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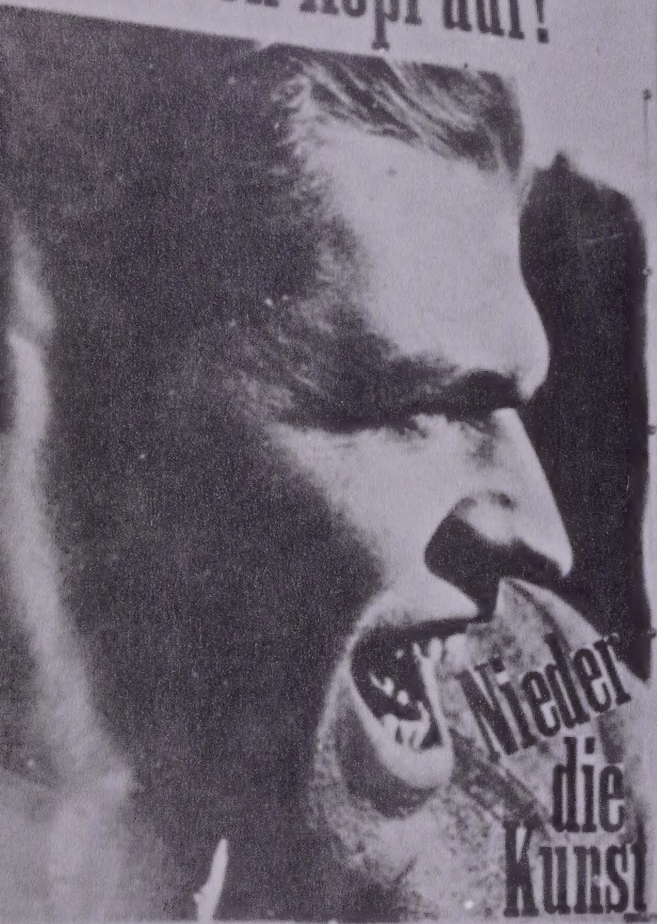
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RUDOLF KUENZLI is Professor of Comparative Literature and English at the University of Iowa. Co-editor of the journal *Dada/Surrealism*, he is also Director of the International Dada Archive at the University of Iowa. Previous publications include *Dada Artifacts* (Iowa Museum of Art, 1978), and contributions to *Artforum*, *Muttersprache* and *Diacritics*. Kuenzli has also edited *Dada Spectrum: The Dialectics of Revolt* (with Stephen Foster, Coda, 1979), *New York Dada* (Willis Locker & Owens, 1986), *Marcel Duchamp: Artist of the Century* (with Francis Naumann, MIT Press, 1988), *André Breton Today* (Willis Locker & Owens, 1989), *Surrealism and Women* (MIT Press, 1991) and *Dada and Surrealist Film* (MIT Press, 1996).

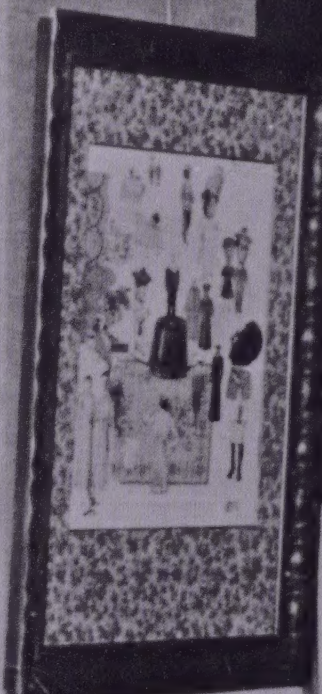
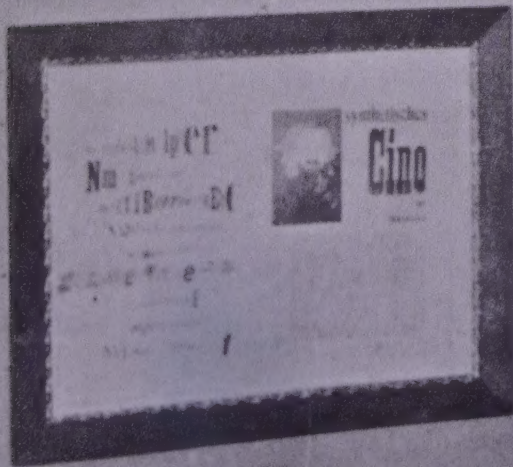
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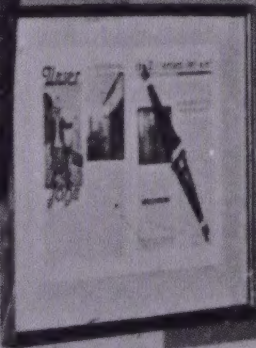


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ist die
willentliche Zersetzung



der
bürgerlichen Begriffswelt

DADA

steht auf
Seiten des revolutionären
Proletariats!

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First room of the International Dada Fair,
Otto Burchard Gallery, Berlin, with
attendees
1920

inside flap, John Covert
Time
1919 (detail)

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supervised by Jasper Johns
Photograph by James Klotzly (detail)
1966

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PRE-

BY RUDOLF KUENZLI

FACE

This volume is a comprehensive assessment, from today's point of view, of one of the most revolutionary twentieth-century movements in the arts. I am indebted to the many critics, art historians, curators, collectors, editors, translators and contemporary artists who have been inspired by Dada, and whose efforts have greatly assisted me.

The sections of this volume are organized chronologically and around the geographic locations of major dada activities, from the inception of Dada in Zurich to New York, Barcelona, Berlin, Hanover and Holland, Cologne, Paris, Central and Eastern Europe and Japan. A final section is devoted to a discussion of Neo-Dada. The Documents section is conceived as a short anthology of dada writing. Most of the dada artists were also poets, and many of them were in fact among the first intermedia artists, for whom performances and visual as well as verbal works were central. Public events that often elicited violent audience reactions were central to the movement. Providing a sense of the performative aspects of Dada has been the greatest challenge, since only a few photographs have survived. Newspaper accounts and programmes give only a limited view of these events, at which Dadas performed Dada to the public.

SUR-

BY RUDOLF KUENZLI

VEY

Reader,
debug
your
brain!

Subversive and irreverent, Dada, more than any other movement, has shaken society's notions of art and cultural production. Fiercely anti-authoritarian and anti-hierarchical, Dada questioned the myth of originality, of the artist as genius, suggesting instead that everybody should be an artist and that almost anything could be art. Surrealism, Constructivism, Lettrism, Situationism, Fluxus, Pop and Op Art, Conceptual Art and Minimalism: most twentieth-century art movements after 1923 have traced their roots to Dada. Dada works still have a radicality and freshness that attracts today's culture jammers and disrupters of life as usual.¹

Emerging during the crisis period of the First World War, Dada's strategies of

critiquing the dominant culture have been used by radical groups ever since. The Dada Cabaret was re-enacted by young German and Austrian writers and artists immediately after the Second World War, and dada slogans were painted on buildings in Paris during the protests of 1968. Greil Marcus traces the connections between Dada, the Situationists and the Sex Pistols, suggesting that Dada was a model of revolt for these later movements. He quotes Henri Lefebvre, a close friend of the Situationists, who wrote: 'To the degree that modernity has a meaning, it is this: it carries within itself, from the beginning, a radical negation – Dada, this event which took place in a Zurich café.' Similarly, Stewart Home, in his *The Assault on Culture*, points to the impact of Dada on Lettrism, Situationism, Punk and Neoism.²

Dada artists and writers were among the first to intervene in mass media; indeed interventions made up much of their activity. They cut out reproductions of photographs in the daily press and critically recontextualized them. Walter Benjamin recognized the importance of Dada when he wrote in 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' that when authenticity ceases to be an important part of making art, 'the total function of art is reversed. Instead of being based on ritual it begins to be based on another

practice, politics.’³ Dada photomonteurs rearranged the cultural and political myths propagated by the press. The Berlin Dadas even presented themselves as an advertising agency; they exploited the desire for sensationalism by feeding the mass media improbable and ridiculous stories.

Exhibitions, catalogues and books on twentieth-century art have generally presented Dada solely as an art movement, which they insert into Modernism’s evolution from Cubism to Italian Futurism, Russian Futurism, Expressionism, Constructivism and Surrealism. Dada is often described as a transitory phenomenon, as late German Expressionism, or as the preparatory phase for Surrealism or Constructivism. Yet considering it as ending or initial stage assesses Dada in terms of those other movements: a study that describes Dada as a precursor of Surrealism emphasizes the proto-surrealist dimensions of Dada at the expense of other aspects of the movement. Dada writers and artists did have connections to earlier movements, and



some joined other groups after 1923. But they changed their orientations during the cultural crisis of the First World War.

Most of the Dadas were interested in the late nineteenth-century philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche; not the Nietzsche of the Futurists who argued for movement and becoming, not the Nietzsche of the

Expressionists who taught a new feeling of life, but the Nietzsche of *Human, All Too Human* and *Twilight of the Idols: Or How One Philosophizes with a Hammer*, the Nietzsche who questioned everything, who found every idol, every truth to be hollow. Hugo Ball, the founder of the Dada movement, wrote his dissertation on Nietzsche, and Raoul Hausmann, the Berlin Dadasoph, often quoted long passages from Nietzsche in his letters to Hannah Höch. Max Jacob even suggested that Tzara, Samuel Rosenstock’s adopted name, was a short form of Nietzsche’s Zarathustra.⁴ This Nietzschean radical critique of all cultural values and truths is at the root of Dada. The first act of the dada group in Zurich was to found the Cabaret Voltaire, an outlet from which to criticize the war culture. Hugo Ball wrote in his diary on 16 June 1916:

‘The ideals of culture and of art as a programme for a variety show – that is our kind of Candide against the times. People act as if nothing had happened. The slaughter increases, and they cling to the prestige of European glory. They are trying to make the impossible

*possible and to pass off the betrayal of human beings, the exploitation of the body and soul of people, and all this civilized carnage as a triumph of European intelligence.*¹⁵

The Dadas saw people's unquestioning belief in the transparency of language as the major reason for the effectiveness of war propaganda. Journalists, poets, philosophers and teachers created an enthusiasm and rationale for the war. Moreover, a well-functioning system of censorship suppressed any direct criticism. In deconstructing the cultural sign system through their own sign production, the Dadas attempted to convince their audiences of the arbitrary nature of signs, and thereby liberate them from their oppressive, murderous social order: they hoped to change society's interpretation of the world. Ball, and much later Tom Stoppard, compared the dada revolution with the revolution Lenin plotted while living in close proximity to the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich. 'Is Dadaism as sign and gesture', Ball wondered, 'the opposite of Bolshevism? Does it contrast

associated; it 'is working with all its might to introduce the idiot everywhere.'¹⁹ Dada opposed society's sense and logic by creating non-sense in the form of anti-art and a-art. Unlike Cubism, Futurism or Surrealism, Dada is, as Tzara insisted, 'not a literary school', denotes not a certain artistic style, but a rebellious, playful 'state of mind' that dissolves fixities, truths and myths.

Yet not all Dadas were inclined to keep dancing with Tzara forever on a new *tabula rasa* of European culture. The 'great negative work of destruction'¹⁰ was for several Dadas a welcome and necessary first phase, but one after which they hoped to find a new beginning. In his retrospective essay 'Dada at Two Speeds', Marcel Janco describes a second phase, a creative search for a new language and new forms, in which Dada became 'a synonym for pure, childlike, direct, primal.'¹¹ Hans Arp echoes Janco's notion: 'While the thunder of the batteries rumbled in the distance we pasted, we recited, we versified, we sang with all our soul. We searched for an

elementary
art that
would, we
thought,
save
mankind
from the
furious folly



destruction and consummate calculation with the completely quixotic, inexpedient, and incomprehensible side of the world?'¹⁶ Dada was primarily concerned with bringing about a change not just in art and literature, but in the whole social system. The choice of 'Dada' as the name for the movement was central: in equating everything with 'Dada', which does not mean anything, the Dadas hoped to invalidate all meaning. According to Tristan Tzara:

'Dada is a virgin microbe ...

Dada has 391 different attitudes and colours depending on the sex of the chairman

*It transforms itself – affirms – simultaneously says the opposite – It doesn't matter – screams – goes fishing'*¹⁷

At the end of his 'Lecture on Dada' of 1922, Tzara again compares Dada to 'a virgin microbe' that he hopes will 'penetrate with the insistence of air into all the spaces that reason has not been able to fill with words or conventions.'¹⁸ Indeed Dada seems to infect everything with which it is

of these times. We aspired to a new order that might restore the balance between heaven and hell.'¹² Arp's new world was based on chance. For Hans Richter, who collaborated with Viking Eggeling on a new elementary cinema, it was the constructivist notion of abstraction.¹³ Kurt Schwitters also saw a new beginning in Constructivism.

These tensions between Dada and Constructivism, between a provocative questioning of all values and the search for a new order are perhaps best embodied in Theo van Doesburg, who created his dada works under the assumed name of I.K. Bonset while leader of the De Stijl group.¹⁴ Berlin Dada was receptive to aspects of Russian Constructivism in its use of collage and photomontage: at the First International Dada Fair in Berlin in 1920, George Grosz and John Heartfield exhibited a large placard with the slogan 'ART IS DEAD. Long live the new machine art of Tatlin.' The dialogue between Dada and Constructivism is also noticeable in Richter's magazine G, in which he published Mies van der Rohe, Naum Gabo, Antoine

Pevsner, Kazimir Malevich, El Lissitzky, Van Doesburg, alongside Tzara, Man Ray, Grosz, Hausmann, Schwitters and Arp; in the dada-leaning magazines of Central Europe, such as Lajos Kassák's *Ma*, which he published first in Budapest and later in Vienna; and *Zenit*, which appeared in Belgrade.

The tensions in Paris between Tzara's notion of Dada and that of the members of the *Littérature* group around André Breton occurred for the same reason. Breton was eager to find a new beginning and seriousness after the period of radical critique. In 1924, having grown more and more impatient with the anarchic performances of Dada, he launched his own movement – Surrealism – with clear definitions, hierarchies and directives.

It is this anarchic, Nietzschean 'joyful wisdom', creating and performing without any claim to truth, and its tension with attempts by some Dadas to find a new beginning that gives the Dada movement its complexity. And to complicate matters even further: these new departures, especially among Berlin Dadas, were more often than not parodies. Examining the efforts of the post-war German government to find a strong political leader, the Dadas immediately launched 'Oberdada' Johannes Baader as the President of the World.

Dada in Zurich and Geneva

During the First World War, neutral Switzerland became a refuge to European pacifists, revolutionaries and anti-war protesters. James Joyce, Romain Rolland, Lenin, the German Expressionists and socialists Ludwig Rubiner, Leonard Frank, René Schickele, Klabund (Alfred Henschke) and the Austrian anarchist Walter Serner were among the thousands of refugees living in Zurich and keeping the Swiss police very busy. Hugo Ball left Germany in 1915 and arrived in Zurich with his girlfriend Emmy Hennings, a professional cabaret singer and poet. Prior to his arrival in Switzerland, Ball had founded (with Hans Leybold, in Munich) the radical periodical *Revolution*, which attacked German culture in all its forms.

In Zurich, Ball and Hennings' cultural critique found a new outlet. On 5 February 1916, in a bar, they founded their own cabaret, out of which emerged the Dada movement. They called it Cabaret Voltaire, in honour of the eighteenth-century French writer, philosopher and radical critic. The Romanian refugees Tristan Tzara and Marcel Janco, as well as Alsatian Hans Arp and his Swiss girlfriend Sophie Taeuber, joined the cabaret. Ball's close friend Richard Huelsenbeck arrived a

week later. Against the backdrop of nationalism raging in Europe, this nucleus of artists and poets formed an international group that aimed to transform contemporary art and poetry.

From the opening of the cabaret to its closing four months later, nightly performances were the focus of the dada group in Zurich. On the small stage in the back room of the bar and restaurant Holländische Meierei everything was possible. The programmes ranged from recitations of simultaneous poems in three different languages to cubist dances; readings of expressionist and futurist poems, as well as their own texts; performances of short plays, such as Ball's bruitist *Nativity Play*; songs presented by Hennings, 'the star of the cabaret';¹⁵ and audience participation. Better than any enumeration of the diverse performances, is Hans Arp's description of the chaotic atmosphere:

*'Total Pandemonium. The people around us are shouting, laughing and gesticulating. Our replies are sighs of love, volleys of hiccups, poems, moos, and meowing of medieval Bruitists. Tzara is wiggling his behind like the belly of an Oriental dancer. Janco is playing an invisible violin and bowing and scraping. Madame Hennings, with a Madonna face, is doing the splits. Huelsenbeck is banging away nonstop on the great drum, with Ball accompanying him on the piano, pale as a chalky ghost.'*¹⁶

These nightly encounters with their audience, which was primarily male and composed of fellow dissidents, challenged the creativity and energy of the performers. One month after the opening, Ball wrote in his diary: 'Our attempt to entertain the audience with artistic things forces us in an exciting and instructive way to be incessantly lively, new, and naïve. It is a race with the expectations of the audience, and this race calls on all our forces of invention.'¹⁷ Traditional distinctions between audience and performers were blurred, transforming the spectators into Dadas themselves. Huelsenbeck's arrival in Zurich injected a more aggressive tone. '[Huelsenbeck] pleads for a stronger rhythm (Negro rhythm). He would prefer to drum literature into the ground.'¹⁸ Huelsenbeck's drum beats and recitations of pseudo-African poems, Tzara's appropriations of African songs from anthropologists' and missionaries' periodicals, Janco's poster for the cabaret evening 'Chant Nègre' and his masks for the performance of improvised dances – all point to the group's search for 'primitive' art, an art that predated the derailment of European culture. In his sound poems, such as 'Karawane', Ball wanted

to find a language that emerges from the 'primeval strata untouched and not reached by logic and by the social apparatus.'¹⁹ He drew parallels between what he was doing in sound and what Kandinsky did in his abstract paintings, rejecting the representational as 'impure', going 'back to the true form, the sound of a thing, its essence, its essential curve.'²⁰

Ball mentioned the word 'Dada' for the first time in his diary entry of 18 April 1916: 'Tzara keeps on worrying about the periodical. My proposal to call it "Dada" is accepted.'²¹ Ball insists that 'Dada' is not an invented word; he seems to appreciate that it is international, having meaning in French ('hobbyhorse') and Romanian ('yes, yes') and an allusion in German to the early sounds a baby makes, sounds that might have emerged from those 'primeval strata untouched and not reached by logic'. In his 'Dada Manifesto' of 14 July he calls Dada 'the heart of words',²² although he clearly indicates that he is aware that Dada is also the brand name of a line of



cosmetic products, including a fortifying hair lotion and soap, when he writes, 'Dada is the world's best lily-milk soap.'²³ Ball read his 'Dada Manifesto' aloud at the first dada evening

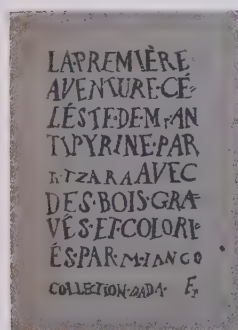
performance outside the Cabaret Voltaire, which closed in early July 1916 due to its diminishing effect on revenue at the bar. This manifesto was 'a thinly disguised break with friends. They felt so too ... When things are finished, I cannot spend any more time with them.'²⁴ Ball distinguishes two different functions of 'Dada': a primal word for a new beginning, which he advocated, and a trade mark, an empty, mystifying label, which he realized Huelsenbeck and Tzara were keen to promote.²⁵ Ball condemns Tzara's and Huelsenbeck's play with the label 'Dada', without perhaps fully recognizing the provocative aspects of their game, which, simulating advertising and marketing of new commodities, declares any claim to be hollow and empty by equating it with Dada, which means nothing. The rift between himself and Tzara and Huelsenbeck was in Ball's assessment so deep, that he and Hennings left the Zurich group shortly after that first dada evening and settled in southern Switzerland. Huelsenbeck, who had a nervous breakdown (in part because of his Swiss

girlfriend, who demanded that he choose between her and Dada), received a medical certificate that allowed him to return to Germany at the end of 1916 without being drafted into the army.²⁶

Although Ball and Arp had hung works by modern artists on the walls of the Cabaret Voltaire – Picasso, Klee, Jawlensky, Léger, van Rees, Kandinsky, Modigliani, Matisse and Janco – the first dada exhibition took place in the Galerie Corray in January 1917, showing Arp, Janco, Giorgio de Chirico, Otto and Ady van Rees, Hans Richter, contemporary Swiss artists, and African sculptures from Han Corray's collection. This gallery, which the Dadas soon rented and called Gallery Dada, became their new performance space. Located on the most prosperous street in Zurich, it had a very different atmosphere from that of the chaotic Cabaret Voltaire. To cover the high rental costs they charged steep entrance fees and because of the sedate surroundings had to agree to admit spectators by invitation only, which assured a predominantly upper-class audience.²⁷

Surprisingly, two expressionist exhibitions, which the dada group took over from Corray's gallery in Basel, filled the rooms for two months. Dada works were exhibited only in the last month of the gallery's existence. The Dadas gave afternoon lectures and guided tours. Huelsenbeck, in Germany, knew of the activities at the Gallery Dada from letters, and described it derisively as 'a manicure salon of the fine arts, characterized by tea-drinking old ladies trying to revive their vanishing sexual powers with the help of "something mad"'.²⁸ In addition to the reading of dada works, these evening performances, staged every other week, emphasized dance and music. Ball, who returned for a few months to Zurich, recited his sound poems while Taeuber, a student of Rudolf von Laban, wore one of Janco's masks and performed abstract dances. One evening was devoted to Hans Heusser, a Swiss composer, who performed his new music; another to Oskar Kokoschka's play *Sphinx and Straw Man*; on another evening they created connections between African poems, Western mystical texts and Arabic dance rhythms.²⁹ After three months, again due to financial difficulties, the gallery closed in May 1917. Ball and Hennings returned to southern Switzerland. Ball's departure signalled the increased influence of the twenty-year-old Tzara. Editing an anthology of works performed at the cabaret, Ball still used 'Cabaret Voltaire' as the title. With Tzara in control, everything the group did was labelled 'Dada'. After Ball's first

departure, Tzara began his 'Collection Dada', a series of collaborative publications between artists and poets, beginning with his own *The First Celestial Adventure of Mr. Antipyrine* in July 1916, accompanied by Janco's woodcuts, and followed by Huelsenbeck's *Schalaben schalabei schalamezomai* and *Fantastic Prayers*, both illustrated by Arp. After the second break with Ball, Tzara wrote in his 'Zurich Chronicle' for July 1917: 'Launching of the MOUVEMENT DADA – mysterious creation! Magic revolver!' From that point on, Tzara untiringly promoted the 'trade mark' Dada. He initiated the periodical *Dada*, which, in the early stages, consisted primarily of his own texts, accompanied by reproductions of visual works by Arp and Janco. Tzara sent copies of *Dada* to editors of literary magazines and to groups of artists and writers from New York to Moscow. In the third issue, he published his explosive 'Manifesto 1918', which he had read at a dada evening devoted to his own works. André Breton read the manifesto in Paris. 'But it is only with *Dada* No. 3, which arrived in Paris at the



beginning of 1919', Breton wrote, 'that things ignited. The "Dada Manifesto 1918", which is the first item in this issue, is a violent explosion. It proclaims art's rupture with logic, the need of accomplishing a great negative work.'³⁰ Indeed, Tzara rejects in this manifesto any guidelines for creating art: 'We don't accept any theories. We've had enough of the cubist and futurist academies: laboratories of formal ideas.'³¹ He questions the very notion of manifesto-writing: 'To launch a manifesto you have to want: A, B & C, and fulminate against 1, 2 & 3 [...] I am writing a manifesto and there's nothing I want, and yet I am saying certain things, and in principle I am against manifestos, as I am against principles.' The text consists of a series of contradictions, thereby deconstructing logic and common sense. In a later manifesto, Tzara recommends writing illogical dada poems by literally cutting up the logical sentence structures of a newspaper article, shaking them in a bag and then arranging the fragments arbitrarily.³²

The artists among the dada group in Zurich also tore apart existing visual constructions, arbitrarily rearranging the resulting fragments. Hans Arp described this deconstruction as his attempt to undermine 'the trumpets, the flags and money, through which repeatedly killings of millions were organized on the field of honour.'³³ As the major cause of the war, Arp singled out human reliance on logic and reason: 'Modern times, with their science and technology, turned man towards megalomania. The confusion of our epoch results from this overestimation of reason.'³⁴ Arp saw in the deconstruction of the cultural construct of reason the principal function of his and dada art and poetry.

Yet while Tzara saw in chance a strategy to transform sense into nonsense, Arp's 'law of chance' takes on mystical connotations. His automatic drawings, painted wood reliefs and *Cloud Pump* poems point to a deeper, non-rational order like that Ball suggested in relation to his sound poems. His biomorphic shapes do not represent objects; they have a life of their own, growing and changing. It was Sophie Taeuber, whose speciality was textile design, who introduced Arp to different materials. The two of them collaborated on works including geometric and constructivist tapestries. He recalled: 'The years during which we worked exclusively on paper and cloth pictures, embroidery work, with new materials, and in which we avoided oil painting had

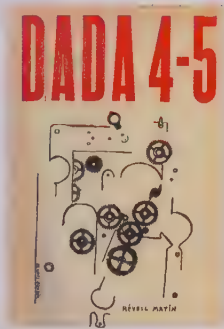
a cleansing effect on us; they were like intellectual exercises to help us finally understand painting in its original pure state.'³⁵

Marcel Janco shared Arp and Taeuber's endeavour to create abstract works that liberated art from representation. In addition to his abstract woodcuts, which appeared in numerous dada publications, his posters for dada events, and costumes and masks for dada performances, he made abstract plaster reliefs, in which he experimented with a language of universal forms related to the new architectural designs that he studied at the Technical University in Zurich. Hans Richter, who equated Zurich Dada with abstract art,³⁶ collaborated with Arp's friend Viking Eggeling. They used scrolls on which to draw the development through time and movement of ever-changing combinations of lines and shapes. The study of these evolving, organic relationships, which they compared to musical compositions, led them to start work on the first abstract films in 1920. Richter's *Rhythm 21* was first shown in Paris in 1923, and Eggeling's

Diagonal Symphony in 1925.

These dada artists also formed, with a few like-minded Swiss artists, the group New Life. Their first exhibition took place in Basel in 1918, followed by a larger one at the Kunsthaus in Zurich in early 1919. In connection with that exhibition, Janco gave a lecture and wrote in the catalogue: 'Our works had to destroy the old stories and anecdotes; they had to become abstract in order to discover the material anew.' They sought an 'elementary', non-mimetic art free of representations of a culture that they rejected. Abstract art, according to Arp, was a revolt against 'the puerile mania and power-madness [that] expects art itself to serve the stultification of mankind.'³⁷

While these visual artists sought a new beginning, Tzara welcomed Francis Picabia for a short visit to Zurich, and the two collaborated on the new issue of *Dada*, No. 4–5, also called 'Anthologie Dada'. He put Picabia's mechanomorphic drawing *Alarm Clock* on the cover and included contributions from the



Paris group – Louis Aragon, André Breton, Jean Cocteau, Philippe Soupault and Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes – who were eager to

participate after having read Tzara's manifesto in the previous issue. On the back page, Tzara lists the bookshops and galleries in Paris, New York, Barcelona, Stockholm and Copenhagen, that distribute *Dada*. Through his incessant letter-writing, Tzara established international contacts almost everywhere. Tzara and his new friend Walter Serner, an Austrian anarchist with a doctorate in law, also exploited the gullibility of newspaper editors and sent them a fictitious story about a gun duel between 'Tzara, the renowned founder of Dada, and the dada painter Arp', with Serner and J.C. Heer, a prominent Swiss novelist, as witnesses. Eager to print sensational events, newspapers throughout Switzerland and as far away as Hamburg and Prague ran this story. At the end of his 'Zurich Chronicle' Tzara claims that 8,590 articles and notices appeared about Dada in newspapers and magazines. Even if this is an exaggerated number, Tzara's collection of dada press cuttings – he hired up to three newspaper-clipping services – amply demonstrates his strategic dissemination of

the word 'Dada'. It is due to Tzara's talents as a promoter that Dada became an international movement.

For the final dada evening in Zurich on 9 April 1919, Tzara collaborated with Serner, who, according to Huelsenbeck, 'hoped to reach his desired great fame through Dada.'³⁸ At the Merchants' Hall, the heart of the Zurich business world, in front of one thousand spectators, Hans Richter read his manifesto 'Against, without, for Dada' and twenty people recited Tzara's simultaneous poem 'The Fever of the Male'. But it was Serner's reading of his manifesto 'The Last Loosening' and presentation of flowers to a tailor's dummy that unleashed protests among the audience. Tzara was pleased with the commotion: 'Dada has succeeded in establishing the circuit of absolute unconsciousness in the auditorium which has forgotten the frontiers of education of prejudices, experienced the commotion of the NEW.'³⁹

After his success at the final dada evening in Zurich, Serner left for Geneva, in order to join his friend the artist Christian Schad and launch Dada in that city. He planned a gigantic dada evening of music and dance, accompanied by exhibits. Yet many of the events that critics have included in their accounts of Dada in Geneva never happened. Serner created a dada congress that existed exclusively in the media. He invented the event – with its hilarious declarations, quarrels, gunshots and police intervention – in press stories that he sent to newspapers in Geneva and several other Swiss cities, Berlin, Dresden, Leipzig, Prague, Hamburg and Vienna, which all printed Serner's account.

Serner did arrange a not-very-successful 'Dada Bal' with a band that played tin cans with sticks, and two exhibitions at the Gallery Néri. The first presented Schad's painted wood reliefs containing buttons, pieces of embroidery and ribbons, and abstract works and assemblages by Gustave Buchet.⁴⁰ It did not include his 'Schadographs', since he had sent them to Tzara in Zurich for publication. The second exhibition, in April 1920, presented works by Picabia and Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes. Yet again, the press accounts, which breathlessly reported that the outraged visitors ripped the artworks off the wall and destroyed them, were Serner's subversive creations.

The end of the First World War brought about the end of Dada in Zurich and Geneva. The refugees were again free to travel. Schad went to Rome, where Julius Evola and Enrico Prampolini organized a dada exhibition; Tzara followed Picabia to Paris; Arp joined Max Ernst in Cologne; and Serner

and Janco also went to Paris, for a brief period. Joining other avant-garde groups in European cities, they not only brought with them the magic word 'Dada' but their works and experience of Zurich Dada, transforming the activities and manifestations of these groups.

Dada in New York and Barcelona

New York Dada is in part a dada invention. It is Dada because it is not Dada. Perhaps it is pre-Dada or proto-Dada; its participants were certainly blessed with the 'dada spirit'.⁴¹ Its central figure, Marcel Duchamp, had little use for the label, although his scandalous readymade urinal and his habit of cross-dressing as Rose Sélavy have become the key examples of dada provocation.

Duchamp and Picabia came to New York in 1915 to avoid the war.⁴² They chose New York over Zurich or some other neutral place because they were well known from their participation two years earlier in the Armory Show, the

exhibition that introduced modern art to New York. Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase*, described in a New York newspaper as 'an explosion in a shingle factory',⁴³ had created a great uproar and placed Duchamp and Picabia at the centre of the New York avant-garde. When they arrived in 1915, they were received as prominent leaders of

modern art, although they had become much more interested in questioning that very modernism.

At first, Picabia collaborated primarily with Alfred Stieglitz and the photographers and artists associated with his Gallery 291.⁴⁴ Stieglitz, a pioneer in the art of photography, was also a major promoter of European avant-garde art in New York. He edited *Camera Work*, a journal of avant-garde art and writing, to which a group of young American artists contributed: Marsden Hartley, Morgan Russell, Benjamin de Casseres, Marius de Zayas, Arthur Dove, Joseph Stella, John Marin and others. In 1915 the group founded 291, a new journal, in which Picabia's *Girl Born without a Mother*, his first mechanomorphic drawing, appeared. This and his subsequent contributions gave 291 its playful dada character.

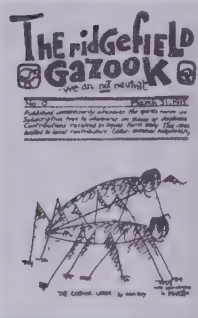
While Picabia worked with the Stieglitz group, Duchamp gathered with an international group of refugees and Americans at the apartment of Walter Conrad Arensberg, a wealthy businessman, art collector and poet. Arensberg

introduced Duchamp to Man Ray, who lived with other American artists, anarchists and socialists in a New Jersey artists' colony, where he had published one issue of the dada-like magazine *The Ridgefield Gazook* in 1915.

The New York group's gatherings in salons and galleries from 1915 to 1921, its participants' preoccupation with visual art and their passion for playing chess, differ greatly from the public dada performances of Zurich. They did not provoke large audiences in concert halls or cabarets; they did not even write manifestos.⁴⁵ Moreover, this group existed prior to the 1916 invention of the label 'Dada' by Ball, Huelsenbeck, Arp and Tzara in Zurich. Although de Zayas, Picabia and Duchamp learned of the birth of Dada in the same year, they did not adopt the label until 1921, and then only for a brief period. Yet the New York group has had a far greater impact on American artists and writers than, for example, Zurich Dada on the Swiss. Arensberg's salon became an important meeting-ground, providing the first extensive opportunity for American interaction with important European artists, who were ready for new experiments in America. The studies of William Agee, Dickran Tashjian, Abraham Davidson and Francis Naumann convincingly show that Duchamp and Picabia were catalysts for the young Americans, who received from them encouragement and confirmation in their experiments with non-conventional material and new subject matter.⁴⁶

Although Picabia was in New York only for extended visits, and Duchamp and Man Ray left for Europe in 1921, their new ideas were, according to Stuart Davis, alive in New York long after their departure: 'Duchamp's suggestion worked slowly. Unaesthetic material, absurd material, non-arty material – ten years later I could take a worthless eggbeater, and the change to a new association would inspire me.'⁴⁷

Picabia's machine drawings and his mechanomorphic portraits probably inspired Man Ray's *Danger-Dancer* (1920), Morton Schamberg's machine paintings and pastels of 1916, Charles Sheeler's *Self-Portrait* (1923), Arthur Dove's composite collage portraits (1924–25) and Charles Demuth's poster portraits (1924–29). Duchamp's readymades, especially his urinal, which he titled *Fountain* (1917), undoubtedly influenced Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven's *God* (1917), a plumbing trap mounted in a mitre box. Man Ray's ironic, mechanical *Self-Portrait* (1916), an assemblage of objects, or his photograph of an eggbeater, which he entitled *L'Homme* (1917), can easily be related to Duchamp's notion of the readymade. Duchamp's



Large Glass incited Joseph Stella to experiment with glass himself in his *Man in Elevated (Train)* (1918). Certainly John Covert's Conceptual art, with its visual puns and use of non-art material, is related to the work of Duchamp, who considered Covert 'an outstanding figure from the beginning'.⁴⁸ With the exception of Man Ray, the young Americans tended to lack the irony, playfulness and eroticism of Picabia and Duchamp. Nevertheless, they felt liberated from the Armory Show's presentation of European Modernism. Already in 1915, upon his arrival in New York, Duchamp encouraged Americans to create their own works and forget Europe: 'If only America would realize that the art of Europe is finished – dead – and that America is the country of the art of the future, instead of trying to base everything she does on European traditions!'⁴⁹

Picabia and Duchamp were in turn stimulated and inspired by America and American writers and artists. When Picabia arrived in New York for the Armory Show in 1913, he immediately made a series of watercolours, which 'express the spirit



of New York, as I feel it, and the crowded streets of your city as I feel them, their unrest, their commercialism, their atmospheric charm ...'⁵⁰ Yet it was his second visit to America, in 1915, which brought, in Picabia's words,

'a complete revolution in my methods of work ... Almost immediately upon coming to America it flashed on me that the genius of the modern world is in machinery, and that through machinery art ought to find a most vivid expression.' In this statement of October 1915, Picabia clearly attributes his discovery of machine drawings to his experience of American culture. He published his first symbolic, but also ironic and humorous, machine portraits of his friends, in the new journal 291.

Duchamp, too, was inspired by New York, a city he admired as 'a complete work of art'.⁵¹ Shortly after coming to America, he suggested using 'the Woolworth Building as a readymade'.⁵² His personal life, his relationship with artists and his position in the art world were dramatically different from those in war-torn France. In October 1915, he stated:

'Paris is like a deserted mansion. Her lights are out. One's friends are all away at the front. Or else they have been already killed ... I love an active and interesting life. I have found such a life most

*abundantly in New York. I am very happy here. Perhaps rather too happy. For I have not painted a single picture since coming over.'*⁵³ Duchamp immediately became the lynchpin of the gatherings at the Arensbergs' apartment, and, according to Henri-Pierre Roché, 'the toast of all the young *avant-garde* of New York. Projects built up around him. His smile inspired daring and a sense of confidence.'⁵⁴

One of Duchamp's collaborators in New York was Man Ray, whom he met in the summer of 1915. In an interview with Arturo Schwarz, Man Ray insists that he was 'Dada' before he met Duchamp, but that Duchamp strengthened and encouraged his attitudes and opinions.⁵⁵ Among the young Americans of the Arensberg circle, Man Ray was the only one who did not care at all about forming an indigenous, modern American art. He broke his contract with Stieglitz, when he opened his new gallery An American Place. Man Ray's insistence on absolute creative freedom, humour and anarchism made him, according to Schwarz, the only true American Dada. In the manner of Rimbaud, Man Ray cultivated his personality. Concerning the works he made in New York he stated: 'I did not even understand my own things myself or why I did them. But I did not care: the idea was to do it. It isn't a question of understanding, it's a matter of acceptance.'⁵⁶ In addition to his assemblages and photographs, he worked with Duchamp on *Rotary Glass Plates (Precision Optics)*, photographed the dust-covered *Large Glass (Dust Breeding)*, and made a film with Duchamp shaving Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven's pubic hair. Man Ray founded the first modern art museum in America, the Société Anonyme, together with Duchamp and Katherine Dreier, and co-edited *New York Dada* (April 1921), the first and last American magazine that officially embraced Dada.

The most outrageous disciple of Duchamp was the German Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven. Performance artist, poet, sculptor, artist's model and proto-punk, the Baroness was easily the most colourful personality of the New York group. Jane Heap, who with her partner Margaret Anderson edited *The Little Review*, described her in 1922 as 'the first American Dada' and as 'the only one living anywhere who dresses dada, loves dada, lives dada.'⁵⁷ Parading through the streets of Greenwich Village half-naked in her art-to-wear costumes, with a coal scuttle for a hat, black lips, shaved head, and yellow face-powder, she picked up metal, cloth, paper, glass and wire for her sculptures and multimedia portraits of

Duchamp, whom she greatly admired. Duchamp suggested that she send her poems to *The Little Review*, which published the Baroness more than any other poet. James Joyce's *Ulysses* appeared for the first time serially in the same issues of the review, but the Baroness's epic poem 'Mineself – Minesoul – and – Mine – Cast-Iron Lover' caused more outrage among the readers. Her assemblage sculpture *God* (1917) is, given its title, one of the most provocative works of the New York group. The Baroness might even have collaborated on that other readymade plumbing device, Duchamp's *Fountain* (1917), which became the focus of discussion in the New York group's magazine *The Blind Man* (May 1917).⁵⁸

Proud of her body, the Baroness challenged the prevailing puritan codes of feminine modesty. While the men of the New York avant-garde, above all William Carlos Williams,⁵⁹ were scared by her notions of uninhibited life, art and sex, non-conventional women of the Arensberg circle admired her. For Anderson, the Baroness was 'perhaps the only figure of our

C. Kahler' under New York. Although this anthology never appeared, in *Dadaglobe* Tzara constructed the notion that Dada was alive and flourishing in New York, thus giving credence to Georges Hugnet's observation that 'When they [the Arensberg circle] discover Dada, it is really Dada that discovers them.'⁶² *New York Dada* suggests an attempt to found an official dada centre connected to the international movement. In the same year, the group even organized a symposium on the question 'What Is Dadaism?' But in spite of these efforts, the New York Dadas dissolved in 1921 with the departure of Duchamp and Man Ray for Paris. Shortly before leaving, Man Ray wrote to Tzara: 'Dada cannot live in New York. All New York is dada and will not tolerate a rival ... So Dada in New York must remain a secret.' On the upper margin of this letter, Man Ray wrote 'MERDELAMERDE ... de l'amerique!' and glued a photograph of the Baroness posing nude, an image printed from a frame of Duchamp and Man Ray's 'shaving film'.⁶³



P · B · T THE BLIND MAN



generation who deserves the epithet extraordinary,⁶⁰ Berenice Abbott, whom the Baroness often severely criticized, considered her 'perhaps ... the most influential person ... in the early part of my life'⁶¹ and the writer Djuna Barnes became her editor, biographer and literary executor.

In the single issue of their journal *New York Dada* in 1921, Duchamp and Man Ray included two photos of the Baroness: one in which she poses as a masculine warrior with wild hair, and the other in which she has exposed breasts and cropped hair. They also printed Tzara's permission for their use of the label 'Dada': 'You ask for authorization to name your periodical Dada. But Dada belongs to everybody.' Tzara emphasizes Dada's destructive character and devotes a large part of his letter to urging American readers to buy his forthcoming international anthology *Dadaglobe*. Advertising its contributors, Tzara lists 'W.C. Arensberg, Gabrielle Buffet, Marcel Duchamp, Adon Lacroix, Baroness von Loringhoven, Man Ray, Joseph Stella, E. Varèse, A. Stieglitz, M. Hartley,

A second short-lived attempt was made to introduce Dada to New York. Its organizers were Matthew Josephson, Malcolm Cowley and their friends – expatriate writers and critics who had witnessed the Paris Dada scandals, and who knew some of the perpetrators. Upon their return to America in 1923, they wanted to recreate these events in New York. They planned to rent a theatre and:

'give a literary entertainment, with violent and profane attacks on the most famous contemporary writers, court-martials of the more prominent critics ... all this interspersed with card tricks, solos on the jew's harp, meaningless dialogues and whatever else would show our contempt for the audience and the sanctity of American letters.'⁶⁴

Dissent among the members and lack of money left most of their plans unrealized. Josephson and Gorham Munson, however, did settle their differences over the two literary magazines *Broom* and *Secession*, with a fistfight of epic proportions, according to Cowley's description of the event.⁶⁵

This group unleashed a fierce debate in literary circles in 1924 concerning Dada in America. Kenneth Burke, together with Josephson, Cowley, Slater Brown, Hart Crane and Allen Tate advocated that America needed to embrace Dada, whereas Waldo Frank was convinced that America was already too dada – chaotic and nonsensical.⁶⁶

Barcelona, like Zurich and New York, was a refugees' haven during the First World War and also experienced dada activity. In the summer of 1916, Picabia and his wife Gabrielle Buffet travelled to Barcelona, where they met a large circle of writers and artists including Sonia and Robert Delaunay, Albert Gleizes and his wife Juliette Roche (who had arrived there from New York a few months earlier), the Russian Serge Charchune, Marie Laurencin, and the Futurist Valentine de Saint-Point accompanied by the advocate of film as art, Ricciotto Canudo. Picabia continued to make his erotic mechanomorphic drawings and met Joseph Dalmau, the first gallery owner to exhibit Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase*, shortly after

to New York in the spring of 1917 for the First Exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists, at which Duchamp's *Fountain* was rejected, encountered Cravan again and introduced him to the Arensberg circle, where he met the British poet and artist Mina Loy. Cravan had offended every artist who had participated in the Paris Independents' Exhibition of 1914 in the fourth issue of his magazine *Maintenant*, and so Duchamp and Picabia invited him to give a similarly scandalous dismissal of contemporary art at the Independents' exhibition in New York. Arriving to deliver his lecture late and very drunk, Cravan stumbled to the lectern and started taking his clothes off while swearing at the audience. But before he could free himself of all his clothes he was arrested. Duchamp considered it a 'wonderful lecture'.⁶⁸

The radical questioning and transgression of society's definitions of art in the readymades of Duchamp and the Baroness, and in Picabia's erotic mechanomorphic drawings, encouraged young American artists in their own

experimentation.

Duchamp's irony, his nihilism, his erotic puns, his urinal and moustached Mona Lisa are today seen as the epitome of Dada. They certainly form part of the 'dada spirit', but Duchamp

was hesitant to be part of Tzara's Dada movement and his appropriation of the Arensberg circle. Duchamp responded to his invitation to participate in the Salon Dada with a very short telegram from New York: 'Balls to you.'

Dada in Berlin

When Richard Huelsenbeck left the dada group in Zurich and arrived in Berlin, still at war in early 1917, he realized that the socio-political situation was very different, writing:

*'In Zurich the international profiteers sat in the restaurants with well-filled wallets and rosy cheeks, ate with their knives and smacked their lips in a merry hurrah for the countries that were bashing each other's skull in. Berlin was the city of tightening stomachs, of mounting, thundering hunger, where hidden rage was transformed into a boundless money lust, and men's minds were concentrating more and more on questions of naked existence. Here we would have to proceed with entirely different methods, if we wanted to say something to the people.'*⁶⁹



it had been rejected by the 1912 Salon des Indépendents in Paris. With the help of Dalmau, Picabia launched his own magazine 391, modelled after 291 of the Stieglitz circle, which he continued to publish until 1924.⁶⁷ Dalmau not only took over the distribution of 391, but also published Picabia's first book of poetry, *Cinquante-deux miroirs* (1917), and organized an exhibition of Picabia's works in 1922.

Picabia met one very unusual person in Barcelona, the adventurer Arthur Cravan – nephew of Oscar Wilde, editor of the polemical magazine *Maintenant* and amateur light-heavyweight champion of France. He lived in Barcelona with his brother Otho Lloyd, a painter. Shortly before the Picabias' arrival in Spain, Cravan had challenged the former world heavyweight champion Jack Johnson; the boxing match took place in the Plaza de Toros Monumental in Barcelona in front of five thousand spectators and a film crew. Cravan earned enough money from the bout to finance his voyage to New York, where he arrived in early 1917. The Picabias, who returned

Huelsenbeck joined the Berlin avant-garde groups associated with the anti-war publications *Die freie Strasse* (The Open Road) and the magazine *Neue Jugend* (New Youth), whose members would become the nucleus of Berlin Dada: anarchist adventurer and writer Franz Jung, radical psychoanalyst Otto Gross, writer and publisher Wieland Herzfelde and his brother Helmut (who anglicized his name to John Heartfield), the poet Walter Mehring, the artists George Grosz, Raoul Hausmann and Hannah Höch, and the 'messianic prophet' Johannes Baader, a former architect.

The years following the war were far from peaceful in Berlin. In 1918, the revolution in Germany led to the flight of the Kaiser and the proclamation of a social-democratic republic. In late 1918 and through 1919, street battles took place in Berlin between the troops of the new socialist government and the communist Spartacus League, which was inspired by the October Revolution in Russia. The Dadas in Berlin took an active part in these political events; they clearly sided with the

Spartacus movement. On 12 April 1918, Huelsenbeck organized the First Dada Evening, at which he read his 'Collective Dada Manifesto' that denounced Expressionism as turning inward and shutting out life in its 'hatred of the press, hatred of advertising, hatred of sensationalism'.⁷⁰ Dada, according to Huelsenbeck, lives in 'the din of the

streets' and rejects art that is not part of contemporary chaos and life. Marinetti's futurist poems aestheticizing the sounds of war ('Il Bombardamento') were performed that evening, but the Berlin Dadas provided an accompanying critique – a wounded soldier groaning and crawling around the stage during the recitation.⁷¹ A great fan of American popular culture, Grosz step-danced to rag-time music, performed his 'Negro Songs', insulted the audience and created such a commotion among the spectators that Hausmann was unable to read his manifesto 'New Material in Painting'.⁷² On 7 December 1919, when they repeated what had been a very well attended performance and doubled the entrance fee, the Berlin Dadas declared to the audience that they 'were not astonished that there are so many stupid people who would pay double entrance. We only wanted to see them close up. Now they can go home again.'⁷³ Their performances in Berlin and on tours to Dresden, Prague, Leipzig and Hamburg included improvised dialogues, simultaneous poems, the 'Race between the

Sewing Machine and the Typewriter' and aggressive insults hurled at the audience. 'We did not mince matters,' Grosz remembered. 'We said "You old heap of shit down there, yes, you with the umbrella, you dumb twit."' ⁷⁴

Yet these evening performances were not as central to Berlin Dada as they were to Zurich Dada. Herzfelde wrote in his introduction to the First International Dada Fair: '*The only programme the Dadas recognize is the duty to make current events, current in both time and place, the content of their pictures. This is the reason they do not consider the "Thousand-and-one nights" ... as sources for their work, but rather the illustrated magazines and the lead stories in the press.*'⁷⁵

The new photojournalism in illustrated magazines, with circulations of up to two million copies, greatly shaped social reality in Germany just after the war: it served the interests of the ruling classes by never questioning the new republic's continuation of pre-war values and ideals.

The Berlin Dadas used several strategies in their attempt to combat the power of mass media. The first tactic was the construction of interventionist montages and collages. Scissors and glue replaced the paintbrush and paint. Heartfield's montage for the cover of the third issue of *Der Dada* put advertisements and printed images from bourgeois magazines into motion. The cut-out words 'Dada-Zirkus' as well as the names of some members of Berlin Dada (Hausmann, Baader, Grosz) are in revolution ('Dada Umschwung') around the cut-out photograph of a car tyre. Heartfield emphasizes disconnection and chaos: the socially fixed reality reproduced by bourgeois mass media is dissolved into a playful circus. The work is signed 'John Heartfield, mont.' (monteur) in contrast to the traditional 'pinx.' or 'pinxit' for painters. In Heartfield's *Life and Times in Universal City, 12:05 Noon* (c. 1919), a montage that uses a drawing by Grosz as background, motion is clearly alluded to by the wheel of a car, the chaotic arrangement of the cut-out fragments that refer to American cinema, and strips of actual film.

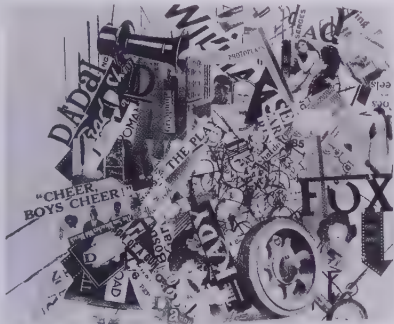
Hannah Höch's most famous work, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada through the Last Epoch of Weimar Beer-Belly Culture in Germany* (1919), although at first glance as confusing and chaotic as Heartfield's montages, is ultimately more structured. Fragments in the upper right represent the anti-Dadas (Friedrich Ebert as chancellor of the new bourgeois republic, the military and its generals); the lower right portion assembles the Dadas, among whom she also places Marx and



Lenin. Most of the fragments are from the cover pages of the illustrated weekly *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*. Höch also examined the mass media's creation of the 'new woman' in montages such as *Dada-Ernst* (Dada Seriousness) and *The Beautiful Girl* which juxtaposes the BMW logo, technology and women with heads consisting of either hair or a light bulb.⁷⁶

Raoul Hausmann's poster poems, such as *fmsbw*, are the most radical collages of Berlin Dada. By arbitrarily forming sequences of letters, Hausmann pointed to the arbitrariness of any word and any text, thus undermining their claim to adequate expression or truth. Similar to Tzara's chance poems, Hausmann's poster poems, which he hung all over Berlin, were an attempt to liberate people from their servile adherence to socially constructed language.⁷⁷

A second strategy of the Berlin Dadas' interventions in mass media was to appropriate and parody commercial language. They operated as an advertising agency and distributed leaflets that offered their services: 'Our advertising



lacks any scruples ... Do you realize what a horde of sandwich-board men and a dada procession could mean for your advertising?'¹⁷⁸ Attacking capitalism and the accumulation of wealth, the Dadas published their

text 'Invest in Dada'. They claim that Dada 'is the only savings bank that pays interest in eternity.'⁷⁹ And Grosz remembers:

‘I was very proud of some of the slogans I invented. There was “Dada today, Dada tomorrow, Dada forever” [a parody of the super-patriotic “Germany today, Germany tomorrow”]; the little political parody “Dada, Dada above everything” [a parody of the German national anthem “Germany, Germany over all”]....’

These slogans appeared in shop windows and coffee houses: *'We posted our stickers just everywhere we went. Even the waiter, carrying his tray of drinks and cigars, would have a "Dada kicks me in the behind" sticker on the back of his frock coat and a "Dada forever" on his box of cigars.'*⁸⁰

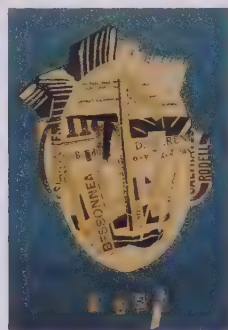
Their third technique of cultural intervention was to produce fantastic counter-myths in order to point out the ridiculousness of all social myths. Dadasoph Hausmann encouraged Johannes Baader to perform his role as Oberdada. The group nominated Baader for all the Nobel prizes, launched him as a political candidate representing

Dada and established a series of pseudo-institutions that mocked the prevailing bourgeois Establishment: the Dada Graphological Institute, the Dada Sex Centre, the Dada Medical Division and the Dada Institute for the Dissolution of Countries.

Berlin Dadas creatively manipulated stories for the media. Initially, the all-too-serious German journalists wanted to understand the meaning of Dada, and were teased by the following questions: 'What is Dada? Is it art? Is it a philosophy? A kind of politics? The name of a fire insurance? Or is it a state religion? Is Dada real energy? Or is it nothing, which means everything?'⁷⁸ A series of actions, or interventions, by Oberdada Baader created a veritable mass-media spectacle. On 18 November 1918, Baader climbed to the pulpit in Berlin's cathedral and shouted to the assembled churchgoers who had supported the war: 'What is Christ to you? You could not care less!' In the tenth issue of *Die freie Strasse*, Baader assumed the title of 'President of the Earth and the Globe'. In the name of the Dada Central Council of World Revolution, Baader wrote the pamphlet *Dadas against Weimar*, which expressed their opposition to the newly elected national assembly, which met in Weimar due to the street battles in Berlin: 'We will detonate Weimar. Berlin is the "Place da...da!"' On 1 April 1919, Hausmann and Baader declared the wealthy Berlin suburb Nikolassee a dada republic, in order to 'show how you found a republic without violence, without shedding blood, without weapons, with nothing but a typewriter.'⁸² The mayor protected the town hall with an army of two hundred soldiers. Baader even announced, via the newspapers, his own death and shortly afterwards his miraculous resurrection. He was the ideal person for these interventions: he always carried with him an official letter that declared him legally insane, which prevented his arrest. He had received this letter in 1917, when he refused conscription.

One of the most effective strategies of the Berlin Dadas was to create their own 'media empire' and to distribute their publications in editions of up to 12,000 copies. Having initially founded the Malik publishing house for the sole purpose of disseminating Grosz's political drawings, Herzfelde published the journal *Die Pleite* (Bankruptcy) from 1919 to 1923 as a critique of the new bourgeois republic. They wrote in the first issue: 'Government socialists, you have betrayed the revolution ... There is only one thing to do: the communist community has to be realized.' Grosz's aggressive drawings

were on the cover of each issue. In January 1919, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, the leaders of the Spartacus League, were killed by government troops; one month later, the Dadas published *Jedermann sein eigener Fussball* (Everyman His Own Football). According to Herzfelde the title meant 'Don't let yourself be kicked around any more.'⁸³ The Dadas hired a hearse and a band and processed through Berlin, selling 7,500 copies of the magazine before they were stopped by government troops.⁸⁴ This magazine included Mehring's satirical poem 'Coitus in the House of Three Lasses', which he subtitled 'New German National Anthem'. Marx's statement 'Revolutions are the locomotives of world history' covered the tops of pages two and three, and in a section entitled 'Toilet' they printed segments of Chancellor Ebert's opening speech to the newly founded national assembly. As publisher, Herzfelde was imprisoned for one month. Upon his release he published *Schutzhaft* (Preventive Detention), a detailed report of the brutality in German prisons. 'Everyman His Own



Football' became a popular subversive slogan. From 1919 to 1920, Grosz's political drawings were again published in the satirical magazine *Der blutige Ernst* (Bloody Earnestness). In 1919, Hausmann and Baader edited the first two issues of *Der Dada* in which they published 'Join Dada' and 'Invest Your Money in Dada'. Grosz joined them to edit the third and last issue with Heartfield's photomontage on the cover, Hausmann's essay 'Dada in Europe', greetings to Charlie Chaplin as 'the greatest artist and good Dada', photomontages by Grosz and Hausmann, Huelsenbeck's 'A Visit in the Cabaret Dada' and Picabia's 'Manifeste Cannibale Dada'.

The culminating event of Berlin Dada was the First International Dada Fair, which took place from 30 June to 25 August 1920. This exhibition was an intervention in the bourgeois art market, as the catalogue announced: 'Dada will lead to the cancellation of the art trade.' Organized by Grosz, Heartfield and Hausmann, it consisted of 174 listed works, mostly collages and photomontages but including posters,

advertisements and sculptures and, almost filling one of the two rooms, Baader's five-storey assemblage *Germany's Greatness and Decline or the Fantastic Life Story of the Oberdada*. From the ceiling in the first room hung Heartfield and Rudolf Schlichter's scandalous sculpture *Prussian Archangel*, a stuffed military uniform with the mask of a pig's head. Slogans in large print did not leave any doubt that in Berlin 'Dada is political' and clearly stated its allegiances and aims ('Dada is the conscious subversion of the bourgeois conceptual world', 'Dada is on the side of the revolutionary proletariat!', 'Down with art'). As one of his exhibited works, Grosz took a reproduction of Botticelli's *Primavera* (c. 1470 to 1480), crossed it out with tape and signed it, 'Away with the old crap. George Grosz.'

In his introduction to the catalogue, Herzfelde explains the centrality of montage in the age of mechanical reproduction: 'The Dadas say: if at an earlier time, love and effort were expended on painting a body, a flower, a hat, a shadow, etc., we only have

to take scissors and cut out all these things we need from photographic reproductions of paintings; if it concerns something smaller we don't even need a depiction at all, but can take the objects themselves, for example pocket-knives,

ashtrays, books, etc.' Yet the main reason is, as Herzfelde notes, its subversive function, which he equates with Dada. In Hausmann's words, Berlin Dada 'made use of all forms and customs in order to smash the moral, sanctimonious world of the bourgeoisie with its own means.'⁸⁵

The First International Dada Fair was the last great event of Berlin Dada. After 1920, tensions between the members of the group made further collaborative projects impossible. Herzfelde, Grosz and Heartfield, who had joined the Communist Party of Germany at the end of 1918, continued to promote a proletarian revolution. Grosz's dialectical drawings, such as *The Communists Fall, and the Stock Market Rises* (1920), became the model for Heartfield's anti-Nazi photomontages of the 1930s. Baader went on to found his Intertellurian Academy, and Hausmann and Höch found a greater affinity with Kurt Schwitters' and Theo van Doesburg's Constructivism. In 1921, Hausmann, Ivan Puni, László Moholy-Nagy and Arp published the manifesto 'Call for an

John HEARTFIELD Cover of *Jedermann sein eigener Fussball* [Everyman His Own Football], 15 February 1919

Cover of *Der Dada*, no. 2, Stieglitz, December 1919

Raoul HAUSMANN Gutz, printed on the back cover of *Der Dada*, no. 2, 1919

Johannes BAADER Das grosse Plasto-Dio-dada-drama: Deutschlands Grösse und Untergang [The Great Plasto-Dio-dada-drama: the Greatness and Downfall of Germany], The First International Dada Fair, Otto Burchard Gallery, Berlin, 1920

Elementary Art'.⁸⁶ Huelsenbeck, the organizer of the first Berlin Dada events, became its historian in 1920, publishing that year *En Avant Dada: A History of Dada; Dada Triumphs! An Assessment of Dada; Germany has to Fall: Memories of an Old Dada Revolutionary* and *Dada Almanach*, the first international anthology of dada texts.⁸⁷

At issue in the disagreements among Berlin Dadas was the degree of their interventions' radicality. Hausmann criticized Grosz's representational anti-militarist drawings by observing that 'if one wants to break conventions, one should not fall into the conventional.'⁸⁸ Yet Hausmann could have hung up thousands of his radical poster poems containing arbitrary sequences of letters and the censors would not have deemed them threatening to the social order. Dada products were politically effective when their dialectical montages and drawings made use of familiar social codes in order to reveal the myths created by the mass media.



Dada in Hanover and Holland

Dada in Hanover was a one-man movement: Kurt Schwitters, a unique figure. While the other German Dadas either fought in the war or escaped to Zurich, Schwitters stayed in provincial Hanover and continued to paint expressionist works. His radical change from imitative painting to collage and assembly occurred at the end of the war. Schwitters wrote:

*'I felt myself freed and had to shout my jubilation out to the world. Out of parsimony I took whatever I found to do this, because we were now a poor country. One can even shout through refuse, and this is what I did, nailing and gluing it together ... everything had broken down in any case and new things had to be made out of fragments.'*⁸⁹

While experimenting with his first collages of refuse, he contacted Arp and Tzara in Zurich, visited Ernst in Cologne and exhibited his new works at Herwarth Walden's Galerie Der Sturm in Berlin.⁹⁰ During a visit to Berlin in late 1918 he met Hausmann, who showed great interest in his collages and

poetry. *Der Zeltweg* (1919), the last publication of Zurich Dada, includes Schwitters' poems 'Welt voll Irrsinn' (World Full of Nonsense) and 'Umdumm' (Dumbdumb), and reproduced his important early collage *Construction for Noble Ladies* (1919). When Huelsenbeck opposed Schwitters' membership of Club Dada, probably because of his connections to the expressionist *Der Sturm* and its 'political blindness', Schwitters chose his own logo for his dada activities: Merz. This unique neologism marked his independence. The word 'Merz' is, as Schwitters explains:

*'the second syllable of Kommerz [commerce]. It originated from the Merzbild, a picture in which the word MERZ, cut-out and glued-on from an advertisement for the KOMMERZ- UND PRIVATBANK [Commercial and Private Bank], could be read ... I searched for a generic term for this new kind of picture, because I could not define them with older concepts like Expressionism, Cubism, Futurism or whatever. So I named all my pictures Merzbilder.'*⁹¹

He used his new logo for his Merz-sculptures, Merz-poems,

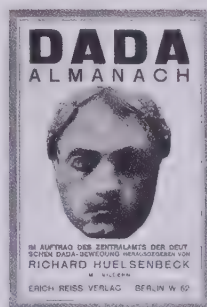
Merz-stage, Merz-architecture, *Merzbau* (Merz Construction), Merz-advertising and his journal *Merz*.

Although rejected by Huelsenbeck as a petit bourgeois, provincial clown,⁹² Schwitters collaborated with several Dadas. He distinguished between 'Huelsendadas' (husk-Dadas),

followers of Huelsenbeck's aggressive, anti-art, political Dada and 'Kerndadas' (kernel-Dadas) or true Dadas, above all Arp, whose early collages inspired Schwitters.⁹³ His friends among the Berlin group were Hausmann and Höch, with whom he organized an 'Anti-Dada Merz' tour to Prague in 1921.

Comparing Dada to Merz, Schwitters wrote in 1923: 'Whereas Dada merely poses antitheses, Merz reconciles antitheses by assigning relative values to every element in the work of art. Pure Merz is art, pure Dada is non-art; in both cases deliberately so.'⁹⁴ His insistence on order, rhythm and symmetry differentiated his work from the protest against any order, hierarchy or structure of some Dadas.

Schwitters defined Merz as 'adjust[ing] materials of different kinds to one another'⁹⁵ and insisted both on the centrality of this adjustment and the relative insignificance of the nature of the materials. He used refuse he found in street gutters and alleys – cloth, cardboard, machine parts, wire, wheels, rope, newspaper advertisements – adjusted and fixed



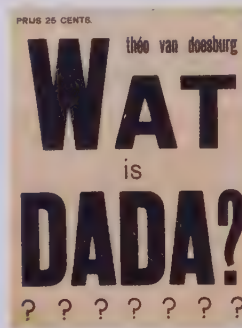
the patterned assembly by nailing and pasting the fragments together to form a relief-collage. Schwitters attempted to convey to the viewer creative, anarchic, humorous play. He produced hundreds of these works and tried to sell them for very little money.⁹⁶

Instead of working with abstract forms and shapes, as did Arp and Sophie Taeuber, Schwitters began with socially coded objects, which through 'adjustment' lose some of their familiar meaning.⁹⁷ Some of his collage poems undergo similar metamorphoses. In 'Anna Blossom Has Wheels' Schwitters rearranges readymade texts from advertising and sentimental love poetry, transforming the loved one into four letters – ANNA – a palindrome.

During the 1920s, Schwitters' collages and poetry became more abstract. During the 'Anti-Dada Merz' tour he began composing his 'Ursonate' or 'Sonata in Primeval Sounds' based on Hausmann's chance phonetic poem 'fmsbwbtözüpggiv', which Schwitters extended to a twenty-

Norway, and moving to England in 1940, he began his third *Merzbau* in a barn in Ambleside. This autobiographical impulse recalls Baader's assembly *Germany's Greatness and Decline* or *The Fantastic Life Story of the Oberdada*, Joseph Cornell's boxes or Robert Rauschenberg's combines. Schwitters' *Merzbau*, however, dwarfs these other works by its sheer size and the almost daily changes over a span of twenty years.

Schwitters attended the Düsseldorf Congress of Progressive Artists in May 1922, and in September the Congress of Constructivists and Dadas in Weimar, where he met El Lissitzky, László Moholy-Nagy, Theo van Doesburg, Richter, Arp, Höch and Tzara. Schwitters' evening performances with Van Doesburg inspired them to organize a dada tour of Holland. Accompanied by Vilmos Huszár, a member of the Stijl group, Nelly van Doesburg and Schwitters' wife Helma, they began their tour in January 1923 in The Hague. Van Doesburg lectured on Dada – he had published his *What Is*



eight-minute sound poem. The finale consists of a triple repetition of the alphabet read backwards and suggests a summary of all the sound material from the various movements of this sonata. According to Hans Richter, Schwitters' recitation of the entire 'Ursonate' to a group of retired generals was very effective in temporarily freeing them from societal norms and reminding them of the happiness of their childhood.⁹⁸

Schwitters' all-embracing life's work was his *Merzbau* (Merz Construction), which he began in his studio in 1919, but which soon took over other rooms of the house.⁹⁹ Initially conceived as a sculpture, it metamorphosed as he added clippings from daily newspapers, his own writings, collages, and tokens from his visiting friends. The *Merzbau* became an ever-expanding 'diary'. During the late 1920s, Schwitters gradually transformed his *Merzbau* into a constructivist environment, in which the grottos were covered up.¹⁰⁰ After his flight from the Nazis in 1937, he started a new *Merzbau* in

Dada? for the tour – only to be interrupted by Schwitters' barking and sneezing. Nelly van Doesburg, a pianist, played Satie's *Ragtime Parade*, and Huszár performed a

shadow play with his constructivist mechanical dance figure.¹⁰¹ Two months and twelve performances later, the tour ended in Leyden, a great success. Schwitters wrote in the first issue of his magazine *Merz*, which he dedicated to Holland Dada, that their 'appearance in Holland was one triumphal march. All Holland is now dada...'¹⁰²

Van Doesburg, leader of the constructivist group De Stijl, was also the most important Dutch Dada. Under the pseudonym of I.K. Bonset, he published the dada magazine *Mécano* in 1922 and 1923 with contributors including Hausmann, Arp, Ernst, Picabia, Man Ray and Tzara, who believed that Bonset was a real person. Van Doesburg was convinced that his Constructivist movement needed nonsensical, rebellious Dada to break with tradition and awaken unfettered creation. He wrote to his friend J.J.P. Oud: 'I can tell you in confidence that I am right now again splitting myself up. Therefore my great plan of attack under the pseudonym of I.K. Bonset in De Stijl. The old can only vanish by the perpetual

Kurt SCHWITTERS Cover of *Merz*, no. 4, July 1923

Kurt SCHWITTERS Guinea Pig House on The White Palace, Detail of the *Merzbau*, Hanover, Germany, c. 1930

The Dada/Constructivist Congress, Weimar [Far left: Max Burchartz (carrying son on his shoulders), Alex Röhl; back row 1–3: Lucia Moholy-Nagy, Alfred Kieny, László Moholy-Nagy; third row 1–3: Harry Scheibe (holding a cigarette), Lotte Burchartz, El Lissitzky (in checked cap), Cornelis van Eesteren (waving stick), Hans Vogel, Peter Röhl; Bernard Sturzkopf (waving hat); second row: Nelly van Doesburg, Theo van Doesburg (with poster in hat), Tristan Tzara, Nini Smit; Hans Arp; front: Werner Gräff (with stick), Hans Richter (lying down)], 1922

Theo VAN DOESBURG Cover of *Wat is Dada?*, De Stijl, 1923

creation of new and terribly strong contrasts. And that's what I am doing.¹¹⁰³

Van Doesburg and Schwitters correctly insisted that I.K. Bonset and Nelly van Doesburg were the only real Dutch Dadas. Huelsenbeck's reference in *Dada Almanach* to 'Paul Citroën (Amsterdam), who together with Jan Bloomfield directs the Dada Central Office in Holland' was an invention intended to make Dada look more international. Citroën was born and raised in Berlin, and left for Amsterdam in 1918. He was a friend of the Berlin Dadas Mehring, Grosz and Huelsenbeck, and he created photomontages of cityscapes, of which *Metropolis* (1923) is probably his best-known work. Jan Bloomfield, born Erwin Blumenfeld, was a German painter who deserted at the end of the war and took up photography while living in Holland. A close friend of Mehring, he was often in Berlin. Citroën states in his 'A Voice from Holland', published in Huelsenbeck's *Dada Almanach*, 'All I wanted to demonstrate is that we are completely cut off here.'¹¹⁰⁴ This letter hardly



describes a thriving Dutch dada centre. Moreover, the majority of Citroën and Bloomfield's dada activities took place during their stays in Berlin. In contrast to this fictitious 'Dada Central Office' Van Doesburg/I.K. Bonset actively practised and disseminated Dada in Holland.

Dada in Cologne and Tyrol

Looking back on the years right after the war, Max Ernst recollected:

*'For us, at that time in Cologne in 1919, Dada was first and foremost an attitude of mind ... Dada was a rebellious upsurge of vital energy and rage; it resulted from the absurdity, the whole immense stupidity of that imbecilic war. We young people came back from the war in a state of stupefaction, and our rage had to find expression somehow or other. This it did quite naturally through attacks on the foundations of the civilization responsible for the war. Attacks on speech, syntax, logic, literature, painting and so on.'*¹¹⁰⁵

When Max Ernst returned to Cologne after four years of active service, he joined a group of left-wing artists and writers. His new friends were Heinrich and Angelika Hoerle, Franz Seiwert and Alfred Gruenwald, the son of a wealthy insurance director, who used the name Johannes Theodor Baargeld ('Bargeld' spelled with one 'a' means cash). Faithful to his pseudonym, Baargeld financed most of their publications with his father's money. In early 1919, the group collaborated on the magazine *Der Ventilator*, subtitled 'Entertainment Supplement to the Daily Press' in order to fool the censors of the British army that occupied Cologne after the war. They condemned, as did the Berlin Dadas, the newly formed bourgeois socialist government and advocated a workers' republic. After six issues with circulations of up to 20,000 copies, the British authorities stopped the magazine's publication.¹¹⁰⁶

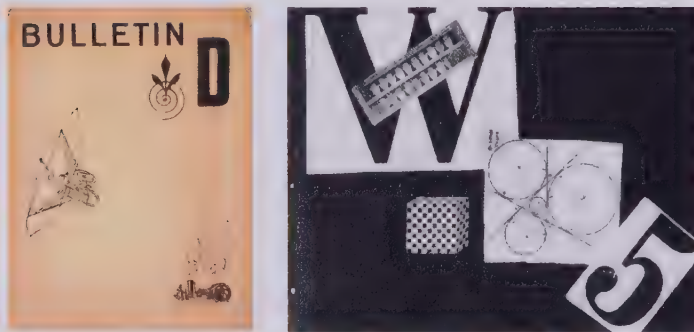
During a visit with his wife Luise to Munich in the autumn of 1919, Ernst came across reproductions of Giorgio de Chirico's works, as well as Zurich Dada publications, which, in his own words, had the effect of a bomb. They showed him ways of attacking 'the foundations of civilization' that were very different from the logical, argumentative prose used in *Der Ventilator*. He adopted a new name, Dadamax, and explored dada techniques of rupturing socially constructed reality. Experimenting with the mysterious juxtapositions of de Chirico, he created *Fiat modes, pereat ars* (Let there be fashion, down with art), a portfolio of eight lithographs.

Ernst turned away from painting, almost exclusively appropriating readymade material. He constructed Schwitters-like reliefs and assemblages of found wood and iron, such as *Fruit of a Long Experience* (1919), and he used printers' blocks to produce mechanic and architectural designs, such as *Don't Smile!* (1920). But his favoured technique was to rearrange printed fragments in such a way that they created a dream-like world inhabited by mysterious beings, as in *Above the Clouds Midnight Passes ...* (1920). Ernst's photomontages are quite different from those of Berlin Dada: while for Höch and Heartfield the decontextualized elements remain fragments in their montages, Ernst's cuttings create a new, alogical reality.

It is not the montage, but the photographic reproduction of it, that for Ernst was the finished work, allowing him to reduce its size for publication or enlarge it for exhibitions. Ernst insisted that the seams between the fragments be invisible. 'Can you show the engraver', Ernst wrote to Tzara

in 1920, 'how to hide the seams in the reproduction of the pasted pieces? (so as to keep the Fatagaga secret a secret?).'¹⁰⁷ Ernst made the 'Fatagagas' – FABrication de TABLEaux GASométriques GARantis – primarily with Hans Arp, whom Ernst had met in 1914, but with whom he had lost contact during the war. When he realized that Arp was a very active member of Zurich Dada, he immediately contacted him. Arp's father lived in Cologne and so Arp came for visits, joining Ernst and Baargeld at least three times in 1920 for extended periods of collaboration. Arp's contributions to the Fatagagas were illogical word collages prompted by Ernst's visual montages.

Ernst was fond of the illustrations in school supply catalogues, medical textbooks and the French magazine *La Nature*, which was devoted to the 'Sciences and Their Applications to the Arts and Industry'. And he wrote to Tzara, 'If you come across any old department store catalogues, fashion magazines, old illustrations, etc., kindly make a gift of them to me, to supply my stock of Fatagaga raw material.'¹⁰⁸



Ernst introduced colour into his works of found black-and-white images by painting over the areas in a reproduced image that did not interest him. In *Approaching Puberty* (1921), Ernst covered everything in the original picture with the exception of the nude female body, in blue paint. This procedure allowed him to introduce colour, but he was still limited by the size of the image. In order to produce larger 'collage' works in colour, Ernst gave up the use of actual fragments of mass-media illustrations and imitated his seamless collaging in oil paintings, which, as in *Celebes* (1921), maintain the illogical, strange juxtapositions.¹⁰⁹

Baargeld, Ernst's closest friend and collaborator in the post-war years in Cologne, had no prior art training. He saw his scandalous assemblages and irreverent collages as part of his left-wing political activities. In his androgynous *Self-Portrait* (1920), he 'completes' a reproduction of the venerated torso *Venus de Milo* by adding a photograph of his own head, thus suggesting a playful gender transgression in the manner of

Duchamp's *Rose Sélavy* or *L.H.O.O.Q.*¹¹⁰ In his collage *Venus at the Game of the Kings* (1920) he cut the king's head in two and filled the space between the photographic fragments with Arp-like biomorphic forms, into which he collaged vegetables suggestive of genitalia.

Ernst and Baargeld wanted to present their new works in an exhibition organized by Cologne's Society of Art in November 1919, but their collages and assemblages were relegated to a room that was not part of the Society's show. *Bulletin D*, the catalogue of this first dada exhibition in Cologne, lists works by Ernst, Baargeld, Arp and Angelika and Heinrich Hoerle, who were the five members of W/5 (West-Stupidia 5). In addition, several anonymous works with such titles as *Pigs*, *Sacrament*, *Asylum* and a series of children's drawings were included. Ernst's brief contribution 'On Cézanne' is the most extraordinary text of this catalogue. He declares that the graffiti in public lavatories and a piano hammer, 'the most perfect sculpture', have much more to do with life than Cézanne's paintings. The catalogue was confiscated by the British authorities, probably because of Otto Freundlich's text 'Laugh-Rockett', in which he recommends the killing of the bourgeoisie.

Arp's extended visits to Cologne were important for the preparation of *Die Schammade*, Cologne's single-issue dada journal.¹¹¹ He put Ernst and Baargeld in contact with Tzara, who had arrived in Paris in January 1920 and whose help they enlisted in securing the collaboration of Paris Dada members. When it finally appeared in April 1920, with its pages of different coloured paper stock and playful typography, *Die Schammade* was the most elaborate and most international of all the dada journals. Contributions by Breton, Aragon, Soupault, Ribemont-Dessaignes and Picabia indicate the close connections that were established between Paris Dada and the Cologne group. The magazine also includes an impressive number of reproductions of visual works. The reproduction of both Picabia's *Oeil Rond* and Baargeld's *Men/Be Careful Dear Heinz* (both 1920) highlights the close stylistic relationship between these two drawings.

A month later, Ernst and Baargeld's works were rejected by a 'jury-free' exhibition organized by the Arts and Crafts Museum of Cologne. In protest, the two arranged their own 'Dada Exhibition: Dada – Early Spring' in a room and partially covered courtyard of a bar. Their show was the most outrageous dada exhibition anywhere. Visitors entered through the public urinal, where a young girl in a white

communion dress greeted them by reciting obscene poems. The most spectacular works were Baargeld's *Fluidoskeptrik*, an aquarium containing red water and a submerged alarm clock, a hand reaching out of the water and a woman's wig floating on the surface, and Ernst's wooden sculpture, a hatchet attached to it with an invitation to destroy the work. Many of the works were not meant to survive, but to provoke. The exhibition was closed on grounds of obscenity; but when the authorities discovered that the only 'obscene' object was a reproduction of Dürer's *Adam and Eve* (1504), which Ernst had integrated into one of his sculptures, was allowed to reopen. The poster *Dada Wins!*, designed to celebrate, was promptly confiscated.

This scandal was the climax, but also the end, of Cologne Dada as a group activity. Baargeld resumed his university studies in economics, and the Hoerles and Franz Seiwert founded the group Stupid.¹¹² Ernst strengthened his connections with the dada group in Paris and asked Tzara at the end of 1920 for an exhibition of his works there.

title alluded to Picabia's separation from Dada, which he announced in several accusatory statements in the summer of 1921.¹¹⁴ Contributions consist of brief prose texts, poems, aphorisms and drawings. Most unnerving is Ernst's collage on the cover: *The Preparation of Bone Glue*.

Breton and his bride Simone Kahn arrived in Tyrol after the publication of *Dada Au Grand Air*, in time to spend a few days with the Ernsts before proceeding to Vienna to visit Sigmund Freud. Paul Eluard and his wife Gala, who arrived even later, stopped in Cologne (on their way back to Paris) to see the Ernsts. This meeting was momentous: Eluard greatly admired Ernst's works and immediately selected eleven collages as illustrations for *Répétitions*, his new volume of poetry; and a strong sexual attraction developed between Ernst and Gala. In March 1922, the Eluards returned to Cologne with copies of *Répétitions*, and Ernst and Eluard began their collaboration on a second book, *The Misfortunes of the Immortals*, which they completed in the summer of 1922, again meeting in Tyrol.



A momentous exhibition with fifty-six works by Ernst took place at the Gallery Au Sans Pareil in May 1921. André Breton wrote the catalogue essay, his first text on visual art, in which he formulated ideas he would later use in defining Surrealism: 'It is Dada and Dada alone whose ability is the marvellous faculty of attaining two widely separate realities without departing from the realm of our experience, of bringing them together and drawing a spark from their contact ... and of disorienting us in our own memory by depriving us of a frame of reference.'¹¹³

Due to the post-war travel restrictions imposed on Germans, Ernst could not attend. He met the Paris Dadas for the first time at a small town in the mountains of Tyrol, which he proposed as a meeting-place. During their vacation there, Arp, Tzara and Ernst worked on the four-page magazine *Dada Au Grand Air – Der Sängerkrieg in Tirol* (Dada in the Open Air – The Singers' War, or Contest, in Tyrol), which forms the last issue of Tzara's magazine *Dada*. 'The Singers' War' in the

This second Tyrolian dada meeting, attended by the Ernsts, the Eluards, Arp and Sophie Taeuber, Tzara and the American Matthew Josephson was overshadowed by tension, due to the relationship between Ernst and Gala. Ernst left his family and Germany at the end of July and went to Paris illegally on Eluard's passport. He lived with Gala and Paul Eluard for the following two years, and became a member of Paris Dada.

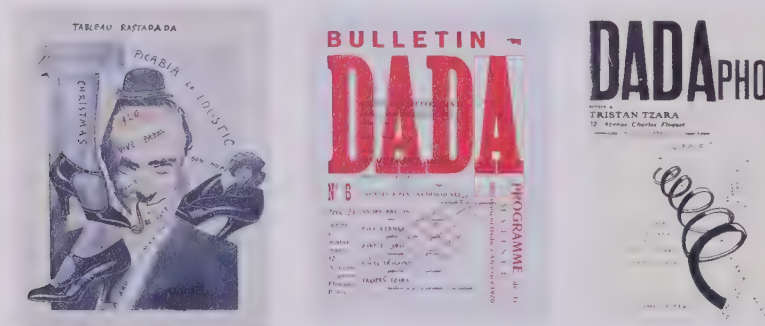
Dada in Paris

At the end of the First World War, Paris became the centre of international Dada. With travel again possible, artists from other European centres and from New York arrived in Paris: Walter Mehring from Berlin; Picabia from New York via Barcelona and Zurich; Tristan Tzara from Zurich; Duchamp for a visit from New York; Hans Arp from Zurich via Cologne; Max Ernst from Cologne; Walter Serner from Zurich via Geneva; and Ilia Zdanevich from Tiflis (Tbilisi). These Dadas were received by young writers associated with the new journal

Littérature: André Breton, Paul Eluard, Louis Aragon, Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes, Paul Dermée and Philippe Soupault.

The excitement generated in Paris by Cubism, the futurist exhibitions and the Ballets Russes had disappeared with the war. Breton, Aragon and Soupault returned from their military service and founded *Littérature*. In the fifth issue they published Jacques Vaché's letters in which he expressed his hatred for art and literature.¹¹⁵ Vaché's anti-art sentiments appealed to these young men who felt betrayed by their society and culture. Tzara's call for a 'great negative work of destruction' in his 'Manifesto of 1918', which they read with great enthusiasm, also concurred with their own plans. They immediately submitted contributions to the next issue of Tzara's Zurich journal *Dada* (No. 4–5) and awaited his coming to Paris 'a little like that of a Messiah'.¹¹⁶

One week after Tzara's arrival the first dada demonstration was held in Paris, on 23 January 1920. At that event, the *Littérature* group read poems by Apollinaire, Cendrars and



Reverdy, and exhibited paintings by Gris, Léger, de Chirico and others; only Picabia's visual works and Tzara's reading provoked the public. Experienced from his Zurich days, Tzara immediately became both the organizer and chief attraction of the large dada provocation-demonstrations in Paris. The first took place on 27 March 1920, at the Maison de L'Oeuvre, the theatre where Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi* had produced a scandal twenty-five years earlier. Tzara later recalled:

'Twelve hundred people were turned away. There were three spectators for every seat; it was suffocating. Enthusiastic members of the audience had brought musical instruments to interrupt us. The enemies of Dada threw down from the balconies copies of an anti-dada paper called *Non* in which we were described as lunatics. The scandal reached absolutely unimaginable proportions. Soupault proclaimed: "You are all idiots! You deserve to be presidents of the Dada Movement."¹¹⁷

The programme included a series of short skits and plays: Dermée's *The Out-of-Tune Ventriloquist*, Ribemont-Dessaignes'

The Mute Canary, and Breton and Soupault's *If You Please*.

Ribemont-Dessaignes' musical composition *No Curly Chicory!*, its notes chosen at random, was performed by Marguérite Buffet, a concert pianist. Breton, wearing a sandwich board with one of Picabia's insults on it, read Picabia's 'Cannibal Dada Manifesto', and Musidora, a famous actress, modelled dada fashion. Picabia presented his *Still Lives* in 'homage' to the art of the past in the form of a stuffed monkey nailed to a board with the inscription 'Portrait of Rembrandt, Portrait of Renoir, Portrait of Cézanne'. But again it was Tzara's work, an absurd play called *The First Celestial Adventure of Mr. Antipyrine*, that created the most violent reactions.

After the scandal and success of the demonstration at the Théâtre de L'Oeuvre, the group immediately planned a Festival Dada at the Salle Gaveau. The evening included Breton and Soupault's new play *You Will Forget Me*, more chance music by Ribemont-Dessaignes, a presentation by Serner, Picabia's 'sodomistic' music performed by Buffet, and his reading 'I am Javanese'. Tzara's contribution (*The Second Celestial Adventure of Mr. Antipyrine*) met with great uproar and success.

The year 1920 was the high point of the Paris Dada movement and its popularity – the demonstrations were discussed in all the newspapers. A Parisian journal, *La Revue de l'époque*, even ran a public opinion poll on the question, 'Should the Dadas be shot?'¹¹⁸

The Paris Dadas flooded avant-garde groups with journals and magazines. Besides the Paris issues of 391, Picabia edited two issues of his magazine *Cannibale*. Tzara continued his Zurich journal *Dada* with issues six ('Bulletin Dada') and seven ('Dadaphone'). Breton, Aragon and Soupault edited *Littérature*. Dermée started the journal *Z*, Céline Arnaud published *Projecteur* and Eluard edited *Proverbe*. The dada gallery Au Sans Pareil organized exhibitions of the works of Ernst, Picabia and Ribemont-Dessaignes and published numerous poetry collections.

After the first series of mass demonstrations Breton grew tired of their repetitive tricks and provocations. For Tzara, Paris had become a great, receptive stage for his anarchic activities; he wanted to go on. Tensions increased during the mock trial of Maurice Barrès. The *Littérature* group wanted to expose Barrès, an influential pro-war writer, as a menace to the sanity of the French people. Breton presided as judge. But Tzara, a witness, rejected Breton's attempt to pass moral judgement,

and disrupted the serious tone of the court proceedings. Picabia did not agree with Breton's seriousness either and attacked all the members of the dada group in his pamphlet *Pilhaou-Thibaou*, under the pseudonym 'Funny Guy'. The movement, increasingly divided, split into three groups: the *Littérature* group consisting of Breton, Aragon, Eluard and Soupault, who were ready for meaningful action; the anarchist group around Tzara and Ribemont-Dessaignes; and Picabia, who grew suspicious of Tzara after having received a letter from Christian Schad 'exposing' Tzara's assumed position as the father of Dada as false and wrongly accusing him of having used Serner's Last Loosening to write his important 'Dada Manifesto 1918'.¹¹⁹

In order to regain the initiative, Tzara organized the 'Salon Dada' at the Galerie Montaigne in June 1921, and particularly encouraged dada writers to contribute visual works. Although twenty Dadas participated, the notable exceptions were Breton, Picabia and Duchamp. The 'Soirée Dada' held on 10 June in connection with the exhibition, featured Soupault disguised as President of Liberia, Aragon's 'sermons' from the balcony and Ribemont-Dessaignes' scatological poem 'The Book of Kings'. But again it was a Tzara play, *The Gas Heart*, that provoked the audience – causing such an uproar that the subsequent evening performances were cancelled.

Neither Tzara's 'Salon Dada' nor the meeting in Tyrol in the autumn of 1921 succeeded in reuniting the group. Breton and the *Littérature* group planned an 'International Congress' in early 1922 in order to decide the direction of the 'New Spirit'. Tzara's opposition brought about its cancellation, followed by Breton's break with Dada, expressed in his 'Après Dada' in March 1922.¹²⁰ With the help of Ilia Zdanevich (Iliazd) and his theatrical group Tcherez, Tzara attempted to revive his vision of Dada by organizing 'The Evening of the Bearded Heart' on 6 July 1923. The programme included modern music and dance, Tzara's *Gas Heart* and Iliazd's 'zaum' poems. The films Tzara selected were Charles Sheeler and Paul Strand's *Manhatta* (1920), Richter's *Rhythm 21* and Man Ray's *Retour à la raison*. Breton charged the stage and broke Pierre de Massot's arm with his cane when he mentioned Picasso disrespectfully; later Eluard also charged the stage, but hit Tzara and René Crevel. Having stifled, beaten and rejected what they considered Tzara's nihilistic, self-destructive version of Dada, Breton and his followers set off on a new road, to Surrealism; Picabia founded his anti-surrealist movement

Instantaneism, which again embraced Dada. Picabia's instantaneist film *Entr'acte* (1924), made with René Clair, is the best example of a dada film and features his remaining friends: Satie, Duchamp and Man Ray.

Dada in Central and Eastern Europe

The consequences of the First World War were far-reaching in Central and Eastern Europe: three empires – the Russian, German and Austro-Hungarian – were overthrown. The new independent nations of Yugoslavia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania created their own avant-garde movements: Zenitism, Poetism, Integralism; H₂SO₄. 'Dada', meaning 'yes, yes' in most Slavic languages, was considered an unsuitable label for the critique of culture, tradition and values. These movements combined Futurism, Cubism, Dada and Constructivism. Often short-lived or loosely associated, they are some of the least studied offshoots of Dada. In addition to the confusion of names, decades of Stalinist suppression impede reconstruction of their activities. The files and collections, for instance, of Dragan Aleksić, a major proponent of Dada in Central Europe, were taken to the Belgrade city dump after his death in 1958;¹²¹ reproductions of works in journals are often the only traces left of these groups. Moreover, due to the chaotic transformations in these countries, Dada reached the attention of these artists relatively late and at a time when Constructivism already informed their works. When Schwitters was asked in 1924 to introduce Dada to Polish artists and writers, he replied 'For us in Germany Dada is not presently as necessary as it was in 1918'.¹²²

Dada itself received important impulses from Central and Eastern Europe: Romanians Tzara and Janco brought their ideas to Zurich Dada.¹²³ Kandinsky had a major impact on Hugo Ball's sound poetry,¹²⁴ the Berlin Dadas greatly admired Tatlin's works, Schwitters collaborated with El Lissitzky in 1923, and Ivan Puni's works may well have inspired Schwitters to create his reliefs and assemblages.¹²⁵ Direct contact happened primarily in the cosmopolitan and bilingual Czech city of Prague. In 1920 Hausmann, Huelsenbeck and Baader travelled there on their dada tour (during which Baader disappeared, afraid of two thousand screaming people at the two scandalous dada evenings).¹²⁶ A year later, Hausmann, Schwitters and Höch organized two 'Anti-Dada Merz' evenings in Prague, and Schwitters returned alone in 1926 to conduct 'Evenings of the Grotesque' and exhibit his works.

Post-war Prague was a city of cabarets and actors. In Jaroslav Hašek's *The Adventures of the Good Soldier Švejk during the First World War* (1921–22) the character Švejk makes fun of the stupidity of military officers, and was considered the Czech 'Folk Dada'.¹²⁷ Already by 1919, students were organizing dada evenings and editing magazines, to which Huelsenbeck contributed an essay, 'Dadaism', that was translated into Czech. Two young Serbians in Prague, Dragan Aleksić and Branko Ve Poljanski (the brother of Ljubomir Micić, editor of *Zenit* in Zagreb), organized dada and zenit evenings, which drew up to one thousand people.¹²⁸ According to Aleksić a flood of dada poems and performances across the city followed.

Aware of Dada and Aleksić, the poet and artist Karel Teige organized in 1923 the Bazaar of Modern Art – including posters, ball bearings, a mirror, and the head of a barber's mannequin – which echoed the dada exhibition at the Galerie Montaigne in Paris and the International Dada Fair in Berlin. 'The modern exhibition', Teige wrote, 'must be a bazaar (a fair,



a world fair) of modern production, a manifestation of the electric century of the machine.'

Foreshadowing

Walter Benjamin, he added, 'Mechanical reproduction and print will eventually make originals redundant.'¹²⁹ Teige's Poetism was a synthesis of Constructivism's order and Dada's vitality. František Halas, a fellow Poetist, seems to have absorbed and combined Serner, Tzara, the Berlin Dadas and Czech absurdity: 'Dada, in its absurdity, naïvety and indifference', he stated, 'became part of modernity and has remained so.'¹³⁰ In 1925, E.F. Burian and his circle published the magazine *Tam Tam* (the Czech 'tam' translates into German 'da'); and students promoted Dada, anarchism and Grosz's social critique in their magazine *Trn* (Thorn), whose mottos were 'We don't give a damn about literary babbling' and 'Švejk will be our programme'.¹³¹

While in Prague, Aleksić corresponded with Tzara, Huelsenbeck, Hausmann, Mehring, Ernst and Schwitters, and wrote a dada manifesto for *Zenit*, Micić's new journal in Zagreb: '(Civilization, you old strumpet!) Let's tear it down tear it down all the way. Let language explode and a great DADA

remain ... Forward is backward. We will reach the START again.'¹³² When he returned to Zagreb, in the summer of 1921, Aleksić also published in *Zenit* essays in which he made connections between Dada, Russian Futurism and Constructivism. Micić, whose ambition was to form a Balkan-centred avant-garde, clashed with Aleksić's promotion of Dada as an international movement. The two separated in 1922 and Aleksić founded his own circle, publishing two single-issue journals, *Dada-Tank* and *Dada Jazz*, in which he included texts by Tzara, Schwitters, Huelsenbeck, Hausmann, Mehring and Ernst. Micić's brother, Aleksić's former collaborator Branko Ve Poljanski, promptly responded with his anti-Dada pro-Zenit journal *Dada-Jok* (1922). But in Central Europe, Aleksić remained the leader of Dada: he organized dada tours, and was called 'Dada' for the rest of his life.

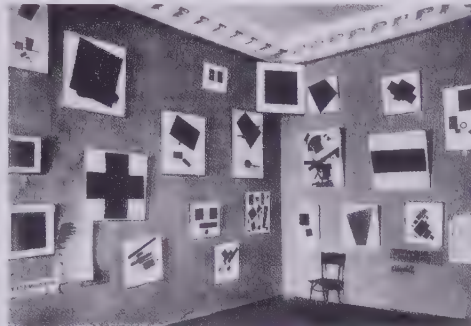
When Aleksić travelled from Prague to Zagreb in 1921, he visited the Hungarian Lajos Kassák, who had moved his group and journal *Ma* (Today) from Budapest to Vienna in 1920 after the collapse of the Hungarian Commune. In exile in Austria, Kassák discovered Dada and admired it as an expression of post-war chaos and disillusionment. In 1921, beginning with the January issue, for which Kassák designed a dada-like cover, he published reproductions of Schwitters' assemblages, his famous poem 'Anna Blossom', text images by I.K. Bonset, frames from the abstract films of Richter and Eggeling, and works and texts by Arp, Hausmann and Huelsenbeck. Inspired by Schwitters, he made his own picture-poems. His wife, Jolan K. Simon recited and performed dada texts at *Ma* evenings.¹³³

Yet Kassák sought a new art: 'Down with art! Long live art!' is the introductory statement of his formulation for 'Pictorial Architecture'. Like Arp he insisted on the non-mimetic nature of art, like Arp. But in claiming that 'Pictorial Architecture' simply exists and 'does not want anything' he lost Sándor Barta and László Moholy-Nagy from his circle, since they insisted on the political aspects of art.

Kassák increasingly emphasized Constructivism in *Ma* after 1921, but continued to publish works by Dadas, and even designed the cover for the Hungarian translation of Tzara's *The Gas Heart* in 1924. Barta, who had denounced logic in 'Green-Headed Man', published by Kassák in *Ma* in 1921, launched in 1922 his own journal *Akasztott Ember* (Hanged Man). He printed Grosz's politically charged drawings and satirized Kassák and his circle in 'The First Gathering of the Mad in the Garbage Bin'.¹³⁴

When Kassák returned to Budapest in 1926, Sándor Bortnyik was stage designer of satirical, political performances that resembled Berlin Dada in their aggressiveness. Kassák founded a new journal in 1927, *Dokumentum*, presenting progressive trends in art, including Dada, which kept alive the spirit of political and cultural resistance. Summing up the significance of Dada for the Hungarian avant-garde, Kassák stated, 'We affirm in Dada its fanaticism of destruction. And without doubt, the Dadas were the greatest heroes of our ... age: they were a creative force that sacrificed itself voluntarily in the overthrow of old idols.'¹³⁵

The avant-garde in Romania was well informed about Dada by Janco, who after a short stay in Paris and a falling out with Tzara, returned to Bucharest in 1921. There he founded (with his friends Ion Vinea and Jean Costin) *Contimporanul* (Present Time), which remained the most important of such journals until the early 1930s. It published Archipenko, Braque, Van Doesburg, Schwitters, Richter, Tzara, Arp and translated texts



from Blok in Warsaw, *De Stijl*, *Ma*, *Merz* and *Zenit*. Janco himself contributed forty essays, thirty engravings, and photos of the many buildings he designed. In 1924, Vinea published his 'Activist Manifesto for Young People' in the provocative dada style: 'Down with Art – For it has prostituted itself! ... Let us destroy, through the strength of disseminating disgust, the ghosts cowering under the light. Let us dispatch our dead!'¹³⁶ The *Contimporanul* circle also organized numerous evening performances. The programme of May 1925 included poems by Soupault, Tzara, Breton and Vinea, 'an elephant dance', 'chants nègres' and the play *The Merry Death*, for which Janco designed sets, as he had in Zurich. In 1924 the group staged a major international exhibition with works by Arp, Richter, Schwitters, Klee, Eggeling, Teige, Kassák and the Romanians Janco, Victor Brauner, Constantin Brancusi, Arthur Segal and Max Herman Maxy. That same year, Ilarie Voronca and Brauner published the one-issue journal *75HP*. It included Voronca's 'Aviogramă', a great dada text that begins 'Reader, debug your

brain!'¹³⁷ and presents the editors' examples of 'Pictopoetry' that resemble Schwitters' collages of words and painting.

Published in Moscow, though written in Prague in 1921, Roman Jakobson's essay 'Dada' draws parallels between the Russian Futurists' destruction of Tsarist Russian culture and later dada activities. Jakobson even claims that 'actually in [dada] poems and pictures there is nothing new.'¹³⁸ John Bowl's account confirms this prefiguration.¹³⁹ The futurist painter Aristarkh Lentulov remembers that at the Exhibition of Painting in Moscow in 1915 'The Burluiks hung up a pair of torn trousers and stuck a bottle in the middle ... The poet V.V. Kamensky ... asked the jury rather convincingly to allow him to exhibit a live mouse in a mouse-trap, but the jury rejected his proposal severely, finding that it would lower the conception of the exhibition and would disrupt the conventions of artistic taste.'¹⁴⁰ Kamensky's *Mouse Trap* was rejected two years before another readymade, Duchamp's *Fountain*, was refused by the Independents' Exhibition in 1917. The poets Aleksey

Kruchenykh, Vladimir Mayakovsky and Ilia Zdanevich, and the painters Natalia Goncharova, Mikhail Larionov and Kazimir Malevich organized exhibitions, such as the Jack of Diamonds Exhibition of 1910, and performed *zaum*¹⁴¹ poetry in Moscow's Pink

Lantern Cabaret. Their manifesto 'Slap in the Face of Public Taste' (1912) was equal in vehemence to later Berlin Dada's attacks. Malevich's *Black Square* (1915), his *White on White* paintings, and his blank canvases (1919–20) exceed the radicality of Dada, while Ivan Puni's reliefs, such as *Relief with Saw* (1916) anticipate Schwitters' assemblages.

Although some of the Russian artists and poets might have been aware of Dada, the first group to ally itself was the Nothingists, who announced: 'We are the first to raise the bricks of insurrection on behalf of Nothing.'¹⁴² In 1922, Boris Zemenkov and his colleagues published their decrees of Nothingness under the title *Dog Box*, which included 'An Appeal to the Dadas' and 'The Nothingists of Russia are the Dada of the West.'

After the October Revolution of 1917, the Russian Futurist Ilia Zdanevich returned to his native Tiflis, the capital of the independent Menshevik Republic of Georgia until 1921, and continued the nonsense *zaum* creations, together with

Kruchenykh, in cabaret performances at the Fantastic Little Inn. They formed the group 41°, whose name refers to the geographic latitude of Tiflis, but also to the alcohol content of vodka and the creative fever of the participants. A younger group, led by the poet Simon Chikovani, arrived soon afterwards and called itself Dada. Their journal's name, H_2SO_4 , the chemical formula for sulphuric acid, signalled their intent to dissolve traditional values and ideas.

Zdanevich left for Paris in 1921, where his *zaum* poetry and playful typography were greeted as Dada. At the occasion of Mayakovsky's visit to Paris in 1923, André Germain gave a lecture on 'Zdanevich and Russian Super-Dada'¹⁴³ and Ribemont-Dessaignes wrote a preface, 'The Russian Form of Literary Dada', to Zdanevich's play *Ledentu le Phare*.¹⁴⁴ Zdanevich in return recognized a *zaum* drama in Tzara's play *The Gas Heart* and selected it for performance by Russian actors at the Evening of the Bearded Heart in 1923.

While Russian Futurism prefigured dada activities,



in Central Europe, where the First World War was seen by many as a liberating event that led to the formation of new nation states, Dada was welcomed as a destructive, cleansing force, and providing the illogical counterpart to logical Constructivism.

Dada in Japan

Beginning in 1920, numerous articles about Dada, its relationship to Buddhism, and its advocacy of freedom and revolt against tradition appeared in Japanese newspapers and literary journals. Takahashi Shinkichi, a young poet, recalled that 'When the end of the First World War gave impetus to the collapse of Europe, a wooden horse called Dada started running with its teeth of rebellion showing. I was the first Asian to hold its reins.'¹⁴⁵ Inspired by articles on Tzara and Serner, Takahashi wrote a sixty-line poem/manifesto 'Assertion Is Dada' in 1922, which begins, 'Dada asserts and negates all.'¹⁴⁶ A year later, this manifesto was the first text in

Takahashi's collection *Poems of Dada Shinkichi*, an influential publication that was already in its fourth printing one month after its initial issue.¹⁴⁷

Tsuji Jun, who edited Takahashi's collection, was the main disseminator of Dada in Japan. A former professor of English, Tsuji published an essay – 'Misunderstood Dada' (1922) – in which he emphasized the importance of Dada for Japan: 'Dada bites at the misery of creatures from the inside, aiming at liberating them inwardly from their falsehood, their own traps, megalomania and silly vanity.'¹⁴⁸ In his 'Talk on Dada' of the same year, he playfully proclaimed Lawrence Sterne 'the Greatest Dada ever born in the world' and *Tristram Shandy* the dada bible.¹⁴⁹ For his own 1922 collection of essays, Tsuji chose the title 'Tada-Dada' (Devotedly Dada), and in 'Beyond Literature?' of 1923 he 'tried to describe the details of [his] life which might explain the process of becoming a Dada'.¹⁵⁰

Tsuji toured Japan propagating Dada: inspired by Tsuji, Yoshiyuki Eisuke founded the magazine *Dada* in Okayama. In December 1922, Tsuji collaborated with Takahashi on a conference entitled 'Dada Expression' in Tokyo. Tsuji was scheduled to speak on Dada, Takebayashi Musoan on Buddhism and Oizumi Kokuseki on nihilism; a fight with a taxi driver led to Takahashi's arrest, and the conference was cancelled. Several newspapers covered this incident.

Members of a left-wing anarchist group founded the journal *Aka to Kuro* (Red and Black) in January 1923. Their first front cover included the following Russian futurist/dada provocation: 'What is poetry? What is the poet? We audaciously declare, throwing out all the notions of the past: Poetry is a bomb!'¹⁵¹ In another manifesto they declared: 'Our existence is negation itself. Negation is creation. Creation is nothingness.'¹⁵² Although Takahashi repeatedly denied that these anarchists were Dadas, Hagiwara Kyōjirō, one of the group's leaders, became a founder of the Japanese 'Neo-Dada' movement in 1925.

From 1920 to 1922 the Russian Futurists David Burliuk and Viktor Palmov exhibited over three hundred modern Russian paintings in several Japanese cities. They introduced to Japan the technique of collage and the Russian futurist style of figure painting. Kinoshita Shuichiro, the leader of the Japanese Futurists, co-wrote with Burliuk *What Is Futurism? An Answer*, published in 1923.¹⁵³

The major Japanese avant-garde figure during the 1920s was Murayama Tomoyoshi. In 1922 he left Japan for Berlin.

Herwarth Walden of Der Sturm enabled Murayama to exhibit at the Great Futurist Exhibition in March 1922. In May he exhibited at the First International Art Exhibition in Düsseldorf; he also participated in the concurrently held Congress of International Progressive Artists, the first joint conference of Dadas and Constructivists, where he met Van Doesburg, El Lissitzky, Richter, Hausmann and representatives from Central Europe. In October, he showed his works in a small Berlin gallery just prior to the opening of the First Great Russian Art Exhibition, at which he saw suprematist, cubo-futurist and constructivist works.

Soon after his return to Japan Murayama showed fifty works from his year-long stay in Berlin: 'Murayama Tomoyoshi's Conscious Constructionist Exhibition of Small Works – Dedicated to Niddy Impekoven and Obtrusive Grace'. The only work to survive is *Dedicated to Beautiful Young Girls*, which consists of curved abstract forms, numbers and words and padded material. Three other collages are known only from

Berlin Dadas, that Mavo constructionist art 'knocks down and destroys the interior boundaries between the other arts and between other areas of life.'¹⁵⁷ In this sense Murayama's works differ from Schwitters' Merz works that transform found objects through patterning into art. Murayama's 'Mavo Manifesto' insists: 'We stand at the vanguard ... We are radical. We revolutionize/make revolution.' Mavo activities included 'lectures, theatre, musical concerts, magazine publishing ... window displays, book designs, stage designs, various kinds of ornaments, architectural plans and so forth.'¹⁵⁸

The first Mavo public provocation, 'Moving Exhibition Welcoming Works Rejected from Nika', was held in August 1923, outside the Tenth Nika, the largest independent exhibition of contemporary art, which had rejected the Mavo artists. Organized as a media spectacle, it was widely reported. Only days later, the Great Kantō Earthquake shook Tokyo. The government imposed martial law and persecuted anarchists and left-wingers. In November 1923, Mavo artists organized

exhibitions in the half-destroyed cafés and streets.

A critic commented: 'We come to realize, it seems, the inner reason why European artists after the War discarded the beautiful tradition of some thousand years and stood for those confusing new arts. Today, at least, Japanese artists have caught up with the world ... and have found themselves in a situation in which they can experience a life with such agony and

uncertainty.'¹⁵⁹ The Mavo group participated in the Exhibition of Creative Projects for the Reconstruction of the Imperial Capital in April the following year, to which Murayama contributed his debris assemblage *Architectural Idea of the Mavo Headquarters*.

In July 1924, the first issue of the journal *Mavo* appeared, with a cover photograph of Yamazato Eikichi's *Standing Man*, an assemblage of tin cans, wires and glass bottle. Arp and Lissitzky included a photograph of this work in the 'Merz Section' of their book *Die Kunstismen* (1925),¹⁶⁰ an indication that they were quite aware of Mavo and considered the group's works closely related to Schwitters' collages and assemblages. Murayama kept in touch with Schwitters and Van Doesburg and regularly included advertisements for *Ma*, *Blok*, *Broom*, and *De Stijl* in *Mavo*. He translated and published essays from these journals, such as Otto Pankok's 'Paul Klee and Dada'. *Mavo* published Yanase Masamu's photomontage *The Length of a Capitalist's Drool*, in which he distorts mass-media

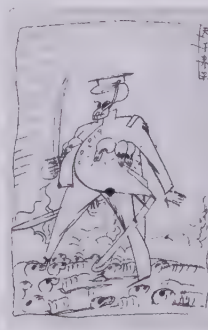


photographs: 'As You Like It' *Danced by Niddy Impekoven*, *Still Life with Bottle* and *Picture without Title*, a photomontage of European women's heads.¹⁵⁴ The cover of the exhibition pamphlet is a reproduction of a dada-like collage of fragments from German newspapers. Murayama was clearly impressed by the collages and assemblages of Ivan Puni and Schwitters. In 1925 he defined 'Constructionism as an ethical response to Dada. Constructionism as the most direct slap in the face. Constructionism as Dada.'¹⁵⁵ His works attracted the attention of some members of the Futurist Art Association, who joined Murayama in forming the movement 'Mavo' (a meaningless word, like Dada) in June 1923.¹⁵⁶

At the first Mavo exhibition, in July 1923, Murayama contributed one hundred works, more than half of all the objects exhibited. One of his more provocative assemblages was *Work Employing Flower and Shoe*, which included newspaper fragments, a woman's high-heeled shoe and artificial flowers. Disapproving of pure art, he insisted, like

photographs of Western women, opposite Sawa Seihō's *Construction*, which incorporates fragments from Russian newspapers. The third issue (September 1924) was immediately confiscated by the police, as an actual firework was affixed to each cover.

In 1925, Mavo collaborated with members of the group Action to create non-juried exhibitions – 'Sanka'. The first show, held in a Tokyo department store, consisted primarily of anti-art assemblages of everyday objects. Critic Kawaji Ryuko commented: 'This is probably the intention of the Constructionists. Making art real and transforming it into daily life is the result of this abstract, machine-like, impulsive form of art.'¹⁶¹ An accompanying evening of performances included 'The Opening Play Rich in Poverty + Dada Movie', 'Comedy "Life" through Negative Effect' and Murayama's dance 'Grotesque Accompanied with the Season'.¹⁶² The second Sanka exhibition, much broader in scope, featured large structures: *Gate and Moving Ticket-Selling Machine*, a



contraption of recycled material on wheels, *Sanka Exhibition Entrance Tower*, an old cooking range, steel wire and beams, and Maki Hisao's boat-like *Draft for an Outdoor Theatre According to Only a Stage Design*. This exhibition marked the end of Mavo. Murayama withdrew from the group and devoted himself to stage design, performance and writing. Without his energy Mavo could not survive.

Yoshiyuki Eisuke, who founded the magazine *Dada* in 1922, started a new magazine, *Baichi Shubun* (Selling Shame and Ugly Text) in 1924, that carried advertisements for the Café Dada in Tokyo. The Café had a function similar to that of the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich and was run by Takahashi, Tsuji and their friends (it was also a place where Murayama danced). The fifth issue of *Selling Shame and Ugly Text* published the play *Café Dada*, which includes a play-within-a-play of nonsense dialogues. The director announces: 'Dadas do not make up an aphrodisiac for you. But this small atmosphere is the world of Dada. A world in which reason and observation is extinct.'¹⁶³

The same issue of the magazine announced a series of performances at the Café Dada: a farce, two plays, a dada banquet and a 'flesh dance'.

In 1925 eleven writers and artists founded the group Dada, which they also called 'Neo-Dada', in order to distinguish themselves from the Western movement. Among them were Tsuji, Takahashi and two artists from Mavo. 'Neo-Dada' artists collaborated on Hagiwara Kyōjirō's illustrated book of poems, *Death Sentence* (1925), and on new magazines, listed by Tsuji: 'Mavo, Gimugemu [Ge Gimigam Prrr Gimgem], Hidoropasu, Don, Dododo, Sekai Shijin, Dadais, Neo-Dadaism – indeed rich and prosperous. A flowering as if it were a flooding period of the dada deluge ... Dada has brought about a 'Neo' and so in due course a 'Neo-Neo' will appear.'¹⁶⁴ Although Dada and 'Neo-Dada' primarily flourished in Tokyo, some dada magazines and collections of poems were published in the provinces. Fujita Tsuruo in Kobe even advocated the idea of God Dada.

In 1925, 'Neo-Dada' split. Murayama joined Yanase Masamu in the founding of The Union of Japanese Proletarian Art and Literature. Yanase had always advocated revolutionary, social consciousness instead of individual freedom. He published Grosz-like caricatures that attacked the brutality of state militarism and castigated the profiteers of capitalism. After years of anarchic

revolt and anti-art, Murayama leaned towards becoming a proletarian artist. He claimed that Sanka was destroyed by anarchy and nihilism, and that 'from this time the distinction became clear between those who were moving vaguely towards a socialist art ... and those who were for artistic suprematism.'¹⁶⁵

Dada in Japan advocated anarchy and both personal and artistic freedom, which the daily press interpreted as 'epicurean'; it rebelled against the Japanese bourgeoisie, its institutions and confining traditions; and it emphasized performance, dance and the theatre as effective means to engage and transform society.

Neo-Dada

From 1925 until the end of the Second World War, Dada was virtually forgotten. Daniel Spoerri, a member of the Nouveaux Réalistes, recalls the impossibility of finding dada publications or seeing dada works during the late 1940s: 'Remember, this

was after the war and many things were still hidden, not yet worked on or not yet accessible.¹⁶⁶ This situation changed dramatically in the 1950s, beginning with the 1951 publication of *The Dada Painters and Poets*, edited by Robert Motherwell. He was assisted by former Dadas then living in New York: Richter, who taught film at City College, Huelsenbeck, who practised psychoanalysis under the name of Charles R. Hulbeck, and Duchamp.¹⁶⁷ A series of exhibitions made visual Dada accessible again. The Sidney Janis gallery in New York exhibited Duchamp's works in 1952, 1953, 1956 and 1959; collages by Schwitters in 1952, 1953 and 1956; and in 1953 *Dada 1916–1923*, for which Duchamp designed the catalogue. In 1954, The Philadelphia Museum of Art opened the Arensberg Collection, which includes forty-three works by Duchamp; and in 1958 and 1959 the exhibition 'Dada: Dokumente einer Bewegung' travelled with eight hundred items from Düsseldorf to Frankfurt and Amsterdam.

A group of young artists in New York began to question



the seriousness and the mythic dimensions of Abstract Expressionism, in which many of them were trained. Duchamp's notions of chance and the readymade, along with Schwitters' assemblies and Merz theatre, suggested possibilities

that could lead them from abstraction back to the everyday object. The composer John Cage became the major mediator of these ideas and mentor to a new generation of artists, relating his study of Zen Buddhism to Duchamp's detached passivity. Duchamp made him see everyday objects differently: '*The Mona Lisa. The musical notes taken out of a hat. The glass. The toy shotgun painting. The things he found. Therefore, everything seen – every object, that is, plus the process of looking at it – is a Duchamp.*'¹⁶⁸

Cage introduced Duchamp's ideas at Black Mountain College in North Carolina, where he and Merce Cunningham taught in the summers of 1948 and 1952,¹⁶⁹ and at the New School for Social Research in New York from 1957 to 1959. Robert Rauschenberg attended in 1952, when he executed his white paintings, which in turn prompted Cage to compose his 'silent' piece 4' 33". That summer, inspired by reading Schwitters' ideas of Merz theatre, Cage organized the first Happening, *Theater Piece No. 1*.¹⁷⁰ A year later Rauschenberg,

in an obvious Duchampian gesture, signed his *Erased de Kooning Drawing* (1953), a literal obliteration of the older generation.

In the mid 1950s, Rauschenberg saw an exhibition of Schwitters' collages and felt the show had been made just for him.¹⁷¹ He began to integrate found objects into his assemblages or 'combines': 'I don't want a picture to look like something it isn't. I want it to look like something it is. And I think a picture is more like the real world when it's made out of the real world.'¹⁷²

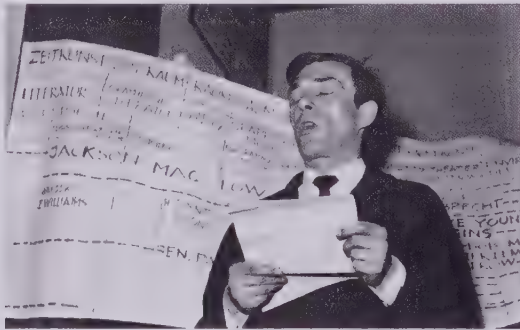
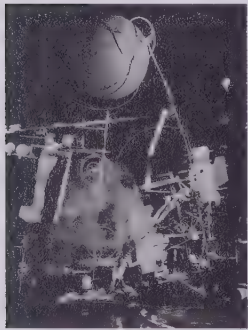
For Jasper Johns, Rauschenberg's friend in the late 1950s, Duchamp's challenges to definitions of art, his irony and his play between image and language, sight and thought were crucial. In his 'Appreciation', written on the occasion of Duchamp's death in 1968, Johns wrote: '[Duchamp] declared that he wanted to kill art ("for myself") but his persistent attempts to destroy frames of reference altered our thinking, established new units of thought, "a new thought for that object".'¹⁷³ Johns' *Painted Bronze* (1960) – two beer cans cast, painted and placed on a small pedestal – plays with notions of the readymade.

Having created both assemblages and environments, Allan Kaprow attended Cage's musical composition classes in New York, looking for ideas for using sound. Cage's account of the Happening he had organized at Black Mountain College in 1952 prompted Kaprow to conceive his own. He shared Cage's interest in Merz theatre and later suggested that Schwitters 'actually conceived happenings but never did them. His writings about possible activities are almost like pre-Happenings.'¹⁷⁴ Kaprow also received an impulse from the Japanese group Gutai, whose Happenings he documented in his *Assemblage, Environments and Happenings*, including Atsuko Tanaka's performance *Electric Dress* (1956). He learned of the Gutai Happenings through the American artist Alfred Leslie, who had participated in the Gutai Sky Festival.¹⁷⁵

Gutai, meaning 'concrete', founded by Yoshihara Jirō in Osaka in 1954, was the first post-1945 Japanese avant-garde group. Michel Tapié lectured in Japan in the early 1950s, advocating the expressiveness of life in art and pinpointing Dada as the 'great break' with formalism.¹⁷⁶ Yoshihara was receptive to these radical suggestions, sharing with Cage, Schwitters and Rauschenberg an interest in the everyday object. In a manifesto of 1956, Yoshihara wrote: 'In Gutai Art, the human spirit and the material shake hands with each other,

but keep their distance. The material never compromises itself with the spirit; the spirit never dominates the material. When the material remains intact and exposes its characteristics, it starts telling a story and even cries out.”¹⁷⁷ Yoshihara encouraged Japanese artists to start from nothing, to experience total freedom and to see artistic creation as an adventure.¹⁷⁸

From 1958 to 1962, American critics used the expression ‘Neo-Dada’ in their discussions of collages, assemblages, environments and Happenings by Rauschenberg, Johns and Kaprow. It was pejorative, suggesting imitation, repetition and derivation. This negative view was largely due to the young artists’ break with figurative and abstract art, styles these critics supported.¹⁷⁹ Some former Dadas shared the critics’ disdain. Hausmann wrote in the *Times Literary Supplement*: ‘The “happenings” of the Neodadaists are empty repetitions of Dada acts.’¹⁸⁰ In his influential memoir *Dada: Art and Anti-Art*, Richter calls the Neo-Dadas ‘Garden Dwarfs’ and quotes from a private letter Duchamp sent to him in 1962: ‘This Neo-



Dada, which they call New Realism, Pop Art, Assemblage, etc., is an easyway out, and lives on what Dada did. When I discovered readymades I thought to discourage aesthetics. In Neo-Dada they have taken my readymades and found aesthetic beauty in them.”¹⁸¹ Yet Kaprow recalls that ‘[Duchamp] came to our Happenings, most of them. He certainly came to mine, and he brought his friends, Ernst and Richter and Huelsenbeck. And, in my case, Duchamp later acted as a referee in my getting a number of grants. So he was very helpful, both practically and intellectually.’¹⁸² Duchamp applauded the young artists’ constant experimentation; he only hoped that they would not repeat themselves.¹⁸³ While fully acknowledging the importance of some aspects of Dada for their works, Rauschenberg, Johns and Kaprow understandably did not embrace the critics’ label of ‘Neo-Dada’. Kaprow stated in an interview: ‘No one said, “Oh, isn’t it wonderful that you’re a Neo-Dadaist.” It was a criticism, not a joyous utterance.’¹⁸⁴

European ‘Neo-Dadas’, or Nouveaux Réalistes, felt

similarly reluctant. This group, including Yves Klein, Raymond Hains, Jean Tinguely, Arman, Ben Vautier, Daniel Spoerri and Niki de Saint Phalle, revolved around art critic Pierre Restany. Restany chose the title ‘A 40° au-dessus de Dada’ (Forty Degrees above Dada, also implying Forty Years after Dada) for his essay introducing the 1961 exhibition *Le Nouveau Réalisme à Paris et à New York*, which included works by Rauschenberg and Johns. He pointed to the importance of the Duchampian readymade in appropriating the exterior reality of urban life, and he drew a direct line from Dada to the Nouveaux Réalistes. The group protested. Spoerri points out that in Europe the label was also negative – Neo-Dadas were ‘just a remake, reheated coffee’.¹⁸⁵

One of the few young artists who felt honoured by the label was Jean Tinguely, who with other Nouveaux Réalistes exhibited at the 1961 Art of Assemblage exhibition in New York, and who was well known for his auto-destructive contraption *Hommage à New York* (1960). He liked ‘Neo-Dada’ or ‘meta-

Dada’, an allusion to his *Métamatics*, his amusing painting machines. A short-lived Japanese group, including Ushio Shinohara, Arakawa Shusaku and Kudo Tetsumi, even chose the name ‘Neo-Dada Organizers’ – ‘a name that expresses our dissatisfaction with the way art operates, frees us from the deadlock we cannot break, and embodies art that cannot be contained by the walls of the exhibition hall.’¹⁸⁶ They

created impermanent junk environments for manifestations of their Happening-like perform-ances, relying on the mass media to disseminate their actions. The Neo-Dada Organizers disbanded in 1961, after only one year. Several members joined the new realist groups in New York or Paris.

Another group that emerged from Cage’s New York courses was Fluxus, founded in 1962 by George Maciunas. His lecture ‘Neo-Dada in Music, Theater, Poetry, Art’ was read by Arthur Caspari at the European Fluxus concert ‘Après John Cage’ in Wuppertal, Germany, that year. Advocating the concrete against the artificial or abstract, and chance against predetermined structure, he describes their ‘art-nihilism’: ‘against the purposefulness, formfulness and meaningfulness of art; anti-art is life, is nature, is true reality ... Rainfall is anti-art, a babble of a crowd is anti-art, a sneeze is anti-art.’¹⁸⁷

This informal, international group included La Monte Young, George Brecht, Yoko Ono, Dick Higgins, Wolf Vostell, Alison Knowles, Nam June Paik, Joseph Beuys and a hundred

artists in at least twenty countries. Active in the 1960s and 1970s, they emphasized trivial, everyday events. In a 1965 manifesto, Maciunas advocated that Fluxus 'must demonstrate that anything can be art and anyone can do it. [It] must be simple, amusing, unpretentious, concerned with insignificances, require no skill or countless rehearsals, have no commodity or institutional value.'¹⁸⁸ Dick Higgins was already keenly aware of Dada; he spent weeks with Hausmann in Limoges, France, and published a facsimile edition of Huelsenbeck's *Dada Almanach* (1920) in order to show that 'The dada attitude ... is profoundly contemporary.'¹⁸⁹ Fluxus members travelled to events from Germany to Holland, to Norway and Iceland. Nam June Paik and Yoko Ono collaborated with the Japanese group Hi Red Center in 1963. This group's most notorious actions were performed in a court room, when Akasegawa Genpei was made to appear in front of a judge for having too faithfully copied thousand-yen notes, with which he wrapped everyday objects.¹⁹⁰



American and European 'Neo-Dadas' repeatedly pointed to the differences between their contemporary works and actions and those of the Dadas. They were not Dada but something new. Their art was not directed against society, was not negative and was not ironic. Rauschenberg expressed this succinctly: 'Dada was anti; I am pro.'¹⁹¹ Kaprow was more expansive: 'the protest was not against society, it was against traditionalism in art ... we did not think, as the Dadaists did in 1916, that the world had gone crazy and there was no redemption in sight – its current of cynicism. Rather, we felt that here was freedom to put the real world together in weird ways.'¹⁹² The Pop artists, at first also labelled 'Neo-Dadas', supported this view that Dada was negative and 'Neo-Dada' positive. Richard Hamilton stated in 1961: 'Pop-Fine-Art is a profession of approbation of mass culture, therefore also anti-artistic. It is positive Dada, creative where Dada was destructive.'¹⁹³ Andy Warhol, when asked what Pop Art was, concurred with Hamilton's affirmative position: 'It's liking

things.'¹⁹⁴ It is this fetishizing and aestheticizing of the ordinary object and of everyday life that Duchamp described in his letter to Richter.

The post-war generation of artists primarily explored the radical new possibilities in the arts of elevating the ordinary object and everyday life. 'Neo-Dada' emerged more as a radical critique of modern art, of Abstract Expressionism and its theories, than as a movement that advocated social and political change.

The politically oriented reactivation of Dada after 1945 occurred with Situationism. Guy Debord wrote in his 1957 text that formulated the goals of the Situationist International: 'Dadaism, constituted in Zurich and New York by refugees and deserters from World War I, aimed at embodying the refusal of all values of bourgeois society whose bankruptcy had just become grossly evident. Its historic role is to have delivered a mortal blow to the traditional conception of culture.'

International Situationism continued the revolutionary



practices of the Berlin Dadas in particular, intervening in mass-media propagation of consumer society and politics. The Situationists' 'détournement' – subverting advertisements, films and government decrees – has in turn become the major tactic of

today's ad-busters, billboard liberators and culture jammers, as these critically subversive strategies live on in current counter-cultural practices. According to Debord, 'It is certain that the Dadaist spirit has influenced all the movements that have come after it.'¹⁹⁵

- 1 See Naomi Klein's chapter 'Culture Jamming' in her *No Logo* (New York: Picador, 2000).
- 2 Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the 20th Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 24; Stewart Home, *The Assault on Culture: Utopian Currents from Lettrisme to Class War* (Stirling: AK Press, 1991).
- 3 Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (London: Routledge, 1992), 218.
- 4 Max Jacob wrote: 'Birth of a Roumanian poet Tristan Tsara [sic] who writes in the style Tsara! Tsara! Tsara! Tsara! Tsara ... Thustra.' See Francis Picabia, 319, ed. Michel Sanouillet (Paris: 1960), 1, 48.
- 5 Hugo Ball, *Flight Out of Time: A Dada Diary by Hugo Ball*, ed. John Elderfield (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 67.
- 6 Ball, *Flight Out of Time*, 117. Tom Stoppard's play *Travesties* (1974) explores a fictive meeting of the Dadas, James Joyce and Lenin, who lived and wrote in Zurich at the same time.
- 7 Tristan Tzara, 'Manifesto on Feeble Love and Bitter Love'. Quoted from *The Dada Painters and Poets*, ed. Robert Motherwell (New York: Wittenborn Schultz, 1951; reprinted Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 95.
- 8 *The Dada Painters and Poets*, 251.
- 9 Tristan Tzara, 'Manifesto on Feeble Love and Bitter Love'. Quoted from *The Dada Painters and Poets*, 94.
- 10 Tzara, 'Dada Manifesto 1918', in *The Dada Painters and Poets*, 82.
- 11 Marcel Janco, 'Dada at Two Speeds', in *Dadas on Art*, ed. Lucy Lippard (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971), 36.
- 12 Hans Arp, 'Dadaland [1938]', in *Dadas on Art*, 23–24.
- 13 See Hans Richter, 'Dada and the Film', in *Dada: Monograph of a Movement*, ed. Willy Verkauf (London: Academy Editions, 1975), 40.
- 14 For an analysis of the relation between Dada and Constructivism, see Dawn Ades, 'Dada – Constructivism', in *Dada – Constructivism* (London: Anneli Juda Fine Art, 1984), 33–46. Also Andrei Nakov, 'Dada Gives Me an Intolerable Malaise', and Richard Sheppard, 'Kurt Schwitters and Dada: Some Preliminary Remarks on a Complex Topic', in the same exhibition catalogue.
- 15 The newspaper *Zürcher Post* reported on 26 March 1916: 'The star of the cabaret, however, is Mrs Emmy Hennings, star of many nights of cabarets and poems. Years ago she stood in front of the rustling yellow curtain of a Berlin cabaret, hands on hips, as exuberant as a flowering shrub; today too she presents the same bold front and performs the same songs.'
- 16 Hans Arp, 'Dadaland', in *Arp on Arp*, ed. Marcel Jean (New York: Viking, 1972), 234.
- 17 Hugo Ball, *Flight Out of Time*, 54.
- 18 Ball, *Flight Out of Time*, 51.
- 19 Ball, *Flight Out of Time*, 75.
- 20 Ball, *Flight Out of Time*, 226. Ball gave his 'Lecture on Kandinsky' in the Gallery Dada on 7 April 1917. The lecture is translated in Ball, *Flight Out of Time*, 222–34.
- 21 Ball, *Flight Out of Time*, 63.
- 22 Ball, 'Dada Manifesto', in *Flight Out of Time*, 221.
- 23 For a detailed account of the cosmetic products 'dada' see Raimund Meyer, 'Dada ist gross Dada ist schön', in *Dada in Zürich* (Zurich: Kunsthau Zürich, 1985), 25–27; with his account of events, chronology, and Hans Bolliger's expert presentation of all the relevant documents, this is the best source for the study of Dada in Zurich.
- 24 Ball, *Flight Out of Time*, 73.
- 25 Ball, 'Dada Manifesto', in *Flight Out of Time*, 220.
- 26 See Richard Huelsenbeck, *Memoirs of a Dada Drummer* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 19–25.
- 27 See Debbie Lewer, 'From Cabaret Voltaire to the Kaufleutensaal: "Mapping" Zurich Dada', in *Dada Zurich: A Clown's Game from Nothing*, ed. Brigitte Pichon and Karl Riha (New York: G.K. Hall, 1996), 45–59. Lewer quotes Hennings, who briefly returned with Ball to the Gallery Dada: 'In the well-furnished exhibition rooms, various recitals were held; soirées that were well attended, in spite of high admission prices. It had all become quite distinguished and one had to keep up appearances.'
- 28 Huelsenbeck, *En Avant Dada: A History of Dadaism*, translated in *The Dada Painters and Poets*, 33.
- 29 The programmes for the Gallery Dada evening performances are reproduced in *Dada in Zürich*, 260–65. Hugo Ball, in his *Flight Out of Time*, also gives detailed descriptions of performances.
- 30 André Breton, *Entretiens* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), 33.
- 31 Tristan Tzara, 'Dada Manifesto 1918', in *The Dada Painters and Poets*, 77.
- 32 Tristan Tzara, 'Manifesto on Feeble Love and Bitter Love', in *The Dada Painters and Poets*, 92.
- 33 Hans Arp, *Unsern täglichen Traum* (Zurich: Arche, 1955), 41.
- 34 Hans Arp, 'Dadaland', in *Arp on Arp: Poems, Essays, Memories*, ed. Marcel Jean (New York: Viking, 1972), 232.
- 35 Hans Arp, 'Sophie Taeuber', in his *Unsern täglichen Traum* (Zurich: Arche, 1955), 10.
- 36 See Hans Richter, 'Dada and the Film', in *Dada: Monograph of a Movement*, ed. Willy Verkauf (London: Academy Editions, 1975), 39.
- 37 Hans Arp, 'Dadaland', 40.
- 38 Richard Huelsenbeck, *Dada siegt* (Berlin: Malik Verlag, 1920), 27.
- 39 Tristan Tzara, 'Zurich Chronicle', in *The Dada Almanach*, ed. Malcolm Green (London: Atlas Press, 1993), 33.
- 40 See Christian Schäd, *Relative Realitäten: Erinnerungen um Walter Serner* (Augsburg: Maro Verlag, 1999), 48.
- 41 'Proto-Dada', 'pre-Dada' and 'dada spirit' are the terms used by historians of New York Dada. They allow making connections between activities in New York and events in other cities that are clearly labelled 'Dada'. See *Dada New York: New World for Old*, ed. Martin Ignatius Gaughan (New York: G.K. Hall, 2003).
- 42 When Picabia came to America, he still served in the French army and was ordered to Cuba to purchase molasses for the French military. Instead he stayed in New York. See Michel Sanouillet, 'Picabia's First Trip to New York', in *Dada New York: New World for Old*, 112–30.
- 43 For the New York reception of Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase*, see Milton W. Brown, *The Story of the Armory Show* (New York: Abbeville, 1988), 133–42.
- 44 Paul Haviland, writer, photographer and collector, who represented his father's Limoges china production in America, introduced Picabia to the Stieglitz circle.
- 45 Even the manifesto 'Dada est américain', attributed to Walter Arensberg, and published in *Littérature* 13 (May 1920), was not written by Arensberg. See Francis Naumann, 'The New York Dada Movement: Better Late than Never', *Arts Magazine* 15, No. 6 (February 1980), 145.
- 46 See William Agee, 'New York Dada, 1910–1930', *Art News Annual*, 34 (1968), 105–13; Dickran Tashjian, *Skyscraper Primitives: Dada and the American Avant-Garde, 1910–1925* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1975); Abraham Davidson, *Early American Modernist Painting 1910–1935* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981); Francis Naumann, *New York Dada 1915–23* (New York: Abrams, 1994).
- 47 See Rudi Blesh, *Stuart Davis* (New York: Grove Press, 1960), 16.
- 48 *Collection of the Société Anonyme, Museum of Modern Art*, 1920 (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1950), 192.
- 49 Anonymous, 'The Nude-Descending-a-Staircase Man Surveys Us', *New York Tribune* (12 September 1915), Section 4, p. 2; reprinted in *Dada and the Press*, ed. Harriet Watts (New York: G.K. Hall, 2004), 379.
- 50 Duchamp's friend, the French novelist Romain Rolland, similarly urged Americans to reject their addiction to European models. See his essay 'America and the Arts' (trans. Waldo Frank), *The Seven Arts*, 1 (November 1916), 47–51.
- 51 Francis Picabia, 'How New York Looks to Me', *New York American* (30 March 1913), magazine, p. 11; quoted by William Camfield, *Francis Picabia: His Art, Life, and Time* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 48.
- 52 Anonymous, 'A Complete Reversal of Art Opinions by Marcel Duchamp, Iconoclast', *Arts and Decoration* 5 (September 1915), 427.
- 53 See Marcel Duchamp, *Salt Seller: The Writings of Marcel Duchamp*, ed. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 75.
- 54 Anonymous, 'French Artists Spur on an American Art', *New York Tribune* (24 October 1915), Section 4, p. 2.
- 55 Henri-Pierre Roché, 'Souvenirs of Marcel Duchamp', in Robert Lebel, *Marcel Duchamp* (London: Trianon Press, 1959), 80.
- 56 Arturo Schwarz, *New York Dada: Duchamp, Man Ray, Picabia* (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1974), 88.
- 57 Ibid.
- 58 Jane Heap, 'Dada', *The Little Review* (Spring 1922), 46. For a biography of the Baroness, see Irene Gammel, *Baroness Elsa: Gender, Dada, and Everyday Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002).
- 59 See Irene Gammel, *Baroness Elsa*, 223–30.
- 60 See Rudolf Kuenzli, 'Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven and New York Dada', in *Women in Dada: Essays on Sex, Gender, and Identity*, Naomi Savelson-Gorse, ed., (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998).
- 61 Margaret Anderson, *My Thirty Years' War* (New York: Horizon Press, 1969), 177.
- 62 Berenice Abbott, in conversation with Hank O'Neill, quoted in Robert Reiss, 'My Baroness: Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven', in *New York Dada*, ed. Rudolf Kuenzli (New York: Willis Locker & Owens, 1986), 82.
- 63 Georges Hugnet, 'Dada', in Alfred Barr, Jr., *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1936), 19.
- 64 Man Ray's letter is reproduced in Francis Naumann, *Making Mischief: Dada Invades New York* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1996), 143.
- 65 Malcolm Cowley, *Exile's Return* (New York: Viking, 1956), 179–80.
- 66 Cowley, *Exile's Return*, 184–85.
- 67 See Waldo Frank, 'Seriousness and Dada: An Exchange with Malcolm Cowley [1924]', in Waldo Frank, *In the American Jungle* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1937), 128–35.
- 68 Picabia published four issues of 391 in Barcelona, three in New York in 1917, one in Zurich in 1919, and the remaining issues (1919–24) in Paris.
- 69 See Gabrielle Buffet's description in her 'Arthur Cravan and American Dada', in *The Dada Painters and Poets*, 13–17. In 1918 Cravan married the British poet and artist Mina Loy. See Roger Conover, 'Mina Loy's "Colossus": Arthur Cravan Undressed', in *New York Dada*, ed. Rudolf Kuenzli, 102–19.
- 70 Richard Huelsenbeck, *En Avant Dada: A History of Dadaism*, in *The Dada Painters and Poets*, 39.
- 71 This manifesto clearly outlines the differences between Expressionism and Dada. It was published in Huelsenbeck's *Dada Almanach* (1920) under the title 'What Did Expressionism Want?' See the English translation, *Dada Almanac*, ed. Malcolm Green (London: Atlas Press, 1993), 44–49.
- 72 See Raoul Hausmann, *Am Anfang war Dada* (Giessen: Anabas-Verlag, 1980), 27.
- 73 See Hanne Bergius, 'Dada Triumphs!' *Dada Berlin 1917–23* (New York: G.K. Hall, 2003), 35.
- 74 See Wieland Herzfelde, 'George Grosz, John Heartfield, Erwin Piscator, Dada und die Folgen – oder die Macht der Freundschaft', *Sinn und Form* 23 (1971), 1242.
- 75 George Grosz, *A Little Yes and a*

- Big No* (New York: The Dial Press, 1946), 182. The quoted translation is closer to Grosz's German version.
- 75 Wieland Herzfelde, 'Introduction', *First - International Dada-Fair* (Berlin: Malik-Verlag), exhibition catalogue.
- 76 For an analysis of Hannah Höch's photomontages and their relationship to the 'new woman', see Maud Lavin, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife: The Weimar Photomontages of Hannah Höch* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).
- 77 See Raoul Hausmann's description of how he made these poster poems in his *Am Anfang war Dada*, 43.
- 78 This flyer is translated in *Almanac Dada*, ed. Malcolm Green (London: Atlas Press, 1993), 162.
- 79 'Invest in Dada' was published in *Der Dada* 1 (1919), 7.
- 80 George Grosz, *A Little Yes and a Big No*, 185–86.
- 81 These questions were published in *Der Dada* 2 (1919), 6.
- 82 Raoul Hausmann, *Am Anfang war Dada*, 59–60.
- 83 Wieland Herzfelde, 'Introduction' to the reprint of *Die Pleite* (Leipzig: Zentral-antiquariat, 1983). This reprint also includes *Jedermann sein eigener Fussball*.
- 84 See Walter Mehring, *Berlin Dada* (Zurich: Arche, 1959), 8.
- 85 Raoul Hausmann, 'Dada in Europa', *Der Dada* 3 (1920).
- 86 This manifesto was published in Van Doesburg's magazine *De Stijl* 4, No. 10 (October 1921).
- 87 The German titles of Huelsenbeck's publications in 1920 are: *en avant dada: Eine Geschichte des Dadaismus* (Hanover: Paul Steegemann, 1920); *Dada siegt! Eine Bilanz des Dadaismus* (Berlin: Malik-Verlag, 1920); *Deutschland muss untergehen. Erinnerungen eines alten dadaistischen Revolutionärs* (Berlin: Malik-Verlag, 1920); *Dada Almanach* (Berlin: Erich Reiss Verlag, 1920). In 1919, Huelsenbeck prepared *Dadaco*, an international dada anthology, with the publisher Kurt Wolff. Due to rising printing costs, Wolff cancelled the contract. Tzara continued to work on the anthology in Paris under the title *Dadaglobe*, which also never materialized.
- 88 Raoul Hausmann, 'Dada empört sich regt sich und stirbt in Berlin,' in his *Am Anfang war Dada*, 19.
- 89 Schwitters' statement is quoted in Werner Schmalenbach, *Kurt Schwitters* (New York: Abrams, 1967), 32.
- 90 In early 1919, Schwitters wrote to Tzara: 'I am following the dada leaflets with great interest and I should be extraordinarily glad to correspond with you'. Quoted in Schmalenbach, *Kurt Schwitters*, 44.
- 91 Kurt Schwitters, "'Katalog" 1927', *Merz* 20 (1927), 99–100; quoted in John Elderfield, *Kurt Schwitters* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985), 12–13.
- 92 In his *Memoirs of a Dada Drummer* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), Huelsenbeck articulates his disagreements with Schwitters. In his Introduction to *Dada Almanach*, Huelsenbeck singled out Schwitters' 'Anna Blossom' as non-Dada: 'Dada fundamentally and emphatically rejects such works as the famous "Anna Bloom" by Mr Kurt Schwitters.' See *Dada Almanac*, ed. Malcolm Green (London: Atlas Press, 1993), 14.
- 93 Schwitters, 'Merz', in *The Dada Painters and Poets*, 60. One of Schwitters' first collages, *Hansi* (1918), confirms Hans [Hansi] Arp's importance for Schwitters.
- 94 Kurt Schwitters, 'Banalitäten', 1923; quoted in Elderfield, *Kurt Schwitters*, 67.
- 95 Kurt Schwitters, 'Merz', in *The Dada Painters and Poets*, 59.
- 96 Schwitters' early recognition came in America. With Duchamp, Katherine Dreier organized Schwitters exhibitions at the Société Anonyme in New York in 1920 and 1921; she bought his works and lent them to major New York exhibitions.
- 97 Martin Gaughan draws on Russian Formalism and Futurism to explain this process. See his 'Imprinting Stoff: Kurt Schwitters' Verbal Art 1919–1921', in *Dada Cologne Hanover*, 136–73. In his *Kurt Schwitters*, John Elderfield uses Schwitters' own vocabulary of 'Entformung' and 'Eigengift' to describe this metamorphosis of culturally coded objects in Schwitters' work.
- 98 See Hans Richter, *Dada Art and Anti-Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1965), 142–43.
- 99 Huelsenbeck remembers of his visit to Schwitters in 1919: 'This tower or tree or house had apertures, concavities and hollows in which Schwitters said he kept souvenirs, photos, birth dates, and other respectable and less respectable data.' See Hueslenbeck, *Memoirs of a Dada Drummer*, 66.
- 100 Hans Richter describes the changes to *Merzbau* when he visited Schwitters a few years later. See Hans Richter, *Dada Art and Anti-Art*, 152–53.
- 101 Schwitters wrote about this tour through Holland in his essay 'Theo van Doesburg and Dada', which is included in *Dada Painters and Poets*, 273–76. See also Hubert F. van den Berg, "'Grand Clearance Sale": Kurt Schwitters and the Dutch Dada Campaign', in his *The Importance of Nothing: How Dada Came, Saw, and Vanished in the Low Countries* (New York: G.K. Hall, 2002), 150–76.
- 102 Kurt Schwitters, 'Dada in Holland', *Merz*, 1 (January 1923), 3.
- 103 Quoted in Hubert F. van den Berg, *The Import of Nothing: How Dada Came, Saw, and Vanished in the Low Countries*, 125.
- 104 See Huelsenbeck's *Dada Almanac*, ed. Malcolm Green, 116.
- 105 Lothar Fischer, *Max Ernst mit Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1969), 35. Translated by Charlotte Stokes in her 'Rage and Liberation: Cologne Dada', in *Dada Cologne Hanover*, ed. Charlotte Stokes and Stephen Foster (New York: G.K. Hall, 1997), 21.
- 106 A reprint of *Der Ventilator* is included in Walter Vitt's *Auf der Suche nach der Biographie des Kölner Dadaisten Johannes Theodor Baargeld* (Starnberg: Keller Verlag, 1977). *Der Ventilator* includes a few caricatures, but primarily unsigned, argumentative prose criticisms of mass media.
- 107 Ernst's letter to Tzara, written at the end of November 1920, is translated in Werner Spies, *Max Ernst: Collages. The Invention of the Surrealist Universe* (New York: Abrams, 1991), 271.
- 108 Ernst's letter to Tzara of 20 October 1921 is in Werner Spies, *Max Ernst: Collages*, 272.
- 109 See William Camfield, *Max Ernst: Dada and the Dawn of Surrealism* (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1993), 106. Camfield writes: 'These "collage paintings", as they came to be called, not only enabled Ernst to achieve the seamless whole which he sought, but to control dimensions, colour, and relationships without having to adjust to the size and material of his sources as was required in the actual collages.'
- 110 Astrit Schmidt-Burkhardt convincingly suggests that Baargeld's *Self-Portrait* might also be related to Rudolf Schlichter's *Venus von Milo* 1 and *Venus von Milo* 2, exhibited at the First International Dada Fair. Schlichter 'corrected' antique statues, adding modern heads. See her 'Variatio delectat. Über Metamorphosendarstellungen beim dadaistischen Portrait', in *Bagage de Baargeld*, ed. Walter Vitt (Starnberg: Keller Verlag, 1985), 104.
- 111 The nonsensical title 'Schammade' was probably chosen in order to avoid censorship. Critics have offered several possible meanings: Scham = genitals, Made = maggot. Since Baargeld was fluent in English (he studied law and political science at Oxford 1912–13), 'Schammade' could also mean 'made by genitals'.
- 112 Franz Seiwert wrote: 'We wish to be the voices of the people ... Our pictures stand in the service of the exploited ... Therefore, we reject the supposed anti-middle-class buffoonery of Dada.' Quoted from William Camfield, *Max Ernst: Dada and the Dawn of Surrealism*, 77.
- 113 Quoted from Brandon Taylor, *Collage: The Making of Modern Art* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2004), 58.
- 114 See Francis Picabia, 'M. Picabia se sépare des Dadas', *Comoedia* (11 May 1921), 2; 'Francis Picabia et Dada', *L'Esprit Nouveau* 9 (June 1921), 1059–60; and Picabia's *Le Pilhaou-Thibaou*, a special issue of his magazine 391 (July 1921).
- 115 'Lettres de Jacques Vaché', *Littérature* 5 (July 1919), 1–8.
- 116 See Michel Sanouillet, *Dada à Paris* (Paris: Flammarion, 1993), 144. Sanouillet's study, first published in 1965, gives a detailed account of all the phases of Dada in Paris. The 'Appendix' includes the correspondence between Breton, Tzara and Picabia.
- 117 Tristan Tzara, 'Memoirs of Dadaism', in Edmund Wilson, *Axel's Castle: A Study in the Imaginative Literature of 1870–1930* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931), 306–7.
- 118 See Elmer Peterson, 'Paris Dada: Publications and Provocations', in *Paris Dada: The Barbarians Storm the Gates*, ed. Elmer Peterson (New York: G.K. Hall, 2001), 11.
- 119 See Sanouillet, *Dada à Paris*, 283. A comparison between Serner's *Last Loosening* and Tzara's 'Dada Manifesto 1918' indicates that Schad's accusations of Tzara copying from Serner's text are wrong.
- 120 André Breton, 'Après Dada', *Comoedia* (2 March 1922); reprinted in Breton's *Les Pas perdus* (Paris: Gallimard 1990), 123–27.
- 121 See *Impossible Histories: Historical Avant-Gardes, Neo-Avant-Gardes, and Post-Avant-Gardes in Yugoslavia*, ed. Dubravka Djuric and Misko Suvakovic (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 132.
- 122 Kurt Schwitters, 'Dadaism', *Blok* (1924). This essay is translated into English in *The Eastern Dada Orbit*, ed. Gerald Janecsek and Toshiharu Omuka (New York: G.K. Hall, 1996), 118–21.
- 123 See Tom Sandqvist, *Dada East: The Romanians of Cabaret Voltaire* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006).
- 124 See Hugo Ball's lecture 'Kandinsky', which he gave on 7 April 1917, in Zurich. This lecture is translated into English in Hugo Ball, *Flight out of Time*, ed. John Elderfield (New York: Viking Press, 1974), 222–34.
- 125 One of Schwitters' first assemblages, *Construction for Noble Ladies* (1919) apparently was dedicated to Puni's wife. See John Elderfield, *Kurt Schwitters* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985), 61.
- 126 See Hanne Bergius, *Das Lachen Dadas* (Giessen: Anabas-Verlag, 1989), 356–57.
- 127 Jindřich Toman, 'Now You See It, Now You Don't: Dada in Czechoslovakia', in *The Eastern Dada Orbit*, 17. George Grosz was fascinated by Hašek's anti-military character Švejk; he made several hundred drawings of Švejk for Erwin Piscator's staging of *Die Abenteuer des braven Soldaten Schwejk* in 1928. See George Grosz, *Berlin New York*, ed. Peter-Klaus Schuster (Berlin: Nationalgalerie, 1994), 197–98.
- 128 Dragan Aleksić describes this evening in his retrospective essay of 1931. Translated into German in *In unsern Seelen flattern schwarze Fahnen: Serbische Avantgarde 1918–1939* (Leipzig: Reklam, 1992), 244–59.
- 129 Karel Teige, 'Painting and Poetry', *Disk* (1923); translated in *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-Gardes, 1910–1930*, ed. Timothy Benson and Eva Forgacs (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 368.
- 130 František Halas, 'Dadaism', translated in *Between Worlds*, 371.
- 131 See Toman, 27–30.
- 132 Dragan Aleksić, 'Dadaism', *Zenit* 3 (April 1921); translated in *Between Worlds*, 350–51.
- 133 See Éva Forgács, 'Constructive

- Faith in Deconstruction: Dada in Hungarian Art', in Gerald Janeczek and Omuka Toshiharu, *The Eastern Dada Orbit* (New York: G. K. Hall, 1996) 72.
- 134 Barta published this satire in his journal *Akaszott Ember*, 1 (1922). Translated into English in *Between Worlds*, 328–32.
- 135 Lajos Kassák and László Moholy-Nagy, eds., *Buch neuer Künstler* (Vienna: Ma, 1922). Kassák's preface was printed in German, followed by reproductions of works by Kandinsky, Arp, Taeuber, Man Ray, Schwitters, Grosz, Picabia, Van Doesburg, Eggeling, Kassák, Moholy-Nagy, Tatlin, Ernst and Léger. This book is one of the most amazing 'exhibits' of the early 1920s.
- 136 Ion Vineu, 'Activist Manifesto for Young People', *Contimporanul* 46 (May 1924); translated in *Dada East: The Romanians of Cabaret Voltaire*, 345–46.
- 137 Ilarie Voronca, 'Aviogramă', 75 *HP* (1924); translated in *Between Worlds*, 535.
- 138 Roman Jakobson, 'Dada', *Vestnik teatra* 82 (February 1921); translated in *Between Worlds*, 359–63. Jakobson was a member of the Russian Futurists who wrote several *zaum* poems. See his *Transrational Gook* (1916), written with Aleksei Kruchenykh, the foremost poet of illogical poetry.
- 139 John Bowlit, 'The Cow and the Violin: Toward a History of Russian Dada', in *The Eastern Dada Orbit*, 137–63.
- 140 Aristarkh Lentulov, 'Avtobiografiia' (1937), quoted by John Bowlit, 'H₂SO₄: Dada in Russia', in *Dada/Dimensions*, ed. Stephen Foster (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1985), 230.
- 141 The word *zaum* was at the centre of Russian futurist painting and poetry. Malevich wrote about the *zaum* poets Velimir Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh: 'They have set themselves the task, analogous to painting, to bring the poetry of the word out of the practical realism, make it an end in itself ... to build a poem not out of utilitarian words of practical objective realism, but create verse out of poetic rhythm.' See Kazimir Malevich, *Essays on Art* (Copenhagen: Borgen, 1968), 1, 95.
- 142 'Dekret o Nichevokakh Poezii', quoted by John Bowlit, 'The Cow and the Violin: Toward a History of Russian Dada', in *The Eastern Dada Orbit*, 151.
- 143 This event is reported in the Paris magazine *Udar* 4 (1923); cited by John Bowlit, 'The Cow and the Violin', 163.
- 144 Iliad Zdzanevich, *Ledantu le Phare* (Paris: Degré 41, 1923).
- 145 Quoted in Kikuchi Yasuo, *Gendaioshi no taidoki* [The Quickening Period of Modern Poetry] (Tokyo: Genbunsha, 1967), 209; translated in Ko Won, *Buddhist Elements in Dada: A Comparison of Tristan Tzara, Takahashi Shinkichi, and Their Fellow Poets* (New York: New York University Press, 1977), 24–25.
- 146 Takahashi's 'Assertion Is Dada' (1922) is translated in Ko Won, *Buddhist Elements in Dada*, 31–34.
- 147 See Omuka Toshiharu, 'Tada=Dada (Devotedly Dada) for the Stage: The Japanese Dada Movement 1920–1925', in *The Eastern Dada Orbit*, 246.
- 148 Quoted in Ko Won, *Buddhist Elements in Dada*, 20.
- 149 Ibid., 20.
- 150 This passage is translated in Omuka Toshiharu, 'Tada=Dada', 246.
- 151 Translated in Omuka Toshiharu, 'Tada=Dada', 248.
- 152 Translated by Ko Won, *Buddhist Elements in Dada*, 28.
- 153 Although the Futurist Art Association was formed in 1920, Futurism was known in Japan much earlier. Marinetti's 'Futurist Manifesto' of 1909 was published in Japanese translation three months after it was printed in *Le Figaro* in Paris. Japanese writers and artists did not make clear distinctions between Dada and Futurism. Kambara Tai's 'First Manifesto' already advocated total freedom in the arts in 1920: 'Painters be gone! Art critics be gone! Art is absolutely free. There is no poetry, no painting, no music. What exists is creation only. Art is absolutely free ... there is nothing that does not fit the content of art.' This passage is translated in Ko Won, *Buddhist Elements in Dada*, 17–18.
- 154 For reproductions of these works, see Jennifer Weisenfeld, *Mavo: Japanese Artists and the Avant-Garde 1905–1931* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 38–42.
- 155 Quoted in Jennifer Weisenfeld, *Mavo*, 159. I follow Omuka Toshiharu's use of 'Constructivism' in order to distinguish it from 'Constructivism'.
- 156 See Jennifer Weisenfeld, *Mavo*, 63–64.
- 157 Murayama Tomoyoshi, 'Concerning the Mavo Exhibition: A Reply to Mr Asaeda' (1923); translated in Jennifer Weisenfeld, *Mavo*, 75.
- 158 The 'Mavo Manifesto' is translated in Jennifer Weisenfeld, *Mavo*, 66–67.
- 159 This review is translated in Omuka Toshiharu, 'Tada=Dada', 261.
- 160 El Lissitzky and Hans Arp, *Die Kunstismen* (Erlenbach-Zurich: Eugen Rentsch Verlag, 1925). However, Lissitzky and Arp falsely attributed *Standing Man* to Murayama.
- 161 Kawaji Ryoko, 'From Expressionist Art to the Art of Daily Life' (1925). Jennifer Weisenfeld translated this review of the first Sanka exhibition in her *Mavo*, 102–3.
- 162 Omuka Toshiharu gives descriptions of some of these performances in his 'Tada=Dada', 278–79.
- 163 Tsuda Kozo, 'Café Dada', *Baichi Shubin* 5 (August 1924). The quoted passage is translated in Omuka Toshiharu, 'Tada=Dada', 269.
- 164 Tsuji Jun, 'Konchiraepuketora' (1925); the quoted passage is translated in Omuka Toshiharu, 'Tada=Dada', 281.
- 165 This quote is translated in John Clark, 'Artistic Subjectivity in the Taisho and Early Showa Avant-Garde', in *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream against the Sky*, ed. Alexandra Munroe (New York: Abrams, 1994), 43.
- 166 Daniel Spoerri, 'Interview with Susan Hapgood', in Susan Hapgood, *Neo-Dada: Redefining Art, 1958–62* (New York: The American Federation of Arts, 1994), 132.
- 167 Robert Motherwell, *The Dada Painters and Poets* (New York: Wittenborn, Schulz, 1951). This anthology was republished by Harvard University Press in 1989. Interestingly, Motherwell observes in his Preface, that of all the former Dadas he met 'Duchamp alone claims still to be Dada' (xix).
- 168 John Cage, '26 Statements Re Duchamp', *Art and Literature* 3 (Autumn/Winter 1964), 9.
- 169 Black Mountain College, founded in 1933 and directed by Josef Albers, a former teacher at the Bauhaus, until 1949, and afterwards by the poet Charles Olson until its closing in 1956, provided a unique meeting place for major creative thinkers and practitioners in the arts. In the summer of 1948, Cage taught the compositions of the pre-dada composer Erik Satie.
- 170 See *Black Mountain College: Experiment in Art*, ed. Vincent Katz (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 137–39.
- 171 See Dorothee Gees Seckler, 'The Artist Speaks: Robert Rauschenberg', *Art in America* 54:3 (May–June 1966), 74.
- 172 Quoted in Calvin Tomkins, *The Bride and the Bachelors* (New York: Viking, 1974), 193–94.
- 173 Jasper Johns, 'Marcel Duchamp: An Appreciation', *Artforum* 7:3 (November 1968), 6.
- 174 Allan Kaprow (Pasadena: Pasadena Art Museum, 1967), 8.
- 175 See Allan Kaprow's Introduction to the section on Happenings in his *Assemblage, Environments and Happenings*, 210–12. Alfred Leslie also gave Kaprow Ray Falk's article on Gutai, 'Japanese Innovators', *New York Times* (8 December 1957), 24ff.
- 176 Michel Tapié, *Un art autre* (1952); an excerpt of Tapié's book is translated in *Art in Theory 1900–2000*, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003).
- 177 Yoshihara Jiro, 'Gutai Art Manifesto' (1956); translated in Alexandra Munroe, *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream against the Sky* (New York: Abrams, 1994), 370.
- 178 Murakami Saburo, 'Gutai ist Gutai', in *Dada in Japan. Japanische Avantgarde 1920–1970* (Düsseldorf: Kunstmuseum Düsseldorf, 1983), 21–22.
- 179 William Seitz, *The Art of Assemblage* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1961), 32. Seitz wrote: 'The recent wave of assemblage, which has disturbed supporters of both figurative and abstract art, has repeatedly been designated, often in disdain, as "neo-dada".' Susan Hapgood provides a list of essays that use the term 'Neo-Dada' in her *Neo-Dada: Redefining Art, 1958–62*, 58.
- 180 Raoul Hausmann, 'Dadaism and Today's Avant-Garde', *Times Literary Supplement* 3262 (3 September 1964), 800.
- 181 Hans Richter, *Dada Art and Anti-Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1965), 207–8.
- 182 Allan Kaprow made this statement in his interview with Susan Hapgood, which she included in her *Neo-Dada: Redefining Art, 1958–62*, 116.
- 183 Pierre Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Viking, 1971), 99, 103.
- 184 Interview with Susan Hapgood, in her *Neo-Dada: Redefining Art, 1958–62*, 115.
- 185 Daniel Spoerri's interview with Susan Hapgood, *Neo-Dada: Redefining Art, 1958–62*, 132.
- 186 Ushio Shinohara, 'The Avant-Garde Road' (1968); translated in Alexandra Munroe, *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream against the Sky*, 80.
- 187 George Maciunas, 'Neo-Dada in Music, Theater, Poetry, Art' (1962), in *Fluxus: Selections from the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection*, ed. Clive Phillpot and Jon Hendricks (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1988), 27.
- 188 Quoted in Elisabeth Armstrong and Joan Rothfuss, *In the Spirit of Fluxus* (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1993), 28.
- 189 Dick Higgins, 'Dada Almanach' [book jacket text of facsimile edition], *Dada Almanach*, ed. Richard Huelsenbeck (New York: Something Else Press, 1966).
- 190 See Alexandra Munroe, *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream against the Sky*, 149–59; and Nakanishi Natsuyuki, 'Hi Red Center', in *Dada in Japan. Japanese Avantgarde 1920–1970*, 28–29.
- 191 Robert Rauschenberg's quote is taken from Françoise Choay's essay 'Dada, Néodada et Rauschenberg', *Art International* 5:8 (20 October 1961), 84.
- 192 Allan Kaprow made this statement in his interview with Susan Hapgood, in her *Neo-Dada: Redefining Art, 1958–62*, 116–17.
- 193 Richard Hamilton, 'For the Finest Art, Try Pop', *Gazette* 1 (1961); reprinted in *Art in Theory, 1900–2000*, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003), 743.
- 194 Andy Warhol, 'Interview with Gene Swenson', *ArtNews* (November 1963); reprinted in *Art in Theory, 1900–2000*, 749.
- 195 Guy Debord, 'Report on the Construction of Situations and on the International Situationist Tendency's Conditions of Organization and Action', in *Situationist International Anthology*, ed. Ken Knabb (Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981), 18. For examples of today's interventionist practices, see *The Interventionists: Users' Manual for the Creative Disruption of Everyday Life* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004).



WORK- S

DRAGAN ALEKSIC

ARMAN

HANS (JEAN) ARP

JOHANNES BAADER

JOHANNES BAARGELD

HUGO BALL

BEN

JOSEPH BEU'YS

ERWIN BLUMENFELD

RICHARD BOIX

I.K. BONSET (THEO VAN

DOESBURG)

SÁNDOR BORTNYIK

VICTOR BRAUNER

JOHN COVERT

MARCEL DUCHAMP

VIKING EGGELING

MAX ERNST

JULIUS EVOLA

ELSA VON FREYTAG-

LORINGHOVEN

IRAKLII GAMREKELI AND

BENO GORDEZIANI

GEORGE GROSZ

RAOUL HAUSMANN

JOHN HEARTFIELD

GEORGE HERMS

HI RED CENTER

DICK HIGGINS

HANNAH HÖCH

ILIAZD (ILIA ZDANEVICH)

MARCEL JANCO

LAJOS KASSÁK

EL LISSITZKY

MAKI HISAO

KAZIMIR MALEVICH

MAN RAY

MURAYAMA TOMOYOSHI

OKADA TATSUO

FRANCIS PICABIA

BRANKO VE POLJANSKI

IVAN PUNI

ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG

HANS RICHTER

MIMMO ROTELLA

NIKI DE SAINT PHALLE

CHRISTIAN SCHAD

MORTON SCHAMBERG

KURT SCHWITTERS

SHIRAGA KAZUO

KÂTE STEINITZ

JINDŘICH ŠTYRSKÝ AND

TOYEN

SUMIYA IWANE

SOPHIE TAEUBER

TAKAMIZAWA MICHINAO

TANAKA ATSUKO

VLADIMIR TATLIN

KAREL TEIGE

TODA TATSUO

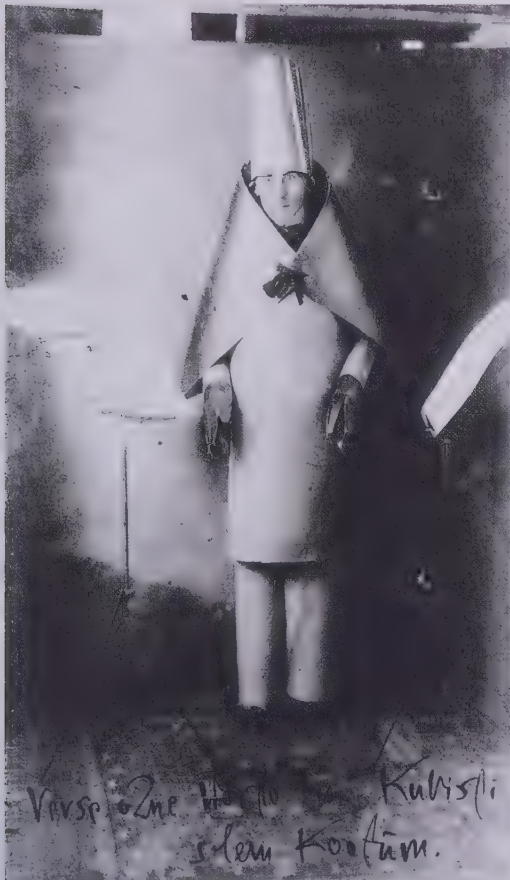
YAMAZATO EIKICHI

YANASE MASAMU

YOSHIMURA MASUNOBU

ZURICH

In the midst of the First World War, dada artists in Zurich rejected the traditions of representational and personal art. Distrusting reason, they embraced chance and sought to develop an impersonal, universal language of grids, shapes and forms. Hans Arp created biomorphic shapes in ink, woodcuts and painted layered wood reliefs, which he considered 'concrete', and not abstract. Sophie Taeuber, with whom he collaborated, introduced him to non-traditional materials and geometric constructions. In addition to creating masks, posters and costumes for dada performances, Marcel Janco worked on 'architectures' of basic geometric shapes that he intended to be universally understood. Hans Richter and Viking Eggeling explored the interrelationship of lines and shapes within movement in their scroll paintings, which led them to produce the first abstract films.



Hugo Ball reciting the poem 'Karawane' at the Cabaret Voltaire
1916

Photograph

Collection, Kunsthaus, Zurich

The performances of Hugo Ball and the Zurich Dadas became famous for their unexpected and fantastic qualities. Ball's sound poem (or 'poem without words'), composed of seemingly primitive expressions, was performed by the artist in a 'cubist' costume consisting of a tall, blue and white striped hat, a wing-like gold cape, and blue leggings; he later described his appearance as that of a 'magical bishop'. Ball could not walk in the outfit and had to be carried on to the stage where he chanted the phonetic poem's phrases in the serious style of a requiem. 'We must return to the innermost alchemy of the word, we must even give up the word, too ...', he later wrote of this new form of poetry.

— Hugo Ball, *Flight Out of Time*, 1927



Marcel JANCO

Sketch for Chants Nègres

[Negro Songs]

1916

Charcoal on paper

73 x 55 cm [29 x 21.5 in]

Collection, Kunsthau, Zurich

Janco's sketch of two cubist-style African sculptures performing on a stage was first used as an advertisement for an evening of performance and provocation at the Cabaret Voltaire, on 31 March 1916. That night Tristan Tzara and Richard Huelsenbeck read their *chants nègres* (negro songs) while each beating a large drum. Inspired by African poetry, they attempted to create a primitive, primal language beyond or before reason – a new dada culture removed from Western European culture, which was engaged in war. Audiences came to expect passionate performances, unrestrained attitudes and interaction with the group. Janco's sketch was used again in 1917 as part of an invitation to the Galerie Dada.

opposite

Marcel JANCO

Cabaret Voltaire

1916

Oil on canvas

Dimensions unknown [lost work]

The Cabaret Voltaire, named in honour of the eighteenth-century French writer, philosopher and radical critic, was held at the Meierei Bar at no. 1 Spiegelgasse. For four months the owner allowed the international group of artists, poets and thinkers to use his small space and up to fifty patrons – other dissidents, refugees and artists – were able to witness the performances each night. A rare visual record of dada activities at the Cabaret Voltaire, surviving only in photographs, Janco's painting shows members of the group on stage at the right of the image. Hugo Ball is playing the piano and Tristan Tzara and Hans Arp are at the front of the stage. Richard Huelsenbeck and Marcel Janco stand behind them while the fair-haired Emmy Hennings dances with Friedrich Glauser. In 1948 Arp remembered these evenings as 'total pandemonium. The people around us are shouting, laughing, gesticulating. Our replies are sighs of love, volleys of hiccups, poems, moos, and meowing of medieval Bruitists'

– Hans Arp, *Dadaland*, 1948





Marcel JANCO

Study for Brilliant Empire Architecture

1918

Collage

37 × 30.5 cm [14.5 × 12 in]

Collection, Kunsthaus, Zurich

For Janco, geometric or concrete abstraction offered a style that would be universally understandable, a democratic language for a new future. His architectonic constructions, completed between 1916 and 1919, such as *Study for Brilliant Empire Architecture*, exhibit this clarity of composition and simplicity of materials. This work recalls not only his early training in architecture, but also the Dadas' general rejection of traditional fine art forms and concepts; the accumulation of basic forms is here executed on cardboard and painted in gouache. Janco wrote that 'the artist is to step down from his pedestal and, as in the Middle Ages, work anonymously. He was to begin again like a craftsman and produce his work out of the craft process, which had to be re-established, retaught, relearned, freed altogether from its ossification.'

– Marcel Janco interviewed by Fritz Billeter, Zurich, 1965



Marcel JANCO

Mask

1919

Assemblage

h. 45 cm [18 in]

Collection, Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

Despite the Dadas' interest in African poetry and visual art, Janco's costumes were not direct quotations of specific African masking traditions. His masks' abstracted, hard-edged features, constructed of such everyday materials as twine and cardboard, communicated 'characters and passions that are larger than life', even from the distance of the stage. When first presented with Janco's masks, the group noticed at once that the objects inspired movements, dances and music. 'Not only did the mask immediately call for a costume; it also demanded a quite definitive, passionate gesture, bordering on madness', wrote Ball. On the spot, the group devised sounds and movements which they later performed at the Cabaret.

– Hugo Ball, *Flight Out of Time*, 1927



Hans ARP

Untitled [Automatic Drawing]

1916

Ink wash and pencil traces on paper

42.5 × 61.5 cm [17 × 24 in]

Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Arp's automatic drawings were exercises in free association, in freeing the non-rational mind from conventional logical thinking. Arp spontaneously drew a basic design with no planning, preconceptions, or expectations, allowing his inner self uncensored expression. Like Tzara's formula for chance poetry (to write a verse, take a bag of words, shake them up, and pull them out one by one), 'automatism' as a process rejected the involvement of intellect. Arp's experiments resulted in free-flowing, organic line drawings in pencil, which he adjusted, refined, and then filled in with black ink, thereby balancing non-rational and more thoughtful techniques. To Arp, this duality represented the actuality of life. These images evoke natural biomorphic structures and organic systems.

Hans ARP

Untitled [The Entombment of the Birds and Butterflies: Head of Tzara]

1916-17

Painted wooden relief

40 × 32.5 × 9.5 cm [16 × 13 × 4 in]

Collection, Kunsthhaus, Zurich

Arp's experiments with non-traditional media and techniques led him to wooden constructions. Made in layers, the wood was cut and assembled by a carpenter to Arp's specifications. These constructions hover between flatness and depth and between painting and sculpture. They also represent Arp's continuing search for elemental, organic forms. *The Entombment of the Birds and Butterflies* consists of three layers of painted wood. Its shapes and colours suggest the wings of the birds and butterflies of the title. However, 'entombed' in the assemblage is also the image of a face; viewed another way, wings become eyes and eyebrows as the centre line of the composition becomes a nose. The dada poet Tristan Tzara's visage and spirit are suggested in this 'picture-poem' of natural forms and constructed elements.



Untitled [Squares Arranged
According to the Laws of Chance]

1916-17

Collage

25.5 x 12.1 cm [10 x 5 in.]

Collection, Kunstmuseum, Basel

Arp's chance imagery, like the chance poems of Tristan Tzara, represented a fundamental break from traditional forms of art and concepts of individual creativity. In these collages, Arp's intentions harmonize with the uncontrollable forces of nature to form a unified whole. Hans Richter has recounted that they were made through a completely random process whereby pieces of paper were torn, allowed to fall, and pasted exactly as they landed. Rather, it is likely that the compositions began with this process but were then refined by Arp, as seen in this grid-like composition. As in his automatic drawings, the collage balances volition and chance, the random and the ordered







Hans ARP

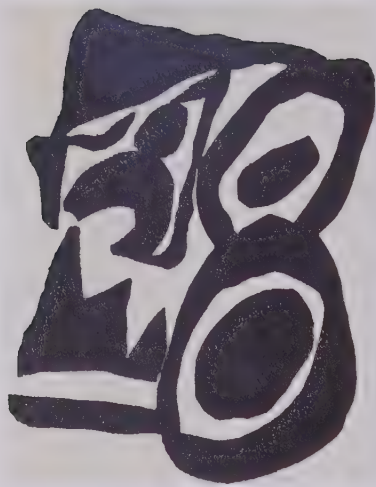
Untitled [White Forms on a Black Ground]

c. 1917

Oil on six wooden panels

64 x 108 cm [25 x 42.5 in]

Undulating painted forms link the constructed wooden elements to one another, balancing the natural and man-made. In many of Arp's drawings and woodcuts, the organic forms are black; here the reverse is true. Like Arp's multilayered wood constructions, such as *The Entombment of the Birds and Butterflies*, this piece blurs the lines between the genres of painting and sculpture. The visibility of each distinct panel, and therefore the acknowledgement of the work's construction, together with the absence of a frame, run counter to the traditions of panelled oil painting



Hans ARP

Title illustration for *Der Zeltweg*

1919

woodcut

25.5 × 18.5 cm [10 × 7.5 in]

The single-issue *Der Zeltweg*, edited by Otto Flake, Walter Serner and Tristan Tzara, was the final publication of the Zurich group. Hans Richter called it the 'afterbirth' of the movement. Published in October 1919, it took its name from the address of Arp's studio, Zeltweg 83. The thirty-two-page issue included contributions from Arp, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Christian Schad, Hans Richter and Mary Wigman. Unlike their other publications, it was printed on deluxe paper by the Spamer Print Shop in Leipzig, and it is more conventional, perhaps because many of the Dadas had begun to turn their attentions to other cities and new collaborative opportunities. Arp's woodcut for the cover of the periodical simultaneously suggests a face, an organism, a landscape and a cosmic system, reflecting the aims the group had pursued since its beginnings – to find a primitive, universal language of form.



Hans ARP

i-Bild

[i-Picture]

c. 1920

Collage

21 × 16.5 cm [8 × 6.5 in]

i-Picture, a collage of coloured paper on a white background, exhibits the grid-like geometries that Sophie Taeuber had been developing before she met and influenced Arp, her future husband. The elementary shapes of coloured paper seen here, part of Arp's own search for basic, impersonal structures and a universal 'concrete' language, form the field in which a mechanically printed letter 'i' floats. Itself an element of a language, the typographic element hovers with the forms and colours, suggesting correlations between the two-dimensional systems that have become the phrases of Arp's new syntax.



Sophie TAEUBER

Untitled (*Pathetic Symmetry*)

1916-17

Cotton embroidery after a drawing
by Hans Arp

76 x 65 cm (30 x 26 in)

Collection Musée national d'art
moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou

DATA

A collaboration between Taeuber and Arp, *Pathetic Symmetry* displays the forms and materials important to their artistic programmes. Based on a drawing by Arp, the work's composition is developed along a strong vertical axis, creating a symmetry that for Arp represented the concept of balance and a sense of the absolute and the ideal. Taeuber translated the image into embroidery, an art form she taught at the Applied Arts School in Zurich. Both the notion of collaboration – or the rejection of individual expression – and the idea of a craft-sensibility found in the embroidery form, speak of the pair's rejection of the traditional fine arts. This work was reproduced on the first page of the first number (July 1917) of the periodical *Dada*, where it is identified as a work by Arp alone.



Sophie Taeuber, wearing a Marcel Janco mask, dancing at the opening of the Galerie Dada 29 March 1917
Photograph
Collection, Arp Foundation, Clamart

Janco's masks and costumes inspired music, dance and various performances of the Zurich group. Taeuber had begun studying expressive dance around 1917 with Rudolf von Laban and Mary Wigman, who also performed with the group. Hugo Ball wrote that the masks, like the abstract costume seen here, not only inspired the performers but, by concealing their identities, took away their inhibitions and allowed them to give full rein to their inner passions. For Taeuber, known as a quiet, unassuming person, Janco's costume may have provided such an outlet. The Applied Arts School, where Taeuber taught, banned her from performing at the Cabaret; Janco's masks thus served to hide her identity as well.

Untitled [Dada Head: Portrait of
Hans Arp]

1918

Painted wood

h. 34 cm [13.5 in]

Collection, Musée national d'art
moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou,
Paris

A number of dada artists produced 'portraits' that were not physical likenesses, but rather communicated ideas about an individual or about human identity in general. In Taeuber's portrait of Arp, the curvilinear, organic forms she and Arp employed in their works are painted directly on a turned wooden head that resembles a hat-stand; the painted circular designs recall both eyes and celestial bodies. Such ovals and circles appear throughout the works of both artists. By combining the representation of a human head, circles and organic designs, Taeuber suggests the ideal human, an individual integrated in nature.



Sophie TAEUBER

Komposition

[Composition]

1921

Gouache on paper

27 x 36.5 cm [10.5 x 14.5 in]

Collection, Stiftung Hans Arp und
Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Rolandseck,
Germany

Taeuber often used graph paper to develop the form and colour relationships found in her works. A series of gouaches and watercolours on paper in which small squares of colour produce rhythmic, grid-like patterns, seem to mimic this format. Hans Arp later said her images were constructed, like works of 'masonry'. These images prefigure the hard-edged, pure geometry of the constructivist works she developed in the 1930s, as Sophie Taeuber-Arp.





Sophie TAEUBER and Hans ARP
Untitled [Duo-Collage]
1918
Collage
82 × 62 cm [32 × 24.5 in]
Collection, Museum Insel
Hombroich, Neuss, Germany
Taeuber and Arp's collaborative
Duo-Collage attempted to remove
their individual egos as far as possible
from the creation process, as a means
of questioning the place of the artist in
artistic production. The impersonal,
geometric forms, which they considered
signs of the pure, absolute, and infinite,
were formed of coloured paper cut not
with scissors, but with a mechanical
paper-cutter. The grid system that
organizes the composition creates a
flat image that mimics the horizontal/
vertical emphasis of textile design.





Christian SCHAD

Untitled

1918

Schadograph

16.5 × 12.5 cm [6.5 × 5 in]

Collection, Kunsthau, Zurich

Schad began making his 'schadographs' in Geneva in 1918. Similar to Man Ray's 'rayographs', these photographs are cameraless images created by laying objects upon photosensitive paper and exposing them to light. The compositions were created, like Arp's collages, through the chance arrangement of objects upon the paper. The negative images produced display a tension between representation and abstraction; the ghostlike objects threaten to dissolve into illegibility.



Christian SCHAD

Composition in M

1920

Painted wood and metal relief

10 × 47.5 × 8 cm [27.5 × 19 × 3 in]

Collection, Kunsthau, Zurich

The style of Schad's painted wooden relief lies somewhere between the organic assemblages of Hans Arp and the mechanomorphic constructions of Francis Picabia, Man Ray and Marcel Duchamp. Schad was not unfamiliar to working in wood; he had been printing with woodcuts since 1913. He also worked with paint and collage. Assemblages such as *Composition in M* that incorporate different techniques and various found objects demonstrate the Dadas' interest in experimentation with methods and materials, as well as their insistence on pushing the boundaries between abstraction and representation, and between art and life.

Viking EGGELING

Composition

c. 1916

Oil on canvas

50 x 35.5 cm [20 x 14 in]

Collection, Kunstmuseum, Basel

Eggeling had met Hans Arp in Paris before the First World War, but did not arrive in Zurich until 1918. Like Arp, he was concerned with the search for universal forms. Linear elements, both geometric and organic, formed the basis of his visual language. Hans Richter remembered that 'As his starting-point, Eggeling had taken the most elementary pictorial element, the line ...' (Hans Richter, *Dada: Art and Anti-Art*, 1964). Much of his early work was executed in pencil but he also explored this visual language in oil paintings, such as *Composition*, that suggest an abstracted landscape. His linear forms, like those that make up the compositional structure here, were later allowed to extend beyond the canvas in his scroll images.

Julius EVOLA

Interior Landscape at 10.30

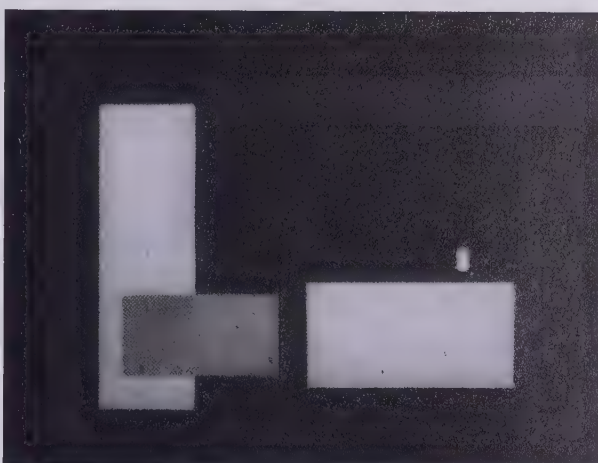
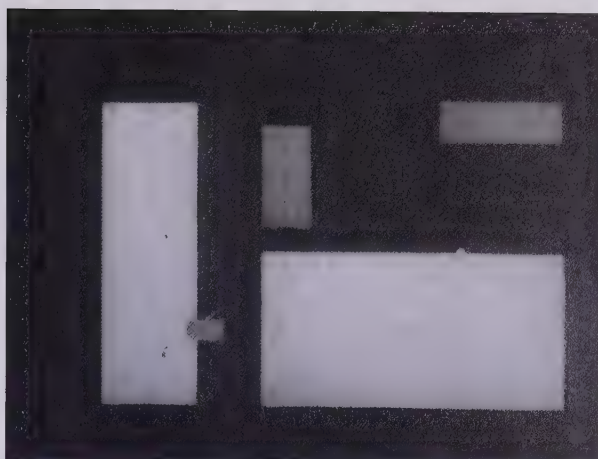
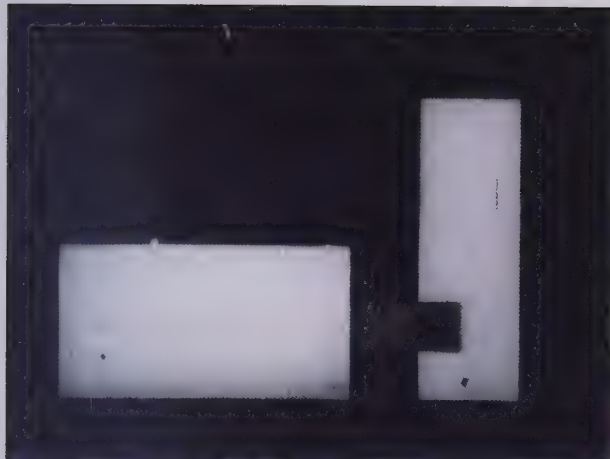
1919-20

Oil on canvas

70 x 54 cm [27.5 x 21 in]

Collection, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome

Evola's work during the period from 1918 to 1922 has been described as 'mystical abstraction'. *Interior Landscape at 10.30*, a dream-like scene, evokes the geometric and organic forms that were central to many of the Zurich group's experiments. Evola's works pose the question 'what is reality?' as elements of his compositions blend the seemingly recognizable and the abstract. While Evola held his own theories of idealist abstraction, he was also influenced by Tzara's 'Dada Manifesto 1918'. In April 1921 he held a dada exhibition at the Galleria Bragaglia in Rome, but shortly thereafter abandoned the movement.



Hans **RICHTER**

Rhythmus 21

[Rhythm 21]

c. 1921

Film, 3 min., black and white, silent

Richter and Eggeling began scroll paintings in 1918 in a dada rejection of traditional easel painting – and these scrolls soon developed into films. The two artists took their rolled drawings to the German film production company U.F.A., where they received technical advice. In 1920 they began using film cameras. After this time, Richter's visual vocabulary became more tailored to film: shapes were basic, but responded to the idea of motion. Richter wrote in 1927 of his abstract films, 'It is not the natural movement of the film that gives the objects their expression, but the artistic movement, that is to say, a rhythmical movement regulated by itself in which the variations and pulsations form part of the artistic design.'

– Hans Richter, 'Mouvement', *Schémas*, 1927

overleaf

Viking **EGGELING**

Symphonie diagonale

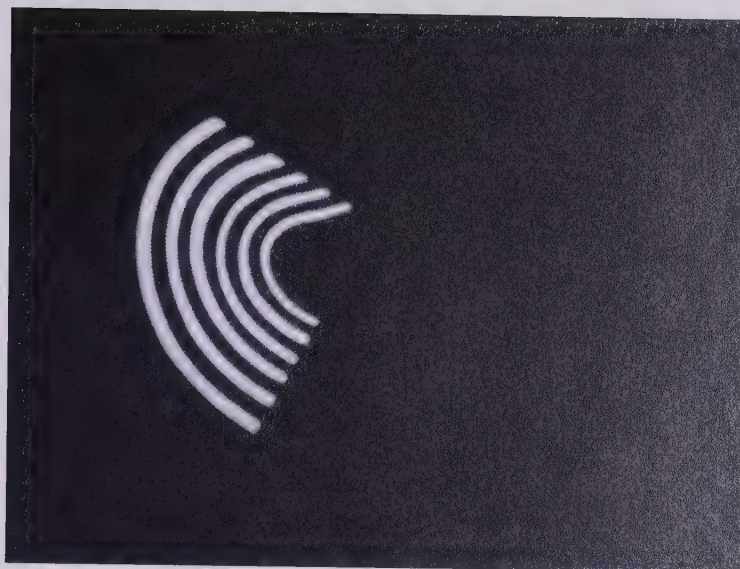
[Diagonal Symphony]

1923-24

Film, 5 min., black and white, silent

Eggeling experimented with variations and transformations of line through the metaphor of music, specifically through arrangements of 'contrapuntally contrasting pairs'. In this scheme, the line functions like the *basso continuo*, a steadiness that holds through variations, which he called the *Generalbass der Malerei*. In 1919 Eggeling and Richter collaborated on a series of 'optical orchestrations' – compositions on long rolls of paper. These abstract images, which some have compared to Japanese ideograms, describe the birth and growth of linear shapes and forms over time and space. Like the unwinding narrative of Asian scroll paintings, the linked images incorporate movement, change and flux; Eggeling had been interested in the visualization of these concepts in his early paintings and drawings, but realized the possibilities provided by their representation in filmic format: the scrolls were adapted into a film first screened on 3 May 1925 in Berlin.





NEW YORK

Marcel Duchamp and Francis Picabia came to New York in 1915

to avoid the war. They were well known in the New York art community due to their having participated in the Armory Show in 1913, where Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase* created a great uproar. These two Europeans were catalysts for young Americans to break with European traditions and experiment in non-conventional subject matters and materials. Inspired by American machinery, Picabia developed his playful, erotic mechanomorphic drawings while working with members of Alfred Stieglitz's group. Duchamp's readymades, especially his *Fountain*, challenged traditional notions of art and incited Man Ray and Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven to create works using found objects. Although reluctant to be labelled Dada, Duchamp's irony, his playfulness, his erotic puns, his urinal, his moustached Mona Lisa and his alter-ego Rose Sélavy are seen today as the epitome of dada provocation.

opposite

Marcel DUCHAMP

Nu descendant un escalier, no. 2

[Nude Descending a Staircase, No.2]

1912

Oil on canvas

147.5 x 89 cm [58 x 35 in]

Collection, Philadelphia Museum of Art

Such early works by Duchamp are often considered cubist, but the concerns represented here also correspond to his later dada projects. The image relates to his lifelong interest in the fourth dimension, mechanomorphic entities and the liminal. Like the stop-action photographic studies of movement made by Étienne-Jules Marey in the late nineteenth century, Duchamp's *Nude* is composed of a series of overlapping, simultaneously viewed moments in time. In this way the figure is also rendered ambiguous: its gender and even humanity becomes unclear. The elusive nature of the subject matter, which may have been suggested by a study by Eadweard Muybridge, as well as the radical transformation of the traditional theme of the nude, led to a poor reception at the 'Salon des Indépendents' in March 1912; it was also ridiculed when shown in New York at the 1913 'International Exhibition of Modern Art' (the Armory Show).



Marcel DUCHAMP

Roue de bicyclette

[Bicycle Wheel]

1913 [1951; third version after lost original]

Metal wheel mounted on painted wooden stool

h. 128.5 cm [50.5 in]

Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Like *Nude Descending a Staircase*, *Bicycle Wheel* embodies Duchamp's interest in motion and machinery. More important, however, is its role as the first of the 'readymades'. Duchamp's influential series of objects that broke with traditional notions of art. These readymades are mass-produced items that Duchamp chose to claim and exhibit as his own works of art, and sometimes altered and signed. Through them Duchamp called into question the notion of the artist as a technically skilled creator of unique objects and suggested that art was a relatively defined concept, with foundations in the realm of ideas and language, rather than in the retinal, or visually aesthetic.



Fountain

1917 [1963; replica after lost original]

Porcelain

h. 33.5 cm [14 in]

Collection, Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington, Indiana

As chair of the hanging committee of the 1917 Exhibition of Independent Artists in New York, Duchamp was doubtful about the organization's open admissions policy: 'no jury, no prize'. To test the claim, he purchased a porcelain urinal at the J.L. Mott Iron Works. After turning it ninety degrees and signing it 'R. Mutt 1917' he anonymously entered it in the show, whereupon an uproar ensued. When the directors, unaware of Mr Mutt's identity, rejected it, Duchamp resigned. *Fountain* disappeared, but not before it was photographed by Alfred Stieglitz in front of Marsden Hartley's 1913 painting *The Warriors*. Duchamp later recreated his work, during the 1960s. The second issue of *The Blind Man* (1917) was dedicated to the controversy and included this famous defence of the readymade by Beatrice Wood: 'Whether Mr Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view – created a new thought for that object.'



Marcel DUCHAMP

Belle haleine, eau de violette

[Beautiful Breath, Veil Water]

1921

Rectified readymade, perfume bottle with label, in cardboard box

16.5 x 11 cm [6 x 4 in]

With *Beautiful Breath*, made from a bottle of eau de toilette, Duchamp created his own 'mass-produced' item, or at least an object that appeared to be one. Using a photograph taken that year by Man Ray of Duchamp's gender-bending alter ego Rose Sélavy, he produced a label that reads 'Beautiful breath, veil water'. The veil recalls Duchamp's longtime interest in 'the bride', a liminal figure that appears in many works. A photograph of this object was reproduced on the cover of *New York Dada*, the journal through which the avant-garde activities of Duchamp and his circle were given their official name.



APOLINÈRE ENAMELED



Marcel DUCHAMP

Apolinère Enameled

1916-17

Corrected ready-made, advertisement for Sapolin Enamel, painted tin
24 x 34 cm [9.5 x 13.5 in]

Collection, Philadelphia Museum of Art

Duchamp created an entire typology of 'rectified', 'corrected' and 'assisted' readymades, each referring to various ways in which the artist manipulated his chosen mass-produced objects. *Apolinère Enameled* was produced from a metal display sign for Sapolin Enamel paint. Duchamp not only changed the larger text, in homage to his friend the French poet and critic Guillaume Apollinaire, he also added a reflection of the young girl in the mirror at right: unlike the 'artist' depicted here, Duchamp by this time had abandoned painting for more conceptual art. In this image he also altered the line 'Manufactured by Gerstendorfer Bros', to read 'Any act red by her ten or epergne', an example of nonsensical wordplay indicative of Duchamp's interest in language, text and puns.



L.H.O.O.Q.

Marcel DUCHAMP

L.H.O.O.Q.

1919 [1964; artist's replica]

Rectified ready-made,

chromolithograph

30 x 23 cm [12 x 9 in]

The humorous *L.H.O.O.Q.* is part of Duchamp's avant-garde stance against bourgeois morality, traditional definitions of art, and the veneration of the masterpiece and its creator. In this work, Duchamp simply added a moustache and beard to a chromolithograph (an inexpensive reproduction) of Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*. While making fun of rumours about Leonardo's sexuality and the mysterious identity of La Gioconda, Duchamp adds an iconoclastic punning caption. Read aloud in French, the letters L H O O Q sound like '*elle a chaud au cul*' ('she has a hot arse'). Duchamp subsequently gave Picabia permission to reproduce the image in his magazine but failed to give him the actual work. Picabia remade it, forgetting the beard; his new version appeared in 1920 in the twelfth issue of *391* under the title *Tableau Dada par Marcel Duchamp*.



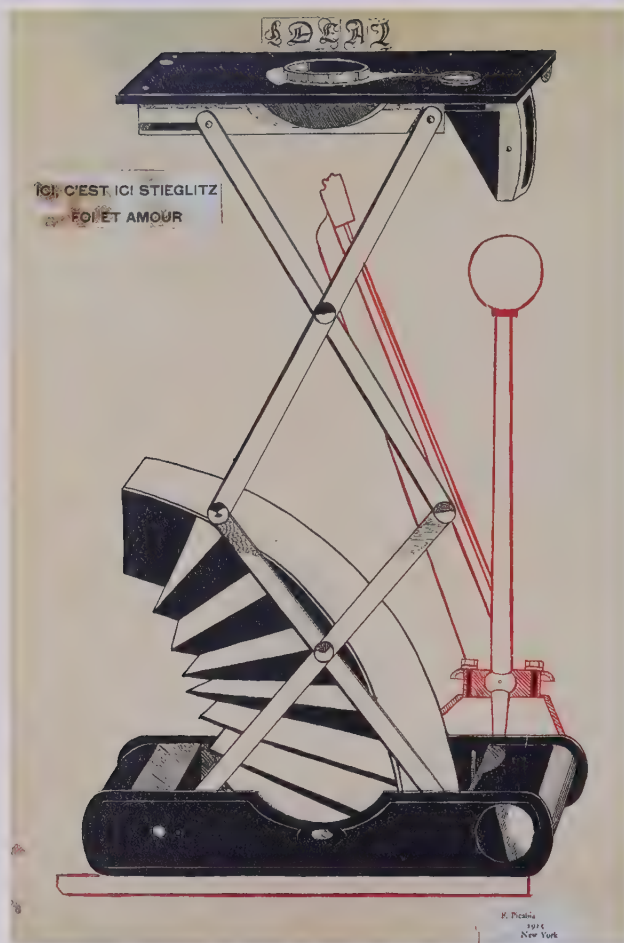
Marcel DUCHAMP

La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même
[The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even, or The Large Glass]
1915-23

Oil, varnish, lead foil, plumb-line on two [cracked] glass plates
277 × 175.5 cm [109 × 69 in]

Collection, Philadelphia Museum of Art

Described by Duchamp as 'definitively unfinished', *The Large Glass* concerns the sexual desires and frustrations of the nine mechanical 'bachelors' in the lower left corner and their attempt to strip the amorphous 'bride' who hovers above them. Made from two sheets of glass held in a metal frame, this 'anti-painting' can be seen as the culmination and convergence of a number of Duchamp's artistic concerns. Duchamp began the work in New York in 1915, but had been planning aspects of it since 1912; notes and studies for the piece were later reproduced in facsimile in *The Green Box* of 1934. To construct *The Large Glass* he spent a few hours each day meticulously manipulating lead foil, a tedious physical process that contrasts with his conceptual readymades. Duchamp also intended a book to accompany this complex image, but it was never written. He later considered this comment on the irrational nature of love and human desire 'completed' when it was accidentally cracked in transit after a 1927 exhibition in Brooklyn, New York.



Francis **PICABIA**

Ici, c'est ici Stieglitz

[Here, This is Stieglitz Here]

1915

Ink and collage

76 × 51 cm [30 × 20 in]

Collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Picabia met Alfred Stieglitz, photographer and gallery owner, on his first trip to New York in the spring of 1913. When Picabia returned to the United States in 1915 he quickly became a contributor to Stieglitz's journal *291*. This 'machine portrait' of Stieglitz appeared in a fold-out set of five mechanical portraits in the July/August 1915 issue. The rest of the series comprised a self-portrait, a 'young American girl' (possibly Agnes Meyer), Marius de Zayas and Paul Haviland. Stieglitz is represented as a sort of camera that has merged with the gear shaft and brake of an automobile. Despite the flattering words '*foi et amour*' (faith and love), the machine-Stieglitz is a dysfunctional contraption: the bellows of the camera are sagging, the car's gears are in neutral and the brake is engaged.

opposite

Francis **PICABIA**

Voilà la femme

[Behold the Woman]

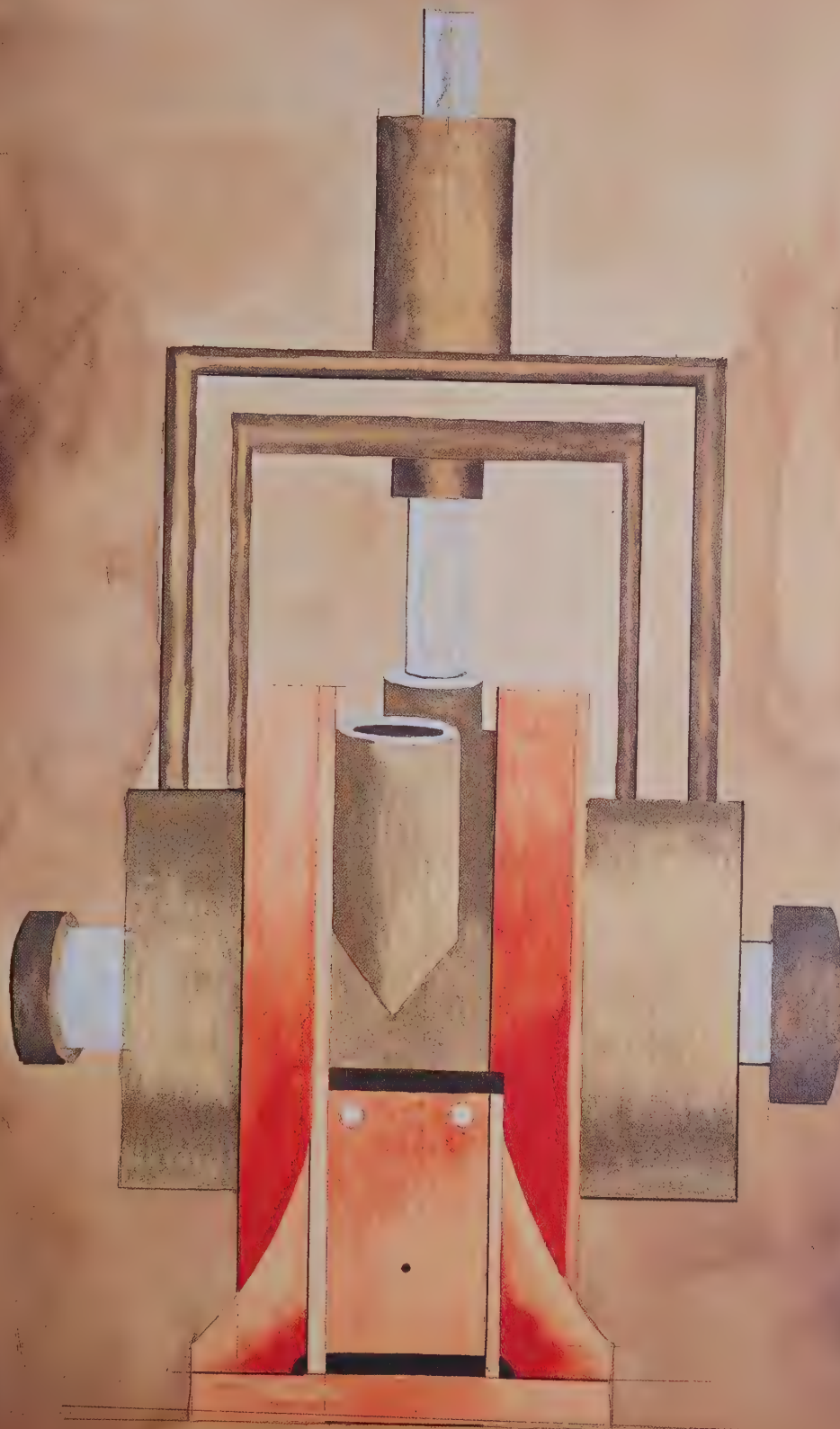
1915

Watercolour and oil on paper

75 × 49 cm [29.5 × 19 in]

Behold the Woman was one of sixteen works exhibited in Picabia's second show at the Modern Gallery, New York, which took place in January 1916. The pieces are representative of Picabia's continuing interest in the use of machine imagery to make statements about the human condition. This work depicts a symmetrical 'female' machine, iconic rather than functional. The central double cylinders, and the blue piston shaft that penetrates one of them, suggest a sexual theme. This is common to many of Picabia's machine images but went unmentioned by contemporary critics.

VOILÀ LA FEMME



Picabia



Francis PICABIA

Fille née sans mère

[Girl Born Without a Mother]

c. 1916-18

Gouache and metallic paint on paper

50 × 65 cm [19.5 × 25.5 in]

Collection, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh

Picabia's first version of this theme was a pen and ink drawing of a mechanomorphic being, also entitled *Girl Born Without a Mother*, that was reproduced in the June 1915 issue of 291. Although quite different in materials and style, the later image repeats the asymmetrical composition found in the first. Picabia appropriated a pre-existing diagram of a railway machine and remade the image by painting in a background of gold, thus covering up unwanted portions of the original image. He also added areas of green gouache to the remaining visible aspects of a flywheel and shaft. The resulting collage-like image exemplifies Picabia's interest in the metaphors of machinery and sexuality; as the flywheel turns, the shaft moves up and down replicating the mechanics of sexual intercourse. Further, the idea of a girl born without a mother is a reverse 'virgin birth', of an entity 'born' of the male, industrialized world.

Machine tournez vite

[Machine Turn Quickly]

c. 1916 18

Gouache and metallic paint on paper, mounted on canvas

49.5 × 32.5 cm [19.5 × 13 in]

Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Machine Turn Quickly, the composition of which resembles both the early and later images titled *Girl Born without a Mother*, once more explores the relationship between genders through mechanical metaphor. Here, two interlocking cogs, labelled '1' and '2', are referenced in the key at the lower left as 'woman' and 'man' respectively. Gold and black lines around the cogs suggest the diagramming of directional movement. The viewer may imagine the infinite spinning movement of the commanding title, but is left to wonder who is ultimately in control.



Parade amoureuse

[Amorous Parade]

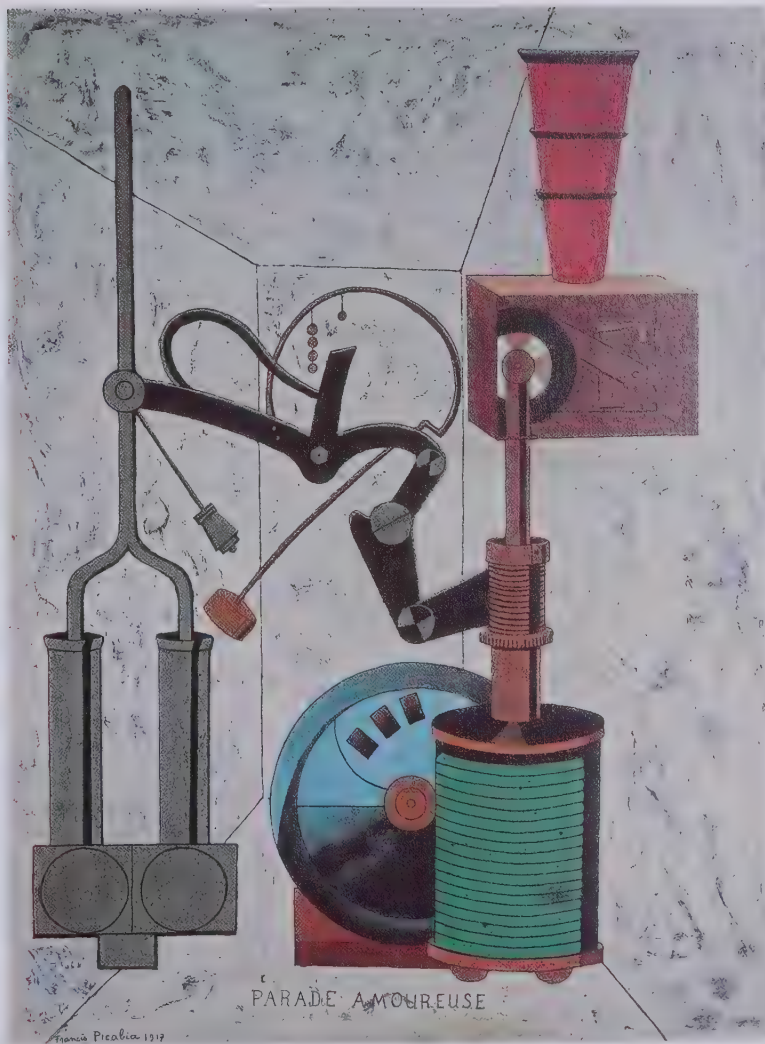
1917

Oil on canvas

96.5 × 73.5 cm [38 × 29 in]

Private Collection, on loan to National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

It has been suggested that the machine on the left, made of two cylinders similar to those of *Behold the Woman*, is female, while the larger machine with wheels and pistons may be male. Four diagonal lines behind the machines create a sense of depth. However, the machines seem to float on the surface of the image, as if painted on glass. The bluish hue that surrounds them supports this connection. *Amorous Parade* may have been influenced by Duchamp's *Large Glass*, and may even be seen as a consummation of the mechanical desire explored in that piece.





LA FEMME

man Ray · new York · 1920

MAN RAY

L'Homme, or La Femme

[Man, or Woman]

1917 [1920]

Photograph

51 × 38.5 cm [20 × 15 in]

Collection, Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

Man Ray photographed an everyday egg-beater, the composition lit so that a long shadow would be created. The subsequent image suggests both a human body with two legs, a torso and head, and, simultaneously, a phallus. Man Ray made an accompanying image entitled *Woman*, a photograph of an assemblage of two light reflectors and a series of clothespins. He later reprinted these photographs, switching the names so that *Man* became *Woman* and vice versa – another case, like Duchamp and his persona Rose Sélavy – of a dada questioning of the boundaries between genders.

MAN RAY

New York

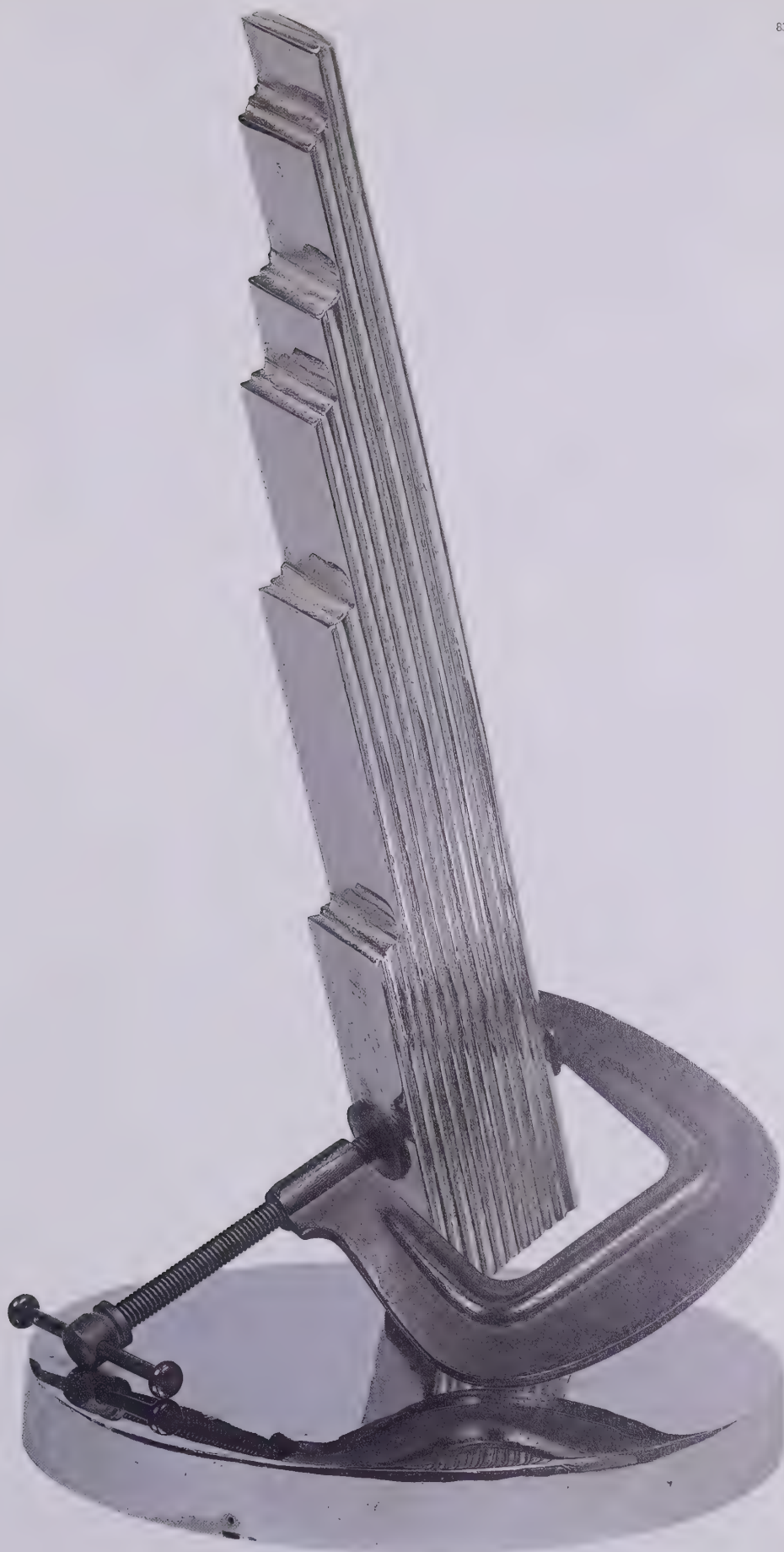
1917 [1966]

Chrome-plated metal and metal clamp

h. 44.5 cm [17.5 in]

Collection, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

Man Ray began his artistic career as a painter, but soon found himself taking photographs and making assemblages. In 1915 he met Duchamp and his work subsequently expanded to include a machine aesthetic not unlike those of Duchamp and Picabia. At the end of 1915 he moved from an artists' colony in Ridgefield, New Jersey, to New York City, perhaps a further inspiration for his technological works. Of his widening interests he stated that for each image, 'I use the medium that is best suited to express that idea.' In 1917 Man Ray turned to sculpture. *New York*, constructed of wood strips and a C-clamp, functions both as a readymade and as an illusionistic representation of the skyscrapers that surrounded him. He later remade it in chrome.





MAN RAY

Elevages de poussière

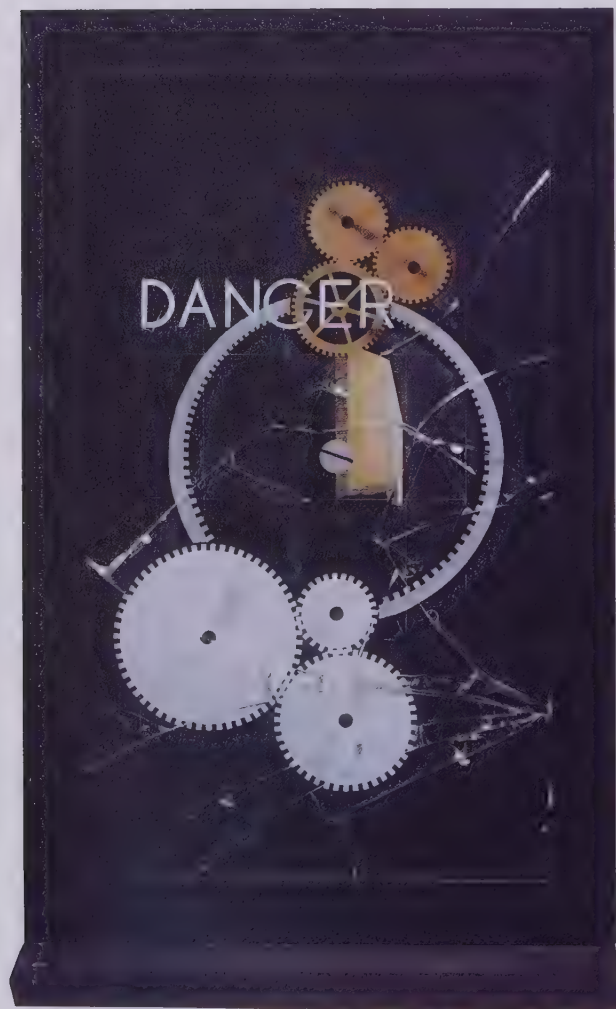
[Dust Breeding]

1920

Gelatin silver print

Collection, The University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City

Dust Breeding might be considered a collaboration between Duchamp and Man Ray. For a year Duchamp had allowed his *Large Glass* to lie on the floor of his studio and collect dust before Man Ray took this photograph. The work was illuminated by a strong light source, at the left, transforming the image of mechanical desire into a landscape. The chocolate grinder seen in the lower right corner and the waterfall above it now become features of a desiccated topography. A different view of the same work including a 'sky' (a blank area at the top) was later reproduced in the fifth issue of André Breton's Paris journal *Littérature* (new series) in October 1922, where it was accompanied by a French caption that translates as: 'View from an airplane by Man Ray. This is Rose Sélavy's territory. How arid it is. How fertile. How joyful. How sad.'



MAN RAY

Danger/Dancer, or L'Impossibilité

[Danger/Dancer, or The

Impossibility]

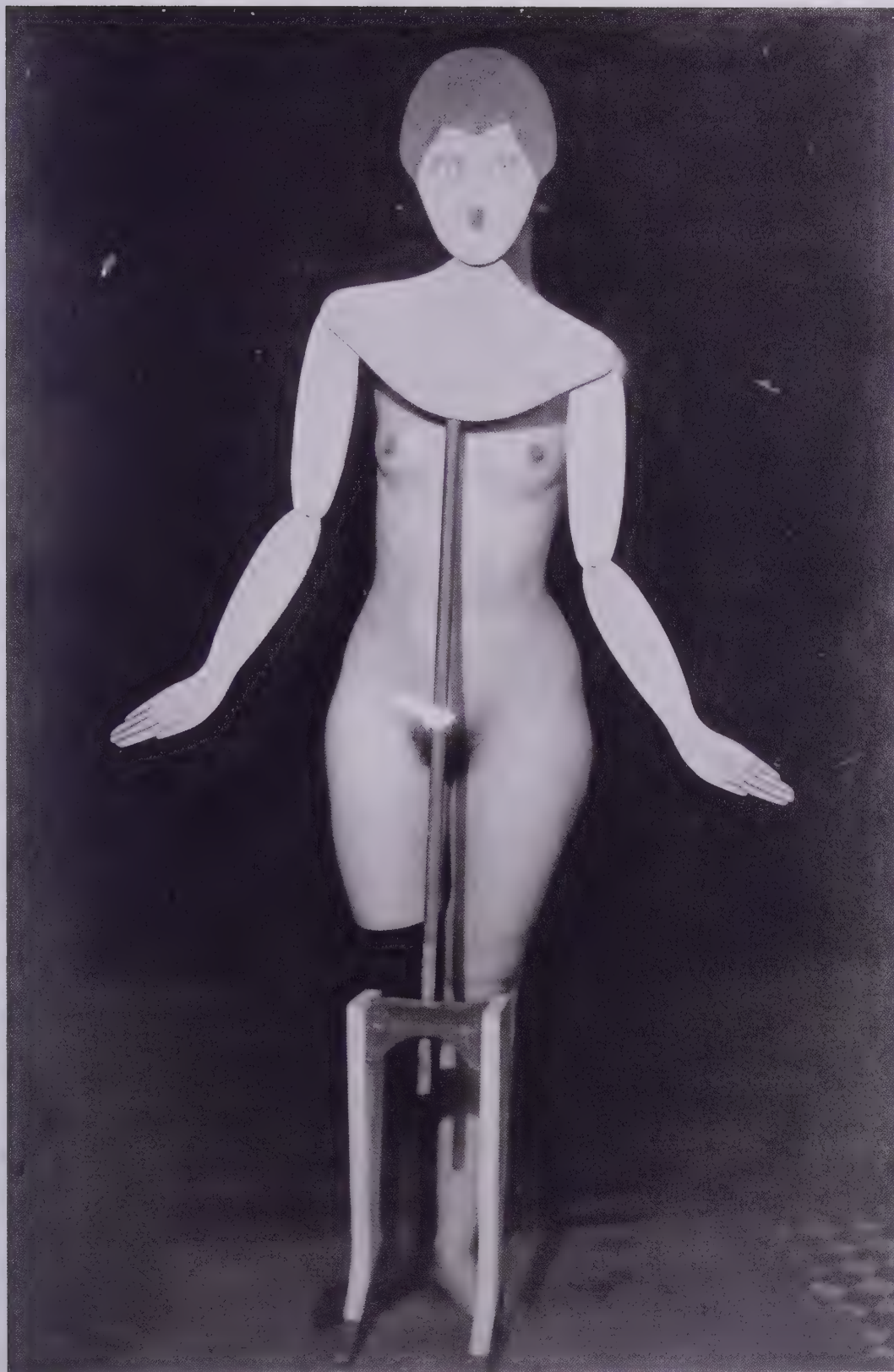
1920

Airbrush on glass with cog wheels

65.5 x 40 cm [26 x 14 in]

Collection, Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

Reminiscent of the interlocking cogs of Picabia's *Machine Turn Quickly*, *Danger/Dancer's* mechanomorphic form is inspired by human motion. Specifically, Man Ray's work, another dada image executed on glass, is said to suggest the 'gyrations of a Spanish dancer' (Arturo Schwarz, *Man Ray*). This machine, however, takes on an ominous quality as the word 'dancer' may also be read as 'danger'. The alternative title is *The Impossibility*, which may refer to the group of three interlocking cogs and their inability to turn and function together. The work therefore comments on the frustrations and risks that arise in relationships between the sexes, and between man and machine in the modern world.



MAN RAY

Portemanteau,

[Coatstand]

1920

Gelatin silver print on
original mount

23 x 15 cm (9 x 6 in)

Collection, Musée national d'art
moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou,
Paris

Man Ray created a number of
photographs in which the boundary
between a human body and an object is
blurred. *Coatstand* is one such image.
Labelled 'dadaphoto' when it appeared in
New York Dada in 1921, the photograph
is of a woman whose body is partially
obscured by a mannequin with a
shocked face and stiff, outstretched
arms. The merging of object and woman,
and of representation and the real, relates
to the general interest of the New York
Dadas in the relationship between
humans and machines.





Baroness Elsa von FREYTAG-LORINGHOVEN

87

Portrait of Marcel Duchamp

c. 1920

Assemblage, miscellaneous objects in a wine glass

Lost work; platinum silver print by Charles Sheeler

20.5 x 15 cm [8 x 6 in]

Now lost, except in this photograph by Charles Sheeler, Freytag-Loringhoven's 1920 'object portrait' of Duchamp is, like her 1919 portrait of him, an assemblage of found objects. Feathers, a ring, a clock-spring and gear, a coil and a fishing lure are situated in a wine glass. The assemblage resembles a trophy, or one of her unusual hats (made from baskets, lids and other everyday items). The portrait appeared in *The Little Review* (9, 2, winter 1922) alongside a poem, also by the Baroness, entitled 'Affectionate'.

opposite

Morton SCHAMBERG and Baroness Elsa von FREYTAG-LORINGHOVEN

God

1917

Mitre box and plumbing trap

26.5 x 29.5 x 10 cm [10.5 x 11.5 x 4 in]

Collection, Philadelphia Museum of Art

The authorship of the object called *God* has been the source of disagreement.

The work is made from found objects of the type that cluttered the apartment of the eccentric Baroness: she had a long-standing habit of petty thieving and shoplifting.

As a great admirer of Duchamp and his ideas, particularly the use of the readymade, Freytag-Loringhoven seems the likely artist behind *God*, another plumbing-related object, like the famous *Fountain*. Schamberg's contribution probably included taking a photograph of the work. Such collaborative efforts between artists and photographers were a common part of New York avant-garde practices.

opposite

John COVERT

Brass Band

1919

Oil cord [probably sisal fibre],
nails and possibly tempera over
gesso on commercial pieced wood,
covered both sides in cardboard
66 x 61 cm [26 x 24 in]

Collection, Yale University Art
Gallery, New Haven

The critic Henry McBride wrote, 'Mr
Covert's muse is at home in what most
artists would consider the unlikeliest of
materials' ('Views and Reviews of Art',
The Sun and New York Herald, 25 April
1920). Made of twine glued to the surface
of composition board, *Brass Band* is an
image of multiple references. The
patterns of string recall the cords on the
sides of drums, or as McBride noted, the
folds of an accordion. A parallel may be
drawn with the complicated rhythms of
jazz music, which was popular at that
time in New York. Finally, similar lines
of string may be seen on one version of
Duchamp's *Chocolate Grinder* (no. 2,
1914), which was reproduced on the
cover of *The Blind Man* (2, 1917).



John COVERT

Time

1919

Oil and upholstery tacks on
composition board

65 x 60 cm [25.5 x 23.5 in]

Collection, Yale University Art
Gallery, New Haven

Like his cousin Walter Arensberg,

Covert was interested in mathematics
and cryptography, the study of codes.

The complex assemblage *Time* calls
for decipherment. The textured surface
contains various numbers, letters,

formulae and other symbols on the
theme of time. The word 'tack' sounds
like the 'tick-tock' of a clock. The letters
'A.M.' and 'P.M.' appear at the right and
left respectively. In 1919 Einstein's

Theory of Relativity was just coming into
popular consciousness: his formula for
the constancy of the speed of light ($x=c/t$,
where c =velocity of light and t =time) can
be seen just below 'A.M.' on the right.



RONGWRONG



Marcel DUCHAMP

Cover of *Rongwrong*

1917

Collection, Philadelphia Museum of Art

In addition to *The Blind Man*, Duchamp also worked on the single issue of *Rongwrong*. He designed the cover, which included a photograph of a matchbook with a picture on the front of two dogs 'greeting' one another. Looking much like a tail, one match is pulled out of the book as if about to be used. Only one issue of *Rongwrong* was ever published. To avoid divisive competition the New York circle held a chess match to decide which of their publications would represent the group and cater to their small audience. Picabia won. *391* became the main publication of Dada in New York, and *Rongwrong* ceased to exist.

The New York Dada Group

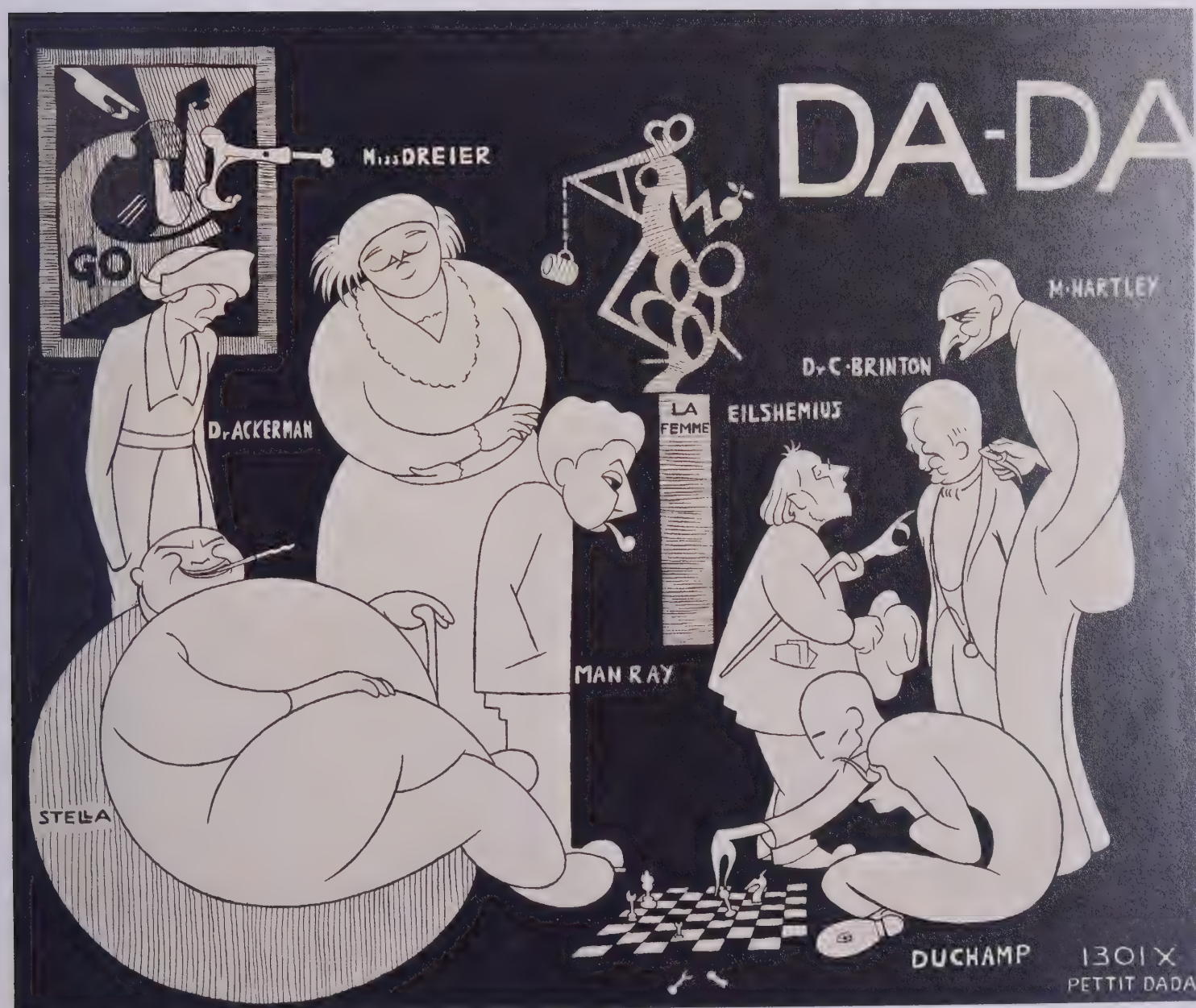
c. 1921

Pen and ink wash on paper

28.5 x 37 cm [11 x 14.5 in]

Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

On 1 April 1921 the Société Anonyme invited the public to a dada evening. 'Do you want to know what a dada is?' asked the invitation. The small gathering that resulted was recorded in this cartoon, which depicts attendees Katherine Dreier (President of the Société), Dr Phyllis Ackerman (a former philosophy professor), the painter Joseph Stella, and Dadas Man Ray and Marcel Duchamp. At the right the artist Louis Michel Eilshemius, art critic Dr Christian Brinton and artist Marsden Hartley (the keynote speaker) are talking. The works of art represented seem derived from a cubist, rather than dada, aesthetic. The assemblage labelled *La femme*, a woman with an apple and dangling cup, may refer to the work of Alexander Archipenko. The painting includes the word 'GO', a pointing hand and a severed foot, which may have been inspired by Man Ray's 1916 work *Symphony Orchestra*.



BERLIN

Aligning themselves with the Spartacus League, which wanted to establish a working-class republic, the Berlin Dadas were politically active in their works and events. They made interventions in mass media, subverting the propagation of bourgeois pre-war values and traditions. Replacing their paintbrushes and paint with scissors and glue, they cut up newspapers and illustrated magazines, recontextualizing these fragments: reality as fixed by society is either dissolved or exposed in these works, as in Hannah Höch's critical examination of the media creation of the 'new woman'. Berlin was the scene of the landmark First International Dada Fair of 1920, the most powerful dada exhibition. Decidedly anti-art and non-commercial, the Berlin Dada show gave poster slogans the same importance as collages.

opposite

Raoul HAUSMANN

Der Kunstkritiker

[The Art Critic]

1919-20

Photomontage

32 x 25.5 cm [12 x 10 in]

Collection, Tate, London

Hausmann's *Art Critic* is considered one of the first photomontages. The bright orange background is one of his optophonetic poster-poems. To this Hausmann added photographs, ink stamps, part of a banknote, newspaper clippings, and markers of style such as spats and a brogue shoe. These symbols of commerce and fashion suggest the connection between the art world and capitalism, with its trendy judgements and fluctuating valuations. Beneath the woman Hausmann attached his own visiting card that gives him the title 'President of the Sun, the Moon and the little Earth ...' In the centre stands the art critic, American pencil in hand, ready to judge what is before him; his eyes and mouth, however, are covered and re-drawn. Some have read this figure as George Grosz (whose own stamped 'signature' appears twice, both times crossed out). He is satirized by Hausmann, whose opposing views on art later caused the two colleagues to part ways.



Raoul HAUSMANN

Dada siegt

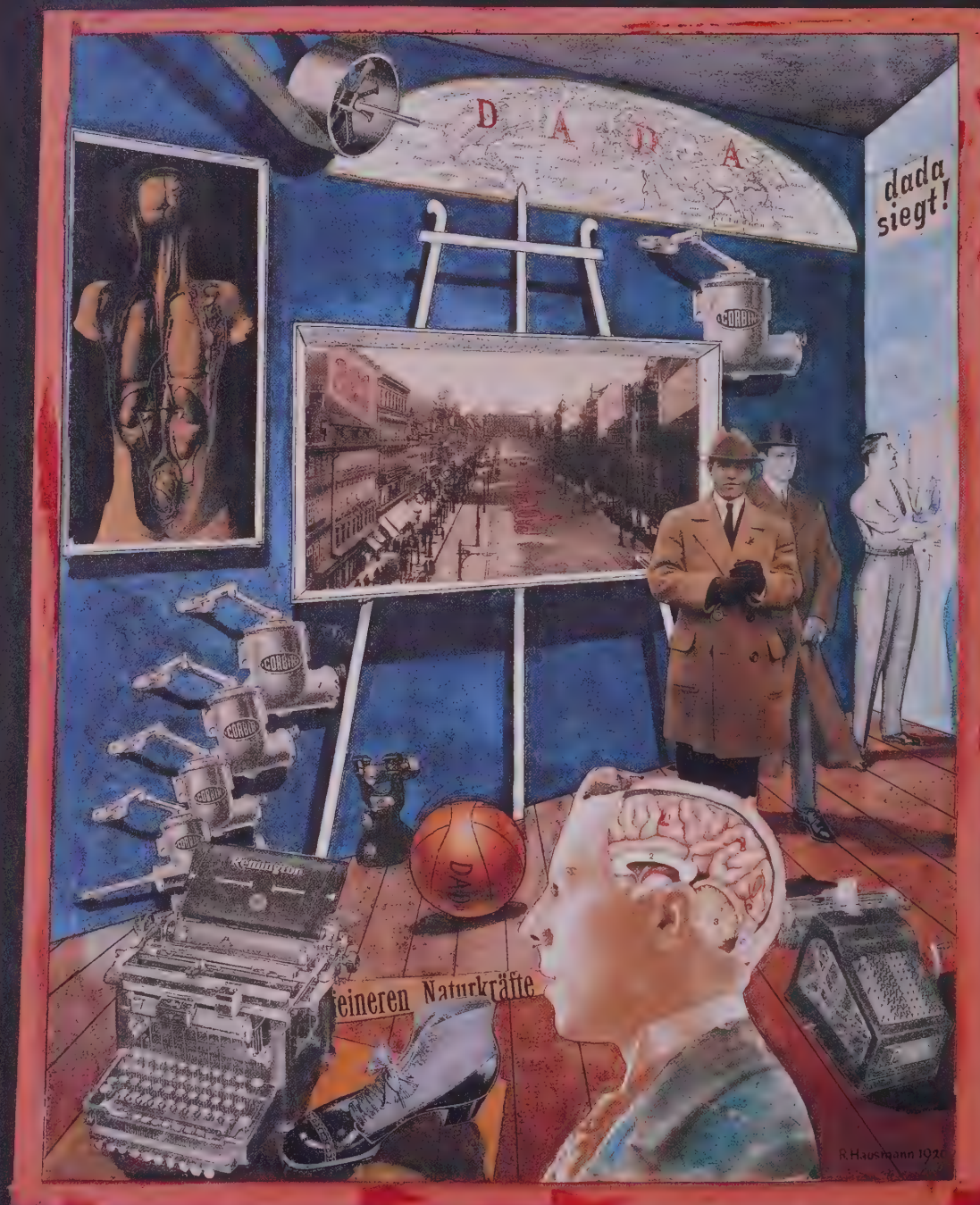
[Dada Conquers]

1920

Photomontage

60 x 42.5 cm [23.5 x 17 in]

The setting in *Dada siegt* is the theatrical stage wherein Dada announces its triumph over the world. Hausmann stands at the back of the shallow space beside an easel that displays an image of the Wenzelplatz in Prague, a stop on the 1920 Dada Tour undertaken by Hausmann, Johannes Baader and Richard Huelsenbeck. The city has been conquered by Dada: flags in the plaza now read '391' (the title of a dada magazine started by Francis Picabia) and 'dada'. Above the easel hovers a map of the northern hemisphere, while on the left is an anatomical model of a human torso. Machines, including calculators and typewriters, are in the foreground. In the centre foreground is a man whose brain has been exposed to reveal the word 'dada!'; like Prague his mind has been conquered by the Dada movement.



Dada siegt

Mechanischer Kopf: Der Geist
unserer Zeit

[Mechanical Head: The Spirit of
Our Time]

c. 1920

Assemblage

h. 32.5 cm [13 in]

Collection, Musée national d'art
moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou,
Paris

Hausmann's *Mechanical Head* addresses the issue of identity, generalized through the use of a bland-featured hairdresser's mannequin. Whereas Sophie Taeuber-Arp described the organic and natural as the prime origin of the human self, Hausmann's work emphasizes the material aspects of culture and their effect on personality (the self as cultural construct); a comment on the bourgeois preoccupation with commodities. Affixed to the head – Western seat of the mind, of thought and identity – are instruments of the quantifiable: a tape measure, a watch, a crocodile wallet, a collapsible aluminum cup, a printing cylinder and part of a camera. Hausmann's *Head* also references increasing mechanization.





Raoul HAUSMANN

Tatlin lebt zu Hause

[Tatlin at Home]

1920

Photomontage

41 x 28 cm [16 x 11 in]

Collection, Moderna Museet, Stockholm

Hausmann's interest in Russian artist Vladimir Tatlin stemmed from his understanding of him as a revolutionary, rather than from direct knowledge of his works. The Berlin group, which referenced the artist in a poster at the 1920 Dada Fair ('Art is Dead. Long live the machine art of Tatlin'), was drawn to his notion of an impersonal, mechanical art created by an artist/worker. The photomontage technique itself responds to the concept of mechanical art: Hausmann and Hannah Höch wanted their images of appropriated material to appear machine-made. In this picture, Tatlin's technologically-orientated mind is made of automobile parts that issue from his head. Hausmann consistently used the motif of the machine-head to demonstrate the concept of the 'new man' in a revolutionary society.



Raoul HAUSMANN

ABCD

1923-24

Photomontage

40.5 x 28.5 cm [16 x 11 in]

Collection, Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

Described as a summary of his dada activities and interests, *ABCD* was constructed after the members of Club Dada had gone their separate ways. Letters of the alphabet are set between Hausmann's teeth as if he is screaming out one of his optophonetic poster-poems. An assortment of materials related to dada activities and other events is incorporated, including tickets from the Kaiser's jubilee. A Czech banknote, referring to dada tours in Prague, and part of an announcement designed by El Lissitzky for a September 1923 Hanover Merz evening with Hausmann and Schwitters, are below. The notions of travel and place are manifest in photographs of outer space and a map of Harrar, Ethiopia, former address of poet Arthur Rimbaud, whose work later inspired the Surrealists. Finally, a medical diagram of a gynaecological examination is at the bottom, an example of Hausmann's interest in the motif of the anatomical model.

Raoul HAUSMANN

Der eiserne Hindenburg

[The Iron Hindenburg]

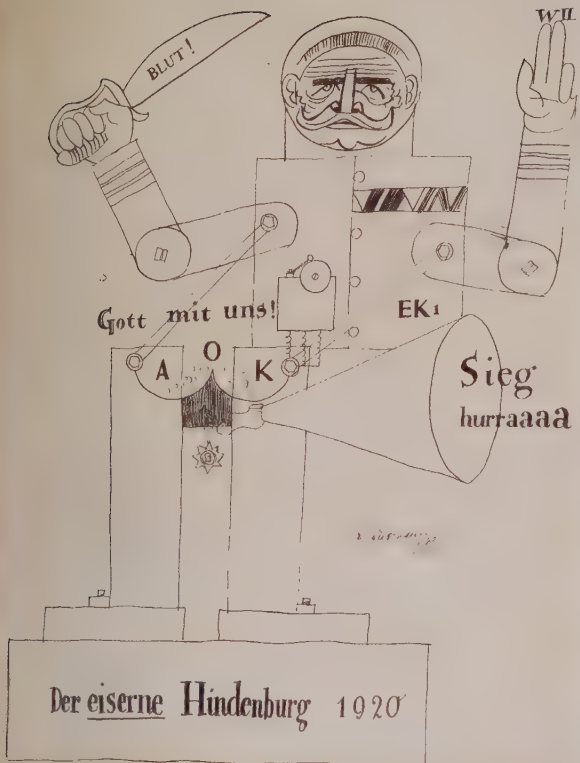
1920

Indian ink on tissue paper

39.5 x 26.5 cm [15.5 x 10.5 in]

Collection, Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

In 1921 Malik Verlag published Hausmann's *Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!* which contained twelve satirical drawings of military leaders and politicians. In each image the individuals depicted are conceived as machines; often they are divided in half at the waist and have megaphones protruding from their genitals or backsides from which emanate slogans and cheers. Hausmann referred to these images as 'grotesques', and indeed the various leaders are rendered both unnatural and bizarre. This caricature of Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg describes him as a stiff yet powerful machine. The word 'blood' appears on his upraised sword and he seems to cheer 'God be with us' and 'Victory hurrah!' Finally, between his legs hangs a military medal. Hausmann's images from *Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!* ridicule nationalism and the mechanical, inhuman leaders' jingoistic catchphrases.



George GROSZ

Prost Noske!

[Cheers Noske!]

Cover of *Die Pleite*, no.3, 1919

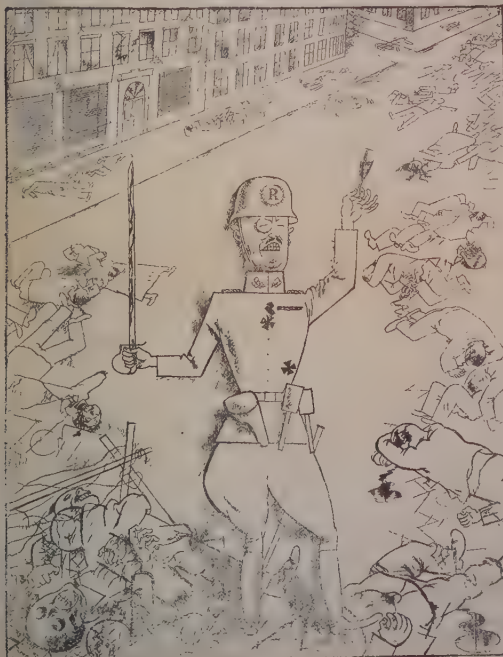
42 x 25.5 cm [16.5 x 11 in]

Collection, Stiftung Archiv der Akademie der Künste, Berlin

This image, captioned 'Cheers Noske! The proletariat is disarmed!', was created in response to a particular conflict in the struggle for power in Berlin after the First World War. The work appeared on the cover of the third issue of *Die Pleite* (Bankruptcy), and shows the aftermath of events that took place in March 1919. That month the Communists had called a general strike. Gustav Noske, the Defence Minister of the Social Democratic Party, then in power, deployed forty thousand troops to quell street fighting and to put down the revolutionaries of the political Left, who had seized control of public buildings. *Freikorps* (militia) and army personnel were ordered to kill anyone holding a weapon; when the conflict was over more than one thousand people were dead. Grosz, who spent these days in hiding, depicted the massacre in his political cartoon of a German officer, sword in one hand, champagne in the other, toasting Noske's victory.

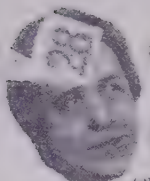
Die Pleite

30 Pf. 1. Jahrgang, Nr. 3 Der Malik-Verlag, Berlin-Leipzig Anfang April 1919 30 Pf.



Prost Noske! - das Proletariat ist entwaffnet!

Maschinenfabrik



Bernhardia
das Sühnopfer
vom Jäger ohne Hemd

Das neugeborene Kind

Nein! Nein! Nein!

33 33 00

Die alten

Die junge Kunst

M. Kempinski
Massenmord
& Co.

Heimatglocke

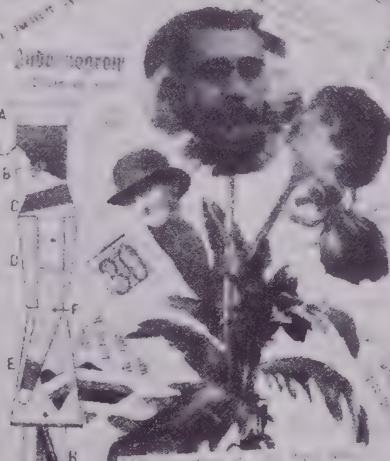
Dank ihm

Der Vielgeliebte

Auf Goethes Pfaden

Rettet die Ehre!

Unentbehrlich



Mein Sonnenb

Antonia

Alle Helden von Cannenberg

Anton

Dortfinger-Bein

Ein Triumph der Wissenschaft!
Tausende dankbarer Damen und Herren!

GROSZ

Wloske in Poldo
An Tolstoi



George GROSZ and John HEARTFIELD

Corrected Masterwork: Henri

Rousseau, Selbstbildnis

[Henri Rousseau, Self-Portrait]

1920

Photomontage

Lost work; reproduced in the

catalogue of the First

International Dada Fair, 1920

In the catalogue for the Dada Fair were

reproductions of two 'corrected'

masterpieces by Grosz and Heartfield.

These mimicked the focus of traditional

exhibition catalogues on masterworks.

This reproduction of Henri Rousseau's

1890 painting entitled *Moi-même*,

portrait-paysage (Myself, portrait-

landscape) depicts the artist, brush and

palette in hand, in Paris. Grosz and

Heartfield added a lacy element, a

second Eiffel Tower, a flag reading 'da

da', a chair on the left, an advertisement

for cakes and a large building. Paris has

been overtaken in the name of Dada. A

photograph of Raoul Hausmann replaces

the face and body of Rousseau, although

he too holds a brush and palette.



George GROSZ and John HEARTFIELD

Corrected Masterwork: Pablo

Picasso, *La Vie heureuse* - Dr

Carl Einstein gewidmet

[Pablo Picasso, the Happy Life -

dedicated to Dr Carl Einstein]

1920

Photomontage

Lost work; reproduced in the

catalogue of the First

International Dada Fair, 1920

On the second page of the catalogue for

the First International Dada Fair was this

'corrected' reproduction of a Pablo

Picasso collage, *Girl's Head with Small*

Bird (1913). Continuing the dada habit of

manipulating icons of art history, Grosz

and Heartfield added images and text,

including the words 'Grosz' and

'perfected art'. It is difficult to discern the

collage's correct orientation, a comment

on Picasso's use of multiple viewpoints

and dada ambiguity.

opposite

George GROSZ

Germania ohne Hemd

[Germany Shirtless]

1919

Collage

Dimensions unknown [lost work]

In this montage of texts and

photographs, Grosz presents the chaos

of words and photographs that collide

with one another in the mass media that

shapes the soul of each bourgeois

('Schulzens Seele'). He includes

nationalistic slogans put forth by the

government and the press. However,

Grosz's accompanying images question

the veracity of these communiqués. At

the top a monkey, traditionally a symbol

of thoughtless mimicry, wears the Iron

Cross and appears to say 'Germany is

now the most democratic and peaceful

state in the world'. Contradicting this

statement are soldiers and the words

'mass murderer'. Below the soldiers is

the bust of Kaiser Wilhelm II with an

angel, representing peace, at his back;

below him is an ironic 'essential'. Other

phrases of text found in the collage

include 'respect law and state', 'Noske

in Potsdam' and 'Incontinence'. Through

these juxtapositions Grosz makes clear

the constructed nature of the culture of

nationalism.

George GROSZ

Republikanische Automaten

[Republican Automatons]

1920

Watercolour on paper

60 × 47.5 cm [23.5 × 18.5 in]

Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

In 1920, Grosz painted a series of watercolours influenced by a constructivist aesthetic. Many depict cityscapes in which sterile, geometrical shapes form the basis of buildings and figures. The result is a rationalized place peopled with mechanical figures. In *Republican Automatons* crippled war veterans on a city street express nationalistic sentiments. A central figure, a faceless man wearing a bowler hat, waves a German flag. The number twelve, found at the centre of targets, renders him a victim. To his left, on the right of the picture, a second veteran, wearing the Iron Cross, cheers '1, 2, 3 Hurrah!', the words issuing from his empty head; Grosz suggests that even the catastrophe of the First World War has not dented German nationalism. Grosz's impersonal signature, an ink stamp bearing his name, has been applied at bottom left.





George GROSZ

Der Sträfling: Monteur John Heartfield

[The Convict: Monteur John Heartfield after Franz Jung's Attempt to Get Him Up on His Feet, or The Engineer Heartfield]

1920

Watercolour and photomontage on paper

42 × 30.5 cm [16 × 12 in]

Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

The dada notion of the artist as an engineer or mechanic resulted from the movement's revolt against Expressionism and Romantic ideas of the artist as creator. The artist as worker, rather than privileged individual, also appealed to their political goals. In this work, known as *The Engineer Heartfield*, Grosz's collaborator John Heartfield bears a machine in place of a medal on his chest and stands in a sterile space, his fists clenched as if ready for a fight. A glimpse of the city is in the background; the text reads 'Good luck in your new home', his prison-like living quarters. In the catalogue to the First International Dada Fair, Wieland Herzfelde (brother of the subject – Helmut Herzfelde before he changed his name) described the figure in this way: 'His face shows human abilities, bitterness, disillusionment, envy, pessimism and obstinacy in Grosz's typical straightforwardness.'



George GROSZ

Die Kommunisten fallen und die Devisen steigen

[The Communists Fall and the Stock Market Rises]

1920

Photolithograph

30.5 × 45 cm [12 × 17.5 in]

Reproduced in *Gott Mit Uns* [God With Us], Malik Verlag, 1920

Collection, Stiftung Archiv der Akademie der Künste, Berlin

Grosz's album of nine photolithographs *God With Us* attacks the collaboration of the military and capitalist leaders of the Weimar Republic. The portfolio, published by Malik Verlag, was sold at the 1920 Dada Fair, where it led to a conviction on charges of defamation of the Germany army for Grosz and his publisher Wieland Herzfelde. The images depict military brutality and are accompanied by titles in French, English and German. The German title, 'The Communists Fall and the Stock Market Rises', is based on a phrase from the writings of Rosa Luxemburg: 'Dividends rise and workers fall'. The French title of the work reads 'Stamp out starvation'; the English title is 'Blood is the best sauce'. *Freikorps* kill workers in the background while an indifferent business man and officer share a meal.

CLUB DER BLAUEN MILCHSTRASSE

AUSTRIA

Ac. 12. (ARDUA) 6⁰⁰
(12. März 1919)

Mittwoch
6 Uhr

(erit in orbe ultima) Potsdamerstr. 28

Wahrlich das nicht an den Vulkan 'des
Feuerhals' kommen, als gewöhnlicher Mensch auf
der Erde geboren sein? Wissen Sie denn, was
ein gewöhnlicher Mensch ist?

Dadaisten gegen Weimar

solange es einen Papst gibt,
ist es auch einen Christus.

Am Donnerstag, den 6. Februar 1919, abends 7^{1/2} Uhr, wird im
Kaisersaal des Rheingold (Bellevuestraße) der

OBERDADA

Erklärung des Erdballs

verkündigt werden nach dem Wort der Zeitung:

„Wir werden in diesem Jahre wahrscheinlich noch einmal wählen,
den Präsidents, das Volkshaus. Und dann wollen wir uns nicht mehr bloß
mit dem Instinkt, der mechanischen Zielsicherheit der unbewußt ahnungs-
vollen Masse bescheiden, sondern das persönliche Genie s. ch. n. gehö, das
wir in irgend einer Schicht unseres Volkes endlich doch und doch hervor-
gebracht haben müssen, wenn wir nicht schon jetzt eine abgestorbene Rasse
sein sollen!“

Zu dieser Suche werden alle geistigen und geistlichen Arbeiter,
Volksbeauftragte, Bürger und Genossen beiderlei Geschlechts (Soldaten
ohne Rangabzeichen) erscheinen, denen an dem Glück der Menschheit
 gelegen ist.

Wir werden Weimar in die Luft sprengen. Berlin ist der Ort
der... Es wird niemand und nichts geschont werden.
Man erscheine in Massen!

Der dadaistische Zentralrat der Weltrevolution.

DADA ER, HAUSMANN, TRISTAN TZARA, GEORGE GROSZ,
MARCEL JANCO, HANS ARP, RICHARD HULSENBECK, FRANZ DONT,
EUGEN ERNST, A. R. MEYER

ER

Kurt Wolff

ARDUA-
DEPESCHE

Zeitrechnung. Alle Menschen nennen die
nächste „B“ und so fort bis „Z“ kommen.
In der alten Rechnung trägt, interessiert
die Vierteljahrhunderte gezählt. Die
erste A-B-C der neuen Zeit ge-
nannt A², B² u. s. w. So
bis zur Zahl „40“. Will man
einzeln gezählt haben, so
Es genügt, dass alle Welt

Die Monate werden

Es hat an
der Göttin
Leitspru-
wissen

Anatomie

Protest

Baader

Erklärung (HADO)

Was bisher über den Dadaismus bekannt wurde, ist unvoll-
ständig. Wer über dada unterrichtet sein will, muß sich die
Dokumente zeigen lassen, die am
Mittwoch, den 7. Mai,
nachmittags 3 Uhr, in die Hand des Direktors der NATIONALZEITUNG
Viktor Hahn gegeben wurden. Außerdem die Dokumente, die auf
der Reichskanzlei, im Büro des Reichspräsidenten, und
seit dem 12. Mai, nachmittags 5^{1/2} Uhr, in der Kanzlei der National-
versammlung liegen.
Das Handbuch des Oberdadaismus ist ein von Hand
gefertigtes Buch, in einem einzigen Exemplar, 30/45 cm groß und
15 cm dick. Es kann nach schriftlicher Vereinbarung der Stunde im
ZENTRALAMT DES DADAISMUS, Berlin-Steglitz, Zimmermannstr. 34,
besichtigt werden. — Trotzdem bleibt das Innerste des dada
Geheimnis. — Freimaurer und Jesuiten sind nicht-dada.
(„Dadaistische Abende“ sind nur Verschleierrungen und Flugmaschinen.)

Der internationale Oberdada.
(Die Entente wird an dada sterben!)

Aus der Reihe der Dokumente:
Sprengung der Nationalversammlung am 8. Februar 1919 und Verkündung
der PRÄSIDENTSCHAFT DES ERDBALLS.
Das Flugzeug der neuen Zeitrechnung A. 12.
Geheimer Oberdadaismus.
Der Tod des Oberdadaismus.
Wiedererweckung in der 8. 2. vom 11. April.
Worte an SCHEIDEMANN während der Verhandlung.
Das wahre Instrument der Welt.
In Berlin.
Werden und ist nur das Wort.
Sonderausgabe „G. 10“ u. s. w.
30. Planung an dada.
Die Begriffe sind zu...

13. Mai 1919
BAADER

Geschäftsstelle: Steglitz, Zimmermannstr. 34
Sprechzeit von 8–9 vormittags.

Johannes BAADER

Dada Milchstrasse

[Dada Milky Way]

c. 1919–20

Collage

50.5 x 30.5 cm [20 x 12 in]

Collection, Kunsthaus, Zurich

Baader, an architect, likened himself not only to a dada constructor, but to the Creator of new worlds. His interventions into political, religious and cultural processes defined his dada activities as events that questioned the constructed boundaries between art and life — his collages are amalgamations of ephemera from his own life. *Dada Milky Way* combines pieces by the dada group, mainly textual works, overlaid on a poster by Raoul Hausmann. A fragment from Grosz and Heartfield's *Corrected Masterwork: Henri Rousseau*. *Selbstbildnis* appears to the right. The word 'Oberdada'. Baader's official dada title is centrally placed.

Gutenberggedenkenblatt

[Gutenberg Commemorative Sheet]

1920

Collage

35 × 46.5 cm [14 × 18 in]

Collection, Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

The Gutenberg Commemorative Sheet is composed almost entirely of textual fragments that refer to events organized by Baader, and clippings from the popular press. Creating a chaos of texts, mainly headlines, Baader comments on the way our understanding of the world is filtered through contradictory mass-media sources. 'The World War is a war of newspapers. In reality it never existed', Baader wrote ('Germany's Rise and Fall, or The Fantastic Life Story of the Oberdada', *Dada Almanach*, 1920). This work was exhibited at the 1920 Dada Fair.



Johannes BAADER

Der Verfasser des Buches der

'Vierzehn Briefe Christi'

[The Author in his Home]

1920

Photomontage

21.5 × 14.5 cm [8.5 × 6 in]

Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Baader wrote his *Fourteen Letters of Christ*, a collection of pacifist texts, in 1914. This collage shows the author/Creator of these letters, Baader himself, as a mannequin standing in a studio. The title reiterates Baader's view of himself as a Christ-like figure. In the background is a large bulletin board on which texts and papers are posted. A poster-poem by Raoul Hausmann as well as Baader's special issue of *Die Freie Strasse* (no. 10, December 1918) is also tacked to the board. Baader, like Kurt Schwitters, regularly collected found material that he used in his montages. The idea of forming a collage of such material was seen by Baader as comparable to an act of Creation.





Hannah HÖCH

Da-Dandy

1919

Photomontage

30.5 × 24 cm [12 × 9.5 in]

Höch's interest in fashion derived from her work at Ullstein Verlag, a large publishing house of such periodicals as *BIZ* (*Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*) and women's magazines *Die Dame* and *Blatt der Hausfrau*. There, Höch worked as a designer of sewing patterns in the handicrafts department. Many of her works incorporate images clipped from these illustrated journals of an idealized type of German woman. Specifically, Höch provides a critique of the image of the fashionable and independent 'new woman', whose problems in Weimar society were ignored by the mainstream media. *Da-Dandy* suggests the isolation and objectification of the mass-produced new woman: the figures are literally composed of fetishized body parts. Höch, too, felt discrimination in her own life: some of the male Dadas, themselves 'dandies', did not take her work seriously.

opposite

Hannah HÖCH

Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser Dada durch die letzte Weimarer Bierbauchkulturepoche Deutschlands
[Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada through the Last Epoch of Weimar Beer-Belly Culture in Germany]
c. 1919

Photomontage

114 × 90 cm [45 × 35.5 in]

Collection, Staatliche Museen, Berlin

This is Höch's best-known work. The collage of figures, machines and text represents the complex nature of culture and politics in the unsettled urban environment of post-war Germany, a cross-section of 'beer-belly culture'. The work has been compared to a zoo or encyclopaedia; many significant individuals of the Weimar Republic and Dada movement appear. They are scattered throughout a technological landscape of wheels, cogs and machines that suggests dynamism and movement. At the top right are the 'anti-dadas', including military figures and politicians. In the upper left is a press photograph of Albert Einstein, as a Dada, and in the lower left the leader of the revolutionary sailors exhorts the masses to join Dada ('*Tretet dada bei*'). At the bottom right are Dadas and Communist leaders including Marx and Lenin. Representations of the 'new woman' are found, such as athletes and actresses; at the centre a headless dancer tosses the head of Expressionist Käthe Kollwitz in the air. The titles of dada texts, including 'Invest your money in Dada!' and 'Join Dada', are also incorporated.



Hannah HÖCH

Dada-Rundschau

[Dada-Review]

1919

Photomontage with gouache and watercolour on board

43.5 × 34.5 cm [17 × 13.5 in]

Collection, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin

In *Dada-Review* Höch offers comment on politics in the Weimar Republic. Most of the photographs and text fragments were clipped from *BIZ* (*Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*). At the centre stands Gustav Noske, head of the *Freikorps*, wearing bathing trunks to which Höch has added a flower. Above him is President Friedrich Ebert, also dressed for a swim. The source of these images is the cover of the 24 August 1919 issue of *BIZ*, which featured this embarrassing photograph of the two standing in the water. Images of other politicians are scattered about but the upper left section of the collage holds the key to the image. There we see women dancing freely; nearby is a text that reads 'German Women into the National Assembly'. Höch signed the work 'Unbridled freedom for H.H.'





Hannah HÖCH

Das schöne Mädchen

[The Pretty Girl]

1920

Photomontage

35 x 29 cm [14 x 11.5 in]

As with many of her works Höch here grapples with the question of the role of women in modern, technologically-focused times. A woman in a swimming costume sits on an I-beam holding a parasol. Despite markers of leisure, the woman is hemmed in by a tyre, a crankshaft and multiple BMW logos. Behind her a large hand dangles a watch. The juxtaposition of the timepiece and motifs of cars points to a comment on the effect of Fordism (or Taylorism), the rationalization of the workplace, in Germany. The woman herself has become part machine: her head is a light bulb; or her face is obscured by commercial imagery. Höch describes the mass-media commodification of women in advertising.



Hannah HÖCH

Bürgerliches Brautpaar (Streit)

[Bourgeois Wedding Couple (Quarrel)]

1920

Watercolour

39 x 50.5 cm [15.5 x 20 in]

Höch's painting has a collage aesthetic. The buildings of the city and Gothic forms of the church intermingle to create an irrational backdrop. A groom in traditional top hat and tails meets a bride in the form of a dress-maker's dummy. In the foreground, Höch's presentation of the bride as mannequin, a motif familiar from her fashion background, here advances a view of a fixed role for married women in society. Sewing images are common in her work; she was a pattern designer for women's periodicals. A small plant, stove and coffee grinder flank the wedding couple in domesticity; the bride herself is shown to be a commodified object.



Hannah HÖCH

Dada-Ernst

[Dada-Seriousness]

1920

Photomontage

18.5 x 16.5 cm [7 x 6.5 in]

Collection, The Israel Museum, Jerusalem

Höch's *Dada-Seriousness* focuses on the contradictory status of the 'new woman' in the Weimar Republic, juxtaposing different types of woman, taken from mass-media images. At the lower left is a crouching gymnast, a picture of health and activity. Above her is an allegorical figure, a romantic nude blowing a trumpet. A woman in a formal gown stands opposite, a conical object upon her head. Surrounding the women are markers of violence, including images from a boxing match in the background. Two large, severed legs with an eye and two gold coins pasted over the crotch suggest prostitution. A saw-like instrument evokes the violent severing of the two legs, but also the act of cutting out these images from their original contexts.



'Erste Internationale Dada Messe'

[The First International Dada Fair]

Otto Burchard Gallery, Berlin

1920

George GROSZ and John HEARTFIELD

Die Kunst ist tot

[Art is Dead]

1920

Collection, Kunsthhaus, Zurich

This exhibition, organized by Grosz, Heartfield and Raoul Hausmann was the culmination of dada activities in Berlin. The group, along with Dadas from other cities including Zurich and Cologne, presented over one hundred and seventy-four works in the small, two-room space of the Otto Burchard Gallery. Kurt Schwitters was not invited to participate. Here, two of the Fair's organizers stand holding their poster 'Art is Dead. Long live the machine art of Tatlin' before their *Electromechanical Tatlin Sculpture*. The assemblage is a tailor's mannequin with a light bulb for a head. Other items are attached including a revolver, bell, knife and fork, an Iron Cross, as well as a set of false teeth at the crotch. Above the sculpture is one of Max Ernst's images made from printers' blocks.

opposite

'Erste Internationale Dada Messe'

[The First International Dada Fair]

Otto Burchard Gallery, Berlin

1920

l. to r.

Hannah HÖCH

Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser Dada durch die letzte Weimarer Bierbauchkulturepoche Deutschlands

[Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada through the Last Epoch of Weimar Beer-Belly Culture in Germany]

c. 1919

Raoul HAUSMANN

Tatlin lebt zu Hause

[Tatlin at Home]

1920

Raoul HAUSMANN

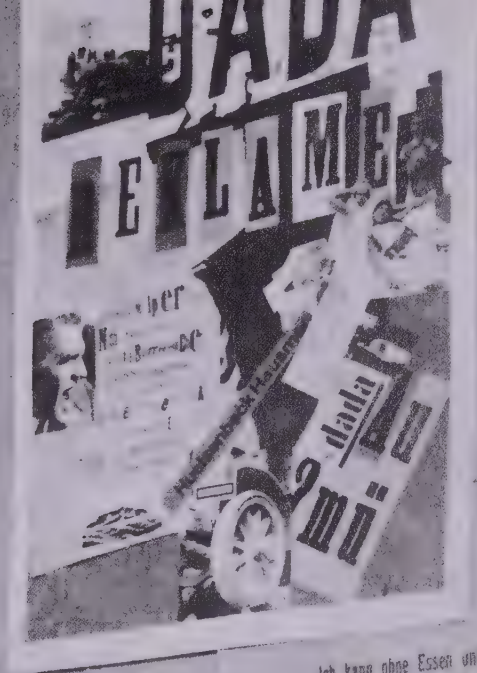
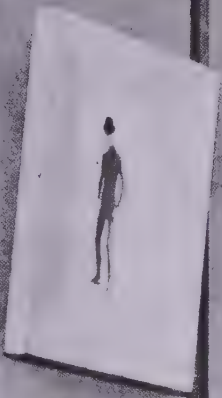
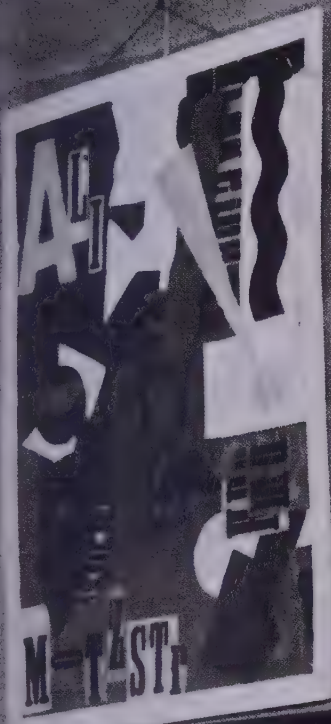
Dada siegt

[Dada Conquers]

1920

Collection, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin

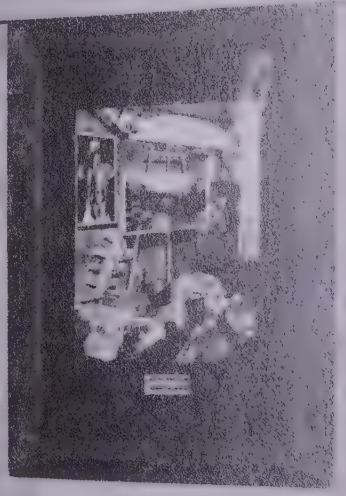
Hausmann and Höch stand before their works. Two lost works by Höch flank her monumental collage. The large collage at the top right is a lost 'Dada poster' by Hausmann. Photographs show that the layout of the exhibition was itself collage-like: photomontages, paintings, sculptures and posters. Hanging above the crowd was a 'ceiling sculpture' by John Heartfield and Rudolf Schlichter, *The Prussian Archangel*—an effigy of an army officer with a pig's head and waistband with the words printed 'From Heaven High I come to You'. Grosz's portfolio collection *God With Us*, which depicted 'grotesque' caricatures of the military, was on sale. The political tenor of the show eventually brought the condemnation of authorities.



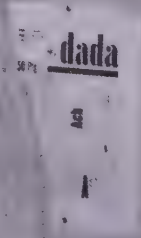
„Ich kann ohne Essen und Trinken
leben, aber nicht ohne **DADA**.“
Marcel Duchamp

„Ich auch nicht.“
John Heartfield

„Auch ich nicht.“
Raoul Hausmann



Die Kunst ist tot
Es lebe die neue
Maschinenkunst
TATLINS



HANOVER AND HOLLAND

Inspired by Hans Arp's

and Max Ernst's collages, Kurt Schwitters recycled the detritus of his culture in his works. Rejected by the Berlin Dadas for exhibiting at the 'bourgeois' Der Sturm gallery, he launched a one-person movement – Merz – in provincial Hanover. He gathered discarded objects from street gutters and glued and nailed them to form relief-collages, with basic symmetries and rhythms. Schwitters insisted that these Merz works were art, in contrast to the Berlin Dada collages, which he considered anti-art. To him the adjustment or arrangement of different materials and shapes was important, not the nature of the materials. *Merzbau*, his all-embracing life's work, was a manifestation of his life and culture: grottos, holes and concavities were dedicated to major themes, to historical events and to friends. Schwitters' friend Theo van Doesburg, leader of the Dutch constructivist group De Stijl, invented the dada alter-ego I.K. Bonset, under whose name he published the dada magazine *Mécano* and created dada collages. Van Doesburg insisted that he needed nonsensical, rebellious Dada to awaken unfettered creativity.

opposite

Kurt SCHWITTERS

Konstruktion für edle Frauen

[Construction for Noble Ladies]

1919

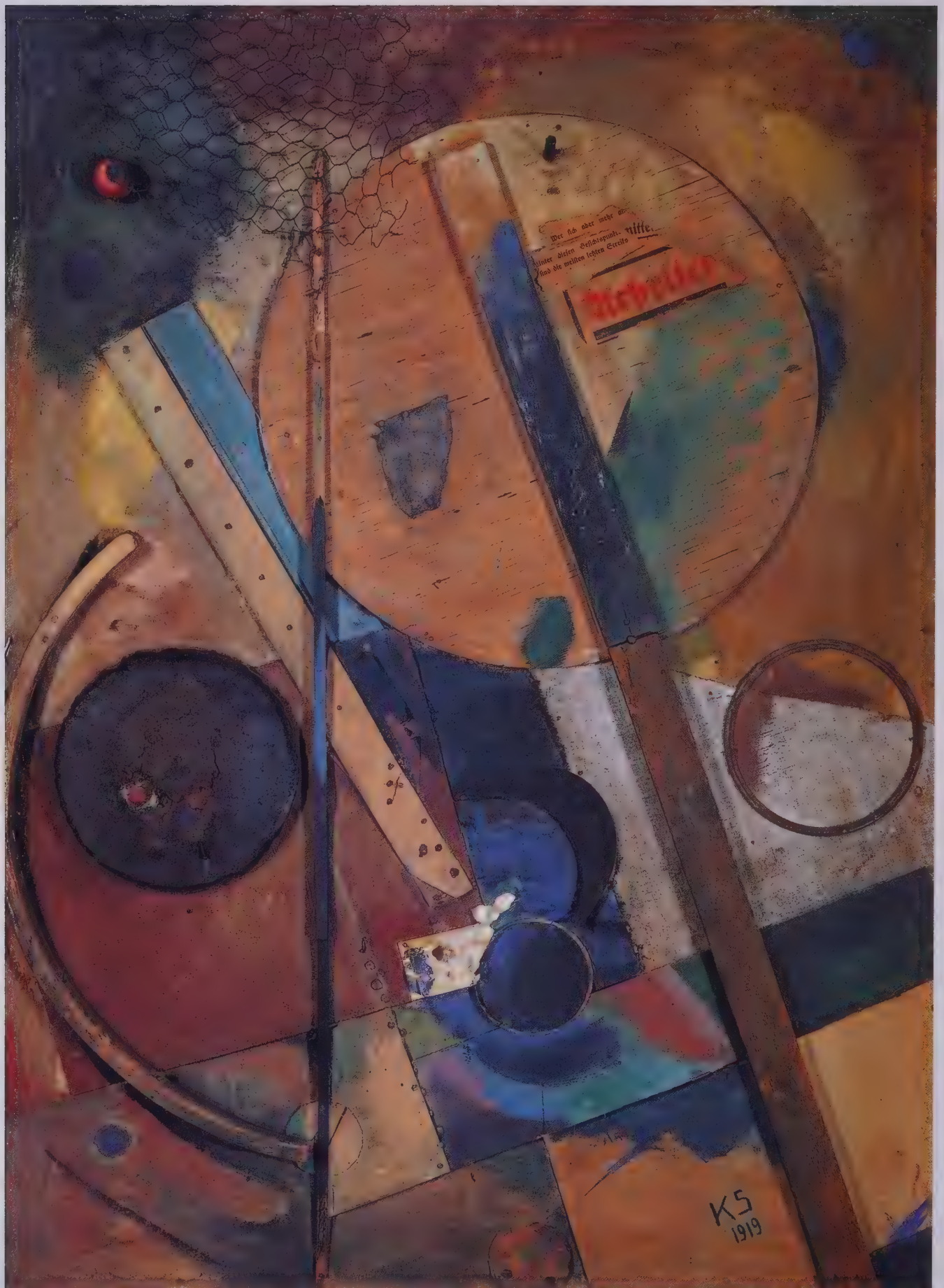
Collage/assemblage

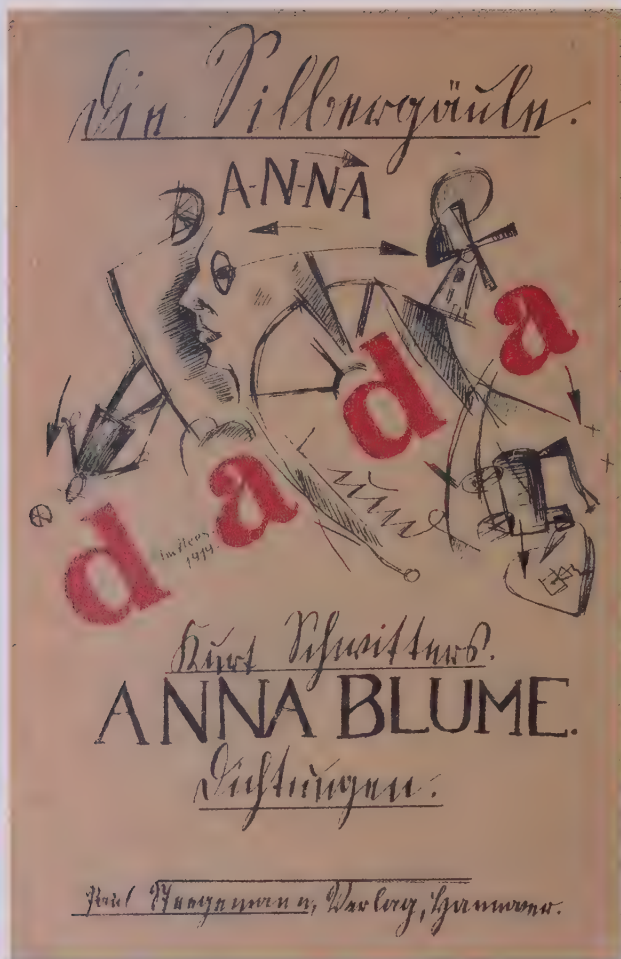
103 x 83.5 cm [40.5 x 33 in]

Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art

In 1919 Schwitters began to work consistently in collage and assemblage, the basis of his philosophy of *merz* whereby any material could be used to make art. In this important early piece, he included his painted portrait of Helma, his wife (on the right, rotated ninety degrees) in addition to wheel parts and newspaper clippings, mixing traditional artforms and common materials. Schwitters selected and arranged objects intuitively. On a walk he found half a toy train engine and, sensing it belonged in this work, picked it up. He walked to a meadow, where he miraculously located the other half. This improbable story encapsulates Schwitters' notion that art is a synthesis of the world and the artist's intuition.







Kurt SCHWITTERS

Cover of *Anna Blume*

1919

22.5 × 14.5 cm [9 × 5.5 in]

Collection, Sprengel Museum, Hanover

In addition to his visual works, Schwitters also wrote, including poetry. His wider philosophy of *merz* ultimately proposed the dissolution of all boundaries between genres and artistic categories. His important poem 'Anna Blume' was included in this his first volume of poems and prose. A part of *Die Silbergäule* (The Silver Nags) series, it was published by Paul Steegemann in Hanover. The cover shows a drawing by Schwitters and prominently displays the word 'dada'. Some individuals in the Berlin group, who had rejected Schwitters for membership of Club Dada and found 'Anna Blume' too conventional, were annoyed by his use of the word.

Kurt SCHWITTERS

Das Unbild

[The And Picture]

1919

Collage/assemblage

35.5 × 28 cm [14 × 11 in]

Collection, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart

The And Picture takes its name from the large 'und' at the top of this collage/assemblage, a work that adds and combines disparate elements including wood, paper and metal. Although the meaning of the collage is unclear, some of the text may form a phrase. For example, if the upside down word 'burg' at the top left is combined with the fragment 'Pferde' in the centre, the phrase 'castle and horse' may be read. A horseshoe is seen at lower right. Beyond these specific motifs of bourgeois society, Schwitters' collages are ultimately concerned with the rebuilding of a new German culture from the remains of old values and outmoded forms.



Kurt SCHWITTERS

Merz Picture (I, A, 1919)

Stuttgart, 1919

[The Stars Picture]

1921

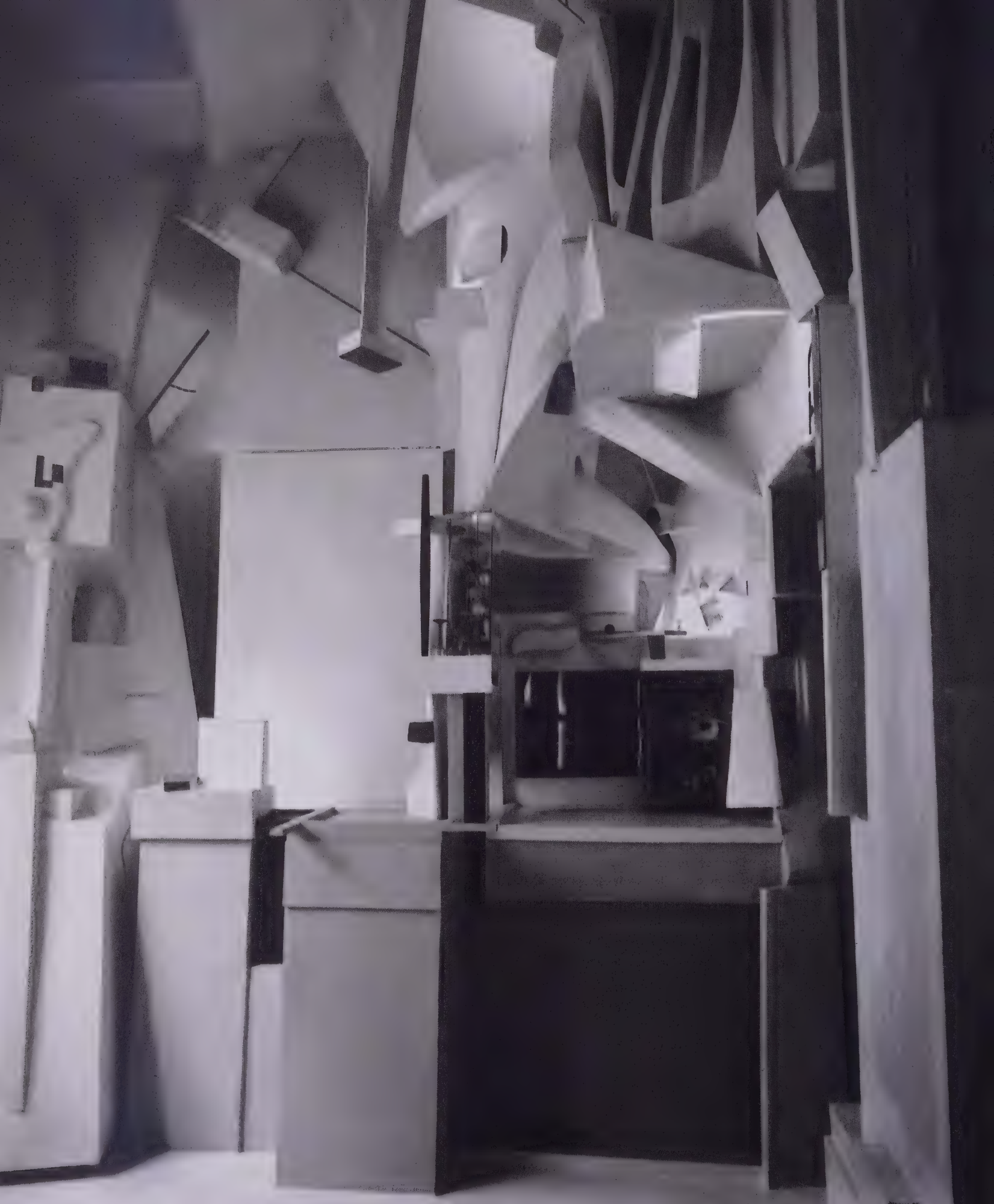
Collection of the artist

104.5 x 14 cm (41 x 5 1/2 in)

Crillington, New York, 1999

Wittne n-Westfa

On a formal level, *The Stars Picture* hovers between painting and sculpture as well as between collage and assemblage: both flat paper and three-dimensional objects are incorporated. As with Schwitters' overall concept of *merz*, the image dissolves boundaries between artistic categories. It also appears to fuse both the political and apolitical. In addition to the title's reference to the cosmos and to constellations, the fragments of text may be linked to contemporary political events. German words for 'blond', 'corruption', 'Lieutenant-General', 'increase' and 'famine', among others, are scattered throughout. In 1920 Germany saw further strikes, unemployment, inflation and rising political and social conflict. 'Open Letter to Matthias' probably refers to Finance Minister Matthias Erzberger's resignation in the face of his opposition to taxation of the upper classes. Despite these inclusions, Schwitters, unlike the Berlin group, is ultimately unclear about his own political stance on such issues.



Kurt SCHWITTERS

View of the Merzbau showing the Gold Grotto, Big Group and Movable Column

c. 1932 [lost work, destroyed 1943]

Sculpture of coloured paper, cardboard, plaster, glass, mirror, metal, wood, electric lighting on wood and stone

393 × 580 × 460 cm [154.5 × 228.5 × 181 in]

Schwitters' *merz* was a worldview, in which all materials might be the used for creation and re-creation. All aspects of life could become art. Schwitters' *Merzbau*, an organic work that quite literally took over his living space, is perhaps the epitome of his philosophy. He covered the walls and floors of his studio and home at Waldhausenstrasse 5 with finished works and with objects he intended to incorporate in future images. Around 1923 he began a series of *merzcolumns*, vertical assemblages of paper and three-dimensional items. Soon he noticed the interaction of works with each other and the surrounding environment. To show these relationships he tied string and wire between objects, later moving on to wooden slats and plaster. Large columns, stalactite masses and grottos were created and sometimes covered over as the work enveloped his apartment. The *Merzbau* grew until Schwitters left Germany in 1937; the house was destroyed in 1943 when Hanover was bombed by the Allied Forces during the Second World War. Schwitters included a number of thematic spaces within the *Merzbau*. Grottos such as the *Cathedral of Erotic Misery* and the *Lavatory Attendant of Life* incorporated items and images related to specific aspects of society. The theme of sexual violence was found in the *Cave of Rape and Murder* and *Whorehouse Grottos*. Other areas were dedicated to Schwitters' friends and contained items collected from or about them, including hair, clothing and pencils. Many of the spaces were eventually encased in the ever-growing *merz* environment.



Kurt SCHWITTERS

Interior of the Merzbau with view of the Blue Window

c. 1930 [lost work, destroyed 1943]

Sculpture of coloured paper, cardboard, plaster, glass, mirror, metal, wood, electric lighting on wood and stone

Dimensions unknown

In the 1930s the structures of the *Merzbau* became increasingly geometric, due to Schwitters' interest in De Stijl and Constructivism. With the use of plaster and wood he was able to create a total environment akin to the abstract spaces of El Lissitzky's *Proun Room* at the 1923 Greater Berlin Art Exhibition. This room was an installation of Prouns – abstract, constructivist wall sculptures that, when combined, formed a unified environment, like Schwitters' architectonic sculptures. The organic, stalactite form seen in this interior view also recalls an inverted Gothic spire, the symbol of a Romantic, utopian ideal of German culture, here turned on its head.

Inhalt: DADA IN HOLLAND. KOK: GEDICHT. BONSET: GEDICHT; AAN ANNA BLOEME.
PICABIA: ZEICHNUNG. HANNAH HÖCH: ZEICHNUNG; WEISSLACKIERTE TÜTE

MERZ

1

HOLLAND

DADA



JANUAR 1923
HERAUSGEBER: KURT SCHWITTERS
HANNOVER · WALDHAUSENSTRASSE 5"

Kurt SCHWITTERS

Cover of *Merz*, no. 1, Holland Dada

January 1923

22 × 14 cm [8.5 × 5.5 in]

Collection, The University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City

Schwitters met Theo van Doesburg, founder of the De Stijl movement in Holland.

in 1921. They immediately began what was to be a long dialogue regarding the

similarities and differences between dada and constructivist concepts, later

collaborating on a number of projects. In 1923 they took a tour of Holland, where

they gave dada performances and spread the philosophy of *merz*. That same year

Schwitters began producing his periodical *Merz*; the first issue in January 1923 was

dedicated to the Holland Dada Tour, though published in Hanover. Schwitters saw his

review as a mouthpiece for information about dada and constructivist ideas. Artists,

architects and designers from both circles were included in the twenty-one issues

published from 1923 to 1932.

3



DADA

ISMUS IN HOLLAND

DADA

in Holland ist ein Novum. Nur ein Holländer, I. K. BONSET, ist Dadaist. (Er wohnt in Wien.) Und eine Holländerin, PETRO VAN DOESBURG, ist Dadaistin. (Sie wohnt in Weimar.) Ich kenne dann noch einen holländischen Pseudo-dadaisten, er ist aber kein Dadaist. Holland aber,

HOLLAND IST DADA

Unser Erscheinen in Holland glich einem gewaltigen Siegeszug. Ganz Holland ist jetzt dada, weil es immer schon dada war.

Unser Publikum fühlt, daß es DADA ist und glaubt, dada kreischen, dada schreien, dada lispeln, dada singen, dada heulen, dada schelten zu müssen. Kaum hat jemand von uns, die wir in Holland Träger der dadaistischen Bewegung sind, das Podium betreten, so erwachen im Publikum die verschlafenen dadaistischen Instinkte, und es empfängt uns ein dadaistisches Heulen und Zähneklappen. Aber wir sind die dadaistische Hauskapelle, wir werden Ihnen eins blasen.

Kurt SCHWITTERS

'Dadaismus in Holland', interior page from *Merz*, no. 1, Holland Dada

January 1923

22 × 14 cm [8.5 × 5.5 in]

Collection, The University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City

A large portion of the first issue of *Merz* was taken up with Schwitters' essay

'*Dadaismus in Holland*'. In this piece Schwitters discusses Dada in Holland, noting

I. K. Bonset (Theo van Doesburg) and his wife Nelly as important figures. He also

relates information about the Holland Dada Tour, stating 'No sooner had any one of us,

who carried the Dada movement into Holland, stepped on to the podium than there

was awakened in the public the slumbering dada instinct, and we were received with

dada howls and gnashings of teeth.' Finally, he explains the basic principles of Dada

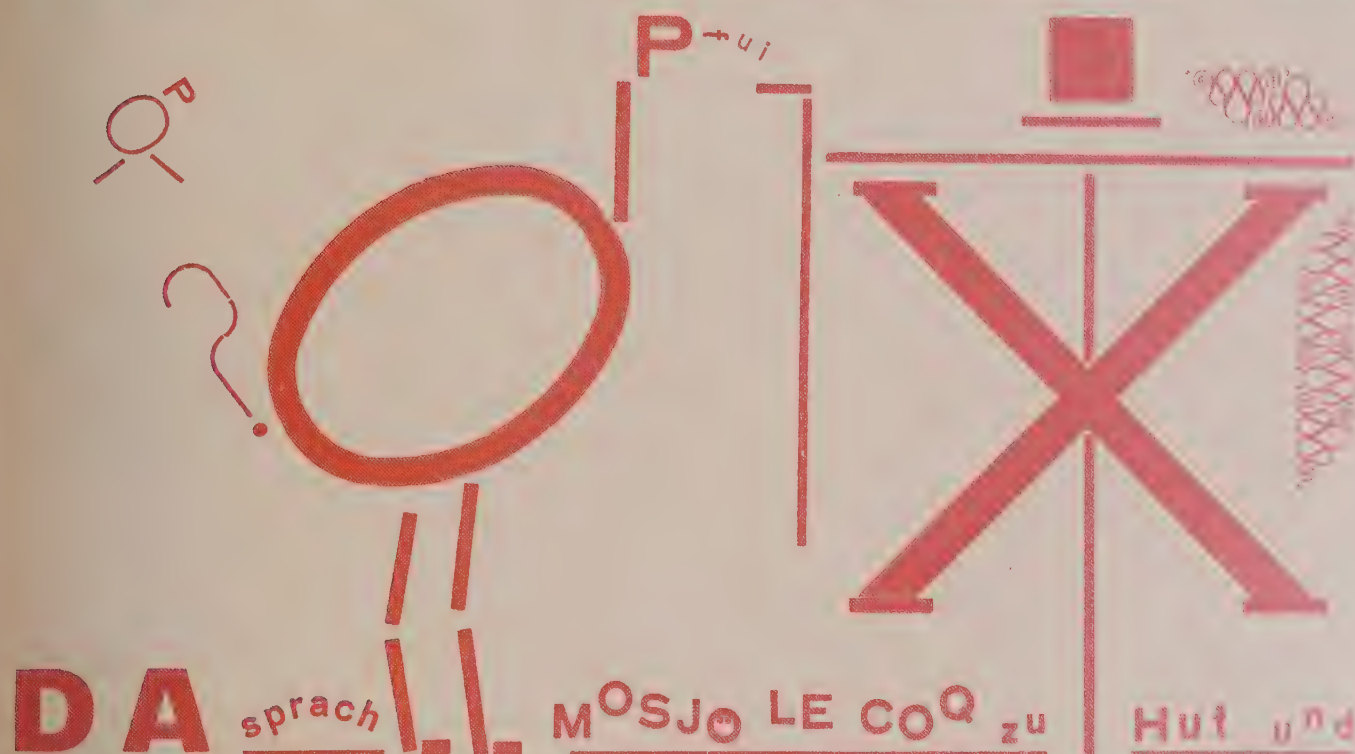
as a means of creating a new future. However, Schwitters also hints at what would be

an ever-growing interest in constructivist principles and aesthetics. 'We will turn

against Dada and fight only for Style', he wrote. Later issues of *Merz* do indeed show

an increasing focus on constructivist concepts.

DA kam das Hühnchen an



Rock und Stock und zu dem **ACH** so schönen
Spitzenschal **PFUI** **ALTER** Mann du bist ja
eine Scheuche Hick Hack und hic haec hoc

Kurt SCHWITTERS, Käte STEINITZ, Theo VAN DOESBURG

Page from *Merz*, no. 14/15, Die Scheuche

[The Scarecrow]

1925

20.5 x 24 cm [8 x 9.5 in.]

Collection, The University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City

In 1925 Schwitters collaborated with Käte Steinitz and Theo van Doesburg on a special number of *Merz*. Issue 14/15 was dedicated to a children's story designed by the trio, which tells the tale of a scarecrow who wears a top hat and shawl and carries a cane, all accoutrements that identify him with a bygone era. A brave chicken and rooster bother and peck him until the ghosts of the former owners of his clothes return to reclaim their belongings and carry them back to the past. This fable, whose lesson is about embracing the future, is told through innovative means. Typographic elements, specifically sans serif letters, are used to form the illustrations; the characters of the story are literally characters of the alphabet. At times, the text of the story merges with these typographic images in a way that dissolves the boundaries between narrative and illustration. The story was intended to be more radical than previous constructivist children's stories such as El Lissitzky's *Story of Two Squares* (1922).



I.K. BONSET [Theo VAN DOESBURG]

Construction I

c. 1920

Collage

31.5 x 15.5 cm [12.5 x 6 in]

Collection, Kunsthaus, Zurich

Only eight collages by Van Doesburg are known today: most are undated and signed 'I.K. Bonset', the pseudonym Van Doesburg used for his dada works and writings. He worked with both the De Stijl group and the Dadas, while keeping his dual identity hidden from the public and even from some of his colleagues. These collages are in many ways quite different from Van Doesburg's De Stijl aesthetic, containing clippings of newspapers and fragments of architectural plans among other found materials. Their titles, generic terms such as 'construction' or 'reconstruction', however, illustrate his own constructivist theories that language and visual imagery from the past must be destroyed and reconstructed to form a new, universal aesthetic. Here basic elements of architecture and typography, realms through which a new universal style may be formed, are juxtaposed in a simple composition.

opposite

I.K. BONSET [Theo VAN DOESBURG]

Matter Denaturalized

[Destruction 2]

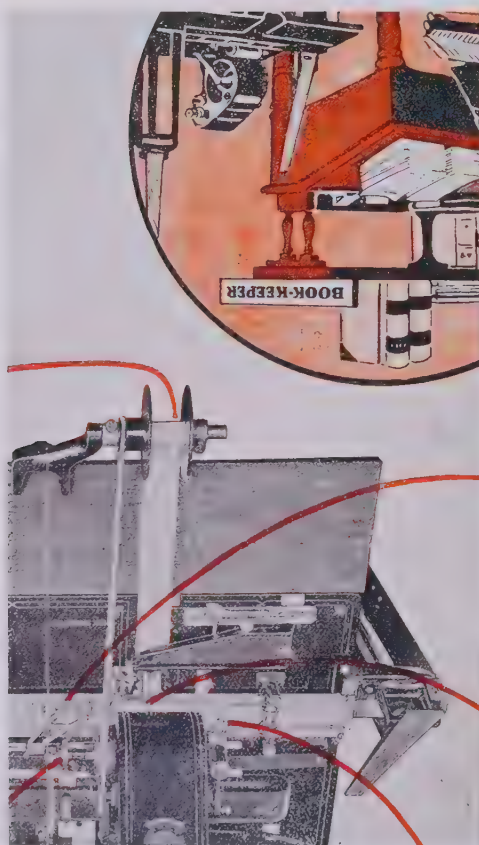
c. 1921

Collage

59.5 x 44 cm [23.5 x 17 in]

Collection, The Netherlands Office for Fine Arts, The Hague

This collage, to which Van Doesburg added areas of gouache, and signed 'I.K. Bonset', was reproduced in Van Doesburg's dada review *Mécane*, published in 1922 and 1923. The periodical appeared in five issues, each designated a colour. *Matter Denaturalized* is found in *Mécane* 4/5 (White) of 1923, which also features information about Schwitters and Van Doesburg's Dada Tour of Holland. Van Doesburg's definition of Dada is included in this issue: 'Dada is a mirror in which the world sees itself. The Dadas do not wish the world to be different than the way they see it, namely, dada: at once orderly and disorderly ...' The orderly and disorderly are seen in these collages, in which the fragments of culture, decontextualized, are reordered and reconstructed as a new object.



I.K. BONSET [Theo VAN DOESBURG]

Reconstruction

1921

Collage

29 x 21 cm [11.5 x 8 in]

Collection, The Netherlands Office for Fine Arts, The Hague

In 1923 Van Doesburg, writing as Bonset, discussed his ideas about a new universal art and poetry made from the remnants of the old: 'The new poet constructs his language with the ruins of the past ...' These ideas, summed up in the title *Reconstruction* and so similar to those of Kurt Schwitters' *merz* concept, are mirrored in Van Doesburg's collages, probably made around 1920–21. This collage has two distinct areas, a machine form at the bottom and, at the top, an upside-down image of a desk with the English words 'Book-Keeper'.

KLEINE PROGRAMME

DADA SOIRÉE

DADA SOIRÉE
INLEIDING DOOR **THO VAN DOESBURG**

GRÖSSEN LOR REICHER REVOLUTION

in EVON DOOR **KURT SCHWITTERS**

Ge PACLE
DICHTE VOOR **ABSTRACTE**
LYRIK BIS ZUM **MURLAUT**

KURT SCHWITTERS

BANALITÄTEN

SIMULTANEÏSME
Tisch-Mechanik
DOOR **HUSZAR**

TRE MARCIEPE LA BESTIE
VAN RIET KLAVIER

ABOM
15 OM 7

PER JAAR 2

NEW

BEI RHEUMATISCHEN ZAHNENSCHMERZEN UND KOPFWEHGENÜGEN 2-3 AUF DEN BAUCH.

DADA EXISTE DEPUIS TOUJOURS LA SAINTE VIERGE DE FET

DADA

DA NEST PAS UNE ÉCOLE LITTÉRAIRE HURLE

TRISTAN TZARA

ERIC SATIE'S RAG-TIME-DADA

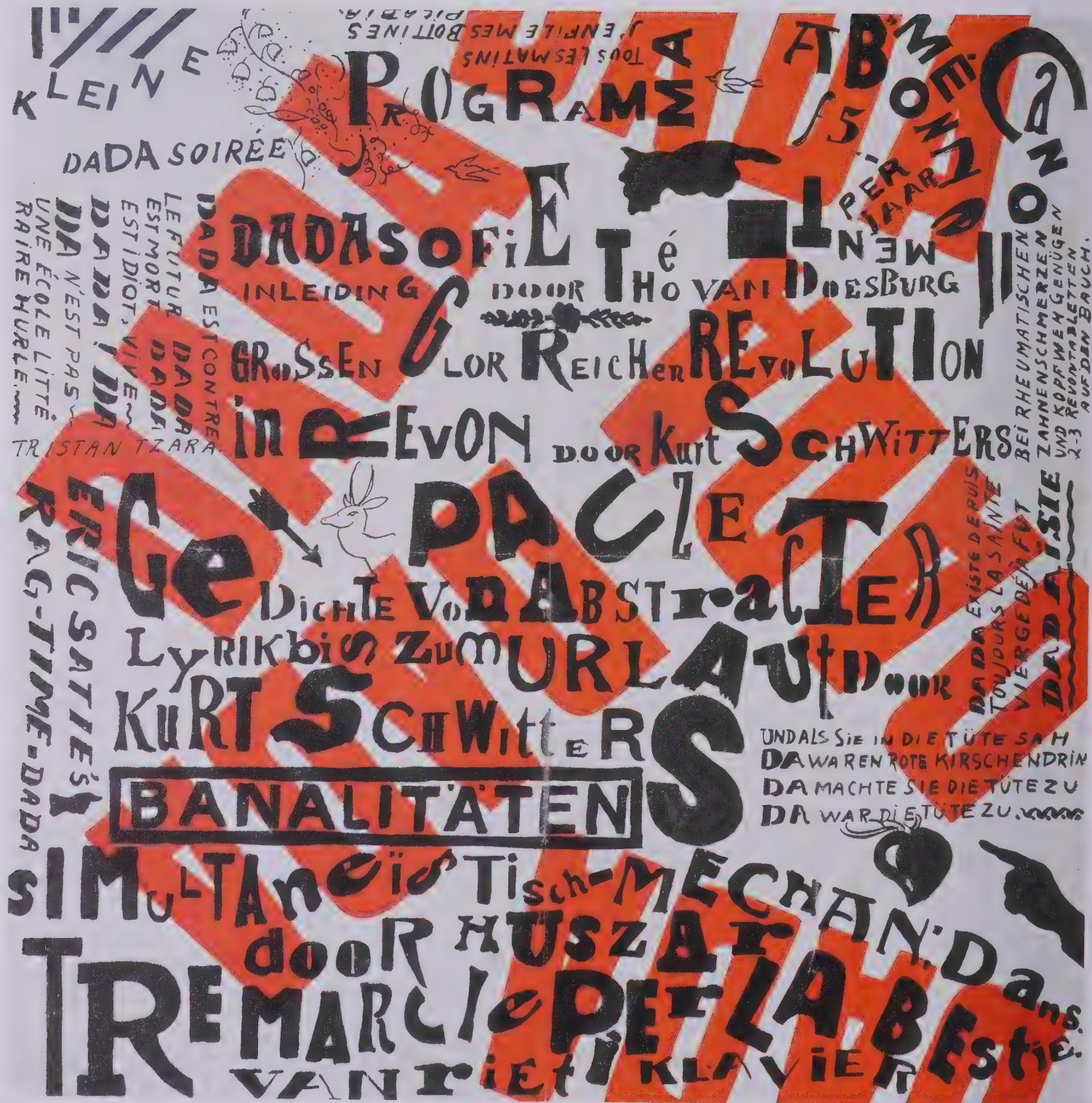
TOUS LES MATINS J'ENFLE MES BOTTINES

DADA EST CONTRE LE FUTUR DADA EST MORT DADA EST IDIOT, VIVE DADA

UND ALS SIE IN DIE TÜTE SAH DA WAREN ROTE KIRSCHENDRIN DA MACHTE SIE DIE TÜTE ZU DA WARD DIE TÜTE ZU

DANS

KLAVIER



Theo **VAN DOESBURG**

Dada Poster for the Dada Tour in Holland

1922

Black and red letterpress

30.5 × 30.5 cm [12 × 12 in]

Collection, Centraal Museum, Utrecht

Van Doesburg's poster advertises the Dada Tour in Holland during which he, his wife Nelly, and Kurt Schwitters held soirées in numerous cities including Amsterdam, The Hague and Utrecht. The jumbled poster announces the programme of these evenings, which began in January 1923. In addition to the word 'Dada' in the background, the poster notes these items on the programme: 'Introduction to Dadasophy' by Van Doesburg, readings by Schwitters including poetry and his *Revolution in Revon*, piano pieces performed by Nelly van Doesburg, including Erik Satie's *Ragtime Parade*, and Vilmos Huszár's demonstration of his 'mechanical dance figure'. The advertisement also includes various aphorisms about Dada and the word 'banalities', which appears in a large black box.

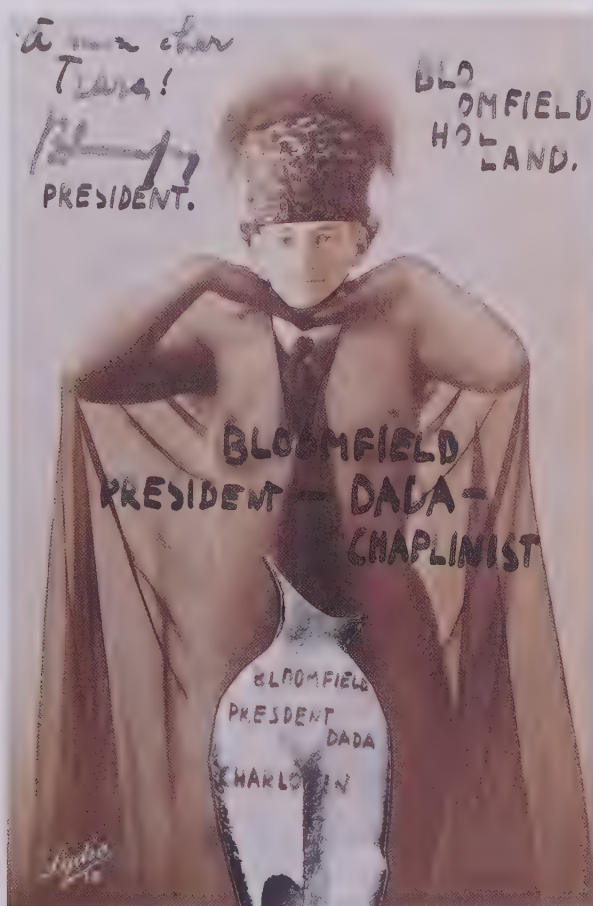


Theo van Doesburg performing Does à la Micarème [Does at mid-Lent] at the Bauhaus

4 March 1922

Photograph

In the years 1921 and 1922 Van Doesburg spent much time in Weimar. He gave a number of lectures at the Bauhaus, although he was never officially hired by Walter Gropius, then head of the school. Nevertheless, Van Doesburg's private seminars on constructivist aesthetics, mainly attended by anti-expressionist students, were an influence on the fundamental concepts taught there. This photograph shows Van Doesburg in a simple costume reminiscent of George Grosz's central figure in *Republican Automats*, although the '12' is now a '13'. His performances involved drums, trumpets and screaming.



Erwin **BLUMENFELD**

Bloomfield President Dada

Chaplinist

1921

Photomontage

13.5 × 9 cm [5 × 3.5 in]

Collection, Kunsthau, Zurich

Along with Paul Citroën, Blumenfeld made up the group known as Dutch Dada-Centrale, based in Amsterdam.

However, he mainly confined his dada activities to venues outside Holland

This photomontage was meant for Tristan Tzara's never-realized dada compilation, *Dadaglobe*. Made from a photograph of Blumenfeld combined with that of a nude woman, it refers subtly to a number of Blumenfeld's interests, including fashion, photography and Charlie Chaplin, the American actor so admired by the Dadas. The text at the upper left reads: 'To my dear Tzara'. Blumenfeld's 'stylish' self-portrait is interesting in light of his future career as a fashion photographer in Berlin and New York.

COLOGNE

Max Ernst and Johannes Theodor Baargeld rejected the tradition of painting as part of the culture they revolted against after the war. Inspired by reproductions in Tristan Tzara's magazine *Dada* and contact with Kurt Schwitters, they experimented with assemblages of found objects and montage, de Chirico's imagery and style, and Picabia's mechanomorphic drawings. Ernst cut up printed material and constructed a dreamlike world of juxtapositions that prefigured surrealist practice. During his visits to Cologne, Hans Arp introduced Ernst and Baargeld to his biomorphic forms and his reliance on chance. Unable to place their works in Cologne art shows, they organized a scandalous dada exhibition in a brewery. Ernst's works included a wooden sculpture with a hatchet attached and an invitation to destroy it. Baargeld's *Fluidoskeptrik* consisted of an aquarium with red water, a hand reaching out and a woman's wig floating on the surface. Ernst's first one-man show, at the dada gallery Au Sans Pareil in Paris, was organized by Tzara and André Breton; it prompted Breton to develop theories about art that became central in his later formulations of the surrealist image.

opposite

Max ERNST

Au dessus des nuages marche le minuit ...

[Above the Clouds Midnight Passes ...]

1920

Photographic enlargement of the original photomontage

73 x 55 cm [29 x 22 in]

Collection, Kunsthhaus, Zurich

Ernst worked in photomontage, but unlike the Berlin group, placed a high value on concealing the seams of his constructions so that a coherent picture would be formed. To this end, he often made photographic enlargements of his collages; he considered the reproduction the final image and actual work. This piece, given the long, poetic title *Above the Clouds Midnight Passes. Above Midnight Glides the Invisible Bird of Day. A Little Higher than the Bird, the Ether Spreads and the Walls and Roofs Float*, depicts a cloud-filled sky. To this backdrop, Ernst added a being made from reproductions of embroidery, a ball of twine and a woman's legs. The enlargement, one of a set of five, conceals the slight colour differences of the various clippings and unifies the image. The result is an apparent photograph of an impossible world.





Max ERNST

Fruit d'une longue expérience

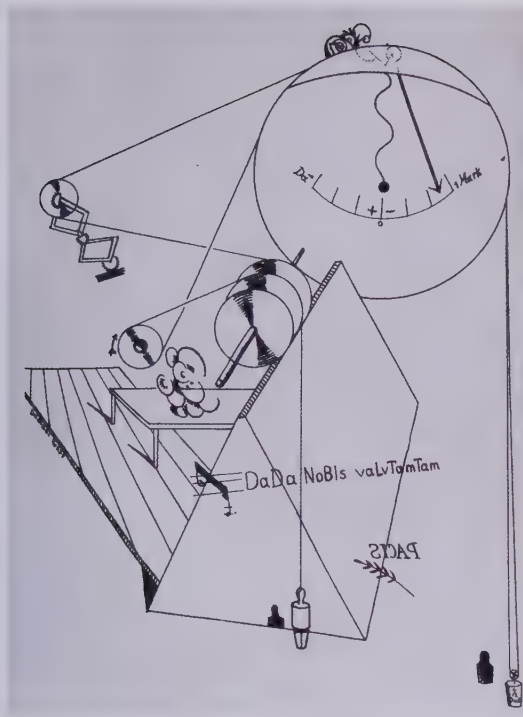
[Fruit of a Long Experience]

1919

Assemblage

45 x 38 cm [18 x 15 in]

Max Ernst's early post-war artistic activity was characterized by experimentation. In the autumn of 1919 he assembled scraps of wood that he screwed together and painted. He called them 'merz paintings' and, like Kurt Schwitters' work, they included found items such as metal elements and paper. *Fruit of a Long Experience* is the only one of these works to survive. Ernst's meaning is unclear, but themes of love and death have been seen in the framed assemblage. Positive and negative spaces at the bottom left hint at gender and sexuality, while the tubular forms might be weapons or cannons. Constellations of stars, a common Ernst motif, also appear. The ambiguous collection of traditional themes and innovative techniques and forms is typical of Ernst's later projects and his overarching rejection of traditional modes of art.



Max ERNST

Fiat modes, pereat ars
[Let there be fashion, down with
art]

1919–20

Lithograph, Plate VIII

45.5 × 33 cm [18 × 13 in]

In the summer of 1919 Ernst took an important trip to Munich, where he learned more about the Dada movement. There, he discovered that his friend Hans Arp was working with Dadas in Zurich. In Goltz's bookshop he saw a copy of *Dada 4–5* (May 1919) with images by Francis Picabia and Arp, as well as the Italian journal *Valori plastici* in which he discovered the work of Giorgio de Chirico. This set of eight lithographs, completed after his return to Cologne, is inspired by the dreamlike imagery of de Chirico, specifically his irrational, tilted perspective. The prints, which Ernst may originally have intended to hand-colour, tell a story of strange mannequins and abstracted figures who sound the call for a new art. Textual elements appear that reference fashion, commerce and religion. Parodies of religious texts in Latin make clear Ernst's rejection of the concept of art as 'holy'. The prints were published in January 1920.



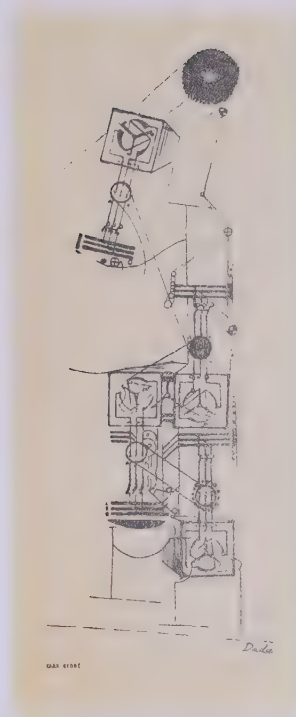
Max ERNST

Lächeln Sie nicht!
[Don't Smile!]

c. 1920

Pencil rubbings of printer's
blocks with charcoal on paper
47 × 32 cm [18.5 × 12.5 in]

At a print shop in Cologne, Ernst began a series of experiments with printers' materials including letter blocks and the diagrammatic imagery used to produce standard technical manuals. Rubbings from the blocks were combined to form abstract designs that recall Francis Picabia's mechanomorphic figures. Ernst added marks in pen and paint, as well as collage elements, fusing them into seamless images that mimic freehand drawing and confuse the viewer's understanding of the medium. Ernst also gave the works enigmatic titles and additional handwritten texts that at once suggest, but ultimately frustrate, a clear interpretation of meaning. *Don't smile!* includes German text that reads 'go outside and smile bitterly', which perhaps relates to the door and key at the centre of the work.



Max ERNST

Title page illustration for *Die
Schammade*
1920

Stereotype print with pen and
Indian ink on paper
25 × 9.5 cm [10 × 3.5 in]
Collection, New York Public
Library

In 1920 Ernst and Johannes Baargeld published the single-issue review *Die Schammade*. The meaningless name sounds like the German words for 'charade', 'shame' and 'maggot'. The journal was less political than *Der Ventilator*, their previous publication, and was financed by Baargeld's father as a welcome distraction for his son from his interest in Communism. The review included not only works by Cologne Dadas, but also submissions by André Breton's group in Paris. Tristan Tzara, with whom Ernst corresponded, helped to collect pieces in French by Louis Aragon, André Breton, Paul Eluard, Philippe Soupault and others. Ernst designed the title page, which includes a 'collage drawing' of printers' materials entitled 'Dada'.



Max ERNST

The punching ball, ou L'Immortalité de Buonarrotti

[The Punching Ball, or The Immortality of Buonarroti]

1920

Photomontage

18 x 11.5 cm [7 x 4.5 in]

This work was created from a photographic portrait of Ernst, to which he added a flayed anatomical head attached to the body of a woman in a white formal gown. Ernst's hand, another fragment, reaches around the woman. An axis line or ruler, calling attention to the work's disparate scales, extends upwards. The word 'dadamax', Ernst's dada nickname, is placed near his face and the strange creature below is labelled 'caesar buonarroti', elevating the Renaissance artist to imperial personage. The title that refers to the punching ball was later added by a collaborator, probably Hans Arp. In this way, the photomontage is also a Fatagaga (Fabrication de Tableaux Gasométriques Garantis). The Fatagaga works were collaborative efforts, in which Ernst's collages were given titles and captions written by his friends.

opposite

MaxMax ERNST

La Puberté proche ... (les pléiades)

[Approaching Puberty ... (The Pleiades)]

1921

Photomontage

24.5 x 16.5 cm [9.5 x 6.5 in]

For Ernst, photomontage and collage did not necessitate the use of scissors and glue: he considered the techniques to be flexible concepts. Some of his works incorporate found materials in other ways. In his 'over-paintings', Ernst appropriated materials which he then manipulated by painting over the parts he wished to omit. *Approaching Puberty* ... was created from an un-cut photograph of a nude woman reclining on a sofa; the image was turned ninety degrees, so that her body appears to hang in space. Ernst then painted over areas of the photograph with gouache. The woman's face has disappeared and she floats in a heavenly space, the mottled blue background suggesting the blue, star-filled skies of Renaissance frescoes.



La puberté prodige n'a pas encore enlevé la grâce tenue de nos pléiades / Le regard de nos yeux pleins d'ombre est dirigé vers le pavé qui va tomber / La gravitation des ondulations n'existe pas encore

Cover of *Dada*, no. 8, Dada au grand air/Der Sängerkrieg in Tirol

[Dada Outdoors/The Singing Contest in Tyrol]

1921

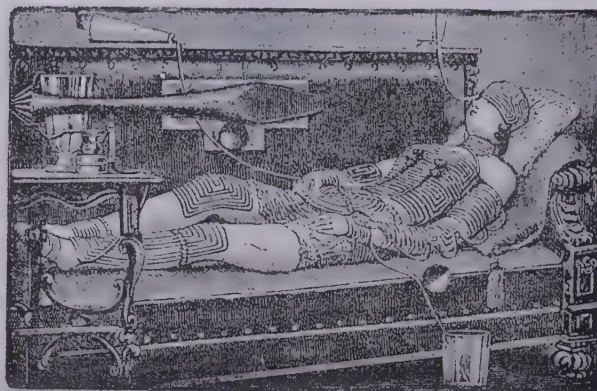
34 x 21 cm [13.5 x 8.5 in]

Collection, The University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City

The eighth and final number of the periodical *Dada* (begun in Zurich) was a response to Francis Picabia's anti-dada issue of 1911 called 'Le Pilhaou-Thibaou', which was created after his defection from the Paris group. Ernst, Tristan Tzara and Hans Arp produced 'Dada Outdoors' while they and their wives and girlfriends were on holiday in the Alps in Tarrenz-bei-Imst in the summer of 1921. The issue contained the group's manifesto and the cover displayed a collage by Ernst entitled *Die Leimbereitung aus Knochen* (The Preparation of Glue from Bones). In addition to various smaller fragments, Ernst composed the image from a nineteenth-century book illustration of a medical treatment. Unlike Ernst's earlier collages, which he unified through photography, the seams of this collage were hidden by the engraving process used to print the issue.

DADA TIRI AUGRANDAIR DERSÄNGERKRIEG

TARRENZ B. IMST 16 SEPTEMBRE 1886—1921 1 FR. 2 MK.
EN DEPOT AU SANS PAREIL 37 AVENUE KLÉBER PARIS



MAX ERNST: *Die Leimbereitung aus Knochen*
La préparation de la colle d'os

NET

Un ami de New-York nous dit qu'il connaît un pickpocket littéraire; son nom est Funiguy, célèbre moraliste, dit bouillabaisse musicale avec impressions de voyage.

Tzara envoie à Breton: une boîte de souvenirs conservés dans du lait d'autruche et une larme batavique munie d'indications pour sa transformation en poudre d'abeilles. Il est attendu à Tarrenz b. Imst par le rire morganatique des plaines et des cascades.

Le titre de ce journal appartient à Maya Chruscec.

Wir kochen geneigte Herrschaften in Parafin und hobeln sie auf.

Arp visse S. G. H. Taeuber sur le tronc d'une fleur.

Dans le catalogue du salon Dada il se trouve une erreur que nous tenons à corriger. Le tableau mécanique de Marcel Duchamp "Mariée" n'est pas daté de 1914, comme on voulait nous faire croire, mais de 1912. Ce premier tableau mécanique a été peint à Munich.

La baronne Armada de Duldgedalzen, connue dans l'histoire sous le nom La Cruelle, a organisé devant des invités, sur ses domaines à Tarrenz, un massacre parmi les paysans des environs.

Maintenant que nous sommes mariés, mon cher Cocteau, vous me trouverez moins sympathique. En Espagne on ne couche pas avec les membres de sa famille, dirait Marie Laurenein.

Tzara envoie à Soupault: 4 baleines en éponge molle, 2 aguilles pour l'empoisonnement des arbres, un peigne perfectionné à 12 dents, un lama vivant et agité et une pomme cuite au jambon de cadavre. A Mic les salutations de son cœur ouvert.

Arp envoie à Eluard: un turban d'entrailles et d'amour à 4 chambres. A Benjamin Péret: des minéraux bouillis des drapeaux de fourmillières et des postiches sur l'impériale couronnée par les putains des souris.

Funiguy a inventé le dadaïsme en 1899, le cubisme en 1870, le futurisme en 1867 et l'impressionisme en 1856. En 1867 il a rencontré Nietzsche, en 1902 il remarqua qu'il n'était que le pseudonyme de Confucius. En 1910 on lui érigea un monument sur la place de la Concorde tchéco-slovaque, car il croyait fermement dans l'existence des génies et dans les bienfaits du bonheur.

Tzara envoie à Marcel Duchamp: des bonbons d'amour trempés dans du whisky nègre et un nouveau divan turc muni de cuisses vivantes de pucelle.

A Man Ray: Une carte postale transparente avec les montagnes et le reste, et un frigorifère qui parle français à l'approche d'un magnéto.

A Marguerite Buffet: un paquet de chocolat à la boutonnière ainsi que 3 notes musicales d'une qualité tout-à-fait exceptionnelle.

Paris (16), 12 rue de Boulainvilliers.

TRISTAN TZARA

Der Redner

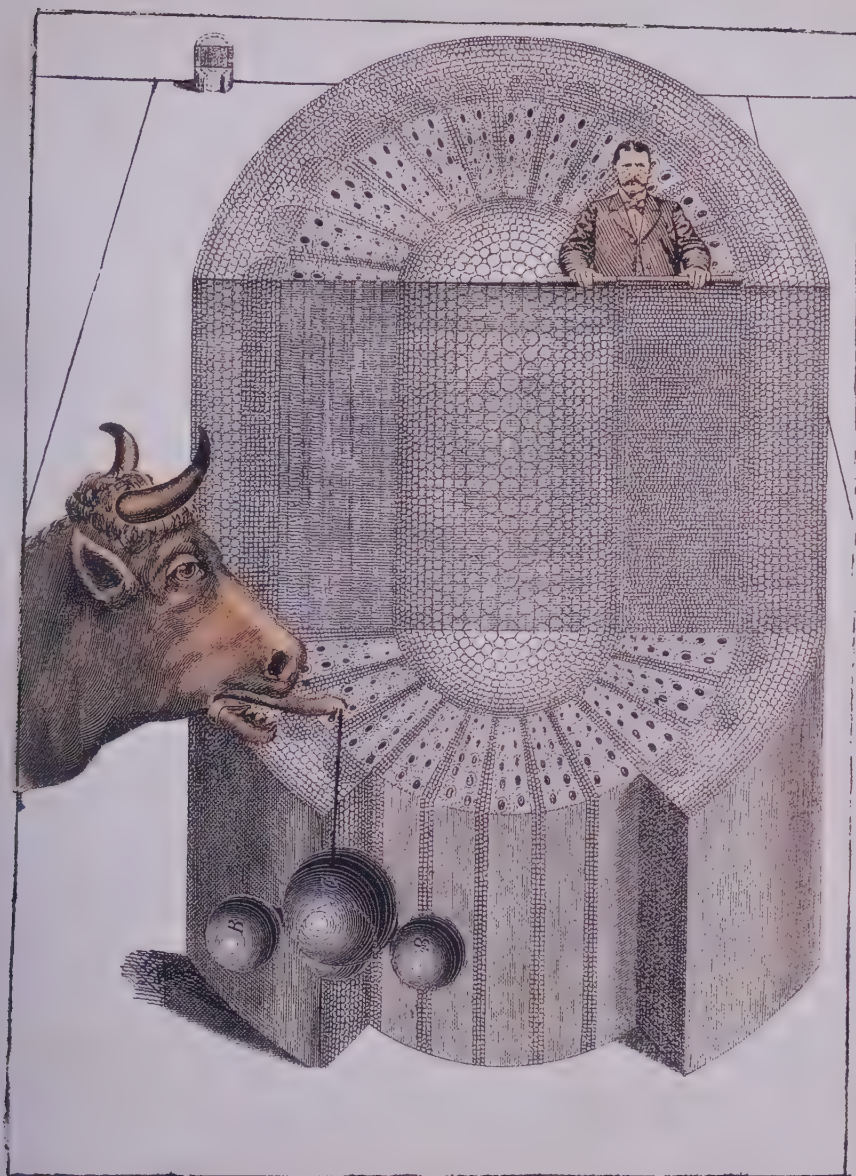
[The Orator]

1921

Collage with ink on paper

50.5 x 19 cm [10 x 7.5 in]

Encyclopaedias, teaching manuals and scientific periodicals offered Ernst a range of imagery derived from wood engravings, the cheap printing method of popular media. These black-and-white linear compositions were easily merged, with pen and ink modifications, to create small collages. *The Orator* is composed of illustrations from the French scientific weekly *La Nature*. The lecturer appears at the top right. His podium appears to be a diagram of the interior of a plant stem. Below is his student, a cow from whose tongue dangle four spheres. Ernst creates a spatial location for these objects through a simple perspective system, two diagonal lines and a horizon where an identical organic diagram is located. Ernst was interested in the themes of education and science; their presence in his irrational world is a critique of the logic on which they are based.





Johannes BAARGELD [Alfred GRUENWALD]

Antropofiler Bandwurm

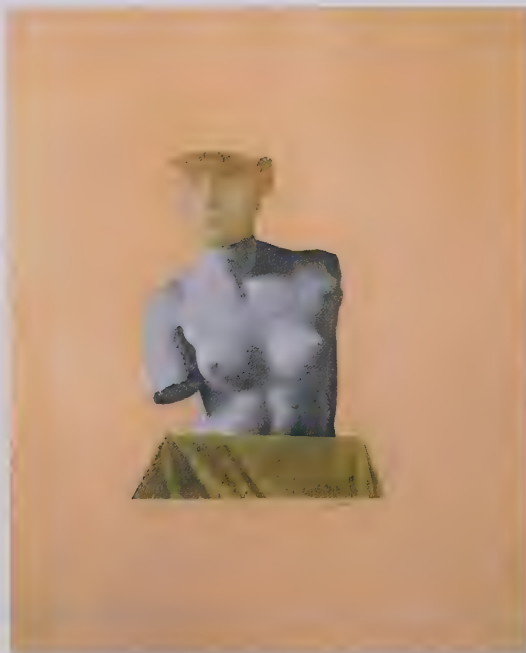
[Anthropophilic Tapeworm]

1920

Assemblage

Lost work; reproduced in *Die Schammade*, 1920

In addition to his work as a draughtsman, collagist and writer, Alfred Gruenwald, under the pseudonym Johannes Baargeld, made assemblages similar to Ernst's *Fruit of a Long Experience*. Although now lost, the work is known through its 1920 reproduction in *Die Schammade*. Baargeld called the work a 'split relief'. Unlike *Fruit of a Long Experience*, it is irregular in shape and has no frame; it thoroughly rejects traditional artistic formats. The type of found objects used by Baargeld also mirror Kurt Schwitters' strategy. Mundane objects such as a baking tin at upper left, a bicycle bell at lower left, springs, pipes, and other items make up the unusual textures and patterns. This piece was one of nine works shown by Baargeld at the infamous 'Dada Winter Brewery' exhibition in Cologne in April of that same year.



Johannes BAARGELD [Alfred GRUENWALD]

Typische Vertikalverklitterung als Darstellung des Dada Baargeld

[Typical Vertical Split Representing the Dada Baargeld]

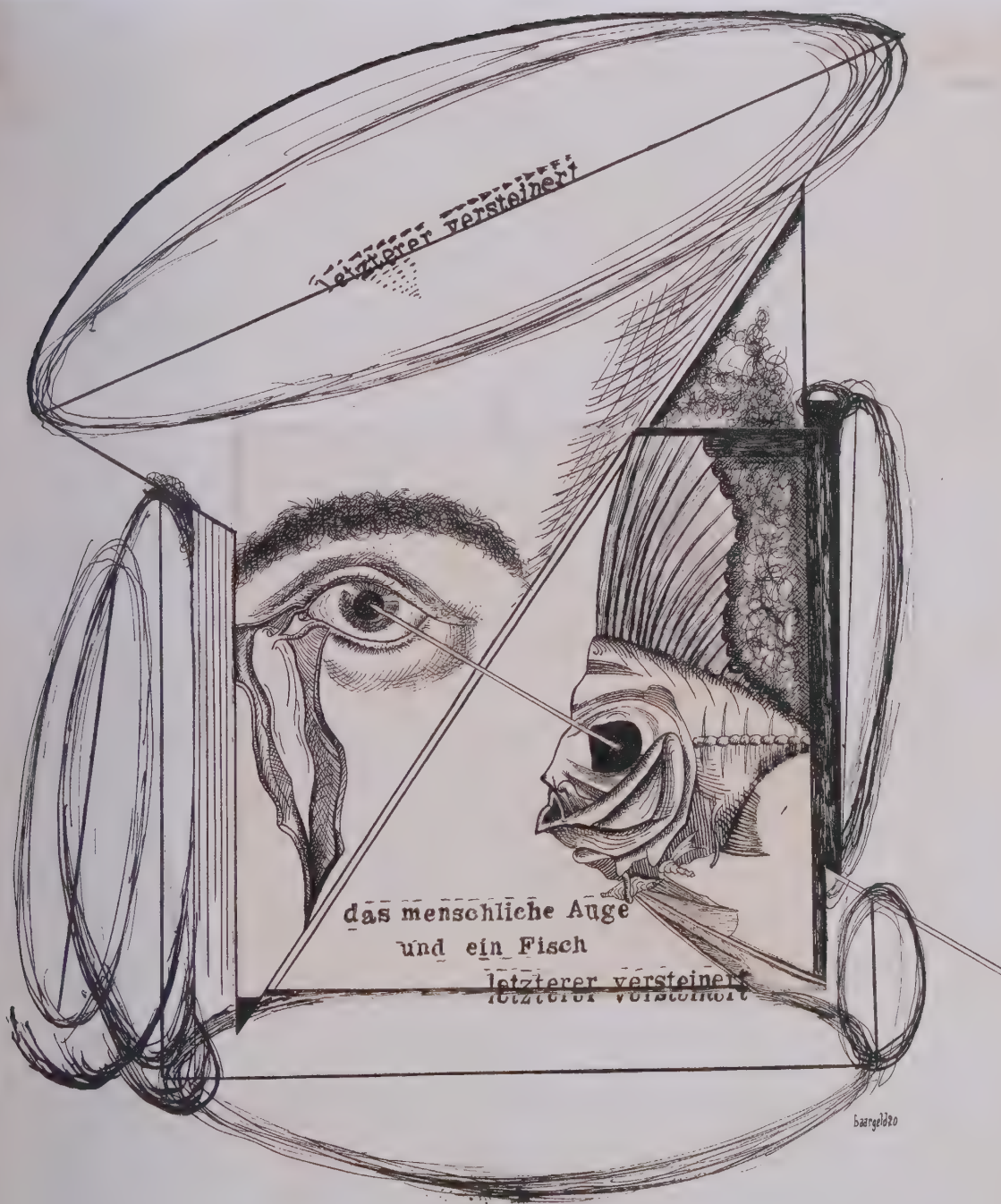
1920

Photomontage

37 x 31 cm [14.5 x 12 in]

Collection, Kunsthhaus, Zurich

In this self-portrait, Baargeld condenses the breakdown of boundaries so crucial to the Dadas' critique of culture. He attached a photograph of himself to a reproduced photograph of the *Venus de Milo*; he also added the brim of a military hat. This new 'sculpture' is set on a table that is missing its legs, a form that suggests the pedestals upon which antique sculptures often rest in museums. Baargeld's androgynous figure pokes fun at the military or at traditional art and idealized concepts of beauty. It also complicates Baargeld's own 'split' identity: his name itself was a pseudonym. Many of the Dadas were fond of making self-portraits that questioned notions of identity. In *Typical Vertical Split Representing the Dada Baargeld*, the artist simultaneously tears down expectations about gender, art and self-representation.



Johannes BAARGELD [Alfred GRUENWALD]

Das menschliche Auge und ein Fisch, letzterer versteinert
[The Human Eye and a Fish, the Latter Petrified]

1920

Pen and ink on paper

30 x 23 cm [12 x 9 in]

Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Unlike Max Ernst, Baargeld was a self-taught artist; he rejected oil painting and other traditional techniques but worked in pen and ink as well as collage. Most of his surviving works, of which there are few, are in these media. Although a drawing, *The Human Eye* is also influenced by the collage strategy. Here, disparate images, including typed text are brought together, connected by a line that pierces the eye and fish. This line extends through the floating planes layered on the paper and thus creates spatial confusion. The pierced eye motif foreshadows themes in Surrealism related to the idea of inner sight. Similar imagery appears in works by both Ernst and Spanish filmmaker Luis Buñuel



Johannes BAARGELD [Alfred GRUENWALD]

Ordinäre Klitterung: Kubischer Transvestit vor einem vermeintlichen Scheidewege

[Vulgar Mess: Cubist Transvestite at Alleged Crossroad]

1920

Collage

31 x 14.5 cm [12 x 5.5 in]

Vulgar Mess is perhaps a rebuttal from the Dadas to the Parisian Cubists. Albert Gleizes, Jean Metzinger and other members of the Parisian avant-garde wanted to revive the yearly 'Section d'Or' exhibition of contemporary art. However, the organizers, mainly Cubists, rescinded their invitation to the Dadas to participate. In Baargeld's collage a well-dressed woman stands at the centre. In the background is a man identified as General Yorck from the Prussian War of Independence. Gleizes, his image cut from a photograph in Guillaume Apollinaire's *Les Peintres cubistes*, sits below. Nearby are 'cubist' shapes taken from a teaching manual, some of which have been pasted onto Gleizes to suggest a phallus. The motifs of war, fashion and Cubism, in addition to the image of Gleizes who, head in hands, seems to be at a mental 'crossroads', points to the collage as a statement about the 'Section d'Or' dispute.



Johannes BAARGELD [Alfred GRUENWALD]

Venus beim Spiel der Könige

[Venus at the Game of Kings]

1920

Collage

37 x 27.5 cm [14.5 x 11 in]

Collection, Kunsthau, Zurich

Although Baargeld's works are not often discussed as political statements, this collage depicting a royal figure suggests such a reading as the Kaiser had recently (1918) abdicated the throne. In this image the figure has been cut in two just above the mouth. A new 'face' has been formed, growing from this cut. Within a dark rectangle hover biomorphic shapes and the image of a woman's legs and hand near the pubic region, a typical gesture from antique depictions of the goddess Venus. At the top left is the remainder of the man's head; opposite is the head of Max Ernst's first wife Dr Luise Straus-Ernst, an art historian and administrator at Cologne's Wallraf-Richartz Museum. In this strange image both outmoded artistic and political traditions are recombined to form a strange new entity.

Johannes BAARGELD [Alfred

GRUENWALD]

Käfer

[Beetles]

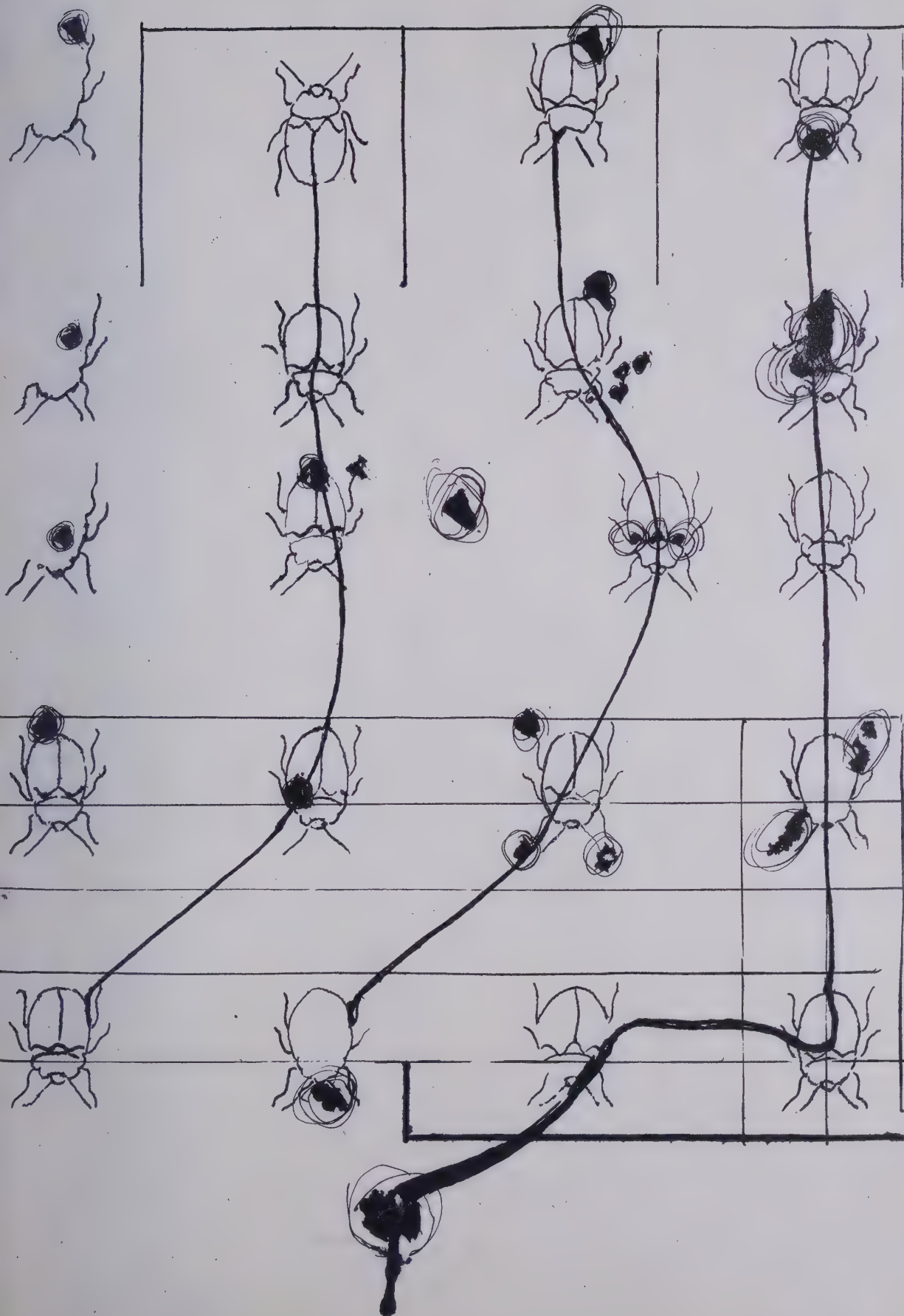
1920

Pen and ink on tissue paper

29 x 23 cm [11.5 x 9 in.]

Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Beetles employs a simple composition to display a tension between the rational and ordered and the irrational and disorientated. Multiple line drawings of beetles organized in a rough grid mimic a scientific drawing or a diagrammatic chart of movement. Lines of ink connect the beetles and outline a development over time or space. The work can be seen as a critique of conventional logic and traditional notions of cause and effect. It also alludes to the process of drawing. This work, along with his *Self-portrait*, *Venus at the Game of Kings*, *The Human Eye*, and others, were at one time in the possession of Tristan Tzara, who was considering them for his large dada compilation *Dadaglobe*. They were purchased from Tzara in 1937 by The Museum of Modern Art, just ten years after Baargeld's death



20 baargeld

PARIS

Paris was ready for Dada. After the misery of the war years, the public longed to forget and to have fun. American movies and jazz were the great attractions. Dada's view of the absurdity of life almost became fashionable. Tristan Tzara organized a large exhibition at the Galerie Montaigne in June 1921 and encouraged the group, predominantly writers, to create visual works for that show. They ranged from Philippe Soupault's *Portrait of an Unknown*, a mirror in which visitors could see themselves, his *Cité de Retiro*, a piece of asphalt, to posters proclaiming 'Dada is the greatest swindle of the century'. The dada gallery Au Sans Pareil organized shows of Max Ernst, Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes and Francis Picabia, who continued to publish his magazine *391*. Man Ray became the photographer of Paris Dada and, with the encouragement of Tzara, created his Rayographs. Arriving in Paris in 1922, Ernst created a series of oil paintings. In order to produce these large works in colour, Ernst gave up the use of fragments of mass-media illustrations, but imitated his former seamless collaging, foregrounding the illogical juxtapositions that for André Breton were central to Dada and Surrealism.

opposite

Francis PICABIA

Optophone I

1922

Watercolour on paper

70 x 60 cm [28 x 23 in]

In 1922 Picabia produced a number of works that play on visual themes from classical imagery and on the idea of the master and masterpiece; these works function as part of his overall rejection of the aura and value of art. In a number of images, such as *Optophone I*, the title of which refers to a device that translates light into sound, silhouettes of traditional female nudes are paired with targets. Here, a large target forms the backdrop for the outline of a reclining female, perhaps a nude by the French painter Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres. Coupling these motifs, Picabia's work refers to the long-standing method of academic artistic training, the copying of established masterpieces and period of apprenticeship. Here the traditional masterwork, the female nude, becomes the bull's eye.



OPTOPHONE

Francis Picabia

LA SAINTE-VIERGE



FRANCIS PICABIA

Francis PICABIA

La Sainte Vierge

[The Holy Virgin]

1920

Ink splash on paper

Lost work; reproduced in 391,

no. 12, March 1920

When published in his journal 391.

The Holy Virgin appeared on the page following Duchamp's *L.H.O.O.Q.* Picabia's image likewise is an iconoclastic gesture – both towards the Virgin Mary herself and the revered images of her that appear in churches around the world. Picabia uses a simple form that allows for multiple references and readings. First, the ink splash suggests the literal defilement of the image of a 'spotless' holy person; the inference being blood-stained sheets, a means by which the doctrine of Immaculate Conception is questioned. But the work is also an anti-art gesture, whereby chance or automatism, embodied in the artless spill of ink, are the processes through which a sacred, yet seemingly anonymous (perhaps 'fatherless'), object is produced.

Francis PICABIA

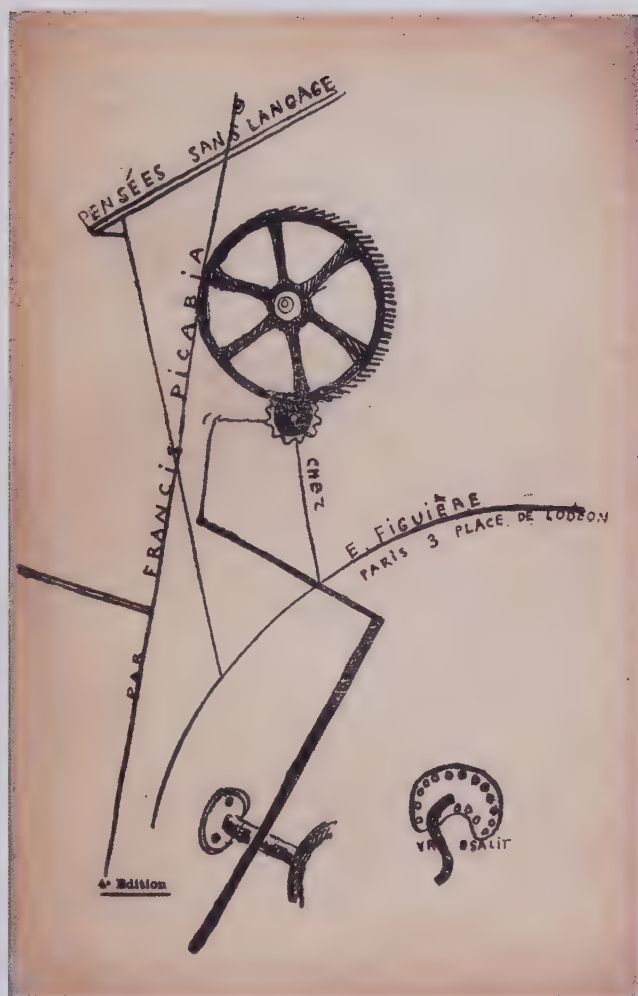
Cover of *Pensées sans langage*

[Thoughts Without Words]

1919

Collection, The University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City

Pensées sans langage was the first of three volumes of poetry that Picabia contributed to the Paris Dada period. Published in late summer of 1919, it was followed in 1920 by *Unique Eunuque* (Unique Eunuch) and *Jésus-Christ Rastaquouère* (Jesus Christ Showy Adventurer). The cover is composed of Picabia's typical mechanomorphic forms, although they are drawn in a softer, more free-hand style. Interspersed throughout the design is the book's basic information including the title, author and publisher (Eugène Figuière in Paris) of the volume. The wheel or gear motif found in earlier images such as *Girl Born without a Mother* (c. 1916-18) and *Machine Turn Quickly* (c. 1916-18) is also present and a key-like form is near the bottom. The volume itself is dedicated to Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia, the artist's wife, as well as to Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes, Marcel Duchamp and Tristan Tzara.



Francis PICABIA

Lits et ratures

[Beds and erasures]

Cover of *Littérature*, new series, no. 7, 1 December 1922

Collection, The University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City

In March 1922, André Breton updated *Littérature* by beginning a 'new series'; the new format featured an image-based cover rather than the typographic design of the original series. The early covers of the new series featured the image of a black top hat by Man Ray. However, in the summer of 1922 Picabia's role at the magazine became more involved and the design of the covers fell to him, and he produced a series of verbal/visual puns for each. For the December 1922 cover he scrambled the word *littérature* to make *lits et ratures* (beds and erasures). The soles (souls) of two people, one male and one female, face each other in the position of a couple making love. The word '*lits*', the facial portraits of a man and woman, and the heart at centre further this suggestion; the word '*rature*', similar to *raté* (failure), often used by Picabia, nevertheless hints at a frustrated ending.

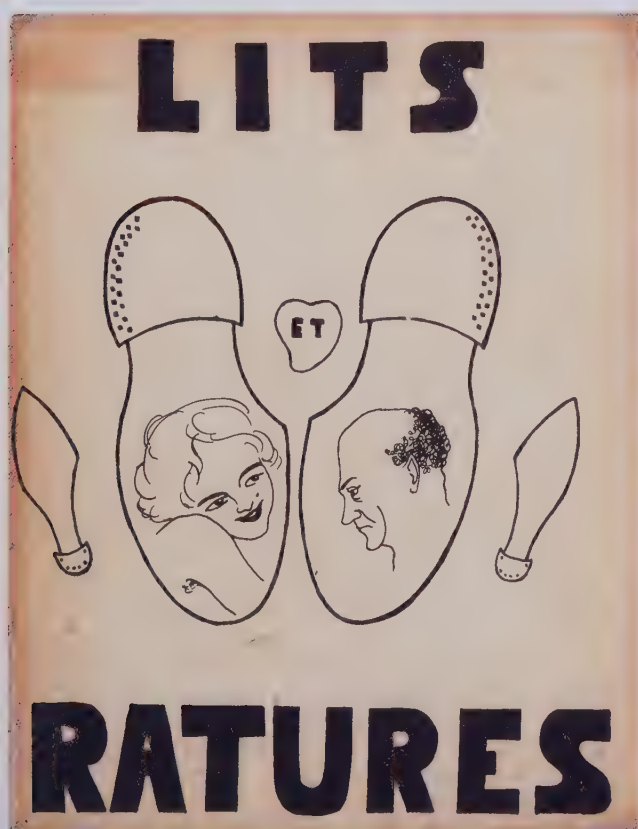
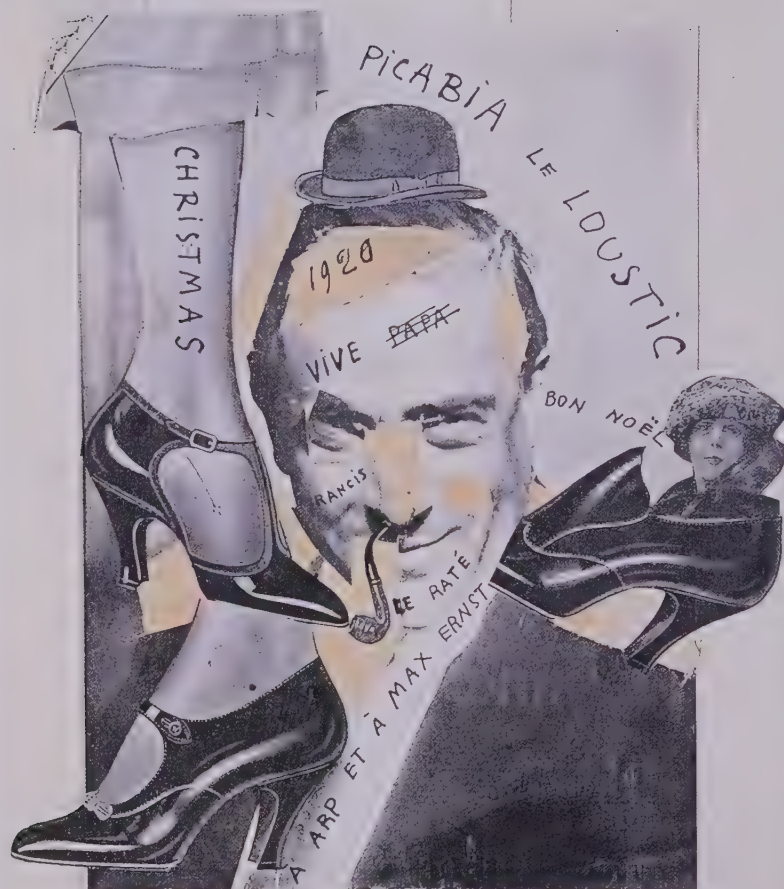


TABLEAU RAȘTADA DA



Francis PICABIA

Tableau Rastadada

[Rastadada Picture]

1920

Photomontage

19 x 17 cm [7 x 6 in]

This self-deprecating photomontage served as Picabia's Christmas postcard to Hans Arp and Max Ernst; it may have also been a tribute to their interest in collage. To his own photograph (the same image found on his *Cacodylic Eye*) Picabia affixed images of a hat and pipe; around him are women's legs, shoes and a woman's head. These markers of conventional fashion provide a comment on the idea of taste and value, especially as created by the aura of the artist's personality. This *Rastadada Picture*, its title a play on his iconoclastic book *Jésus-Christ Rastaquouère*, also contains two self-mocking remarks – '*Picabia le Loustic*' ('Picabia the funny guy') and '*Francis le Raté*' ('Francis the failure'). Picabia often used sarcastic self-deprecation; for example, in his 1921 broadside from the Salon d'Automne. The piece reads 'Francis Picabia is an Imbecile, an Idiot, a Pickpocket!!!!', but then invites the reader to kiss his fingers.

opposite

Francis PICABIA

L'Oeil cacodylate

[The Cacodylic Eye]

1921

Oil and collage on canvas

148.5 x 117.5 cm [58 x 46 in]

Collection, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

The Cacodylic Eye is a collaborative work, a 'collage' of images and signatures.

Picabia began with the title, which refers to a harsh treatment for eye disorders, and a large painted eye, as well as his photograph and signature at lower left. He then set up the work in his apartment and allowed friends and colleagues to complete it. More than forty individuals added signatures, aphorisms and other elements to the work. Picabia wrote, 'This canvas was finished when there was no longer space on it and I find this painting very beautiful ... my great despair would be precisely to be taken seriously, to become a great man, a master ...' (*Comoedia*, 23 November 1921).

The idea of the master's unique signature, the value-producing aspect of a work, is cleverly disrupted by the collaborative strategy and presence of many signatures, which according to the art market, would render the work even more valuable. The completed *Cacodylic Eye* was exhibited at the 1921 Salon d'Automne.

Paul Z. final DERMÉE

Tout le monde
ont signé je
signe y Noisy

L'OEIL CACODYLATE

Je m'appelle
DADA
depuis 1892
Millhaud

En quelques
mots: c'est bien!
Séjourné:
c'est mieux
magique
A. Chateaubriand
au lieu MARQUETTE
BUFFET.
Picasso
je prête sur moi-même
G. Ribemont Desnages
Compromis
Salim

Chong
Vannie de la comédie
étranger

MON
DEUIL
de verre



VOUS REGARDE
J. Gatti

Couronne
de
mélancolie

LA VOIX
DE
JEAN HUGO

moi, j'aime
FRANCIS et
GERMAINE
IL FAUT MAIS JE
NE PEUX PAS
Je suis bête
Je gagne Benjamin
Duchamp
C'est moi
non je ne signerai pas
H. Toudoum-Morbang
Sagant
qui sait de lui

Parlez
pour moi.
L. Rigaut.
Je n'ai rien à vous dire
Georges Auric

Raphael Schwartz

VIVE AGAGA PANSACRI
PICABIA TE SOUVIENT TU

PHARAMOUSSE



S. SCHARCHOUNE

Je l'aime
J. Tardieu
Je l'aime la

Le petit de Massot
sourit
au GRAND PICABIA!
J'espère
toujours me
réveiller.
GERMAINE
EVERLING.
J'admire
Léo Claret
H. Tardieu
Je l'aime
sans fausseté
C. Noisy
H. Tardieu
J'admire
L. Tardieu
J'admire
L. Tardieu

SOLEIL
RENATA RUSSE
BORGATTI
LES CROISSANTS SONT BONS
RIEN FAIT ET JE SIGNE
JE ME TROUVE TRÈS
FRANÇOIS HUGO
d'aimer
Hania

MICHEL
CORLIN
LE CUCULIN
AILE
BALARCON
LA PLEINE



FRANCIS PICABIA

TRISTAN
TZARA

POISSON
J. Tardieu
Je l'aime la

DADAISME, INSTANTANÉISME

Journal de l'Instantanéisme

POUR QUELQUE TEMPS

L'INSTANTANÉISTE EST UN ÊTRE EXCEPTIONNEL CYNIQUE ET INDÉCENT

LE SEUL MOUVEMENT C'EST,
LE MOUVEMENT PERPÉTUEL!

L'INSTANTANÉISME : EST POUR
CEUX QUI ONT QUELQUE CHOSE À DIRE.

IL N'Y A QU'UN MOUVEMENT
C'EST LE MOUVEMENT PERPÉTUEL!
Dans son prochain nu-
méro "391" donnera une
liste des premiers instan-
tanéistes, hommes excep-
tionnels.

L'INSTANTANÉISME : NE VEUT PAS D'HIER.
L'INSTANTANÉISME : NE VEUT PAS DE DEMAIN.
L'INSTANTANÉISME : FAIT DES ENTRECHATS.
L'INSTANTANÉISME : FAIT DES AILES DE PIGEONS.
L'INSTANTANÉISME : NE VEUT PAS DE GRANDS HOMMES.
L'INSTANTANÉISME : NE CROIT QU'À AUJOURD'HUI.
L'INSTANTANÉISME : VEUT LA LIBERTÉ POUR TOUS.
L'INSTANTANÉISME : NE CROIT QU'À LA VIE.
L'INSTANTANÉISME : NE CROIT QU'AU MOUVEMENT PERPÉTUEL.

Francis PICABIA

Portrait of Marcel Duchamp,
Cover of 391, no. 19, October
1924

36.5 x 27.5 cm [14.5 x 11 in]
Collection, The University of
Iowa Libraries, Iowa City

Picabia described 'Instantaneism' on this
cover of 391 as 'the only movement, it is
a perpetual movement'. Created as an
'-ism' in opposition to Breton's
Surrealism, which was founded that
same year and rejected by Picabia.
Instantaneism found its expression in
Picabia's ballet *Relâche*, the film he
made with René Clair. *Entr'acte* (shown
during the interval at the ballet), and in
this issue of 391. The cover sports a
green silhouette of Marcel Duchamp
smoking a pipe. The image is overlaid
with text affirming Picabia's new
movement. Inside the issue is a piece
entitled 'Opinions and Portraits' that
openly criticizes Breton, while on the
back is a large advertisement for *Relâche*.

Francis **PICABIA**Drawing for the ballet *Relâche*

1924

Watercolour and Indian ink

32.5 × 25 cm [12 × 9 in]

Picabia collaborated with the avant-garde composer Erik Satie and the choreographer Jean Bortin to create an 'instantaneous ballet' called *Relâche* (*Suspended Performance*). The production, with its bright lights, loud music and comic obscenities lived up to Picabia's statement in the programme notes: '*Relâche* promenades through life with a great burst of laughter.' The uproar caused by the audience on opening night added to the chaos. Picabia, who wrote the text and designed the set, which included a wall of three hundred and fifty automobile headlights, advised the audience to wear dark glasses and cover their ears. Performed by the Swedish Ballet at the Théâtre Champs Elysées, *Relâche* premiered on 4 December and was accompanied by Picabia and René Clair's avant-garde film *Entr'acte* (Interval), appropriately shown between the two acts of the ballet. This design for the ballet includes two figures and the dada text 'When does one free oneself of the custom of wanting to explain everything?'

Francis **PICABIA**

Le Surréalisme crucifié

[Surrealism Crucified]

c. 1924

Pencil and watercolour on paper

32 × 25.5 cm [12 × 10 in]

Collection, Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris

One of André Breton's goals in writing the 'Manifesto of Surrealism' was to circumscribe a group of individuals with specific beliefs. Often called the Pope of Surrealism, he was known to 'excommunicate' those who did not follow his directives. By the spring of 1924 Breton and Picabia had fallen out; Picabia declared the opposing movement of Instantaneism and there was no reconciliation between the two men. Picabia's image of 'Saints' Breton and Aragon criticizes Breton's growing zeal about Surrealism (the word is written across the face of the Christ-figure) as well as the movement's complex, troubled relationship with Communism (referenced across Christ's half-revealed groin). The traditional 'INRI' placard now reads '391 / bien à vous' (yours truly), raising themes of betrayal and sacrifice.



Max ERNST

Sainte Cécile

[Saint Cecilia, or The Invisible Piano]

1923

Oil on canvas

101 × 82 cm [39.5 × 25 in]

Collection, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart

Ernst's painting *Sainte Cecilia* evokes the tensions between inner and outer sight, a theme important to the emerging Surrealist movement. The work, based on the dada medium of found imagery, concerns the story of the patron saint of musicians and the blind, who was a martyr in third-century Rome. In Ernst's image, she is encased in a sort of masonry, a form Ernst found in an illustration of the bronze casting process. This source relates the work to the process of making visual art. The material encasing the saint is littered with eyes, despite her inability to see past it to the world around her. It contains her in an interior world. Cecilia plays an invisible piano, using her creative, inner sight to create music, a non-visual art.



Max ERNST

Ubu Emperor

1923-24

Oil on canvas

100 × 81 cm [39.5 × 32 in]

Collection, Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

This painting depicts a large, strange figure composed of incongruent parts in a vast landscape. It is both bizarre and comic. Ernst stated that he produced the work after reading Alfred Jarry's satirical play *Ubu Roi* (King Ubu). The absurdist play was first performed in 1896 and concerns a greedy and ignorant character who murders the king of Poland and usurps the throne. The farce scandalized audiences in the late nineteenth century with its scatological language and political references. The Dadas, including André Breton, Tristan Tzara and Hans Arp, were inspired by Jarry, whom they considered a proto-Dada. Ernst's *Ubu Emperor* shares the features of Jarry's original Ubu character, drawn by the playwright himself to advertise performances – a grotesque, pear-shaped figure. Ernst's king is a red, barrel-shaped spinning top with an empty eye and human hands.



Max ERNST

Weib, Greis und Blume

[Woman, Old Man and Flower]

1924

Oil on canvas

96.5 × 130 cm [38 × 51 in]

Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

The setting for *Woman, Old Man and Flower* is a desolate coastline. On the left is an animal-like older man, dressed in trousers and a red cape and holding a miniature nude woman in the crook of his arm. He leans against a wall or pole dividing the composition and does not seem to notice the androgynous figure in the foreground. This commanding individual is a composite being with human legs and buttocks, a metal chest of armour, transparent arms rendered only in outline, and a head composed of a fan. The painting seems to depict a dream; perhaps the subconscious of one of the figures within it. Ernst presents the divide between the generations of traditional and modern art, the former represented by the old man and classical nude, the latter by the innovative, collage-like creature he fails to notice.

MAN RAY

Untitled

1922

Rayograph

22.5 × 17 cm [8 × 6.5 in]

Like Christian Schad's *Schadographs*, Man Ray's *Rayographs* are photographs that abandon the use of the camera. Sometimes called 'photography in reverse' or 'paintings with light', they were made by placing objects on photographic paper and exposing them to light. Man Ray often used mechanical objects in these images, such as gears and springs, but he also used materials related to artistic practice, including strips of film or paper. In this chance-based process, the original objects lost their everyday signification and took on evocative tones. Although the *Rayographs* were first published in Breton's journal *Littérature*, Man Ray also compiled them in a book entitled *Les Champs délicieux* (The Delicious Fields) which he published himself in 1922. The book's title is a play on André Breton and Philippe Soupault's automatic text *Les Champs magnétiques* (The Magnetic Fields).

*opposite*MAN RAY

Retour à la Raison

[Return to Reason]

1923

Film, 3 min., black and white, silent

Gelatin silver print

1923/24

Collection, Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

Man Ray's three-minute experimental film debuted in July 1923 at the infamous *Soirée du cœur à barbe* (Evening of the Bearded Heart); Tristan Tzara had commissioned *Return to Reason* from the artist, his first film, specifically for that show. Like the *Rayographs*, much of the film involved abstract designs produced from everyday items. Man Ray sprinkled salt, pepper, tacks and pins on to unexposed film stock, exposed the film strips to light and then developed them. In *Return to Reason* these sections of *Rayograph* film are followed by footage of some of his works, including *Danger/Dancer*, followed by a nude female torso (model Kiki de Montparnasse) turning in front of the camera. At the July debut, the film broke twice during the screening, adding to the already chaotic atmosphere. This still was later reproduced on the fourth page of *La Révolution surréaliste*, no. 1, 1 December 1924.





MAN_RAY

Le Violon d' Ingres

[The Violin of Ingres]

1924

Retouched photograph

48.5 × 37.5 cm [19 × 15 in]

Collection, Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges
Pompidou, Paris

References to the French painter Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres abound in Man Ray's multivalent photograph. The title refers to Ingres' musical avocation for which he was famous. The shape of the violin also suggests Ingres' depiction of the human form. Like the woman in Man Ray's photograph (his model and mistress Kiki de Montparnasse), Ingres' figures have elongated limbs and spines, similar to the necks of violins. Ingres distorted the bodies in his works to evoke romantic and exotic themes. Man Ray similarly manipulates Kiki's body: he touches up his photograph by adding two sound holes (in Indian ink) as well as pencil and wash shadings to balance and refine the shape of her torso, buttocks, and shoulder. Kiki wears a turban and sits with her back turned, an obvious recalling of Ingres' images of odalisques and bathers. Like Ingres' violin, this female figure is rendered an object for male pleasure, something to be handled, played with and enjoyed.

MAN_RAY

Objet indestructible

[Indestructible Object]

1923 [1932; 1959]

Metronome with photograph of eye

22.5 × 11 cm [8 × 4 in]

Collection, The Israel Museum,
Jerusalem

The history of *Indestructible Object* is complex, although the object itself is simply a metronome with a photograph of an eye clipped to its pendulum. When first conceived in 1923 the eye was anonymous, but when photographer Lee Miller left Man Ray in 1932 he replaced it with a photograph of her eye. A text that accompanied the object read: 'Cut out the eye from a photograph of one who has been loved but is seen no more. Attach the eye ... and regulate the weight to suit the tempo desired. Keep going to the limit of endurance. With a hammer well-aimed, try to destroy the whole in a single blow.' The metronome's incessant sound and movement seem perpetual, yet its constantly 'winking' eye provokes aggression and destruction. Over the years Man Ray re-made the object many times; it has also been known as *Object to Be Destroyed*, *Object of Destruction* and *Perpetual Motif*.



Poster for the Salon Dada

Exposition Internationale,

Galerie Montaigne, Paris

6-30 June 1921

121 x 82 cm [47 x 32 in]

Not long after the first Paris exhibition of Max Ernst's work at the Galerie Au Sans Pareil, Tristan Tzara organized the Salon Dada at the Galerie Montaigne as an antidote to the well-respected Salon des Indépendants. The exhibition was paired with a soirée and performances of Tzara's anarchist play *Le Coeur à gaz* (The Gas Heart). Only a few photographs of the exhibition survive but they show a collection of assemblages, collages and found objects, which seem to have been displayed in a rather subdued manner, quite unlike the Dada Fair in Berlin a year earlier. Many Dadas contributed works to the Salon including Hans Arp, Max Ernst, Julius Evola and Man Ray. However, the gallery management closed the show early because of the Dadas' unusual performances. The advertisement for the exhibition cleverly depicts a group of signs containing words and phrases including the prophetic 'immobilization' (or 'shutdown').



Poster for the Dada Festival,

Salle Gaveau, Paris

26 May 1920

37 x 26.5 cm [14 x 10 in]

The Dada Festival in May 1920 occurred at a difficult time for the Paris group. Tensions between Francis Picabia, André Breton, Tristan Tzara and other members were beginning to arise as the movement evolved in various ways: Dada was becoming popular with the general public, causing feelings of unease in some members. This performance took place at the genteel Salle Gaveau and attracted a large crowd. The organizers had been careful to publicize the event widely; large numbers of posters (with a mechanomorphic design by Picabia) were put up that included the lines 'all the Dadas will have their heads shaved on stage' and 'the sex of Dada will be revealed'. Manifestos, a play, and other provocations were part of the evening, but, to the disappointment of the audience, not one Dada had a haircut. The audience threw food and caused an uproar, which was for many the appeal of such dada events.

ILIAZD [Ilia ZDANEVICH]

Invitation/poster for his lecture
'Nouvelles écoles dans la poésie
russe'

[New Schools in Russian Poetry]
1921

By the time the Georgian artist known
as Iliazd arrived in Paris in 1921 he had
already been involved in the important
movements around *zaum* poetry and the
group called '41' in Tiflis (now Tbilisi).
Upon his arrival in Paris he immediately
began organizing conferences, lectures,
and parties through his Union of Russian
Artists in Paris. Each event was well
advertised with posters and leaflets.
The November lecture entitled 'New
Schools in Russian Poetry' was held in
French and introduced Iliazd's new
audience to the idea of *zaum* or
transrationality, a concept that described
the search for forms that were beyond
logic and structure and thus more
universal and authentic. Through his
public events and new ideas, Iliazd
wished to reinvigorate the Paris art
scene, which he described as 'weak and
colourless', 'dry and isolated'

10 rue Faustain Helie Passy

DiMaNCHe le 27

Tramway 12 Metro Passy

Olenine d'Alheim
la conférence du professeur
de l'université de Tiflis

Novembre 1921 aura lieu

ILIA

ZDANEVITCH

LA POESIE

RUSSE

41°

2 me tirage mencera à 2 heures

la soirée sera honorée par la présence des MM
VICTOR HUGO & HONORÉ BALZAC

de la part de M. Larionov

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Combining Futurism, Cubism, Dada and Constructivism, the Central and Eastern European avant-garde created their own movements. Often short-lived or loosely associated, these are some of the least-studied offshoots of Dada. Records were widely destroyed and many of the remaining archives have been accessible only since the early 1990s; reproductions in journals are often the only traces left. Dada reached Central and Eastern Europe after Constructivism: Dada's impact was that of spontaneity as counter-balance to order and rationality. Kurt Schwitters' collages and typography inspired Lajos Kassák's 'Pictorial Architecture' and his cover designs. In their radical questioning of traditional art, Russian Futurist works bear a striking resemblance to Dada, although the two movements developed independently. Kazimir Malevich's *Composition with Mona Lisa* and Vasilii Kamensky's *Mouse Trap* prefigure the radicality of Marcel Duchamp's own readymades and Ivan Puni's reliefs of found objects point to Schwitters' later assemblages.

opposite

Vladimir TATLIN

Counter-Relief

1915 [1966-70]

Assemblage

68.5 x 83 cm x 78.5 cm [27 x 32 x 31 in]

Reconstruction by Martyn Chalk, from photographs of 1915 original

Tatlin investigated and undermined the Western tradition of wall-hung art with a three-dimensionality that broke through to the real space of the viewer. While his works also explored essentialist concepts – for example, the basic properties of materials, forms, or colours – he questioned traditional concepts of art by breaking down the boundary between pictorial reality and 'life': as he put it, his work involved 'real materials in real space'. His counter-reliefs are geometric compositions of pieces of wood and metal that hang on the wall like a painting, but project out into the surrounding space. He later expanded the concept to objects termed 'corner-counter-reliefs', works that hung across the corner of a room making reference to Russian religious icons similarly displayed in homes.





Kazimir **MALEVICH**

Composition with Mona Lisa

1914

Collage

62.5 × 49.5 cm [24.5 × 19 in]

Collection, State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg

While Vladimir Tatlin undermined the traditional presentation of art through an investigation of the viewer's space, Malevich's cancellation of the Mona Lisa, and thus the Western tradition of representational art, was a step on the way to Suprematism and his iconic image of a black square on a white canvas, which summed up the essence of painting – two-dimensionality. This square first appeared in his stage designs for the opera *Victory Over the Sun* (1913), which told the story of men who conquer, or literally eclipse, the past. The black shape also appears in *Composition with Mona Lisa*, where it is juxtaposed with the words 'partial eclipse'. Here, Mona Lisa's face has been crossed out, and is situated next to a cubo-futurist composition, as well as smaller texts that read 'Apartment for Sale' and 'In Moscow'. The diverse pairings in the image, photography and painting, abstraction and realism, image and text, are also part of the broader concept of *zaum*, transrationalism, developed by Russian avant-garde poets who attempted to move beyond structural logic and reason, and whose works were admired by the Dadas.

opposite

Ivan **PUNI**

Relief with Saw

1916

Assemblage

72.5 × 65 × 12 cm [28 × 25 × 4 in]

Reconstruction from 1916 drawing of 1915 original

In 1915 Puni wrote in a manifesto, 'A painting is a new conception of abstracted, real elements, deprived of meaning'. This merging of opposites – for example, the real with the abstract, terms normally set apart in traditional art – is a common theme in Puni's work, especially in constructions such as *Relief with Hammer* (1915), *Relief with Saw* (1916) or *Relief with Plate* (1919). In each work an abstract image, a real object and fragments of text are combined. This assemblage includes wood, sheet iron, glass, cardboard and a saw. Puni studied in Paris in 1909 and 1910, during which time he met Picasso. In addition to the suprematist focus of his work, it is also often compared to Picasso's synthetic Cubism, developed around 1912.





Iraklii GAMREKELI and Beno GORDEZIANI

Cover of H_2SO_4

1924

28.5 x 20 cm [11.5 x 8 in]

Collection, Georgian State Book Chamber, Tbilisi

Although associated with a Georgian circle of futurist artists, H_2SO_4 was also a dada journal, published in Tiflis (now Tbilisi). Its name is the chemical formula for sulphuric acid, a reference to the group's desire for the destruction of traditional literature and art, especially Georgian art which they found backwards and obsolete. The first issue of the journal was published in May 1924, edited by a group including Simon Chikovani, Bidzina Abuladze, Sh. Alkhazishvili, Akakii Beliashvili and Niko Chachava. The design of the magazine was a fusion of constructivist, futurist and dada styles, which the group deemed significant. The journal published visual works, poetry and essays, mainly in the Georgian language.



Lajos KASSÁK

Bruits

[Noises]

1920

Collage and ink on paper

15 x 10.5 cm [6 x 4 in]

Collection, Neues Museum–Staatliches Museum für Kunst und Design, Nuremberg

Kassák's early artistic life was that of a writer and poet; his poetry was first published around 1910. Like dada poetry, Kassák's work was free and unencumbered by the rules of traditional composition. Kassák sought a 'New Literature', in which language once again operated on a primordial, authentic and universal level. 'The subject of the new literature is the entirety of the cosmos', he wrote. He turned to the visual arts in the early 1920s. Like his poems, often nonsensical and expressionistic, his picture-poems, such as *Bruits*, display the freeing of language from conventional meaning in both a visual and verbal sense. Kassák also questions conventional art: texts in various European languages referring to images and art make up this 'cacophonous' textual collage.

Ilya ZDANEVICH [ILIAZD]

Zokha and Her Suitors

1919

26 x 20.5 cm [10 x 8 in]

Typographical composition for the play *Dunkee for Rent*

Reproduced in *To Sofia Georgievna*

Melnikova, ed. Ilya Zdanevich

Collection, Library of The Getty

Research Institute, Los Angeles

Zdanevich, who later moved to Paris,

took the name Iliazd. As a proponent of

zaum, or transrational poetry and art, he

later participated in the activities of Paris

Dada. In addition to his written and visual

work, Zdanevich also wrote a series

of *zaum* plays or 'dras'. These plays

employed simultaneity and were

subsequently difficult to understand

Zdanevich's accompanying images, such

as this illustration from *Dunkee for Rent*,

visually manifest the sense of chaos and

obfuscation found in the performance of

the text. This image was published in an

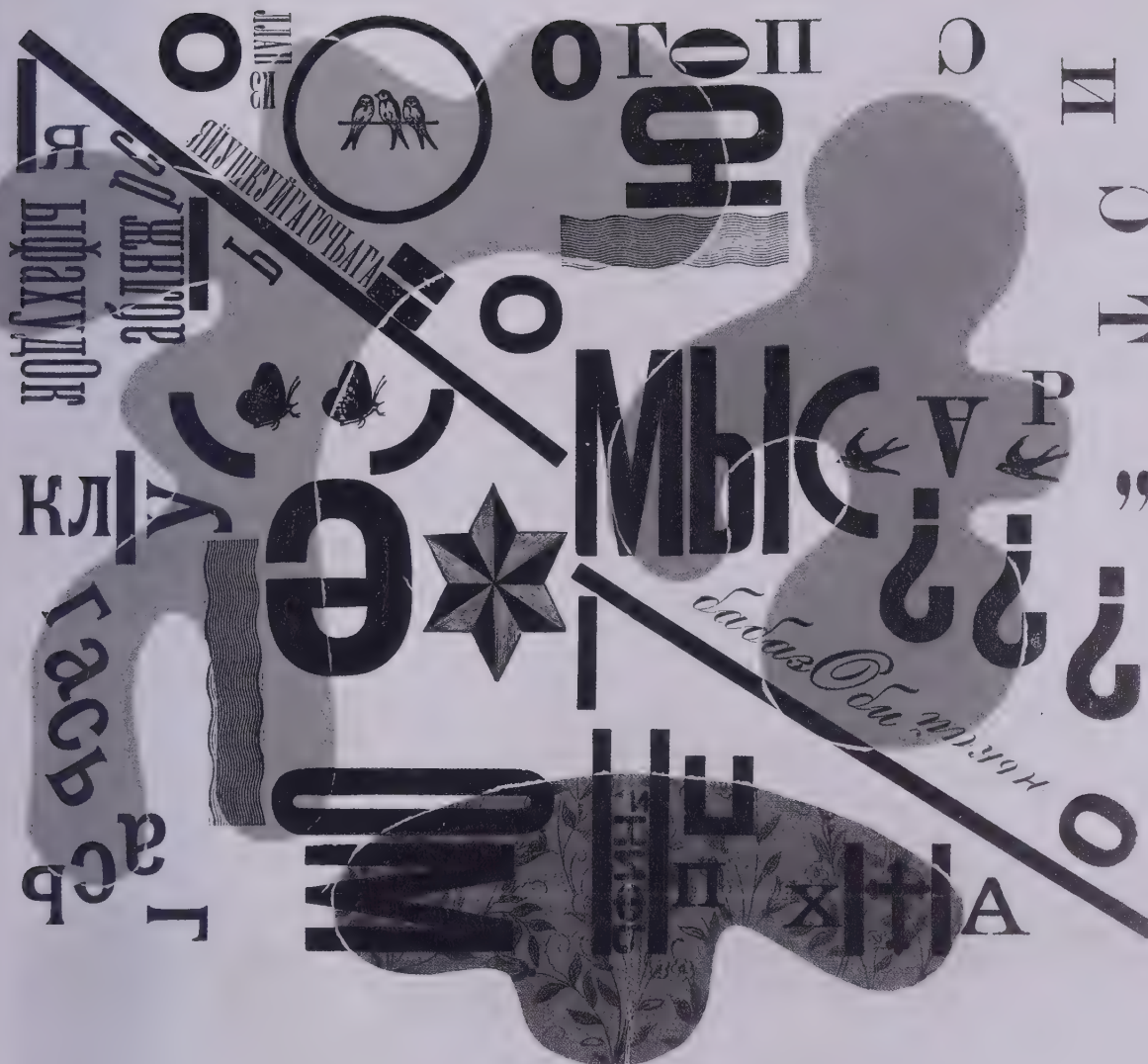
anthology entitled *To Sofia Georgievna*

Melnikova, which collected the work of

the futurist group associated with The

Fantastic Little Inn, a performance venue

in Tiflis.



ИЛЪЯ ЗДАНЕВИЧ

зохна и женихи

(набор 1919)



Lajos KASSÁK

Untitled [Twintig]

[Twenty]

1921

Collage

20 x 16 cm [7 x 6 in]

Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Kassák achieved a merging of Dada, Constructivism and Futurism within the content of his international journal *Ma*, as well as in his own visual works from 1920 onwards. While he often employed a dada deconstruction of forms and text, he did so that he might then build up from that point through his constructivist notion of *Bildarchitektur* (image architecture). This work sums up Kassák's various concerns. The collage's economic and architectonic structure nevertheless contains fragments, text from a German newspaper (for example, 'proclaiming the destruction of all reality as the true sense of being'), as well as the Dutch word 'twintig'. This combination of stability and fragmentation belies the influence of Kurt Schwitters. The use of Dutch suggests a homage to Theo van Doesburg.

Cover of *Ma*, vol. 6, no. 1

1 January 1921

Reprint of original cover

Collection, The University of

Iowa Libraries, Iowa City

Kassák's avant-garde publication

entitled *Ma* (Today) was founded in 1916

in Budapest but was banned by the

authorities in 1919. That same year

Kassák and other artists fled to Vienna;

he began publishing *Ma* again in 1920

From his position in Vienna Kassák

heard about the Berlin Dada group,

mainly through Hungarians living in

Germany, such as László Moholy-Nagy.

In 1921 *Ma* increased its focus on the

international avant-garde. The 1 January

1921 issue was devoted to the dada work

and ideas of Kurt Schwitters. The cover

displays one of Kassák's 'picture-

poems', which includes the provoking

text 'But what will the good family

supporters and blonde women say to

this?' In this issue are other dada items

including a poem by Sándor Barta

entitled 'The Green-Headed Man', an

essay by Christof Spengemann on Kurt

Schwitters, two essays by Schwitters

himself and a Hungarian translation of

Anna Blume.

Ara 15 korona
Cseh-Szlovákiaiában 6 korona



Lajos KASSÁK

Előre

[Forward]

1923

Collage and India ink composition

16 x 16 cm [6 x 6 in]

Collection, Kunsthalle, Nuremberg

This work is related to Kassák's picture-

poems, but it also displays the more

radical freeing of words and letters

associated with Futurism: Kassák

had published the work of Tommaso

Marinetti in his journal *Ma*. This typo-

graphical composition also sums up

Kassák's statement that to express

himself he had to 'use not only a

combination of new words and a new

rhythm, but also at times intersperse

senseless words among words'. *Forward*

manifests this tension between meaning

and nonsense. It also contains the

elongated and balanced forms typical of

Kassák's constructivist images. A long,

arrow-like form, together with the title,

suggest themes of progress and utopia

central to Kassák's work.

Although Bortnyik worked with Kassák while in Vienna, the two later parted ways.

From 1923 to 1924 Bortnyik lived in Weimar where he worked with the Bauhaus,

attended seminars by Theo van Doesburg and developed an interest in graphic design

and advertising. In 1925 he returned to Budapest and became a stage designer at the

avant-garde Green Donkey Theatre. He also worked as editor of the leftist art journal

Új Föld (New Earth) published from February to May 1927. Bortnyik's works, here

presented in *New Earth*, merge dada collage with constructivist compositions. In

Self-Portrait, Bortnyik's large head is surrounded by female performers on a shallow,

box-like stage; there are scissors to the right. These elements suggest Bortnyik's

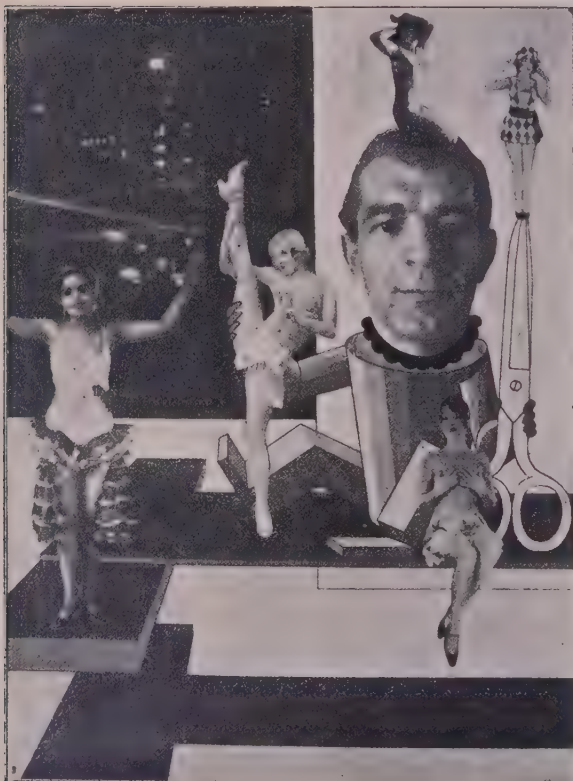
various roles as collagist, poster artist and stage designer. Drama continues in *Food*

of the Giants, a less static composition in which a gunman at right takes aim at an

escaping figure at left while characters 'perform' in the foreground.

BORTNYIK SÁNDOR

KÉT FÉNYKÉPKOMPOZÍCIÓ.
A ZÖLD SZAMÁR ALBUMBÓL.



1



2

1. ÖNARCKÉP

2. ŐRIÁSOK ELEDELE



Branko Ve POLJANSKI

Cover of *Dada-Jok*

1922

Collection, National Museum, Belgrade

It is uncertain whether the anti-dada journal *Dada-Jok*, put out by Ljubomir Micić's brother under the pseudonym Branko Ve Poljanski, was a direct response to Dragan Aleksić's *Dada-Tank*, or whether it had been planned earlier. Nevertheless, both publications appeared in June 1922 in Zagreb. The title of the journal reads 'Dada-No' in Turkish. It has been suggested that *Dada-Jok*'s anti-dada stance is more truly Dada than Aleksić's affirmative publication, despite the fact that the journal provided a critique of this international movement through manifestos, poetry and other works. The cover of *Dada-Jok* includes a collage of images and text. That same year Ve Poljanski wrote, 'I am a Dada, because I am not', a paradoxical statement fundamentally in line with Dada's attempt to undermine conventional language and logic.

vi na okup blizu je dan razračuna pašli će stare vrednote „umetnosti“
veukupni krematoriji ne donesaju toliko kalorije u telo istrulih mumija kao dada



Dragan ALEKSIĆ

Cover of *Dada-Tank*, Zagreb

1922

Collection, Nacionalna i Sveučilišna Knjižnica, Zagreb

Dragan Aleksić, who published the single-issue journals *Dada-Tank* and *Dada-Jazz*, was originally a contributor to Ljubomir Micić's journal *Zenit*. Through his position Aleksić made contact with Dadas such as Raoul Hausmann, Richard Huelsenbeck and Kurt Schwitters, whose ideas he synthesized and developed into his own notion of 'orgart', or organic art. His great interest in Dada and in the international avant-garde caused him to fall out with Micić, whose point of view was orientated mainly towards Balkan culture. Aleksić thus left *Zenit* and went on to produce *Dada-Tank* in June 1922. The publication which touted itself as 'the real Dada' was modelled after other Dada publications and included radical typographic strategies and works by Aleksić, Richard Huelsenbeck, Kurt Schwitters and Tristan Tzara.

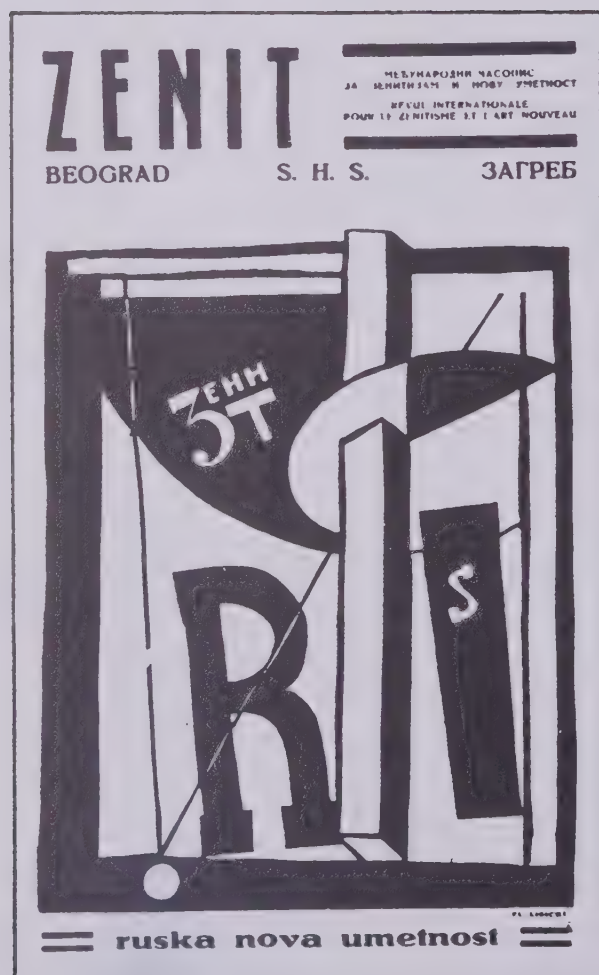
opposite

Victor **BRAUNER**Cover of *75HP*

October 1924

Collection, Institutului de Cercetarea a Avangardei Românești și Europene, Bucharest

Some have called *75HP* (75 Horsepower) the most Dada of all the Romanian avant-garde journals, including Marcel Janco's long-standing *Contimporanul* (Present Time). Founded by the painter Victor Brauner and the poet Ilarie Voronca, *75HP* was published in only one issue before the pair went on to create the review *Punct*. *75HP* was centred around the concept of 'picto-poetry', their version of the dada merging image and text. The bright constructivist cover by Brauner displays this style. The journal also included their short dada definition of picto-poetry, 'Pictopoetry is not Painting / Pictopoetry is not Poetry / Pictopoetry is Pictopoetry', as well as Voronca's exhortation, 'Reader, debug your brain!'

El **LISSITZKY**Cover of *Zenit*, no. 17-18

1922

Collection, Library of the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

The journal *Zenit* (Zenith) was founded in 1921 in Zagreb by Ljubomir Micić, who envisioned the magazine as a vehicle for his philosophy of Zenitism as well as providing a platform for other manifestations of new art and culture. Unlike other Central European Dada movements, Zenitism championed a specifically Balkan culture; nevertheless it did so by showcasing a multitude of various European styles and artists, including reproductions of expressionist, cubist, suprematist, constructivist and dada works. This strategy perhaps derived from Micić's philosophy that saw the merging of contradictory concepts as a way to bring progress towards a better future. Nevertheless, his heterogeneous journal leans towards an interest in Constructivism as seen, for example, in this cover by El Lissitzky.



Construcție: VICTOR BRAUNER



Karel TEIGE

Pozdrav z cesty

[Travel Postcard]

1923

Collage

32.5 × 24.5 cm [13 × 9 in]

Collection, Galerie hlavního města, Prague

Teige's 'picture poem' combines Constructivism with poetic imagery. Composed of basic structural shapes, it is static, yet concerned with the contrasting notion of travel. Teige, leader of the Devětsil Group, here combines photographs, maps, a postcard and envelope, a painting and text to evoke movement across time, space and memory. At the centre is a map of northern Italy and a triangular slice of the night sky overlaid with the words 'Greetings from a Journey'. At the top left is a gouache painting of a nautical flag while next to it is an image of a Mediterranean town. Below, an envelope with a red wax seal mirrors the nautical flag above. The postcard at right is addressed to Jaroslav Seifert, another Prague artist. A pair of binoculars float above two cancelled stamps that mirror the shape of the lenses. Teige's description of art as 'the calculations of the engineer saturated with poetic vision' describes this image as well as the philosophy he called 'poetism'.



Jindřich ŠTYRSKÝ and TOYEN

Comment j'ai trouvé Livingstone

[How I found Livingstone]

1925

Collage

40 × 30 cm [15 × 12 in]

The Devětsil Group was drawn to themes of travel and geography, as seen here in Štyrský's collage. The title refers to the quest of Henry M. Stanley, sent to Africa around 1870 by the *New York Herald* to find David Livingstone, the Scottish explorer and missionary. Through a constructivist composition and the use of found imagery Štyrský and Toyen created an image similar to Hannah Höch's *Ethnographic Museum* series. A 'pup tent' comprised of a real stamped envelope plays on the idea of the six years when no one received correspondence from Livingstone. The envelope is also a marker of civilization, as is the potted tree that stands before the tent. Inside the tent is an altar boy, perhaps Livingstone himself, holding a crucifix; the text 'Maryland' hints at a reference to the Virgin. Behind the tent are masked performers riding a giraffe. They are flanked by the text of the title which in turn makes the work into a postcard. Parallels may be drawn with the dada exploration of the primitive.

JAPAN

Avant-garde groups in Japan welcomed Dada as rebellion, as an opportunity to change society and win greater freedom. Leading figure Murayama Tomoyoshi's year in Berlin (1922) introduced him personally to Theo van Doesburg, Kurt Schwitters, Russian Constructivists and the Berlin Dadas. On his return to Japan, he founded the movement Mavo with members of the Japanese Futurist Art Association (influenced by the Russian Futurists David Burliuk and Victor Palmov during their tour of Japan, 1920–22). Mavo art was integral to life, a philosophy visible in assemblages of everyday objects and in architectural models produced after the Great Kantō Earthquake in 1923. Like the word 'Dada' in European languages, 'Mavo' was meaningless in Japanese; similarly the group emphasized performance, dance, stage design and the publication of its eponymous magazine. Yanase Masamu's pointed critiques of consumer culture and his political cartoons increasingly persuaded Murayama to the political Left. After years of anarchist revolt, he joined Yanase in 1925 in founding The Union of Japanese Proletarian Art and Literature, and Mavo came to an end.

opposite

OKADA Tatsuo

Montō den idō kippu uriba

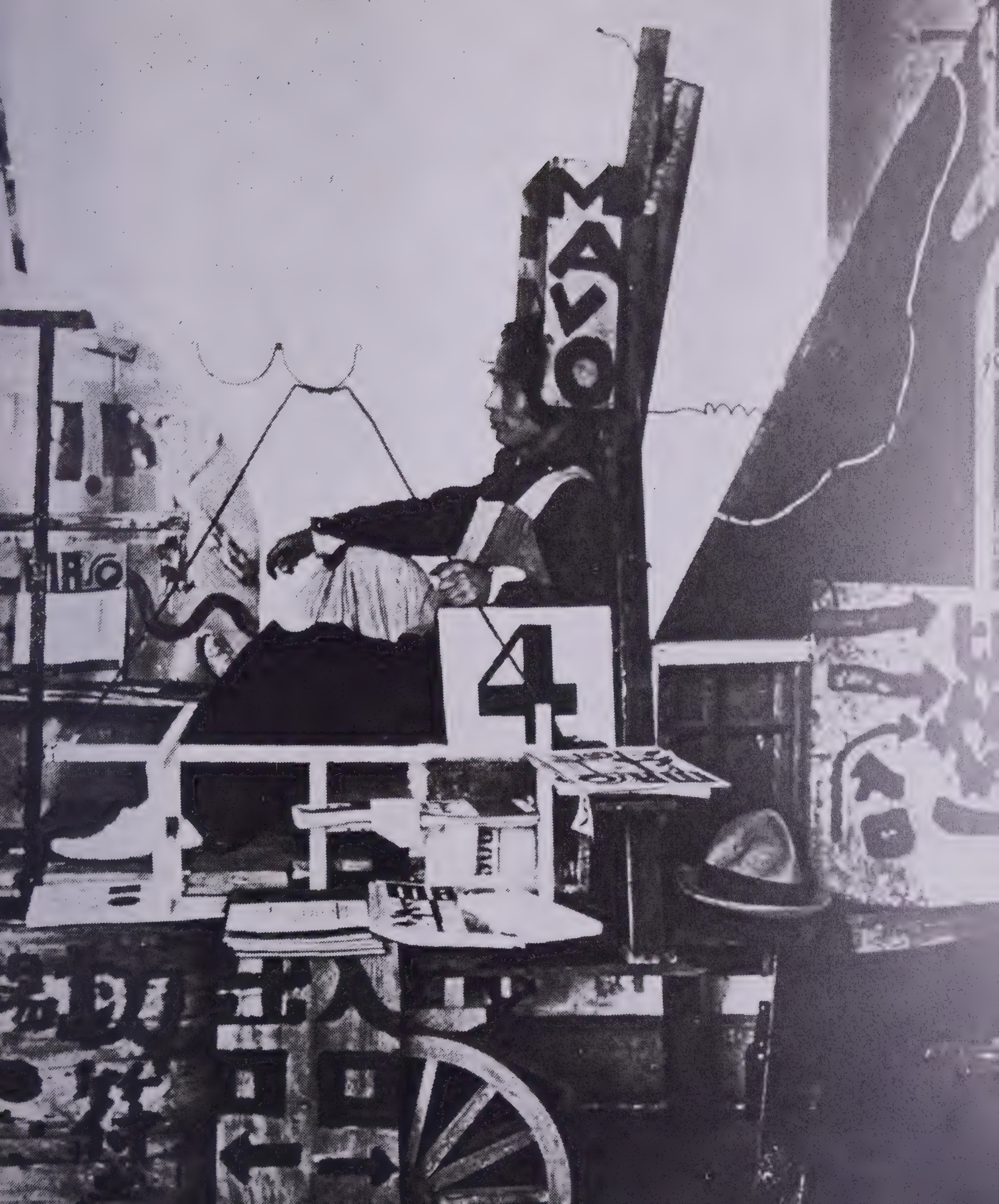
[Gate and Moving Ticket-Selling Machine]

1925

Assemblage

Photograph of the artist seated in his construction at the Second Sanka exhibition [Sanka Publicly Advertised Exhibition], Jichi Kaikan, Ueno, September 1925, reproduced in *Chūō bijutsu*, no. 119, October 1925

Sanka (the Third Section Plastic Arts Association), formed out of the Mavo group as an arena for experimental art, put on an open exhibition in September 1925 emphasizing the constructivist style. Okada, in collaboration with Takamizawa Michinao and Toda Tatsuo, created the *Gate and Moving Ticket-Selling Machine*, a large-scale, mobile, predominantly wooden assemblage. As seen in this photograph, it was covered with *Mavo* publications and text including the words 'ticket-selling place', 'entrance' and 'exit'. Interviewed by contemporary newspapers, Okada explained that the machine was to play music and move around the exhibition and city as an advertisement, a ticket kiosk and performance attraction: the ticket-taker to be hidden except for a hand that reached out from the machine during a transaction.





MURAYAMA Tomoyoshi

Schönen Mädchen Gewidmet

[Dedicated to the Beautiful Young Girls]

c. 1922-23

Collage

93.5 x 80 cm [37 x 31.5 in]

Included in his first solo exhibition in May 1923, this piece shows the influence of Murayama's stay in Berlin in 1922, where he was introduced to the European avant-garde. The central area of the composition, a painted blue oval overlapped by a swathe of red and a white, curved element, suggests an abstracted face. To the painting Murayama attached a piece of cloth (now lost) and soft padding. These objects affixed to the surface of the canvas, together with the shading on the abstract elements, create a three-dimensional effect that contrasts with the incorporation of flat text. This text includes a row of numerals between 11 and 17 across the top, the words 'Mädchen' (girl) and 'Nummer' (number), and the German title of the work in Gothic script that reads up the left of the canvas.



MURAYAMA Tomoyoshi

Portrait of a Young Jewish Girl
1922

Oil and mixed media on canvas

40 x 27 cm [16 x 10.5 in]

Collection, National Museum of
Modern Art, Tokyo

Portrait of a Young Jewish Girl was completed while Murayama was living in Germany; he brought this work and others back to Tokyo with him in his suitcase. The foundation of the work is a German railway baggage shipment form attached to a canvas. Over this document Murayama added paint and other elements. In the centre, and again, faintly, at the top, Hebrew letters form unreadable words. Incomprehensible Hebrew lettering is found in Murayama's painting *Sadistic Space* (c. 1922), also produced during his time in Germany. This combination of found objects, text and paint is not unlike the collages of Kurt Schwitters.



MURAYAMA Tomoyoshi

Cover of exhibition pamphlet

[Murayama Tomoyoshi's Conscious

Constructivist Exhibition of

Small Works: Dedicated to Niddy

Impekoven and Obtrusive Grace]

Bunpōdō, Tokyo

15-19 May 1923

At his first solo exhibition, Murayama exhibited fifty recent works including those made while in Germany. He introduced his concept of 'conscious constructivism' to the Japanese public on the third floor of the store Bunpōdō, which sold Western-style art supplies. The works exhibited were produced in a variety of media including painting and collage. Murayama designed the cover of the exhibition pamphlet, a collage with German text relating to performance and theatre: 'April in the theatre', 'to the performance together' and 'scene of popular songs' are scattered throughout. The curling, spring-like element, reminiscent of a pig's tail, is a motif later used by the Mavo artists as a symbol of their group. Murayama dedicated the exhibition to Niddy Impekoven, a German dancer whose work he discovered while in Germany.





MURAYAMA Tomoyoshi

171

Mavo nonbū no kenchikuteki rinen

Architectural Idea for Mavo Headquarters

1924

Assemblage

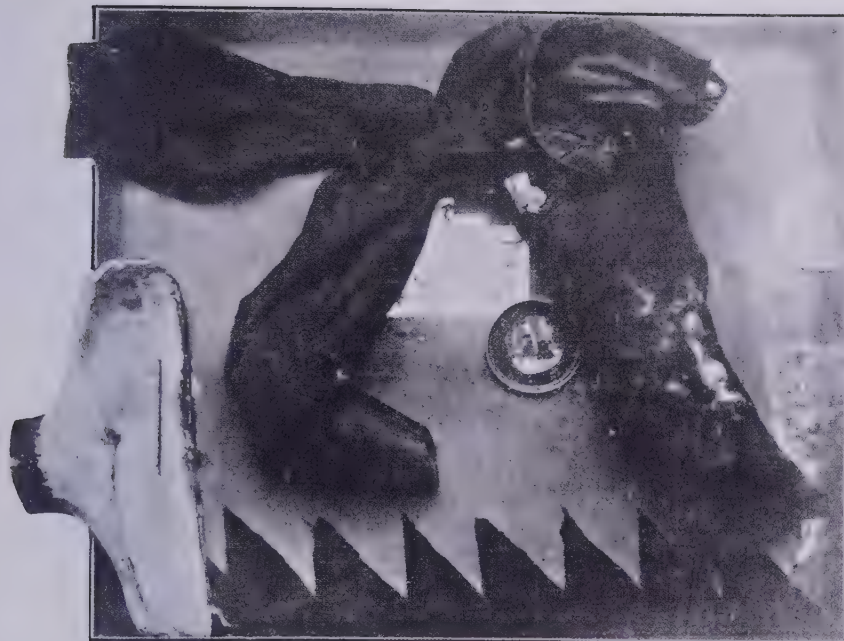
base 200 × 200 cm [72 × 72 in]

Lost work; photograph at the 'Exhibition of Plans for the Reconstruction of the Imperial Capital', April 1924, reproduced in *Kenchiku shinchō*, 5, no. 6, June 1924

Murayama's model for Mavo headquarters has been compared to Kurt Schwitters' *Merzbau* and Johannes Baader's *Plasto-Dio-Dada-Drama* (1920) due to its combination of detritus, assemblage principles and architecture. The work was produced for the 'Exhibition of Plans for the Reconstruction of the Imperial Capital' held after the devastating Great Kantō Earthquake (1 September 1923). The show's purpose was to help rebuild the city; the over fifteen-hundred projects on display were for sale. At the exhibition, organizers allowed the Mavo artists two rooms in which to display their unusual and amusing constructivist architectural plans. Murayama's large construction was composed of everyday objects; a model for a tower big enough to house the entire Mavo organization. The group's initials 'MV' appeared on the side of the tower. Covering the base of the model were images of women from mass-media publications. This use of found materials not only suggests Mavo's artistic principles, it also stems from the limited resources available after this natural disaster.

Murayama's *Construction* invites comparison with the wooden constructions of Hans Arp and Max Ernst, and the photomontages of the Berlin group. It also takes into account the concept of Tactilism. Murayama met Tommaso Marinetti in Berlin in 1922; the Italian Futurist gave Murayama a copy of his 'Manifesto of Tactilism', a tract that lauds the consideration of the sense of touch in works of art. Murayama's large work combines pieces of wood, cloth, nails and paint, creating a variety of tactile surfaces. Occupying the top-right quarter is a photomontage of images and advertisements from magazines – buildings, machines and fashionable women. A label for McCallum silk stockings further suggests sensuality.





OKADA Tatsuo

K.KL, or kk.L

c. 1924

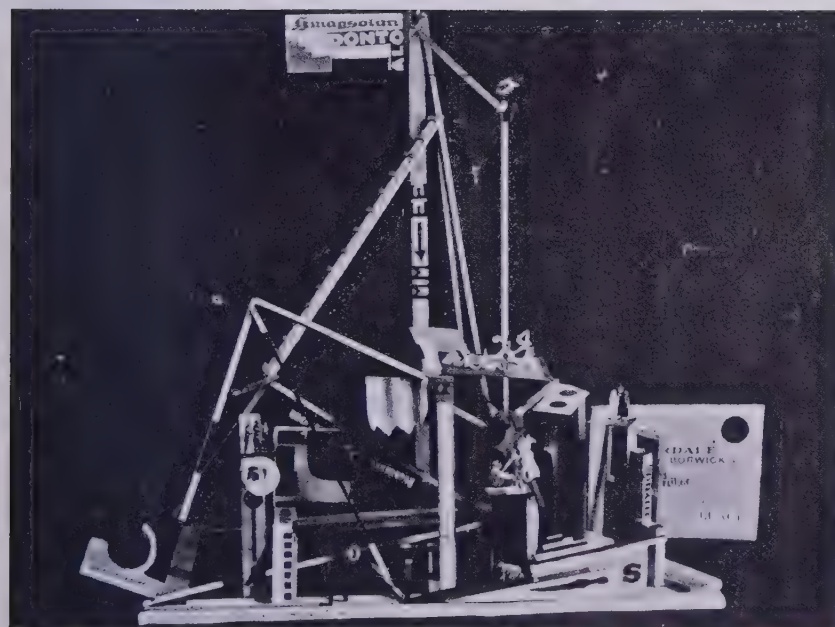
Assemblage

Dimensions unknown

Lost work; photograph reproduced in *Mavo*, no.1, July 1924

Collection, Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo

K. KL was produced for the 'Serial Conscious Constructivist Exhibition' held at the Café Suzuran in Koishikawa. This sequential exhibition, held in June and July of 1924, presented the work of a single artist for ten days. Artists who participated included Toda, Takamizawa, Sawa and Okada. Okada's exhibition was the sixth in the series. *K. KL* was displayed in his installation entitled *The Exhibition Space and Me*. His works were constructions that had architectonic features: here, a pair of boots is attached to the geometric composition. Like Tatlin's *Counter-Reliefs*, the work, as part of an installation, merges the artistic space of the object with the real space of the viewer.



MAKI Hisao

Butai sôchi nomi ni yoru okugai gekijô sôan

[Draft for an Outdoor Theatre According to Only a Stage Design]

1925

Mixed media construction

Dimensions unknown

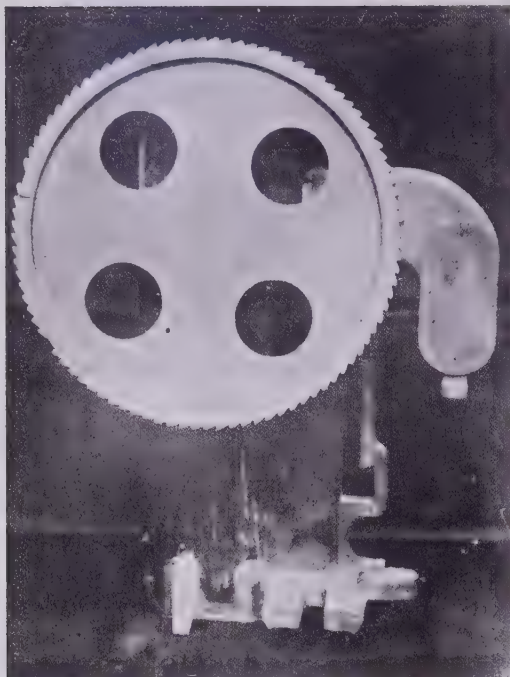
Exhibited at the Second Sanka Exhibition ['Sanka Publicly Advert... Exhibition'], September 1925

Lost work; photograph reproduced in *Mavo*, no. 7, August 1925

Collection, Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo

Maki was an architect who joined Mavo in 1925. His theatre design appeared at the Second Sanka Exhibition in 1925. The construction, while fulfilling the call for 'practical' works, also responds to Mavo's focus on theatre and performance.

The work has been compared to a sailboat with a tall mast and flag. This boat-like form and use of diagonals evoke a sense of movement that counters its constructivist, grid-like composition and economic style. A long, ladder-like element that stretches up to the mast at the left and the figures on precarious platforms lend a dramatic effect to the model. Like Murayama's design for Mavo headquarters, the model itself is made of found materials. Western text appears throughout. The work appeared in the final issue of *Mavo* where it accompanied Maki's essay 'Two Theatre Proposals as Commonsense Processes for the Play and Theatre Extermination Movement'.



TAKAMIZAWA Michinao

PrOtestO

[Protest]

c. 1924

Mixed media construction

Dimensions unknown

Lost work; photograph reproduced in *Mavo*, no. 1, July 1924

Collection, Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo

Takamizawa's assemblage raises a debate about technology and rationalization in industrial Japan, the cog suggesting labour and production. As in Europe, rapid modernization produced a broad cultural discourse on its positive and negative effects. The title, *Protest*, leaves the work open to ambiguous interpretation. It may refer to resistance against industrialization. On the other hand, the capital letters 'O' in the title mirror the form of the cog and involve it in modern protest powered by machines: liberation made possible through technology. Like the European avant-garde, the Mavo group was ambivalent about technology and its repercussions for a modern society.

opposite

SUMIYA Iwane

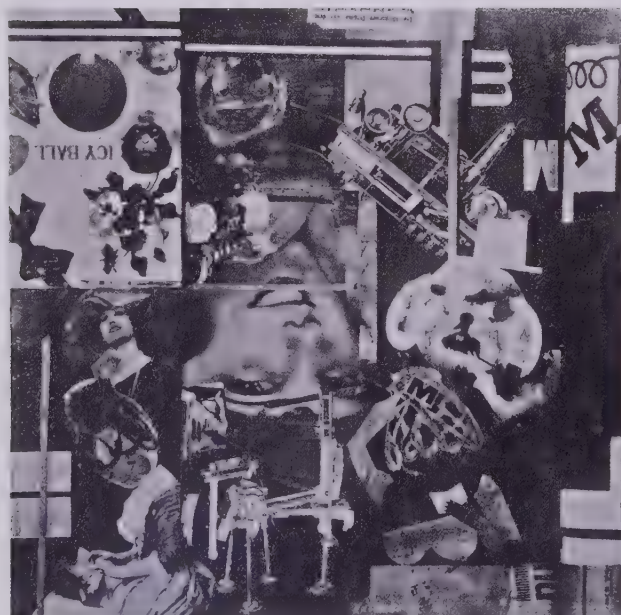
Undô to kikai no kôsei

[Construction of Movement and Machine]

c. 1924

Linocut reproduced in *Mavo*, no. 3, September 1924

Sumiya's twisted machine has been interpreted as a negative comment on the role of technology and machines in Japan. The irregular contraption has parts that neither fit together nor form a logical, working whole. The large chain on the right of the image, a symbol of bondage and authority, evokes the enslavement of workers, industry – and thus society – by mechanization. The work itself is a mechanically produced image. This linocut appeared in the September 1924 issue of *Mavo* in which the pages of a Japanese newspaper were used as the magazine's pages.



YANASE Masamu

Shihonka no yodare no nagasa

[The Length of a Capitalist's Drool]

c. 1924

Photomontage

Dimensions unknown

Lost work; photograph reproduced in *Mavo*, no. 1, July 1924

Collection, Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo

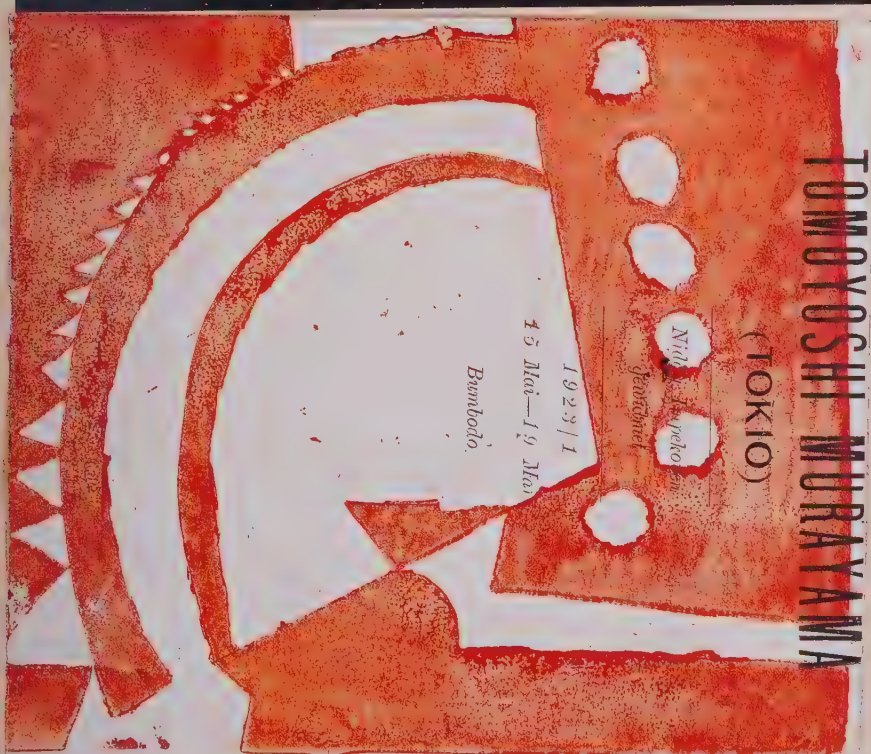
Yanase's photomontage might best be compared to images by Hannah Höch or Kurt Schwitters in its critique of modern culture – a juxtaposition of fashion motifs and industrial machinery with the distorted and grotesque. Fragments of both German and English text appear alongside beasts and monstrous beings. A Mavo pig's tail and letter 'M' are also present. The 'capitalist's drool' of the title suggests both the dulling of culture by mass media and its craving for material commodities, here specifically Western goods. The image was published next to Sawa Seihō's critique of mechanization, *Construction* (1924), in *Mavo*, no. 1. The Mavo group was especially aware of the revolutionary and socialist implications of using Russian motifs and Sawa, who himself understood the Russian language, incorporated fragments from Russian newspapers in his collage.

教育に模倣する者及び臨海中州の實を有する勞動者並にち蠻の地り出しむべきものといつてある。

mallo

4

大正十三年九月廿八日印刷
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TOMOYOSHI MURAYAMA
(TOKIO)

1923/1
15 Mei-19 Mei
Bunko.

戸 日 遠 玄

4C 金 銭

NEO-DADA

After 1925 and throughout the Second World War, Dada was virtually forgotten. During the 1950s, a series of exhibitions and publications renewed interest in the movement. Young artists trained in Abstract Expressionism began to question its high seriousness and self-importance; they found in Dada a way back from abstraction to the object. Inspired by Duchamp's readymades and Schwitters' collages, assemblages and environments of found objects, and with the composer John Cage as mentor, Robert Rauschenberg and Fluxus artists explored radical new possibilities for the ordinary object, everyday life and for the erasure of the artist's ego. Similarly inspired, the Nouveaux Réalistes in Europe appropriated aspects of urban reality as readymades and built contraptions and assemblages of recycled refuse. The Happenings of the Japanese group Gutai, the performances and stunts of the Neo-Dada Organizers in Tokyo, and the actions of the members of Hi Red Center formed part of this post-1945 rediscovery of the art's interactions with everyday life.

opposite

TANAKA Atsuko

Electric Dress

1956 [1985]

Painted light bulbs, electric cords and timer

Collection, Takamatsu City Museum of Art

Tanaka, a member of Gutai, created early performances in which she wore many layers of paper dresses. One by one each was removed until the artist was wearing only a black leotard and flashing tights. This piece was the impetus for further work with both electricity and the body – for example, *Bell Piece* (1955) in which twenty electric bells were strung about an exhibition space and rang when the audience touched them. Her best-known work is *Electric Dress*, a garment fashioned out of hundreds of colourfully painted light bulbs that blinked on and off. Tanaka wore the dress at a number of performances, including the Second Gutai Art Exhibition at Ohara Kaikan Hall, Tokyo, in October 1956. The work suggests the restrictions and discomfort of fashion, and thus of the female experience: the dress presented physical danger to Tanaka, who risked electrocution each time she wore it.





ERASED de Kooning Drawing
ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG
1953



Robert RAUSCHENBERG

Trophy I [for Merce Cunningham]

1959

Combine painting: oil paint, pencil, metallic paint, paper, fabric, wood, metal, newspaper, printed reproductions and photograph on canvas
167.5 × 104 × 5 cm [66 × 41 × 2 in]

Collection, Kunsthau, Zurich

Rauschenberg spent a decade collaborating with the composer John Cage (who was a friend of Marcel Duchamp) and the choreographer Merce Cunningham. He produced stage designs and costumes for the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. Just as Rauschenberg looked to found objects for his works, Cunningham and Cage similarly used ordinary movements and everyday sounds in their disciplines, questioning artistic traditions. Rauschenberg's 'trophy' for Cunningham is a 'combine', an object that, like images by Kurt Schwitters, bridges the gap between collage, assemblage and painting. *Trophy I* contains a photograph of Cunningham dancing. A sign below states 'Caution / Watch your step' and refers to an incident in which Cunningham injured his ankle on stage. Nearby, at centre, the work is punctured by an open gap. Other objects include a shirt sleeve, stencils of a bell and star, photographs, pieces of wood and fragments of text. Rauschenberg paraphrased Schwitters when he claimed that 'a pair of socks is no less suitable to make a painting with than wood, nails, turpentine, oil and fabric.'

– quoted in Calvin Tomkins, *Off the Wall: Robert Rauschenberg and the Art World of Our Time*, 1980

opposite

Robert RAUSCHENBERG

Erased de Kooning Drawing

1953

Traces of ink and crayon on paper with hand-lettered label in ink, in gold-leafed frame

64 × 55 × 1 cm [25 × 22 × 0.5 in]

Collection, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

A 'monochrome no-image', Rauschenberg said this work 'just came from my wanting to know whether a drawing could be made out of erasing ...' (solo exhibition catalogue, National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C., 1976). In 1953 Rauschenberg asked the Abstract Expressionist Willem de Kooning for a good drawing, then meticulously erased the valuable work, a process that took two months. Rauschenberg's act mirrored earlier dada events such as André Breton's 1920 erasure of a Francis Picabia chalk drawing before a large, angry audience in Paris. Unlike that ephemeral gesture, Rauschenberg's effort was labelled and framed: traces of the original work are still present, transforming the act into a collaborative project similar in spirit to Picabia's *Cacodylic Eye* (1921). 'It had nothing to do with destruction', Rauschenberg insisted. Such statements fuelled the debate about whether the Neo-Dadas were as radically anti-art as their original counterparts or instead had more aesthetic goals in mind. John Cage saw the connection between Rauschenberg's gesture and Duchamp's strategies: 'Duchamp showed the usefulness of addition (moustache), Rauschenberg showed the function of subtraction (De Kooning).'

– John Cage, *26 Statements re Duchamp*, 9, 1964



Niki de SAINT-PHALLE

Tir avec roue et poussette

[Shooting Painting with Wheel and Cart]

1961

Cart, wheel, jug, artificial flowers and paint on wood panel [door]

238 x 72.5 x 34.5 cm [93.5 x 28.5 x 13.5 in]

Collection, Sprengel Museum, Hanover

In 1959 Saint Phalle began creating shooting paintings when she encouraged viewers to throw darts at her assemblages that juxtaposed found objects with targets. This anti-art gesture mirrors the collaborative strategy of Francis Picabia's *Cacodylic Eye* (1921) and the subject matter of his *Optophone* works (which also depict targets). In 1961 Saint Phalle extended the practice to her paintings. She embedded pouches of colour into the plaster laid on a canvas, gave her audience .22 calibre rifles, and invited them to shoot at the works, thus releasing the pockets of paint, which dripped down the surface mirroring abstract expressionist paintings. Saint Phalle also devised assemblages that could be simultaneously shot and 'painted'. This particular work includes such mechanical parts as a wheel and small cart, in addition to a jug filled with artificial flowers, all mounted on a door, and suggests the association of the domestic with acts of masculine violence.

ARMAN

Grands déchets bourgeois

[Large Bourgeois Rubbish]

1960

Accumulation of refuse in glass box

65.5 x 40 x 8 cm [26 x 16 x 3 in]

Arman, a member of the French Nouveaux Réalistes, produced works that were accumulations of everyday objects. His early series of *poubelles* (rubbish bins), which he began in 1959, are glass containers filled with found refuse. The works were sometimes conceived as portraits of a person or group of people – for example, his artist friends or, here, the French bourgeoisie. Inside this transparent box newspapers, coffee cups and saucers, cigarettes and other insignificant items that make up the daily existence of the middle-class individual are visible. The container is mounted on a wooden base, elevating this collection of detritus to sculpture. The same year, Arman completed a large installation entitled *Le Plein* (Full) at Galerie Iris Clert, Paris, where he filled the entire space with as much junk as possible.





Mimmo ROTELLA

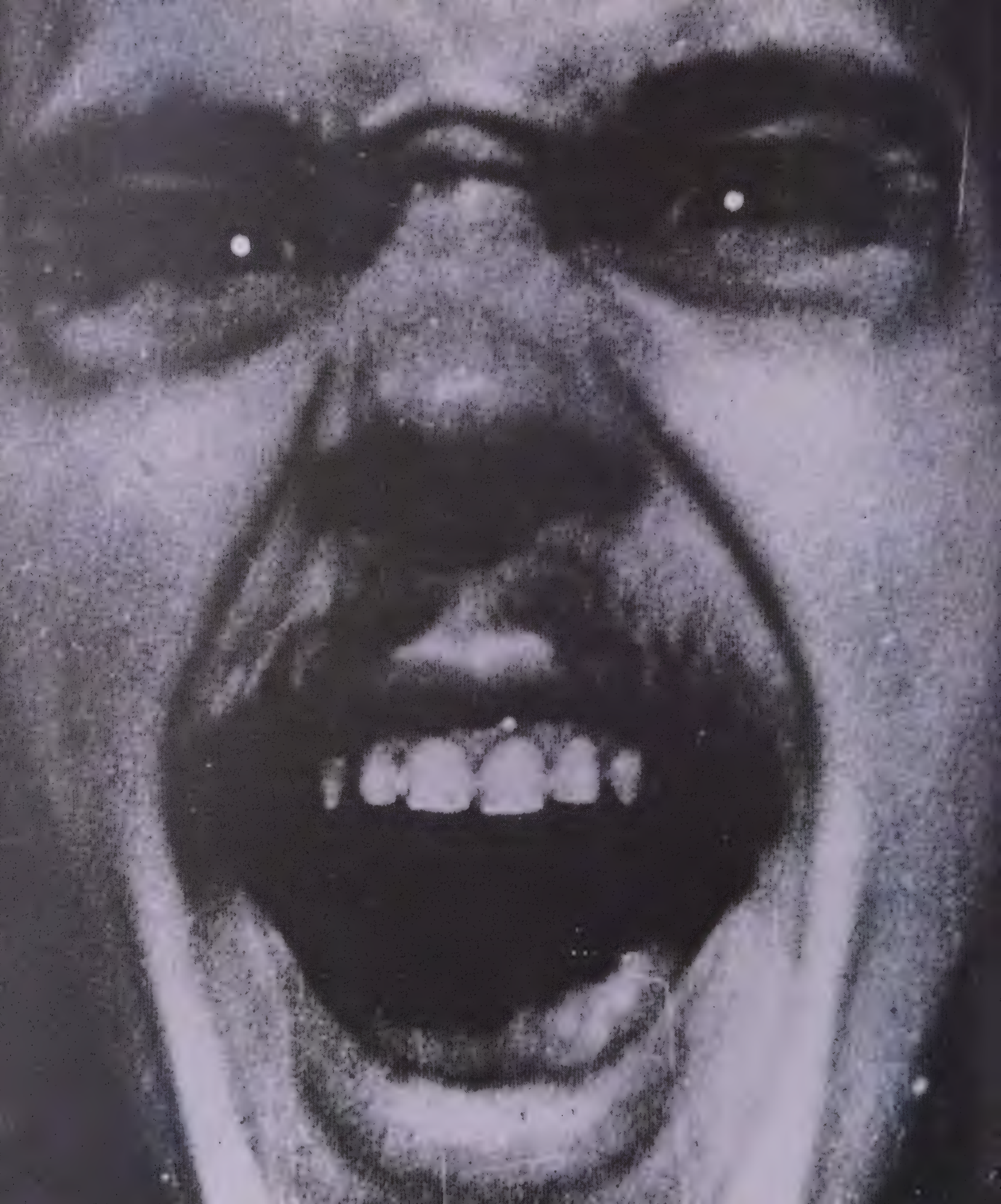
All'Italiana

1962

Décollage

130 × 95 cm (51 × 37.5 in)

Rotella, associated with the Nouveau Réalisme group, was a pioneer of a technique he called 'décollage', which has been described as a reversal of the collage process. He collected posters, often movie or product advertisements, from street walls on which they were pasted around Rome, where he lived. These ordinary, everyday images were affixed to older advertisements, forming a conglomeration of glued paper. Rotella took the posters into his studio where he ripped and tore into the layers. The process revealed older, unseen images underneath and produced, through chance, a 'collage' of fragments. Rotella occasionally added painted embellishments to a décollage. This particular work contains advertising text as well as the clearly distinguishable image of a can of ravioli at top right. His retention of much of the informational elements of the posters and often iconic brand names such as Coca-Cola, or images of iconic stars such as Marilyn Monroe, is emblematic of his work.





Joseph BEUYS

Ausfegen

[Sweep Out]

1972

Sand, stones, paper, ...

Vitrine: 200 x 200 x 65 cm [79 x 79 x 25.5 in]

Photograph of the action Ausfegen [Sweep Out], Karl Marx Platz, Berlin, 1 May 1972

Beuys, associated for a time with the Fluxus group, was interested not only in art but in politics, science and education. Many of his works involved performance or were the result of an action or Happening. This strategy stemmed from Beuys's understanding of art as an 'expanded concept' – that any creative action might be art – and he called for the 'permeation of life by creative acts'. He incorporated political and social action into his practice, sometimes calling these acts 'sculptures' and creating static works from the result. *Sweep Out* took place on 1 May 1972 when Beuys and two of his students cleaned up Karl Marx Platz in Berlin after a demonstration. Some of the refuse and Beuys's broom were placed in a vitrine thus creating a 'social sculpture' that captures the energy and memory of the action.

Danger Music Number Seventeen

Scream! ! Scream! ! Scream! !
Scream! ! Scream! ! Scream! !

above

Dick HIGGINS

Score for Danger Music Number Seventeen

c. 1960

opposite

Performing Danger Music Number Seventeen

c. 1962

Higgins is credited with developing the term 'intermedia' to describe works and activities that fall between categories, 'the conceptual fusion of two or more previously defined areas of art or concern' ('The Readymade Boomerang: Certain Relations in 20th Century Art', 8th Sydney Biennale, 1990). He studied music in the 1950s, including two years with John Cage, and played a major role in the international Fluxus movement and their Happenings – events that merged lectures, music, art and theatre. In a performance of *Danger Music Number Two*, Higgins's wife cut his hair as he sat by a bucket. The score for *Danger Music Number Seventeen* reads simply 'Scream! Scream! Scream! Scream! Scream! Scream! Scream! Scream!' Like Hugo Ball's *Karawane* (1916), *Danger Music* exists in the amorphous area between music, poetry and event.





opposite

SHIRAGA Kazuo

Foot Painting

1956

Photograph of the Performance at the 2nd Gutai Art Exhibition, Ohara Kaikan hall, Tokyo, October 1956

Collection, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History

Shiraga, and the Gutai group to which he belonged, created what has been called 'art on stage': events that combined theatrical performance with art production. Shiraga, a formally trained painter, gave up the use of the brush in favour of his body as a non-traditional tool. In *Foot Painting*, the artist set up a huge unstretched canvas (more than two by six metres) on the floor, over which a rope was hung. Shiraga dipped his feet in a bucket of paint and, hanging from the rope, allowed his body to swing over the canvas. His feet thus created an unmediated action painting that both visually suggested, but technically rejected, the highly controlled Japanese tradition of calligraphy. This work became an important emblem of the Gutai group whose name in Japanese literally translates 'tool-body' (*gu-tai*).

HI RED CENTER

Roof Event [The Ochanomizu Drop]

10 October 1964

Photographs of the performance in Tokyo, reproduced in Fluxus publication *Bundle of Events*, 1965

Hi Red Center produced actions in the public sphere, outside the restrictions of the art world, and incorporated absurdity and nonsense. These anarchic artists (Takamatsu Jiro, Akasegawa Genpei and Nakanishi Natsuyuki) who had participated in the Yomiuri Independent group show, came together in May 1963 at a three-person show called Fifth Mixer Plan. They built fallout shelters for colleagues such as Yoko Ono, scrubbed city streets and distributed pamphlets. In *Roof Event*, personal items were thrown from a building down to the street below. Hi Red Center saw such 'meaningless' activities as an important strategy for creating awareness of daily life and enacting social change. The Fluxus group, influenced by these Japanese artists, recreated some of their actions. The name Hi Red Center is a composite of the English translation of the first part of the three members' names: Takamatsu Jiro (*taka*=high), Akasegawa Genpei (*aka*=red) and Nakanishi Natsuyuki (*naka*=centre).



George HERMS

Saturn Collage

1960

Mixed media

72 × 48 × 10 cm [28.5 × 19 × 4 in]

Herms was associated with the California beat scene. In his early work, he experimented with the type of poetry being written by Allen Ginsberg and others, but he was nervous at public readings and began making object- and text-based assemblages that he placed on stage. His visual works merge everyday realism with surreal, sometimes fantastic, juxtapositions that the beats used as a critique of American post-war culture. Herms's found objects are often arranged around an underlying constructivist grid that suggests an order and meaning for his layers of detritus. *Saturn Collage* combines the symmetry of three central circles with directional words and images, including 'OUT' and a 'DETOUR' sign pointing upwards. A back brace is above, while below are a torn copy of J.G. Holland's nineteenth-century novel *Arthur Bonnicastle*, a small photograph and an ink painting.

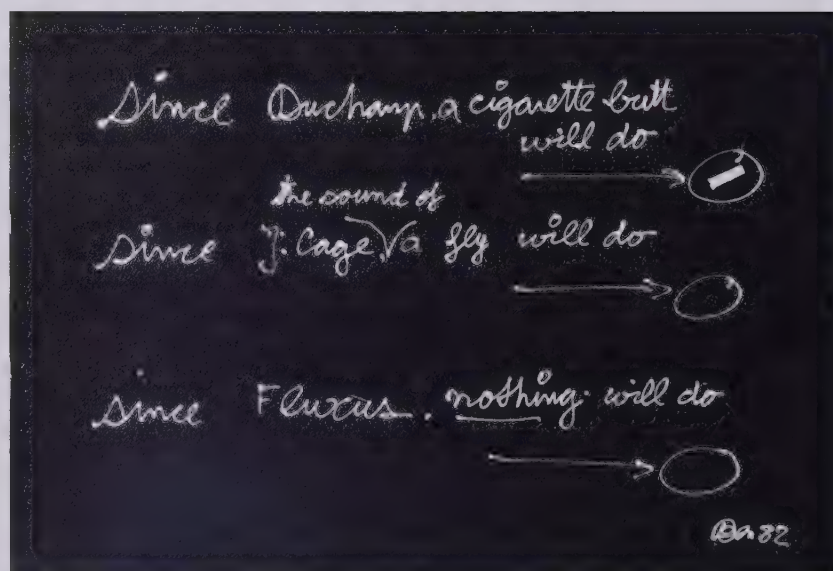
opposite

YOSHIMURA Masunobu

Photograph of the artist announcing the third exhibition of the Neo-Dada Organizers, Tokyo September 1960

Collection, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

The Neo-Dada Organizers were a short-lived but much publicized group led by the artist Yoshimura Masunobu. They were known for their junk assemblages, ephemeral works and performances. Like Yanase Masamu with his photomontage *The Length of a Capitalist's Drool* (c. 1924), the Neo-Dada Organizers saw art as a means by which to shake the bourgeois public from its complacency. To this end, the group employed the themes, images and detritus of capitalism and industrialism in its anti-art works. Like the Gutai group, they also incorporated a sense of the theatricality of the human body. Here, Yoshimura made his own body into a mobile advertisement for the group's third and final exhibition in Tokyo, which was held at the Hibiya Gallery. He wrapped his body in posters and walked the streets, becoming simultaneously a literal advertisement and a work of art.



BEN [Ben VAUTIER]

Since Duchamp ...

1982

Oil painting

70 × 100 cm [27.5 × 39.5 in]

Ben Vautier, or Ben, is well known for his black and white paintings of handwritten text that question definitions of art and selfhood. *Since Duchamp ...* speaks of the influence of the dada artist on later generations and is a punning optical poem in the tradition of Duchamp's wordplay. Beginning with the idea of the readymade and with John Cage's notion of found music (here, a fly's buzz), the Fluxus artists are described as the logical culmination of Dada. The phrase 'nothing will do' suggests that art can progress no further than Fluxus' activities, but the words may also be read as nothing (i.e. nothingness, a void) will do as an appropriate medium for a work of art. This seemingly nihilistic statement is the conclusion to Ben's notion of Total Art whereby anything (even 'nothing') may be called art.



DOCUMENTS

DRAGAN ALEKSIĆ

WALTER CONRAD
ARENSBERG
ARMAN
HANS (JEAN) ARP
JOHANNES BAARGELD
HUGO BALL
SÁNDOR BARTA
I.K. BONSET (THEO VAN
DOESBURG)
GEORGE BRECHT
ANDRÉ BRETON
KENNETH BURKE
DAVID BURLIUK
JOHN CAGE
JEAN CROTTI
MERCE CUNNINGHAM
MARCEL DUCHAMP
MAX ERNST
ELSA VON FREYTAG-
LORINGHOVEN
JEFIM GOLYSCHIEFF
OTTO GROSS
GEORGE GROSZ
HAGIWARA KYŌJIRŌ
FRANTIŠEK HALAS
RICHARD HAMILTON
RAOUL HAUSMANN

JAMES HEARTFIELD

JOHN HEARTFIELD
BEN HECHT
EMMY HENNINGS
WIELAND HERZFELDE
IVÁN HEVESY
DICK HIGGINS
HANNAH HÖCH
RICHARD HUELSENBECK
ILIAZD (ILIA ZDANEVICH)
ROMAN JAKOBSON
MARCEL JANCO
JASPER JOHNS
KAMBARA TAI
VASILII KAMENSKY
ALLAN KAPROW
LAJOS KASSÁK
VELIMIR KHLEBNIKOV
ALEXEY KRUCHENYKH
MIKHAIL LARIONOV
MINA LOY
GEORGE MACIUNAS
JÁNOS MÁCZA
MAN RAY
VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY
WALTER MEHRING
MIRAIHA BIJUTSU KYŌKAI
MURAYAMA TOMOYOSHI

NAKADA SADANOSUKE

NAKAHARA YUSUKE
LOUISE NORTON
NAM JUNE PAIK
ŌDŌN PALASOVSZKY
FRANCIS PICABIA
BRANKO VE POLJANSKI
PIERRE RESTANY
GEORGES RIBEMONT-
DESSAIGNES
KURT SCHWITTERS
WALTER SERNER
USHIO SHINOHARA
PHILIPPE SOUPAULT
DANIEL SPOERRI
TAKAHASHI SHINKICHI
MICHEL TAPIÉ
KAREL TEIGE
TRISTAN TZARA
BEDŘICH VÁCLAVEK
ILARIE VORONCA
ANDY WARHOL
WILLIAM CARLOS
WILLIAMS
STANISŁAW IGNACY
WITKIEWICZ
BEATRICE WOOD
YAMASAKI TSURUKO

YOSHIMASA JINDŌ

SERGEI YUTKEVICH



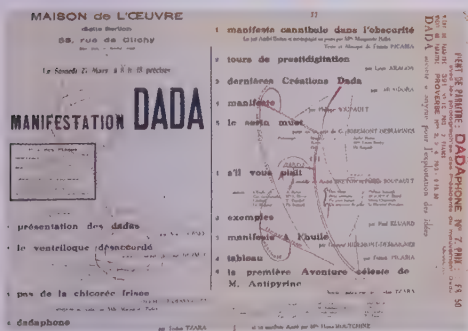
1. [see page 197]
 Marcel JANCQ
 Mouvement Dada
 1918
 Woodcut poster
 23 × 14.5 cm [9 × 6 in]
 Collection, Kunsthaus,
 Zurich



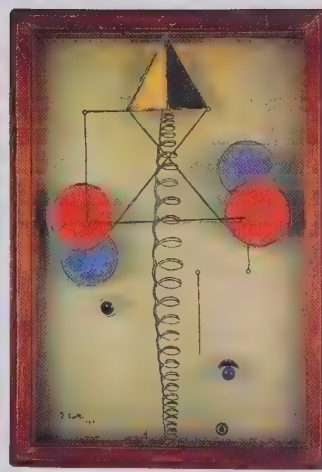
3. [see page 210]
 MAN RAY
 Rose Sélavy [Portrait
 of Marcel Duchamp]
 1921
 Gelatin silver print
 Collection, Philadelphia
 Museum of Art



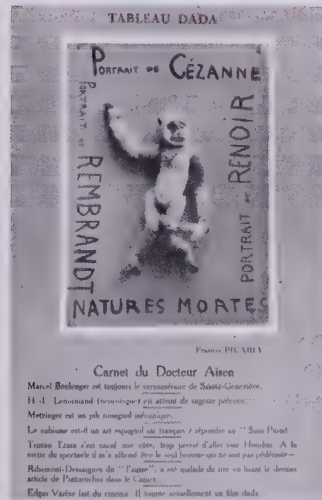
5. [see page 215]
 Beatrice WOOD
 Un peut [sic] d'eau dans
 du savon
 [A Little Water in Some
 Soap]
 1917 [1977; replica]
 Pencil, coloured pencil
 and soap on cardboard
 26.5 × 21 cm
 [10.5 × 8 in]



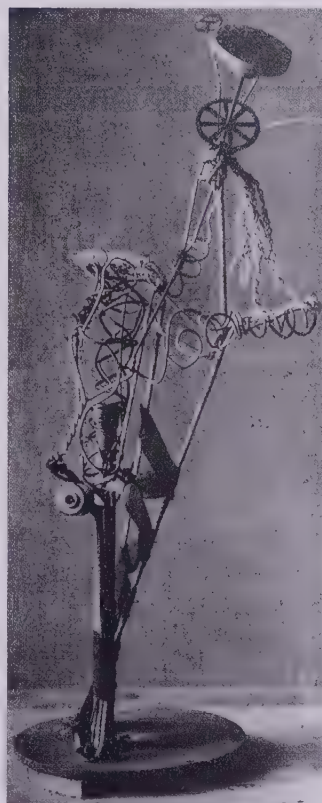
7. [see page 246]
 Programme of the
 Manifestation Dada,
 Maison de l'Œuvre,
 Paris
 27 March 1920
 26.5 × 37.5 cm
 [10.5 × 14.5 in]
 Collection, Kunsthaus,
 Zurich



2. [see page 209]
 Jean CROTTI
 Clown
 1916
 Collage on glass
 37 × 25.5 cm
 [14.5 × 10 in]
 Collection, Musée d'art
 moderne de la Ville de
 Paris



4. [see page 212]
 Francis PICABIA
 Natures Mortes: Portrait
 de Cézanne/Portrait de
 Renoir/Portrait de
 Rembrandt
 [Still] Lifes: Portrait
 of Cézanne/Portrait of
 Renoir/Portrait of
 Rembrandt]
 1920
 Stuffed monkey mounted
 on board
 Dimensions unknown
 [lost work]



6. [see page 243]
 Max ERNST
 Objet dad'art
 [Dad'art Object]
 c. 1920
 Assemblage
 32.5 × 25 cm
 [13 × 10 in]



8. [see page 270]
FUCHIGAMI Hakuyo
 Mavoisuto no shozo
 [Portrait of a Mavoist]
 Subject unknown,
 possibly Toda Tatsuo
 1925
 Collection, Museum of
 Contemporary Art, Tokyo



10. [see page 274]
Merce CUNNINGHAM
 Performing 'Septet'
 1955



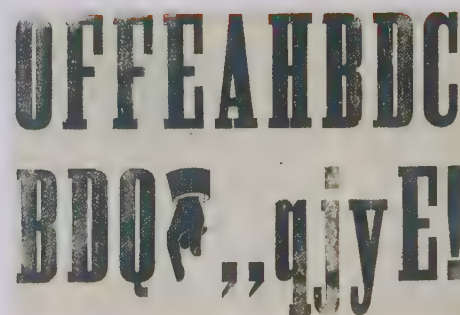
13. [see page 283]
Allan KAPROW
 18 Happenings in 6 Parts
 1959



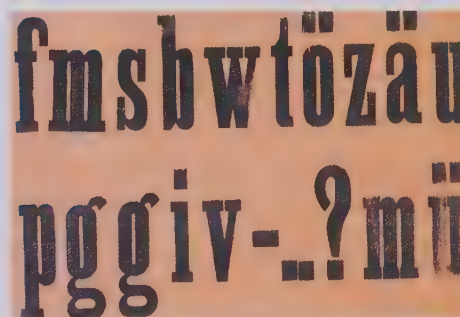
15. [see page 285]
AKASEGAWA Genpei
 One Thousand Yen Note
 Trial
 1967



9. [see page 272]
 Exhibition flyer, 'Sanka
 kaiin saku hin zokei
 geijutsu tenrankai'
 [Sanka Members Plastic
 Arts Exhibition],
 Matsuzakaya, Ginza
 May 20-24, 1925
 Collection, Museum of
 Contemporary Art, Tokyo



11. [see page 280]
Raoul HAUSMANN
 OFFFEAHBDC ...
 1918
 Phonetic poster-poem
 32.5 × 47.5 cm
 [13 × 19 in]
 Collection, Centre
 Georges Pompidou, Paris



12. [see page 280]
Raoul HAUSMANN
 fmsbw ...
 1918
 Phonetic poster-poem
 32.5 × 47.5 cm
 [13 × 19 in]
 Collection, Centre
 Georges Pompidou, Paris



14. [see pages 276, 283]
Jackson POLLOCK
 Painting in his studio,
 East Hampton
 c. 1950

ZURICH

Against the backdrop of nationalism in Europe during the war, Zurich

Dada formed as an international group that aimed to transform contemporary art and poetry. Tristan Tzara brought a great admiration for the Italian Futurists; Hans Arp had been at the forefront of modern art in Paris; and Richard Huelsenbeck, Hugo Ball and Emmy Hennings came to Zurich from the expressionist circles of Berlin and Munich. Their common experience of the war and their rejection of anything associated with that culture united them in irony, nihilism and laughter. Tzara's 'Dada Manifesto 1918', the key text of Zurich Dada, questions everything, including logic and language. After this radical critique, Ball, Arp and Marcel Janco attempted to find a new beginning in sound poetry. African songs and, according to Janco, in 'children's art, primitive art, folk arts'. He suggests that the artists sought a new beginning, whereas the writers – Tzara, Huelsenbeck, Walter Serner – continued to question cultural meaning. These texts render only traces of Zurich Dada events, which primarily consisted of uproarious performances.

Hugo BALL

Karawane [1916]

jolifanto bambla ô falli bambla
grossiga m'pfa habla horem
 égiga goramen
 higo bloiko russula huju
 hollaka hollala
anlogo bung
 blago bung
 blago bung
 bosso fataka
 ü üü ü
 schampa wulla wussa ólobo
hej tatta görem
 eschige zunbada
 wulubu ssubudu uluw ssubudu
 tumba ba– umf
kusagauma
 ba– umf

Hugo Ball, 'Karawane', *Dada Almanach* [Berlin: E. Reiss, 1920, 53; reprinted in *Dada Almanac*, ed. Malcolm Green, London: Atlas Press, 1998] 61.

Hugo BALL

Gadji Beri Bimba [1916]

gadji beri bimba glandridi laula lonni cadori
 gadjama gramma berida bimbala glandri galassassa
 laulitalomini
 gadji beri bin blassa glassala laula lonni cadorsu sassala
 bim
 gadjama tuffm i zimzalla binban gligla wowolimal bin beri
 ban
 o katalominal rhinozerossola hopsamen laulitalomini
 hoooo
 gadjama rhinozerossola hopsamen
 bluku terullala blaulala loooo

zimzim urullala zimzim urullala zimzim zanzibar zimzalla
 zam
 elifantolim brussala bulomen brussala bulomen tromtata
 velo da bang bang affalo purzamai affalo purzamai
 lengado tor
 gadjama bimbalo glandridi glassala zingtata pimpalo
 ögrögöööö
 viola laxato viola zimbrabim viola uli paluji malooo

tuffm im zimbrabim negramai bumbalo negramai
 bumbalo tuffm i zim
 gadjama bimbala oo beri gadjama gaga di gadjama affalo
 pinx
 gaga di bumbalo bumbalo gadjamen
 gaga di bling blong
 gaga blung

Hugo Ball, 'Gadji Beri Bimba', *De Stijl*, 8, 85-86 [1928, 102; reprinted in *The Dada Market: An Anthology of Poetry*, ed and trans., Willard Bohn, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993] 37.

Hugo BALL

Dance of Death [1916]

This is how we die, this is how we die,
 Every day we die
 Death comes so cosily.
 In the morning, still sleepy and dreaming
 Gone by lunchtime
 Deep in the grave by evening.
 The killing fields are our bordello

Our sun is bloody
 Death is our sign and password
 Our women and children we leave behind –
 It's every man for himself.

This is how we kill, this how we kill,
 Every day we kill
 Our comrades in the dance of death
 Brother, show yourself before me,
 Brother, bare your breast,
 Brother, who must fall and die.

We don't grumble, nor do we moan,
 Every day we silent
 Until our hips twist out of joint.
 Our bed is hard,
 Our bread is dry,
 Our dear God smeared with blood and dirt.

We thank you, we thank you,
 Herr Kaiser for your grace, that you have elected us to die.
 Go ahead then, sleep, sleep peacefully and silently
 Until you wake to find our wretched bodies
 Scattered in the fields.

Hugo Ball, 'Totentanz', *Der Revoluzzer*, 2, 1 [January 1916, 1; trans. David Britt and Debbit Lewer, in Michael Howard and Debbie Lewer, *A New Order: An Evening at the Cabaret Voltaire*, Manchester Metropolitan University Press, 1996] 53.

Hugo BALL from Kandinsky lecture [1917]

[...] The artists of these times have turned inward. Their life is a struggle against madness. They are disrupted, fragmented, dissevered, if they fail to find in their work for a moment equilibrium, balance, necessity, harmony ... They are forerunners, prophets of a new era. Only they can understand the tonalities of their language. They stand in opposition to society, as did heretics in the Middle Ages. Their works are simultaneously philosophical, political, and prophetic. They are forerunners of an entire epoch, a new total culture ... They dissociate themselves from the empirical world, in which they perceive chance, disorder, disharmony. They voluntarily abstain from representing natural objects – which seem to them to be the greatest of all distortions. They seek what is essential and what is spiritual, what has not yet been profaned, the background of the empirical world, in order to weigh, to order, to harmonize this new theme of theirs in clear, unmistakable forms, planes, and emphases. They become creators of new natural entities that have no counterpart in the known world. They create images that are no longer imitations of nature but an augmentation of nature by new, hitherto unknown appearances and mysteries ...

The secret of the cubists is their attempt to break up the convention of the canvas surface; they placed upon that surface one or several imaginary surfaces as the basis for the painting. The whole secret of Kandinsky is his being

the first painter to reject – also more radically than the Cubists – everything representational as impure, and to go back to the true form, the sound of a thing, its essence, its essential curve. Our age has found its strongest artistic types in Picasso the faun and Kandinsky the monk ...

Hugo Ball, 'Kandinsky lecture', *Die Flucht aus der Zeit* [Munich: Duncker & Humblot, 1927; reprinted in Rose-Carol Washton Long, ed., *German Expressionism: Documents from the End of the Wilhelmine Empire to the Rise of National Socialism*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995] 264–65.

Hugo BALL from Flight Out of Time [1927]

30 March 1916
 All the styles of the last twenty years came together yesterday. Huelsenbeck, Tzara and Janco took the floor with a 'poème simultanée' [simultaneous poem].¹ That is a contrapuntal recitative in which three or more voices speak, sing, whistle, etc., at the same time in such a way that the elegiac, humorous, or bizarre content of the piece is brought out by these combinations. In such a simultaneous poem, the wilful quality of an organic work is given powerful expression, and so is its limitation by the accompaniment. Noises (an *rrrrr* drawn out for minutes, or crashes, or sirens, etc.) are superior to the human voice in energy.

The 'simultaneous poem' has to do with the value of the voice. The human organ represents the soul, the individuality in its wanderings with its demonic companions. The noises represent the background – the inarticulate, the disastrous, the decisive. The poem tries to elucidate the fact that man is swallowed up in the mechanistic process. In a typically compressed way it shows the conflict of the *vox humana* [human voice] with a world that threatens, ensnares, and destroys it, a world whose rhythm and noise are ineluctable.

The simultaneous poem (according to the model of Henri Barzun and Fernand Divoire) is followed by 'Chant nègre I and II', both for the first time. 'Chant nègre (or funèbre) No. I' was especially prepared and was performed as if in a Vehmic court in black cowls and with big and small exotic drums. The melodies for 'Chant nègre II' were composed by our esteemed host, Mr Jan Ephraim, who had been involved in African business for some time a while ago, and he was helping eagerly with the performance like an instructive and stimulating prima donna.

14 April 1916
 Our cabaret is a gesture. Every word that is spoken and sung here says at least this one thing: that this humiliating age has not succeeded in winning our respect. What could be respectable and impressive about it? Its cannons? Our big drum drowns them. Its idealism? That has long been a laughing stock, in its popular and its academic edition. The grandiose slaughters and cannibalistic exploits? Our spontaneous foolishness and our enthusiasm for illusion will destroy them.

18 April 1916
 [...] Tzara keeps on worrying about the periodical. My proposal to call it 'Dada' is accepted.² We could take turns at editing, and a general editorial staff could assign one member the job of selection and layout for each issue. *Dada* is 'yes, yes' in Romanian, 'rocking horse' and 'hobbyhorse' in French. For Germans it is a sign of foolish naïveté, joy in procreation, and preoccupation with the baby carriage.

24 May 1916
 Janco has made a number of masks for the new soirée, and they are more than just clever. They are reminiscent of the Japanese or ancient Greek theatre, yet they are wholly modern. They were designed to be effective from a distance; in the relatively small space of the cabaret they have a sensational effect. We were all there when Janco arrived with his masks, and everyone immediately put one on. Then something strange happened. Not only did the mask immediately call for a costume; it also demanded a quite definite, passionate gesture, bordering on madness. Although we could not have imagined it five minutes earlier, we were walking around with the most bizarre movements, festooned and draped with impossible objects, each one of us trying to outdo the other in inventiveness. The motive power of these masks was irresistibly conveyed to us. All at once we realized the significance of such a mask for mime and for the theatre. The masks simply demanded that their wearers start to move in a tragic-absurd dance.

16 June 1916
 The ideals of culture and of art as a programme for a variety show – that is our kind of *Candide* against the times.³ People act as if nothing had happened. The slaughter increases, and they cling to the prestige of European glory. They are trying to make the impossible possible and to pass off the betrayal of man, the exploitation of the body and soul of the people, and all this civilized carnage as a triumph of European intelligence.

They produce a farce and they decree that a Good Friday mood must prevail; it must not be disturbed or defamed by a surreptitious twang of the lute or by a blink of an eye. We must add: they cannot persuade us to enjoy eating the rotten pie of human flesh that they present to us. They cannot force our quivering nostrils to admire the smell of corpses. They cannot expect us to confuse the increasingly disastrous apathy and coldheartedness with heroism. One day they will have to admit that we reacted very politely, even movingly. The most strident pamphlets did not manage to pour enough contempt and scorn on the universally prevalent hypocrisy.

24 June 1916
 Before the poems I read out a few programme notes. In these phonetic poems we totally renounce the language that journalism has abused and corrupted. We must return to the innermost alchemy of the word, we must even give up the word too, to keep for poetry its last and holiest refuge. We must give up writing secondhand: that is, accepting words (to say nothing of sentences) that are not

newly invented for our own use. Poetic effects can no longer be obtained in ways that are merely reflected ideas or arrangements of furtively offered witticisms and images.

- 1
- The text of this work, ‘L'Amiral cherche une maison à louer’ [The Admiral is Looking for a House to Rent], appeared in *Cabaret Voltaire* (bibl. 3); 6–7.
- 2
- This entry dates the discovery of the word ‘Dada’ to some time in the preceding week, after the eleventh, when the idea of a ‘Voltaire Society’ was voiced.
- 3
- This is Ball's only indication why the Cabaret Voltaire was so named. Interestingly, around the time Voltaire wrote *Candide*, he considered building his own theatre in Switzerland to produce and direct his own plays.
- Hugo Ball, *Die Flucht aus der Zeit* [Munich: Duncker & Humblot, 1927; trans. Ann Raimes in Hugo Ball, *Flight Out of Time: A Dada Diary*, ed. John Elderfield, New York: The Viking Press; reprinted Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995] 57–58, 61, 63, 64, 67, 71.

Emmy HENNINGS

After the Cabaret [1913]

I go home in the morning light.
The clock strikes five, the sky grows pale,
A light still burns in the hotel
The cabaret shuts for the night.
In a corner children hide,
To the market farmers ride,
Silently churchward go the old
Bells ring out in the silent air,
And a whore with tousled hair
Still wanders, sleepless and cold ...

Emmy Hennings, ‘Nach dem Kabarett’, *Die Letzte Freude* [Leipzig: K. Wolff, 1913, 13; trans. David Britt and Debbie Lewer in Michael Howard and Debbie Lewer, *A New Order: An Evening at the Cabaret Voltaire*, Manchester Metropolitan University Press, 1996] 87.

Emmy HENNINGS

Twilight Song [1916]

Octaves stumble like echoes through the grey years.
High-towered days crumble into ruins.
Yours will I be –
My blonde hair grows in the grave
And a strange race lives in lilac trees
A pale curtain whispers about a murder
Two eyes wander restlessly through the room
Ghosts haunt the edge of the kitchen.
And little fir trees are dead children
Ancient oaks are the souls of tired old men
Who whisper the story of unsuccessful lives.
Lake Klintekongen sings an old tune.
I was not charmed before the evil glance
Negroes crawled from the water pitcher
The brightly coloured picture in the book of fairytales,
red Hanne

Once bewitched me for all eternity.
Emmy Hennings, ‘Gesang zur Dämmerung’, *Cabaret Voltaire*, 1 [1916, 12; reprinted in Willard Bohn, ed., *The Dada Market: An Anthology of Poetry*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993] 101.

Emmy HENNINGS

Morphine [1916]

We are waiting for one last adventure
What do we care about sunshine?
High-towered days crumble into ruins
Turbulent nights – prayer in Purgatory.

We no longer read the daily mail
Only sometimes do we smile quietly in the pillows,
Since we know everything, and fly
To and fro slyly in attacks of shivering.

Men may hurry and struggle
Today the rain still falls cheerlessly
We push unsteadily through life
And sleep, confused and exhausted ...
Emmy Hennings, ‘Morphin’, *Cabaret Voltaire*, 1 [1916, 12; reprinted in Willard Bohn, ed., *The Dada Market: An Anthology of Poetry*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993] 101.

Richard HUELSENBECK

The End of the World [1916]

Things have really gone too far in this world
Cows sit on the telegraph poles and play chess
The cockatoo under the Spanish dancer's skirts is singing
as sadly as a regimental bugler and the cannon wait
the whole day long
Such was the lilac landscape which Mr Smith was talking
about when he lost his eye
Only the fire brigade can drive the nightmare from the
drawing room but all the hoses are torn
Yes yes Sonia they take the celluloid doll for a changeling
and scream: God save the king.
The entire Monist Society is gathered on the steamship
‘Meyerbeer’
but only the helmsman has any clue about top C
I pull the anatomical atlas from out of my toe
a serious study begins
Have you seen the fish that are standing in front of the
opera house in cutaways
already for two nights an’ two days?
Ah ah you great devils – ah ah you beekeepers and
sergeant majors
Wanna woof woof woof wanna where where where who
today has not heard what our Father Homer wrote
I have both war and peace in my toga but I'll take a cherry-
brandy flip
No one knows today whether tomorrow he will be

past history
They beat time to it with a coffin lid
If only someone had the courage to tug the tail feathers out
of the tram it would be a great age
The zoology professors gather on the meadow
They hold the rainbow at bay with the palms of their hands
The great magus places tomatoes on his forehead
The roebuck whistles the stallion bounds
If you haunt the castle and its grounds
(Who wouldn't end up gaga at that?)
Richard HuelSENbeck, ‘Ende der Welt’, *Phantastische Gebete* [Zurich: Collection Dada, 1916; trans. Malcolm Green, in *Blago bung blago bung bosso fataka!: first texts of German Dada*, London: Atlas Press, 1995] 82–83.

Hans ARP

The Swallow’s Testicle [1917]

1.
oh no our good old kaspar is dead
who will now wear the burning flag in his pigtail who will
turn the coffee grinder
who will bait the idyllic doe
he confused the boats at sea with that little word *parapluie*
and he named the
winds bee-master
oh no oh no oh no our good old kaspar is dead hell's bells
kaspar is dead
the crayfish clatter in the chimes when one says his first
name and so I keep
sighing kaspar kaspar kaspar
why have you become a star or a chain of water on a hot
whirlwind or an udder of
black light or a transparent brick on the groaning drum
of the craggy being
now our tops and toes are drying up and the fairies lie half-
charred at the stake

2.
now the black skittle alley
rumbles behind the sun and no one winds the compasses
or the wheels of the
barrows any more
who will eat now with the rat at the secluded table who will
chase off the devil
when he wants to lure the horses who will explain to us
the monograms in
the stars
his bust will adorn the mantelpieces of all truly noble
people but that is no
consolation and snuff for a death's head

3.
the *cascadeuses* waved their little flags on the water turrets
as shown in figure 5
the adventurers with their false bears and diamantine
hooves mounted the
rostrum snowingly with the help of inflated whale skins
the great spirit-lion harun al-raschid viz harpoon a radish

yawned thrice and
 revealed teeth blackened by tobacco
 the mercerized rattlesnakes uncoiled from their spools
 mowed their corn and
 locked it away in stones
 the eyes of the young stars stepped forth from the seam of
 death
 the donkey's hooves danced on bottlenecks after being
 scourged on the sun's
 cheek
 the dead fell like flakes from the leather towers
 how many skeletons turned the wheels of the gates
 once the waterfall had crowed thrice its wallpaper faded to
 the marrow and the
 sailer-stencil shattered
 the cupboards rose from the depths and spread out their
 anchors
 at last the ocean risked the impotency of the bitter
 compasses
 the glittering angels swung on their hinges
 the glassy owls handed round death from beak to beak
 the birds hung their glass tails like waterfalls from out of
 the rocks
 the farmwives wore burnt-out taxidermied suns in their
 hair only the farmwives
 were allowed to plant wax dolls but only in their craws
 only in their
 nictating membranes only in their dear little town
 Jerusalem

Hans Arp, 'Die Schwalbenhode', *Dada Almanach* [Berlin: E. Reiss, 1920, 114–16; trans. Malcolm Green in *Dada Almanac*, London: Atlas Press, 1998] 119–20.

Hans ARP

Manifesto of the Dada

Crocodarium [1920]

The statue lamps come from the bottom of the sea and shout long live DADA to greet the passing ocean liners and the presidents dada a dada the dada the das I dada you dada he das and three rabbits in indian ink by arp dadaist in porcelain of striped bicycle we will leave for london in the royal aquarium ask in any pharmacy for the dadaists of rasputin the tzar and the pope who are valid only for two thirty.

Hans Arp, 'Manifeste du Crocodarium Dada', *Littérature*, 13 [1920, 12; trans. Joachim Neugroschel in *Arp on Arp: Poems, Essays, Memories*, ed. Marcel Jean, New York: Viking Press, 1972] 3.

Hans ARP

Concrete Art [1944]

We do not want to imitate nature. We do not want to recreate, we want to create. We want to create, as the plant creates its fruit, and not recreate. We want to create, not

indirectly, but directly.

As there is no trace of abstraction to be seen in this kind of art, we call it concrete art.

The works of concrete art should not bear the signature of the man who composed them. These paintings, these sculptured works – these objects – should, in the great studio of nature, be anonymous like clouds, mountains, animals, men. Yes – even men should merge themselves into nature. Artists should work in communities as did the artists of the Middle Ages. As early as 1915 O. van Rees, C. van Rees, Freundlich, Sophie Taeuber and I were trying to do this.

I wrote in the year 1915: These works are constructs of line, surface, form and colour, and seek to attain the transcendent, the eternal which lies above and beyond the human. They must disown our egotism ... Instead of aiding us like our own hands, the hands of our brothers have become the hands of enemies. Nowadays instead of an anonymous art the celebrated work, the masterpiece, reigns supreme. Wisdom is dead ... To recreate is to imitate, is mere theatricality, a high-wire act ...

The Renaissance placed too much value on human reason. The modern age with its science, its technology, has turned men into megalomaniacs. The frightening disorientation of our times is the result of this excessive emphasis on reason.

The path of development from traditional to concrete art, from Cézanne via Cubism, has been explained many times already, and these historical explanations have only rendered the problem more obscure. Suddenly, 'according to the laws of chance', around the year 1914, the human spirit was transformed. Man was confronted with an ethical problem. The works which resulted from this were put on show in exhibitions from about 1920. It was a moment of release for every form and colour in the world. These paintings, these sculptured works – these objects – no longer contained any elements of conventionality. In every country there appeared disciples of this new art. Concrete art influences architecture, everyday objects, the film, typography.

A few surrealist 'objets' are also concrete art. As they too are freed from descriptive content, they seem to me to be of the greatest importance in the development of concrete art. By allusions to the dreamworld they infuse into this art a psychic meaning that brings it to life.

Concrete art seeks to transform the world and render it more tolerable. It seeks to save man from that most dangerous brand of madness, vanity, and to simplify his life. It seeks to merge it into nature. Reason cuts man off from his roots and imposes a tragic existence upon him. Concrete art, however, is an elemental, natural, healthy art, which causes the stars of peace, love, and poetry to blossom in head and heart. Where concrete art makes its appearance, despondency packs her grey suitcases filled with black sighs and departs.

Hans Arp, 'Konkrete Kunst', preface to *Konkrete Kunst*, exhibition catalogue [Basel: Kunsthalle, 1944; reprinted in R.W. Last, ed., *Hans Arp: The Poet of Dadaism*, London: Wolff, 1969] 74–76.

Jean [Hans] ARP

from Dada Was Not a Farce

[1949]

Madness and murder were rampant when Dada in the year 1916 rose out of the primordial depths in Zurich. The people who were not directly involved in the monstrous madness behaved as if they did not understand what was going on around them. Like stray lambs they looked out into the world with glassy eyes. Dada wanted to frighten mankind out of its pitiful impotence. Dada abominated resignation. To speak only of Dada's confusing unreality and fail to penetrate its transcendent reality, is to render only a worthless fragment of Dada. Dada was not a farce [...]

From 1915 to 1920 I wrote my *Wolkenpumpe* [Cloud Pump] poems. In these poems I tore apart sentences, words, syllables. I tried to break down the language into atoms, in order to approach the creative. At length I rejected art, because it distracts us from the depths and disturbs the pure dream. Out of the billowy breast of height and depth, I awaited the figures upon whose brows gleam tiaras of diamond kisses. Chance opened up perceptions to me, immediate spiritual insights. Intuition led me to revere the law of chance as the highest and deepest of laws, the law that rises from the fundament. An insignificant word might become a deadly thunderbolt. One little sound might destroy the earth. One little sound might create a new universe [...]

I met Sophie Taeuber in 1915 in Zurich. Like the leaves of a tree in a fairytale, her luminous works descended on my existence. Only a few days after our first meeting, we executed embroideries and collages together. Together we planned large montages. We had met in the beauty of the starry firmament and its mighty architecture had foreordained our work forever [...]

Janco never wearied of proclaiming the new art. If I remember rightly, he spoke as follows, and exactly as I should have done: 'Spiritual reality bestows rich gifts on him who does not close himself to it. In the depths, the abscesses of festering reason dissolve without trace. Apes and parrots are the greatest enemies of art and dreams. Men with their reason seek the key that will open the gate of mystery, the gate of life. Never in this way will they penetrate to the infinite, peacock-coloured halls, in which the golden flames dance and embrace one another.'

Jean [Hans] Arp, 'Dada Was Not a Farce', *The Dada Painters and Poets: An Anthology* [ed. Robert Motherwell], New York: Wittenborn, Schultz, 1951; reprinted Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1988] 293–95.

Dada at Two Speeds [1966]

1916

We had lost confidence in our 'culture'. Everything had to be demolished. We would begin again after the *tabula rasa*. At the Cabaret Voltaire we began by shocking the bourgeois, demolishing his idea of art, attacking common sense, public opinion, education, institutions, museums, good taste, in short, the whole prevailing order.

For writers, it was a godsend. They exposed themselves in their creations, their manifestos, their poetry, and invectives and insults rained down on all sides. Courageously, they abused those who came to listen to them, and, to make themselves more interesting, they posed as nihilists declaring art already dead and Dada nothing but a joke. It was young and modern, delightful and novel! For those of us in the plastic arts it was less simple. We did not have their advantages and did not always take part in these negative and sometimes dangerous public demonstrations. Also, for us it was 'literature'. Ineffectual babbling, irrational attacks. This repeated itself over and over again with no logic, became superficial, empty, like a circus.

1917

Less and less interested, we moved away from literature. Our nihilists, who were insulting art, were directing our galleries and writing our catalogue introductions. Not one of those who proclaimed the death of art abandoned us, as Rimbaud did.

Our attitudes had changed.

We had gone beyond the first speed, the negative speed. Neither Arp, Taeuber, Richter, Eggeling, nor myself were interested in scandal. Our experiences, our new style of expression through automatism and the discovery of the game of chance, faith in the instinct of art and in the power of the subconscious gave us new confidence. The word Dada itself already had a new meaning for us; a synonym for pure, childlike, direct, primal.

1918

With the exhibition of our collages, *papiers déchirés* [torn paper collages], tapestries, wood, painted and plaster reliefs, scroll pictures, our abstract sculptures, we began to see clearly; a new sun rose on the horizon. Through an understanding of prehistoric art, children's art, primitive art, folk arts, through long nights of discussion about abstract art, we came to the conclusion that the crusade for the return to the Promised Land of creativity was Dada's most important discovery.

1919

For us it was no longer true that Dada was against everyone and everything. We ourselves had gone beyond negation, and no longer needed aggression and scandal to pursue our positive course. We had put our courage into our work, finding a new meaning for art in society. We had stressed the creative values, freedom in art, the freshness

and vitality of the subconscious, direct expression. Art was born, like the fingernail, from the flesh, said Arp.

1919–20

Huelsenbeck had left us for Berlin, Ball had gone to Ticino, and now Tzara was leaving us for Paris. We stayed on the spot, for our roads had been diverging for some time. Our pure Dada experiences continued and we went on to publish the manifesto of 'the radicals', signed by all the Dada plasticians, painters, sculptors – Arp, Baumann, Eggeling, [Augusto] Giacometti, Helbig, Janco, Morach, Richter – expressing our positive attitude toward life and society. At the same time we had formed the group, *Das neue Leben*, which embraced all the progressive forces of the country, and we also held exhibitions, lectures, and other public demonstrations in other Swiss towns. However, Dada was considered everywhere as madness, aggression, derailment, and nihilism, for each time the Dada flame flared again, burning somewhere, in milieux and locations everywhere, it began with the same purifying and scandalous force to consume the past and open up a new creative route. This spiritual violence of the first phase, which I call negative speed, very often remains in the same state, not having found soil fertile enough to expand into the positive, as was the case in Zurich. This Dada attitude had impressed minds and imprinted a stamp which could not be effaced. But the positive side of Dada, which had borne fruit, remained unknown. This is why today people are surprised to find that the best Dadas, like Jean [Hans] Arp, seem least Dada. Arp's tranquil nature, his serene art, his poetry without bitterness, aggressiveness, or nihilism is not characteristic of Dada. Also, when one looks at the Dada *oeuvre*, it is noticeable that most of the plastic artists – like Arp, Taeuber, Schwitters, Richter, Ernst, Eggeling, Janco and others – did not use negative Dada methods and have become the most significant artists of their generation.

The importance of this retrospective exhibition lies in the fact that, today, after fifty years, two Dadas, negative and positive, are being presented as objectively as possible in all stages and all moods. Thus one can estimate at their true value the negative, literary, and creative phenomena side by side with the prophetic work of positive Dada, which opened to art a new road, upon which, to say the least, artistic creativity has remained dependent through the present day.

Marcel Janco, 'Dada à deux vitesses', *Dada: Ausstellung zum 50-jährigen Jubiläum*, exhibition catalogue [Zurich: Kunsthau; Paris: Musée national d'art moderne, 1966; trans. Margaret I. Lippard, in Lucy R. Lippard, *Dadas on Art*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971] 36–38.

Tristan TZARA

Dada Manifesto 1918 [1918]

(Read by the author on 23 July 1918, in the *Meise* in Zurich)

To launch a manifesto you have to want: A, B & C, and fulminate against 1, 2 & 3, work yourself up and sharpen

your wings to conquer and circulate lower and upper case As, Bs & Cs, sign, shout, swear, organize prose into a form that is absolutely and irrefutably obvious, prove its *ne plus ultra* and maintain that novelty resembles life in the same way as the latest apparition of a harlot proves the essence of God. His existence had already been proved by the accordion, the landscape and soft words. To impose one's A.B.C. is only natural – and therefore regrettable. Everyone does it in the form of a crystalbluff-madonna, or a monetary system, or pharmaceutical preparations, a naked leg being the invitation to an ardent and sterile Spring. The love of novelty is a pleasant sort of cross, it's evidence of a naïve don't-give-a-damn attitude, a passing, positive, sign without rhyme or reason. But this need is out of date, too. By giving art the impetus of supreme simplicity – novelty – we are being human true in relation to innocent pleasures; impulsive and vibrant in order to crucify boredom. At the lighted crossroads, alert, attentive, lying in wait for years, in the forest.

I am writing a manifesto and there's nothing I want, and yet I'm saying certain things, and in principle I am against manifestos, as I am against principles (quantifying measures of the moral value of every phrase – too easy; approximation was invented by the impressionists).

I'm writing this manifesto to show that you can perform contrary actions at the same time, in one single, fresh breath; I am against action; as for continual contradiction, and affirmation too, I am neither for them nor against them, and I won't explain myself because I hate common sense.

DADA – this is a word that throws up ideas so that they can be shot down; every bourgeois is a little playwright, who invents different subjects and who, instead of situating suitable characters on the level of his own intelligence, like chrysalises on chairs, tries to find causes or objects (according to whichever psychoanalytic method he practises) to give weight to his plot, a talking and self-defining story.

Every spectator is a plotter, if he tries to explain a word (to know!). From his padded refuge of serpentine complications, he allows his instincts to be manipulated. Whence the sorrows of conjugal life.

To be plain: The amusement of redbellies in the mills of empty skulls.

Dada does not mean anything

If we consider it futile, and if we don't waste our time over a word that doesn't mean anything ... The first thought that comes to these minds is of a bacteriological order: at least to discover its etymological, historical or psychological meaning. We read in the papers that the negroes of the Kroo race call the tail of a sacred cow: DADA. A cube, and a mother, in a certain region of Italy, are called: DADA. The word for a hobbyhorse, a children's nurse, a double affirmative in Russian and Romanian, is also: DADA. Some learned journalists see it as an art for babies, other Jesucallingthelittlechildrenuntohim saints see it as a return to an unemotional and noisy primitivism – noisy and monotonous. A sensitivity cannot be built on the basis of a word; every sort of construction converges into a boring sort of perfection, a stagnant idea of a golden

swamp, a relative human product. A work of art shouldn't be beauty *per se*, because it is dead; neither gay nor sad, neither light nor dark; it is to rejoice or maltreat individualities to serve them up the cakes of sainted haloes or the sweat of a meandering chase through the atmosphere. A work of art is never beautiful, by decree, objectively, for everyone. Criticism is, therefore, useless; it only exists subjectively, for every individual, and without the slightest general characteristic. Do people imagine they have found the psychic basis common to all humanity? The attempt of Jesus, and the Bible, conceal, under their ample, benevolent wings: shit, animals and days. How can anyone hope to order the chaos that constitutes that infinite, formless variation: man? The principle: 'Love thy neighbour' is hypocrisy. 'Know thyself' is utopian, but more acceptable because it includes malice. No pity. After the carnage we are left with the hope of a purified humanity.

I always speak about myself because I don't want to convince, and I have no right to drag others in my wake, I'm not compelling anyone to follow me, because everyone makes his art in his own way, if he knows anything about the joy that rises like an arrow up to the astral strata, or that which descends into the mines strewn with the flowers of corpses and fertile spasms. Stalactites: look everywhere for them, in crèches magnified by pain, eyes as white as angels' hares.

Thus DADA was born out of a need for independence, out of mistrust for the community. People who join us keep their freedom. We don't accept any theories. We've had enough of the cubist and futurist academies: laboratories of formal ideas. Do we make art in order to earn money and keep the dear bourgeoisie happy? Rhymes have the smack of money, and inflection slides along the line of the stomach in profile. Every group of artists has ended up at this bank, straddling various comets. Leaving the door open to the possibility of wallowing in comfort and food.

Here we are dropping our anchor in fertile ground.

Here we really know what we are talking about, because we have experienced the trembling and the awakening. Drunk with energy, we are revenants thrusting the trident into heedless flesh. We are streams of curses in the tropical abundance of vertiginous vegetation, resin and rain is our sweat, we bleed and burn with thirst, our blood is strength.

Cubism was born out of a simple manner of looking at objects: Cézanne painted a cup twenty centimetres lower than his eyes, the cubists look at it from above, others complicate its appearance by cutting a vertical section through it and soberly placing it to one side. (I'm not forgetting the creators, nor the seminal reasons of unformed matter that they rendered definitive.) The futurist sees the same cup in movement, a succession of objects side by side, mischievously embellished by a few guide-lines. This doesn't stop the canvas being either a good or a bad painting destined to form an investment for intellectual capital.

The new painter creates a world whose elements are also its means, a sober, definitive, irrefutable work. The new artist protests: he no longer paints (symbolic and

illusionistic reproduction) but creates directly in stone, wood, iron, tin, rocks, or locomotive structures capable of being spun in all directions by the limpid wind of the momentary sensation. Every pictorial or plastic work is unnecessary, even if it is a monster which terrifies servile minds, and not a sickly-sweet object to adorn the refectories of animals in human garb, those illustrations of the sad fable of humanity.

A painting is the art of making two lines, which have been geometrically observed to be parallel, meet on a canvas, before our eyes, in the reality of a world that has been transposed according to new conditions and possibilities. This world is neither specified nor defined in the work, it belongs, in its innumerable variations, to the spectator. For its creator it has neither cause nor theory.

Order = disorder; ego = non-ego: affirmation = negation: the supreme radiations of an absolute art. Absolute in the purity of its cosmic and regulated chaos, eternal in that globule that is a second which has no duration, no breath, no light and no control. I appreciate an old work for its novelty. It is only contrast that links us to the past.

Writers who like to moralize and discuss or ameliorate psychological bases have, apart from a secret wish to win, a ridiculous knowledge of life, which they have classified, parcelled out, canalized; they are determined to see its categories dance when they beat time. Their readers laugh derisively, but carry on: what's the use?

There is one kind of literature which never reaches the voracious masses. The work of creative writers, written out of the author's real necessity, and for his own benefit. The awareness of a supreme egoism, wherein laws become insignificant. Every page should explode, either because of its profound gravity, or its vortex, vertigo, newness, eternity, or because of its staggering absurdity, the enthusiasm of its principles, or its typography. On the one hand there is a world tottering in its flight, linked to the resounding tinkle of the infernal gamut; on the other hand, there are: the new men. Uncouth, galloping, riding astride of hiccups. And there is a mutilated world and literary medicasters in desperate need of amelioration.

I assure you: there is no beginning, and we are not afraid; we aren't sentimental. We are like a raging wind that rips up the clothes of clouds and prayers, we are preparing the great spectacle of disaster, conflagration and decomposition. Preparing to put an end to mourning, and to replace tears by sirens spreading from one continent to another. Clarions of intense joy, bereft of that poisonous sadness. DADA is the mark of abstraction; publicity and business are also poetic elements.

I destroy the drawers of the brain, and those of social organization: to sow demoralization everywhere, and throw heaven's hand into hell, hell's eyes into heaven, to reinstate the fertile wheel of a universal circus in the powers of reality, and the fantasy of every individual.

A philosophical question: from which angle to start looking at life, god, ideas, or anything else. Everything we look at is false. I don't think the relative result is any more important than the choice of patisserie or cherries for dessert. The way people have of looking hurriedly at things from the opposite point of view, so as to impose their

opinions indirectly, is called dialectic, in other words, heads I win and tails you lose, dressed up to look scholarly.

If I shout:

Ideal, Ideal, Ideal

Knowledge, Knowledge, Knowledge,

Boomboom, Boomboom, Boomboom,

I have recorded fairly accurately Progress, Law, Morals, and all the other magnificent qualities that various very intelligent people have discussed in so many books in order, finally, to say that even so everyone has danced according to his own personal boomboom, and that he's right about his boomboom: the satisfaction of unhealthy curiosity; private bell-ringing for inexplicable needs; bath; pecuniary difficulties; a stomach with repercussions on to life; the authority of the mystical baton formulated as the grand finale of a phantom orchestra with mute bows, lubricated by philtres with a basis of animal ammonia.

With the blue monocle of an angel they have dug out its interior for a mark's worth of unanimous gratitude. If all of them are right, and if all pills are only Pink, let's try for once not to be right. People think they can explain rationally, by means of thought, what they write. But it's very relative. Thought is a fine thing for philosophy, but it's relative. Psychoanalysis is a dangerous disease, it deadens man's anti-real inclinations and systematizes the bourgeoisie. There is no ultimate Truth. Dialectics is an amusing machine that lead us (in banal fashion) to the opinions which we would have held in any case. Do people really think that, by the meticulous subtlety of logic, they have demonstrated the truth and established the accuracy of their opinions? Even if logic were confirmed by the senses it would still be an organic disease. To this element, philosophers like to add: The power of observation. But this magnificent quality of the mind is precisely the proof of its impotence. People observe, they look at things from one or several points of view, they choose them from amongst the millions that exist. Experience too is the result of chance and of individual abilities. Science revolts me when it becomes a speculative system and loses its utilitarian character – which is so useless – but is at least individual. I hate slimy objectivity, and harmony, the science that considers that everything is always in order. Carry on, children, humanity ... Science says that we are nature's servants: everything is in order, make both love and war. Carry on, children, humanity, nice kind bourgeois and virgin journalists ... I am against systems; the most acceptable system is that of having none on principle. To complete oneself, to perfect oneself in one's own pettiness to the point of filling the little vase of oneself with oneself, even the courage to fight for and against thought, all this can suddenly infernally propel us into the mystery of daily bread and the lilies of the economic field.

Dadaist Spontaneity

What I call the I-don't-give-a-damn attitude of life is when everyone minds his own business, at the same time as he knows how to respect other individualities, and even how to stand up for himself, the two-step becoming a national anthem, a junk shop, the wireless (the wire-less telephone) transmitting Bach fugues, illuminated advertisements and placards for brothels, the organ

I am writing a manifesto and

**THERE'S
NOTHING I
WANT**

broadcasting carnations for God, all this at the same time, and in real terms, replacing photography and unilateral catechism.

Active simplicity.

The incapacity to distinguish between degrees of light: licking the twilight and floating in the huge mouth filled with honey and excrement. Measured against the scale of Eternity, every action is vain – (if we allow thought to have an adventure whose result would be infinitely grotesque – an important factor in the awareness of human incapacity). But if life is a bad joke, with neither goal nor initial *accouchement*, and because we believe we ought, like clean chrysanthemums, to make the best of a bad bargain, we have declared that the only basis of understanding is: art. It hasn't the importance that we, old hands at the spiritual, have been lavishing on it for centuries. Art does nobody any harm, and those who are capable of taking an interest in it will not only receive caresses, but also a marvellous chance to people the country of their conversation. Art is a private thing, the artist makes it for himself; a comprehensible work is the product of a journalist, and because at this moment I enjoy mixing this monster in oil paints: a paper tube imitating the metal that you press and automatically squeeze out hatred, cowardice and villainy. The artist, or the poet, rejoices in the venom of this mass condensed into one shopwalker of this trade, he is glad to be insulted, it proves his immutability. The author or the artist praised by the papers observes that his work has been understood: a miserable lining to a coat that is of public utility; rags covering brutishness, horse-piss collaborating with the heat of an animal incubating the baser instincts. Flabby, insipid flesh multiplying itself with the aid of typographical microbes. We have done violence to the snivelling tendencies in our natures. Every infiltration of this sort is macerated diarrhoea. To encourage this sort of art is to digest it. What we need are strong, straightforward, precise works which will be forever misunderstood. Logic is a complication. Logic is always false. It draws the superficial threads of concepts and words towards illusory conclusions and centres. Its chains kill, an enormous myriapod that asphyxiates independence.

If it were married to logic, art would be living in incest, engulfing, swallowing its own tail, which still belongs to its body, fornicating in itself, and temperament would become a nightmare tarred and feathered with Protestantism, a monument, a mass of heavy, greyish intestines ...

But suppleness, enthusiasm and even the joy of injustice, that little truth that we practise as innocents and that makes us beautiful: we are cunning, and our fingers are malleable and glide like the branches of that insidious and almost liquid plant; this injustice is the indication of our soul, say the cynics. This is also a point of view; but all flowers aren't saints, luckily, and what is divine in us is the awakening of anti-human action. What we are talking about here is a paper flower for the buttonhole of gentlemen who frequent the ball of masked life, the kitchen of grace, our white, lithe or fleshy girl cousins. They make a profit out of what we have selected. The contradiction and unity of opposing poles at the same time

may be true. If we are absolutely determined to utter this platitude, the appendix of a libidinous, evil-smelling morality. Morals have an atrophying effect, like every other pestilential product of the intelligence. Being governed by morals and logic has made it impossible for us to be anything other than impassive towards policemen – the cause of slavery – putrid rats with whom the bourgeois are fed up to the teeth, and who have infected the only corridors of clear and clean glass that remained open to artists.

Every man must shout: there is great destructive, negative work to be done. To sweep, to clean. The cleanliness of the individual materializes after we've gone through folly, the aggressive, complete folly of a world left in the hands of bandits who have demolished and destroyed the centuries. With neither aim nor plan, without organization: uncontrollable folly, decomposition. Those who are strong in word or in strength will survive, because they are quick to defend themselves; the agility of their limbs and feelings flames on their faceted flanks.

Morals have given rise to charity and pity, two dumplings that have grown like elephants, planets, which people call good. There is nothing good about them. Goodness is lucid, clear and resolute, and ruthless towards compromise and politics. Morality infuses chocolate into every man's veins. This task is not ordained by a supernatural force, but by a trust of ideas-merchants and academic monopolists. Sentimentality: seeing a group of bored and quarrelling men, they invented the calendar and wisdom as a remedy. By sticking labels on to things, the battle of the philosophers was let loose (money-grubbing, mean and meticulous weights and measures) and one understood once again that pity is a feeling, like diarrhoea in relation to disgust, that undermines health, the filthy carrion job of jeopardizing the sun. I proclaim the opposition of all the cosmic faculties to that blennorrhoea of a putrid sun that issues from the factories of philosophical thought, the fight to the death, with all the resources of –

Dadaist disgust

Every product of disgust that is capable of becoming a negation of the family is Dada; protest with the fists of one's whole being in destructive action: DADA; acquaintance with all the means hitherto rejected by the sexual prudishness of easy compromise and good manners: DADA; abolition of logic, dance of those who are incapable of creation: DADA; every hierarchy and social equation established for values by our valets: DADA; every object, all objects, feelings and obscurities, every apparition and the precise shock of parallel lines, are means for the battle of: DADA; the abolition of memory: DADA; the abolition of archaeology: DADA; the abolition of prophets: DADA; the abolition of the future: DADA; the absolute and indisputable belief in every god that is an immediate product of spontaneity: DADA; the elegant and unprejudiced leap from one harmony to another sphere; the trajectory of a word, a cry, thrown into the air like an acoustic disk; to respect all individualities in their folly of the moment, whether serious, fearful, timid, ardent, vigorous, decided or enthusiastic; to strip one's church of every useless and unwieldy accessory; to spew out like a

luminous cascade any offensive or loving thought, or to cherish it – with the lively satisfaction that it's all precisely the same thing – with the same intensity in the bush, which is free of insects for the blue-blooded, and gilded with the bodies of archangels; with one's soul. Liberty: **DADA DADA DADA**; – the roar of contorted pains, the interweaving of contraries and of all contradictions, freaks and irrelevancies: **LIFE**.

Tristan Tzara, 'Manifest Dada 1918', *Dada Almanach* [Berlin: E. Reiss, 1920, 116–31; first printed in *Dada*, 3, 1918; trans. Barbara Wright in *Dada Almanac*, ed. Malcolm Green, London: Atlas Press, 1998] 121–32.

Tristan TZARA

The Sailor [1918]

He is making love to a woman who has only one leg
the tightness of a Pondichery ring
they have opened his stomach which shrieks chi-chi
from which come the stockings and the oblong animals
in your interior there are smoking lamps
the blue honey swamp
cat crouching in the gold of a Flemish tavern
boom boom
lots of sand yellow cyclist
new château for the popes
Manhattan there are tubs of excrement before you
mbaze mbaze bazebaze mleganga garoo
you circulate rapidly in me
kangaroos in the ship's entrails
wait I will first arrange my impressions
the seated travellers lace on the water's edge
stick your fingers in the orbits that the light punctures
pomegranates
the tropical vulture watches us – you must re-enter the
menagerie of understanding
the tropical vulture takes root in the sky as an orange ulcer
where are you going
conjurer windmill hair styles all the ospreys are cankerous
egg-nog

Tristan Tzara, 'Le Marin', *Dada*, 3 [1918, 15; reprinted in Willard Bohn, ed., *The Dada Market: An Anthology of Poetry*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993] 215.

Tristan TZARA

from Negro Songs [1920]

Negro Songs

Unearthed and translated by Tristan Tzara

Zanzibar

o mam re de mi ky
we have escaped the Wahha ho ho
the Wawinza won't plague us any longer oh oh
Mionwu won't receive any more cloth from us hi hi
and Kiala will not see us ever again he he.

Sotho Negroes

Building song

a ee ea ee ea ee ee, ea ee, eae, a ee
ea ee ee, ea ee,
ea, ee ee, ea ee ee,

Poles of the court we are building for the chieftain
we are building for the chieftain.

Tristan Tzara, 'Negerlieder', *Dada Almanach* [Berlin: E. Reiss, 1920, 141; trans. Malcolm Green in *Dada Almanac*, London: Atlas Press, 1998] 145-146.

Tristan TZARA

Zurich Chronicle 1915–1919

[1920]

1915 – November.

Exhibition of Arp van Rees Mme van Rees, at the Tanner Gallery – strong rumours of new men looking at paper – and discovering only a world of crystalsimplicitymetal – finding neither art nor painting (Chorus of critics: '*What should we do?*' Constipation exclusive) a world of transparencelineprecision turns somersaults before uncontested truth, brilliant success predicted.

1916 – February.

In the darkest of streets in the shadow of architectural ribs, where you will find discreet detectives amid red street lamps – BIRTH – birth of the **CABARET VOLTAIRE** – poster by Slodky, wood, woman and Co., heart muscles CABARET Voltaire and pains. Red lamps, overture piano Ball reads Tipperary piano 'under the bridges of Paris' Tzara quickly translates a few poems aloud, Mme Hennings – silence, music – declaration – that's all. On the walls: van Rees and Arp, Picasso and Eggeling, Segal & Janco, slodky, Nadelman, coloured papers, ascendancy of the NEW ART, abstract art and geographic futurist map-poems: Marinetti, Cangiullo, Buzzi; Cabaret Voltaire, music, singing, recitation every night – the people – new art the greatest art for the people – van Hoddis, Benn, Tress – balalaika – Russian night French night – characters of a unique edition appear, recite or commit suicide, come and go, the joy of the people, shouts, the cosmopolitan mixture of goD and bRothel, crystal and the *fattest* woman in the world:

'Under the bridges of Paris'

February 26 –

HUELSENBECK ARRIVES

bang! bang! bangbangbang

Without contradistinction to initial perfume.

Gala night – simultaneous poem 3 languages, protest noise Negro music / Trous-erfly Trou-serfly / piano Typerrary magic lantern demonstration last proclamation!! *Invention dialogue* !! **DADA** !! *latest novelty* !!! bourgeois

syncope, **BRUITIST** music, latest rage, Tzara song dance protests – the big drum – red light, policemen – songs cubist paintings postcards song Cabaret Voltaire – patented **simultaneous Poem** Tzara Trou-serfly and van Hoddis Huelsenbeck Trou-serfly whirlwind Arp-two-step demands liquor smoke towards the bells / a whispering of arrogance / silence Mme Hennings, Janco declaration, transatlantic art = people rejoice star hurled upon the cubist sleigh-bell dance.

1916 – June

Publication of

'CABARET VOLTARE'

Price 2 francs.

Printed by J. Heuberger

Contributors: Apollinaire, Picasso, Modigliani, Arp, Tzara, van Hoddis, Huelsenbeck, Kandinsky, Marinetti, Cangiullo, van Rees, Slodky, Ball, Hennings, Janco, Cendrars, etc. DaDada d a d a dadadadadada dialogue the new life – contains a simultaneous poem; the carnivorous critics placed us platonically in the giddy house of overripe geniuses. Avoid appendicitis sponge your intestines. 'I found that the attacks became less frequent. Those who want to remain young should avoid rheumatism.'

Thermal golf mystery

The Cabaret lasted 6 months, every night we thrust the triton of the grotesque of the god of the beautiful into each and every spectator, and the wind was not gentle – the consciousness of so many was shaken – tumult and solar avalanche- vitality and the silent corner close to wisdom or folly – who can define the frontiers? – the young girls slowly departed and bitterness laid its nest in the belly of the family-man. A word was born no one knows how **DADADADA** we took an oath of friendship on the new transmutation that signifies nothing, and was the most formidable protest, the most intense armed affirmation of salvation liberty blasphemy mass combat speed prayer tranquillity private guerrilla negation and chocolate of the desperate.

1916 – July 14.

For the first time anywhere.

Waag Hall

I.DADA – SOIRÉE

(Music, dances, theories, manifestos, poems, paintings, costumes, masks)

In the Presence of a compact crowd Tzara demonstrates, we demand we demand we demand the right to piss in different colours, Huelsenbeck demonstrates, Ball demonstrates, Arp 'Declaration', Janco 'my pictures', Heusser 'original compositions' the dogs bay and the dissection of Panama on the piano on the piano and dock – shouted Poem – shouting and scuffles in the hall, first row approves second row declares itself incompetent the rest shout, who is the strongest, the big drum is brought in, Huelsenbeck against zoo, Trou-serfly accentuated by the

very big drum and little bells on his left foot – the people protest shout smash windowpanes kill each other demolish fight here come the police interruption. Boxing resumed: cubist dance, costumes by Janco, each man his own big drum on his head, noise, Negro music / trabatgea bonoooooooo oo oooooo / 5 literary experiments: Tzara in tails stands before the curtain, abrupt sober for the animals, and explains the new aesthetic; gymnastic poem, concert of vowels, bruitist poem, static poem chemical arrangement of ideas, Biriboom biriboom the ox whizzes round in a circle (Huelsenbeck), vowel poem a a ò, i e o, a i î, new interpretation the subjective folly of the arteries the dance of the heart on burning buildings and acrobatics in the audience. Renewed outcries, the big drum, piano and impotent cannon, tear off cardboard costumes the audience hurls itself into puerperal fever interrrrruption. The newspapers dissatisfied simultaneous poem for 4 voices + #simultaneous work for 300 hopeless idiots.

1916 – July.

JUST APPEARED:

TRISTAN TZARA:

'THE FIRST CELESTIAL ADVENTURE OF MR. DISPRIN.'

Pour la première fois:

COLLECTION DADA

cocktail breveté

With coloured woodcuts by M. Janco

Price : 2 francs.

Impotence cured prepaid on request.

1916 – September.

'FANTASTIC PRAYERS'

Poems by **RICHARD HUELSENBECK**

with 7 woodcuts by Arp

COLLECTION DADA

COLLECTION DADA

Zurich

'indigo indigo tramway sleeping bag bedbug and flea

indigo indigai unbaliska boom DADA!'

'brrs pffi commencer Abrr rpppi commence beginning beginning'

1916 – October.

„SCHALABEN SCHALOMAI SCHALAMEZO MAI“

RICHARD HUELSENBECK

With drawings by Arp.

Collection Dada.

... incomparable for your baby's appearance!

1917 – January – February

GALERIE CORRAY, Bahnhofstrasse, Zurich.

I. DADA EXHIBITION.

Van Rees, Arp, Janco, Tscharner, Mme van Rees, Lüthy, Richter, Helbig, Negro art. Brilliant success: the new art.

Tzara delivers 3 lectures: 1. Cubism, 2. the old and the new art, 3. the art of the present. Large poster by Richter, poster by Janco. Several elderly Englishwomen take careful notes.

1917 – March 17

GALERIE DADA

Directors: Tzara, Ball. March 17, introductory address.

1. Exhibition of: Campendonk, Kandinsky, Klee, Mense, etc.

1917 – March 23

Opening Ceremony

GALERIE DADA

ZURICH, BAHNHOFSTRASSE 19.

Red lamps mattresses social sensation Piano: Heusser, Perrottet, Recitations: Hennings, A. Ehrenstein, Tzara, Ball, Dances: Mlle Taeuber / costumes by Arp / C. Walter, etc. etc. Great enchanted gyratory movement of 400 persons celebrating.

March 21, March 28, April 4, and every Wednesday:

Tour of the gallery

by L.H. Neitzel, Arp, Tristan Tzara.

LECTURES:

March 24 Tzara: Expressionism and abstract art

March 31 Dr. W. Jollos: Paul Klee

April 7 Ball: Kandinsky

March 28 Tzara: on the new art

April 14

II. Performance at the Galerie Dada:

Jarry

Marinetti

Apollinaire

Van Hoddiss

Cendrars

Kandinsky

STURM EVENING 5

Heusser, Ball, Glauser, Tzara Sulzberger, A. Ehrenstein, Hennings etc.

NEGRO MUSIC AND DANCING

with the support of the Misses Jeanne Rigaud and Maya Chruszcz, masks by Janco.

Première:

'Sphinx and Straw Man'

by O. Koloschka 6.

Firdusi Indian rubber man Anima Death

This performance decided the role of our theatre, which relinquished the stage direction to the subtle invention of the explosive wind, the scenario to the audience, visible direction, grotesque props: the DADAIST theatre. Above all masks and revolver effects, the effigy of the director. Bravo! & Boom boom!

April 9 – 30

II. EXHIBITION at the GALERIE dada: Bloch, Baumann.

Max Ernst, Feininger, Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Kokoschka, etc. etc.

April 28

NEW ART NIGHT

Tzara: cold Light,

Simultaneous poem by 7 per-sons.

Glauser: own poems,

NEGRO MUSIC AND DANCES

Janco: own paintings

Mme Perrottet: Music by Laban, Schönberg etc. Ball, Hennings, etc.

F. Hardekopf reads from his works. ETC.

The audience makes itself comfortable and rarefies the explosions of elective imbecility, each member withdraws his personal inclinations and sets his hope in the new spirit in process of formation: 'Dada'.

May 2 – 29

III. EXHIBITION AT THE GALERIE DADA

By: Arp, Baumann, G. de Chirico, Helbig, Janco, P/ Klee, O. Luthy, A. Macke, I. Modigliani, E. Prampolini, van Rees, Mme van Rees, von Rebay, H. Richter, A. Segal, Slodky, J. von Tscharnet etc.

CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS

NEGRO SCULPTURES

EmbroiderieS

ReliefS

1917 – May 12

Galerie Dada

Evening recitals

OLD AND NEW DADA ART

A. Spaini: from Jacopone da Todi to Francesco Meriano and Maria d'Arezzo; music by Heusser, performed by composer; - Arp: Verses, Böhme – of cold and calcification. NEGRO POEMS

Translated and read Tzara / Aranda, Ewe, Bassoutos, Kinga, Loritja, Baronga / Hennings, Janco, Ball etc. Aegidius Albertinus, Narrenhatz's Songs of the Frogs.

The public appetite for the mixture of instinctive recreation and ferocious bamboula which we succeeded in presenting forced us to give on.

May 19

REPETITION OF THE OLD ART AND NEW ART EVENING

May 25 –

H. HEUSSER EVENING. OWN COMPOSITIONS.

PIANO. SONG. HARMONIUM. RECITATION: Miss K. Wulff.

June 1 –

Galerie Dada goes on unlimited vacation.

1917 – July

launching of the

Mysterious creation!

Magic revolver!

MOUVEMENT DADA

1917 – July

Appearance of

DADA 1

a review of art and literature

Arp, Lüthy, Moscardelli, Savino, Janco, Tzara, Meriano.

Wisdom repose in therapeutic art, after long persecutions: neurasthenia of pages, thermometers of those painters called The subTLe onEs.

1917 – December

DADA 2 price: 2 francs.

Contributors: van Rees, Arp, Delaunay, Kandinsky, Maria d'Arezzo, Chirico, P. A. Birot, G. Cantarelli etc. etc.

1918 – July

just appeared:

tristan tzara: 25 poems

arp: 10 woodcuts

dada collection

PRICE: 3 frs.

1918. – July 23

Salle zur Meise

SOIRÉE TRISTAN TZARA

Manifesto, antithesis thesis antiphilosophy, DadA DADA DADA dada spontaneity dadaist disgust dadaist LAUGHTER poem tranquility sandez diarrhoea is also a sentiment war business poetic element infernal propeller economic spirit jemenfoutisme national anthem posters for whorehouses draymen tossed on stage, savage outburst against the rarefaction of the academic intelligence etc.

September 1918.

Wolfsberg Gallery.

Exhibition of Arp, Richter, Mc Couch, Bauman, Janco etc.

1918 – December

DADA 3

Price 1.50 francs.

De luxe edition: 20 francs.

Liberated order at liberty seeks a restrained rotary movement 'I do not even wish to know if there were men before me.' Long live Descartes long live Picabia, the anti-painter just arrived from New York the big sentiment machine check long live dada Dschouang-Dsi the first Dadaist down with melody dOwn with the future (Reverdy, Raimondi, Hardekopf, Huelsenbeck, Picabia, Prampolini, Birot, Soupault, Arp, Segal, Sbarbaro, Janco, Richter, Dermée, Huidobro, Savino, Tzara were contributors). Let us destroy let us be good let us create a new force of gravity NO = YES Dada means nothing life Who? Catalogue of insects / Arp's woodcuts / each page a resurrection each eye a daredevil-leaping down with cubism and futurism every sentence a blast of an automobile horn let us mix let us mix friends and colleagues the bourgeois salad in the basin of eternity is insipid and I hate good sense.

At this point intervenes / hats off! :

Novissima d anzatrice

Dr. W. Serner ATTRACTION!

who has seen with his own eyes and squashed the bed-bugs between the meninges of the counts of goodness. But the mechanism turns turn turn Baedeker nocturnes of history brush the teeth of the hours keep moving gentlemen noise breaks pharmaceutical riddles

1918. – December 31

Arp:

the columns of reclining legs the cardboard phenomenon dance crater gramophone succession of lights in the darkness cocktail surprises for lovers and progression foxtrot house Flake, Wigmann, Chrusecz, Taeuber, madness in centimetres problematic and visual exasperation.

first free exercise of

dadaist spontaneity

in colour

and

each man his own war horse

1919 – January 16

KUNSTHAUS

Lecture by Tzara 'ON ABSTRACT ART'

with slides

in which professors are seen arranging the ineffable in drawers full of squares cooked in the oil of the assassin of the applause of the Good-Will and the explanation of the Boomboom, the genuine one, by the lack of landscape hat fish in pictures escaping from their frames. Infusion of slow moving bacteria under shivering veins.

1919 – February

Just appeared

/Editions Mouvement Dada/

391

Price 2 frs.

travelling magazine / New York – Barcelona / Gabrielle Dada Manifesto Buffet Alice Bailly, the eternal Arp will exhibit tree roots from Venice, Picabia, PICABIA, The Blind Man, Ribemont-Dessaignes, Tzara, Duchamp, etc.

1919 – April 9

Non PLUS ultra

NON PLUS ULTRA

Salle Kaufleuten

9. DadA-SOIRÉE

Producer: W. Serner.

Tamer of Acrobats: Tzara,

signs crucifix of impatience mist of suspicions sparks of anxiety showed their canine teeth 2 weeks before the show and publicity spread through the countryside acute disease.

1500 people filled the hall already bubbling in the mud of bamboulas.

Here is Eggeling connecting the wall with the ocean and telling us the correct line of a painting of the future; and Suzanne Perrottet plays Erik Satie (+ recitations), musical irony non-music of the *jem'enfoutiste* gaga child on the

marvellous ladder of the DADA MOVEMENT. But now Mlle Wulff appears / superhuman mask ? % § ? / to accentuate the presence of Huelsenbeck and his poems. LauGHTer (beginning) the bonbons make an impression a single thread passes through the brains of the 1500 spectators. And when the shaded stage is revealed with 20 people reciting Tr Tzara's simultaneous poem: 'THE FEVER OF THE MALE' the scandal assumes menacing proportions islands spontaneously form in the hall accompanying and multiplying underlining the powerful wave of roaring and simultaneous orchestration. The call of blood. Revolt of the past, of education. 'Feverish four-wheeler and 4 macabre acrid cracks in the barrack.' Under the bridges of Paris. In the ammoniac storm a scarf is presented to the author by Alice Bailly and Augusto Giacometti.

Richter elegant and malicious. FOR againSt and withOUT DADA, from the Dada point of view dada telegraphy and mentality etc. dada. dada dada. Arp hurls the cloud pump under the enormous oval, burns the rubber, the pyramid stove for proverbs bright or swampy in leather pockets. Serner takes the floor to illuminate his **dadaist MANIFESTO**

and now when 'a queen is an armchair a dog is a hammock' the unleashing of the tempestuous storm dizzying siren whistles bombardment song the battle breaks out in earnest, half the audience applaud the protesters hold the hall in the lungs nerves liquefy muscles jump Serner makes mocking gestures, schticks the scandal in his buttonhole / ferocity that wrings the neck / I n t e r r u p t i o n .

Torn up chairs projectiles crack intended effect atrocious and instinctive.

NOIR CACADOU, Dance (5 persons) with Mlle Wulff, the pipes dance the renovation of the headless pithecanthropus stifles the public rage. The balance of intensity inclines towards the stage. Instead of his poems Serner lays a bunch of flowers at the feet of a dress-maker's dummy. Tzara prevented from reading the DADA PROCLAMATION delirium in the hall, voice in tatters drags across the candelabras, progressive destructive madness wrings laughter and audacity. Repetition of the last spectacle. New dance in 6 enormous dazzling masks. End. Dada has succeeded in establishing the circuit of absolute unconsciousness in the auditorium which has forgotten frontiers of education of prejudices, experienced the commotion of the NEW. Final victory of Dada.

1919 – May –

ANTHOLOGIE DADA (DADA 4–5)

Price: 4 francs;

de luxe edition: 20 francs.

Alarm clock firecrackers Picabia, electric battery Picabia Tzara ringing calendar 3 easy plays Cocteau note on midwife poetry Globe Giacometti Reverdy 199 Globe Hurly-burly Radiguet triangle catastrophe p. a. Birot. Hausmann latest new magic TNT Arp Aa 24 Arp in sections asphodel foreskin owl taxi driver G. Ribemont-Dessaignes < words at random in function of priest Gabrielle Buffet MAM fish-pond dada receiver of contributions André Breton the dragoon Chirico rolls the

Dada statue out full length Louis Aragon invents streets Ph. Soupault Eggeling Richter the pretty bird drum Huelsenbeck, the splendours Hardekopf and Serner-SERNER-ser serves the cablegram Art is dead etc. Inaugurate different colours for the joy of transchromatic disequilibrium and the portable circus velodrome of camouflaged sensations knitting anti-art the piss of complete courage diverting diversities under the latest cosmopolitan variation.

1919 – June –

mock duel Arp + Tzara on the Reharp with canon but aimed in the same direction audience invited to celebrate a private bluish victory.

1919 – October –

Just appeared:

DER ZELTWEG

The Dadas are here! Price 2 Francs.

Contributors: O. Flake, Huelsenbeck, Christian Schad, Serner, Arp, Tzara, Giacometti, Baumann, Helbig, Eggeling, Richter, Vagts, Taeuber, Wigmann, Schwitters, etc.

The Dadas are here!!

Neo-Dadaism Watch Out! Pick-pockets very much è pericoloso.

Tr. TZARA.

By October 15, 8590 articles on dada have appeared in the newspapers and reviews of: Barcelona, St. Gallen, New York, Rapperswill, Berlin, Warsaw, Mannheim, Prague, Rorschach, Vienna, Bordeaux, Hamburg, Bologna, Nuremberg, Chaux-de-Fonds, Colmar, Jassy, Bari, Copenhagen, Bucharest, Geneva, Boston, Frankfurt, Budapest, Madrid, Zurich, Lyons, Basle, Christina, Bern, Naples, Cologne, Seville, Munich, Rome, Horgen, Paris, Effretikon, Bern, London, Innsbruck, Amsterdam, Santa Cruz, Leipzig, Lausanne, Chemnitz, Rotterdam, Brussels, Dresden, Santiago, Stockholm, Hanover, Florence, Karlsruhe, Venice, Washington, etc. etc.

Tristan Tzara, 'Chronique Zurichoise 1915-1919', Dada Almanach [Berlin: E. Reiss, 1920, 10-29; trans. Terry Hale and Malcolm Green in Dada Almanac, ed. Malcolm Green, London: Atlas Press, 1998] 15-34.

Walter SERNER from Last Loosening [1919]

1.

Racing around a fireball is a blob of filth on which ladies' silk stockings are sold and Gauguins prized. Truly a most deplorable business, yet one that nevertheless permits certain distinctions: silk stockings can be *grasped*, but not Gauguins. (Try to imagine Bernheim as a prestigious biologist.) The thousand pea-brained *rastas* of the most *embêtant* persuasion – who serve up columns of reviews to bourgeois index fingers in states of erection (O pastose toffs!) in order to unleash rivers of money – have to this end been responsible for such negligence that many a lady

still ends up going short. (Here one should reflect for three minutes on the psychosis of poorly treated eyesight: clinical symptom, primary: underestimating silk stockings; secondary: digestive disorders.)

2.

What did the first brain to find itself on this planet do? Presumably it was astonished at being here and hadn't a clue what to make of itself and the filthy vehicle beneath its feet. In the meantime people have come to terms with their brains by regarding them as so unimportant as to be not even worth ignoring, by making *rastas* of themselves (bottommost: blackish pole; uppermost: the president of the senate, say) and by turning the so-unjustly beloved nature into the backdrop for a right farce. Although this doubtless not especially heroic way of avoiding a dilemma that still receives insufficient appreciation has become quite void of any charm now that it is so utterly predictable (how infantile bathroom scales are!), for this self-same reason it is, however, highly suitable for conducting certain procedures.

3.

Even an engine driver realizes at least once a year that his relations with the locomotive are anything but binding and that he knows little more now about his spouse than he did after that balmy night in the Bois. (If I had said La Villette or Theresienwiese, the two relationships would have been quite illusory. A tip for budding professors: 'On topographical anatomy, psychic changes of air and related matters.') In the Ronceroy Hotel or in Piccadilly, on the other hand, you may already find that it becomes damned unclear why now, of all times, you are gaping at your hand and carolling, hear yourself scratching and love your own spittle. This ever so peaceful example, or so it might appear, is the biggest opportunity for that importunate feeling of boredom to somersault its way up and become a thought considering its own cause. Lovely moments of this kind set up the desperado (my what a sweetly!) who creates all sorts of mischief as a prophet, artist, anarchist, statesman, etc., in short as a *rasta*.

4.

Napoleon, who really was a sterling fellow, maintained quite irresponsibly that mankind's real calling is to till the soil. Why? Did the plough fall from heaven? But homo sapiens did manage to get a clue about SOMETHING, the voice of a lady undernourished by love I presume. Well, certainly not the soil; and when all is said and done, herbs and fruits existed already in those days. (Please consult the German biogeneticists here to discover why I am incorrect. But it will prove very boring. Consequently I am correct.) So in the end even Napoleon, who otherwise expressed himself with a delightfully refreshing lack of constraint, was from time to time an athlete in the field of the emotions. A shame. A real shame.

5.

You see EVERYTHING is *rastaquouèr-esque*, my dear friends. Everyone is a (more or less) very flighty entity, *dieu merci*. (By the way: all credit to the industrious fellow who

proves to me that there is anything that does NOT in the end rush about arbitrarily as a norm!) Otherwise, it should be added, death would become epidemic. Diagnosis: rampant boredom; or panicky resignation; or: transcendental resentment, etc. (Continued *ad libitum*, this can be elevated to the register of all ungifted states.) The current state budget on the inhabited surface of the earth is thus merely the consequential result of boredom that has grown unbearable. Boredom: just to give its most inoffensive name! My each seek the most palatable word for his inferiority! (A dear little subject for a fierce game of forfeits!)

6.

It is generally known that a dog is not a hammock; less so that failing to accept this tender hypothesis would cause the painters' daubing fists to slump at their sides; and completely unknown that interjections are far more apt: world views are word mixtures ... *Sapristi*, the procedure must be slightly expanded here. (Small image: a gentle craniotomy!) So: all stylists are not even donkeys. Because style is merely a gesture of embarrassment with the wildest structure. And since embarrassment (after sleeping on it briefly) reveals itself as the most perfect self-regret, it is evident that stylists, fearing they will be mistaken for donkeys, behave far worse than them. (Donkeys you see have two quite outstanding characteristics: they are stubborn, and lazy.) Thus the difference between Paul Oskar Höcker, Dostoevsky, Roda-Roda and Wedekind reveals itself solely in the restraint shown with regard to the aforementioned gesture of embarrassment. Whether someone purrs to me in perfectly functioning trochees or otherwise in a manner bristling with images (all images are plausible) or in a naturalistic fashion, as it were, saying that he had felt sick, but that after he had seen it in black and white he felt better, or that he had in fact felt fine all along (hullo hullo!), but then became sick when he no longer understood it at all (*teremtete!*): it's all just the same sub-donkey-like effort, the desire to escape one's embarrassment by giving it (stylistic, ogodogodo) form. Dreadful word! Which is to say: to make something that is probable out of life, which is improbable to the tips of its toes! To clap a redeeming heaven over this chaos of filth and enigma! To perfume and order this pile of human excrement! Thank's a lot! ... Is there a more idiotic picture than an (ugh!) ingenious stylizing mind playing the coquette with itself during this activity? (By the way: tuppence to the plucky fellow who proves to me that this coquettishness is NOT present among all the ethico-blusterers!) O, that frightfully cheerful embarrassment that ends with a bow before one's own self! THAT'S the reason (on account of this stylized curvature) why philosophies and novels are sweated out of people's pores, pictures are daubed, sculptures hewn, symphonies groaned out and religions founded. What appalling ambition, especially because these vain asinine games (i.e. especially in the German regions) have come to a complete nought. Nothing but horseplay!

7.

The most beautiful landscape I know is the Café Barratte in

Les Halles. For two reasons. It was there that I became acquainted with Germaine, who whispered, among other things: '*C'est possible que je serais bonne, si je saurais pourquoi*'. I admit maliciously that I paled with pleasure. And secondly because in this friendly bar Jean Kartopaïtès, who otherwise only consorted with men without stiff collars, broke off relations with me brusquely because I was careless enough to drop the name Picasso.

8.

Oh the darling white porcelain plates! Because ... Well because: previously people wanted to convey what they claimed to be inexpressible, or in reality did not have, through painting. (Yippee! As if one could only make a neat and tidy portrait of a vice-queen if one didn't know that she was not an armchair! See: hammock!) Consequently one could smirk long in advance at the fix these smearers would end up in once they ceased jerking off oil-photos. (Behind their ears: more girls, please, more girls!) But the impressions! So: WHAT is achieved when, after blinking furiously, one manages to arrange things so that that potato gobbler also beholds only a cow, but was first able to puff himself up like THAT in the opinion it was HIS cow, a highly special cow, in short: THE one and only AND redeeming cow? (*teremtete!*) But the expressions! Ho ho: WHAT is achieved when one looks fixedly at what an adjective can accomplish because, having also failed until now to act as any sort of guide, it would already be a failure before it came to be painted? But the Cubists, the Futurists! Whoops: although the champions of these thoroughly ultra-violet failures of paint-brush-charges heralded that they would descend – like the *liberatio* (ugh!) – from the high swing of style (Charge of the trapeze! Charge of the trapeze! Roughly as follows: 'We'll manage to get the swing of this embarrassment!'), all that they achieved was that not even a chignon began to swing, and worse still that the wildest donkeys arrived in the world at a steady trot. (O Sagot, mounted by his brood! etc. etc.) Horseplay! Horseplay!

9.

Basically a repetition of what has already been said in section 8 for those who have been brought up badly: an abecedarian matter, perfectly abecedarian! But to be noted anyway out of caution, my dearest:

- a) Sculpture: highly unwieldy playthings, heightened by a metaphysical upward gaze.
- b) Music: ersatz for Pantopon or Eros. (Long since sub-abecedarian!).
- c) Poetry: a young lad finds himself in a jam. Recipe: ask him who he dreams of and you can tell him with whom he has not slept. (Naturally one is ALWAYS in a jam; but then one should no longer find oneself in the 'c' jam.)
- d) Novels and so on: the goodly gentlemen talk as if they were being roasted on a spit, or more recently not at all. Just a bit more sweat and it will turn out well: *belles-lettres!* (One finds oneself on the spit rather often. But a volume from Samuel Fischer's is a much too time-consuming method of creating the Syracuse-Sandwich-Central Heating airline.)

All in all, my dearest: art was a teething problem.

10.

one never has a thought. At best the thought acts as if. (But there are always those who quibble about it!) Every word is a disgrace, mark you! People simply keep trumpeting out sentences with the most circus-like verve across a chain bridge (or even: ravines, plants, beds). Helpful suggestion: before falling asleep imagine with the greatest clarity the terminal mental state of a suicide who at last wishes to plumb the depths of self-awareness with a bullet. But you will only succeed if you have first made yourself ridiculous. Highly ridiculous. Terribly ridiculous. Ridiculous beyond all measure. So appallingly ridiculous that everything becomes equally ridiculous. That everyone falls metaphorically on his backside. And sneezes.

11.

Interjections are the most fitting. (Oh the darling white porcelain plates!) ... These amphibians and newts, who consider themselves too good to be donkeys, must be brought to reason by driving it out of them! Whipping it out of them! This ghastly, larger-than-life postcard-blue, which these dismal *rastas* have lied to high ha- ho- hi- hu- (pardon me?) heaven, must be torn down! One must tap one's head, carefully but firmly, on one's neighbour's as if on a rotten egg (good, good). One must bellow the utterly indescribable, the totally inexpressible, so unbearably close up that no dog would wish to continue leading its life so smartly – but rather far more stupidly! So that everyone loses their wits and gets their head back again! The pancakes, the Bible sayings, the girls' bosoms, the percentages, the Gauguins, the snot-rags, the stocking garters, the spirits, the lavatory seats, the waistcoats, the bugs – all the stuff that simultaneously they do, think of and pore over – must be shoved, one after another, so sharply in front of the curve of their chins until finally their feeling of well-being is as great as the mere feeling of woosiness they had experienced until then. One must. One simply must. *Teremtete!*

12.

Silk stockings are priceless. A vice-queen IS an armchair. World views are word mixtures. A dog IS a hammock. *L'art est mort. Viva Dada!*

Walter Serner, 'Letzte Lockerung. Manifest', *Dada*, 4–5 [1919, 14–16; trans. Malcolm Green in *Blago bung blago bung bosso fatakal: first texts of German Dada*, London: Atlas Press, 1995] 153–60.

Tristan TZARA, Walter SENER, Hans ARP (under the pseudonym Alexander PARTENS) Dada Art [1920]

Expressionism is just poster art and did not need to be made the servant of business in order to lose its expressiveness once and for all.

All art, even purely imitative forms, already contains elements of abstraction; either in its proportions or colour, or in the choice of materials, for all imitative work consists in transposing external relationships into a complex unity which is by its nature different. Hence photography is the form of abstraction with the smallest degree of differentiation. Here the addition of colours entails the creation of mutual relationships on the surface with the use of light, shadow and mathematical laws (perspective etc.). These relationships, even the seemingly most subtle, remain stranded however between two external elements; superficial. Cézanne painted inanimate objects viewed diagonally from above; he introduced the still life to modern art. But in the end only one explanation can be found for this new view of diagonally-from-above: it seemed more interesting to the painter. The Cubists began to view the same objects, which were already saddled with a tradition of being viewed-from-diagonally-above, vertically from above, so that all that remained of them were ellipses, squares, triangles, octagons, etc. Or they sliced them down the middle, as it were, and constructed the picture out of their fragments. Thereby they hoped to capture the totality more effectively than by attempting to depict the object as a whole. In short, artists specialized in finding relationships of an inner nature by directing themselves towards a goal which greatly outstripped that of mere imitation – even by means of an intense and sensitive apprehension of one or several external relationships.

The Futurists specialized (and every art movement is a specialization) in the relationship between movements and their synchronicity. But by placing several objects beside one another in cinematographic fashion, they also remained essentially illusionistic, retaining the surface and needing to compose the space for the objects depicted. Nevertheless they were more interesting than the Expressionists, who were so convinced of their daring in feeling free to retain illusionism that they coined the catchword 'psychological art' for their desired inwardness. A very meagre innovation. All they achieved was a form of symbolism which, even without the favourable circumstances of the times, would in any case have found its way on to the billboards.

The goal of every art work is emotion, whose strength is greater in proportion to the immediacy of the reality represented in the work. The lack of the problematic, of a continued search within the picture, is the major prerequisite for penetrating to direct reality within an art work. The intercession of intellect, in order either to pose problems or give explanations, weakens the emotions and makes them indirect, or even excludes their possibility. Thus a direct work free of problems will be more perfect and its emotion stronger and more direct. It contains a new reality which has an immediacy and thus a genuinely new and liberating outlook on the visual arts.

The first, admittedly still indecisive attempts, can be found in Braque. He was the first to break through the surface, thus dispensing with a considerable portion of

illusion, and managing to view objects more or less from within. Picasso took elements from his delicate, almost transparent, early portraits, bent them so that they united, and, in an act which destroyed a great deal of painting's formalism and illusionism, arranged them in this form in his new pictures. In addition he no longer fitted the parts together, but arranged them in a more violent fashion. His brilliant ideas inspired others to incorporate alien materials into pictures. Independent of a reality which artists had until then conceived themselves, they glued on an actual one (using newspapers, hairs, cloth etc.). The intention was not merely to depict forms and colours, but rather to prise open directly the contrast between that which was apprehended and that which one provided from one's self. The old *métier* seemed worn out. Completely new things were in the offing.

It was the special achievement of Hans Arp to view the *métier* itself as the problem. In this way he gave renewed emphasis to it and the possibility of nourishing it with a renewed imagination. For him it was no longer a question of improving and specifying an aesthetic system and making it more precise. He wanted a direct form of production, one that exactly conformed to the way a stone breaks off from a mountain, a flower blossoms, or an animal perpetuates itself. He wanted imaginative qualities that are not to be found in any museum. A type of animal-like formation with all its wild intensity and diversities. The creation of a new body outside of us that lives as we do, perches on the corners of tables, resides in gardens, looks down from walls. He wanted abstraction.

Like Otto van Rees, he created pictures made only of paper, sticking coloured pieces on top of, and beside one other. The frame and later the stand were dropped as unnecessary crutches. As of now the picture was only of interest in terms of colour and construction. The painter, with that dubious sensitivity instilled in him by a teacher, was discarded. Like Arp, Kandinsky, who had reached the same result via a completely different route, was a predecessor, if not so clearly and definitively.

The new impulse did not limit itself to painting. People began to make reliefs, sculptures, which helped clarify the aim of these new methods, direct psychic emotion. This effect is only to be found in pure, accomplished forms and colours; like painting, sculpture was only able to trigger emotion when it revealed what the imagination summons from itself in a naïve, powerful manner. There was no more possibility of relating to the object, even if one attempted in one way or other to draw it back into the image. This marked both the end and a great new beginning.

It was one of Dada's first realizations that systematic psychology, or psychoanalytic symbolizing (Expressionism), does not lead to that emotion which was already being sought in some circles. So it detested objects, landscapes, anecdotes and allegories, demanding instead the use of simple means and a primitive approach to elementary things. It was quick to recognize the immense diversity which this could achieve, the unsuspected richness within the countless new possibilities to which the artist was now able to surrender his personality in full. He knew that the new variety in individual paintings was not the result of some striving for

originality, but rather of the uniqueness of each single human being, his fundamental difference from all others. He saw that hitherto completely concealed personal attributes were able to extend themselves outwards, become part of his species which could receive new life from his self. Abstract methods had thus brought him a complete, final knowledge of all the available ways and means and of the complete breadth of each personality.

This new feeling of vitality in Dada left it feeling quite indifferent to the reaction against attempts to perfect something (Expressionism) which had failed on all fronts. It began again right from scratch. After a lapse of many years, Dada once again created works from a new, powerful and genuine feeling for life. Its existence alone was a direct and menacing opposition to everything that had become enfeebled and stereotyped. It did not need to exert itself to reveal the mendacity of Expressionism, the false emphasis of Futurism, the *comme-il-faut* nature of Cubism.

Abstract painters were thus among the first to side directly with Dadaism, being strongly attracted by the movement's individualism. But more important than this was its dislike of handicraft, its disdain for schools and its ridicule of doctrines. In principle no difference was made between painting and ironing handkerchiefs. Painting was treated as a functional task and the good painter was recognized, for instance, by the fact that he ordered his works from a carpenter, giving his specifications on the phone. It was no longer a question of things which are intended to be seen, but rather how they could become of direct functional use to people. One created from one's own world, creating a mix that was strange, glorious, wild: and then signing it.

The most authoritative representative of Dada art beside Hans Arp is Francis Picabia, who has brought from America the most intriguing resonances which he found in machine parts. He has transposed into his pictures iron constructions, the insides of clocks, pianos etc. in particular profiles, often even using photographs of them, lending them an astonishing expansive force. They do not depend on some new magnetism exerted by the object; neither the machine nor some relationship with it is intended to be grasped emotionally: an explosive imagination was at work, whereby the most banal and mechanical was seized in a brutal grip, suddenly imbued with a new, alien life in which irony, eroticism, scorn, merriment and *ennui* resonated curiously.

Every eye can see that this, and Hans Arp's geometrical pictures, opens up the infinite extension and personal wealth of possibilities which characterizes Dada art.

The following have felt deeply indebted to Dada and participate in its exhibitions: Augusto Giacometti, Kurt Schwitters, Otto van Rees, Viking Eggeling, Hans Richter, Christian Schad, Raoul Hausmann, Alice Bailly, Giorgio de Chirico, M.S. Taeuber, Daniël Rossiné.

(Translated from the Danish by J.C.)

Alexander Partens

Tristan Tzara, Walter Serner and Hans Arp [under the pseudonym Alexander Partens], 'Dada-Kunst', *Dada Almanach* [Berlin: E. Reiss, 1920, 84-90; trans. Malcolm Green in *Dada Almanac*, London: Atlas Press, 1998] 91-96.

NEW YORK

The 'Dada' label was used by the New York group only in 1921, when Man Ray and Marcel Duchamp published the one-issue *New York Dada*. Aware of Dada in Europe, critics pointed to Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven as Dada. Her 'Ready-to-wear American Soul Poetry' combines advertising slogans to expose commercialism as the dominant feature of American language. Tristan Tzara's 'Authorization Letter' shows his eagerness to create New York Dada; yet Man Ray's letter to Tzara indicates the limited interest in New York. Duchamp mischievously suggested to over-eager Tzara a strategy for marketing Dada: to sell bracelets with the four letters D A D A hanging from them, accompanied by a prospectus outlining maladies against which the bracelet would protect. Returning expatriate writers and critics who had witnessed the Paris Dada scandals attempted in 1923 to re-launch Dada in New York. But instead of organizing dada events, they started a debate between critics who thought that America was already too Dada, and proponents, such as Kenneth Burke.

Elsa VON FREYTAG-LORINGHOVEN

Subjoyrides [1919–20]

Subjoyride
<Sense into Nonsense>

Between the acts:
Holeproof —
Pompean Nightcream
for feeble old people!
spread on thickly —
massage briskly with Vicks —
until skin is red —
Then repeat!
If necessary!
Caution!!!
Don't rush!
Please!
Life's best work!
An ambition realized!

Against jars:
Melanchrino
Dykman Oval —
against harsh winds:
Cover with hot flannel
Sloping lines!
Be alert!
sanitary!
clean!
after hydrox!
subjoy passengers
can *always*
Lorna Doone!
Look for it!
Delicious with poached egg!
Makes you
eat —
sleep —
feel —
work —
the runnels of a man better!
Protects you
When buying sliced meat
the guard will tell you!
— Live happier in Leonia —

Subjoyride

Ready-to-wear
American Soul Poetry
<The right kind>
Lux Kamel hands off the
Better Bologna's Beauty —
Get this straight — Wrigley's
Pinaud's Heels for the wise —
Nothing so Pepsodent — soothing
Pussywillow — kept clean
with Philadelphia Cream
Cheese.
They satisfy the man of
Largest Mustard Underwear —
No dosing
Just rub it on —

Subjoy Ride IV

You can teach a saelect
seal packerparrot — rinso —
postum lister world-war
on saxo salve —

Try a veenotonic semi-
sofit of a stiff indigestion
Don't scratch!
Original sunshine makes
Tanlac children

Do you know that made
from rich pure shaving
cream Jim Henry tired
out? —

Famous fain reduces
reg'lar fellows to the
toughest korry-krome
pancake apparel — kept
antiseptic with gold dust
rapid transit — —
it has raised 3 generations
of mince-piston-rings-pie.

Subjoy Ride V

Wake up your passengers —
Large and small — to ride
On pins — dirty erasers and
Knives
These 3 graces operate slot
For 5 cents.
Don't envy Aunt Jemima's
Selfraising crackerjack
Laxative knitted chemise
With that chocolaty
Taste — use pickles in pattern
Follow green lyons.

Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, *Subjoyrides* [1919-20;
reprinted in *Subjoyrides*, ed. Rudolf Kuenzli, Los Angeles:
Green Integer, 2005]

Elsa VON FREYTAG-
LORINGHOVEN

Klink-Hratzvenga
(Deathwail) [1920]

Klink — Hratzvenga
(Deathwail)

Narin — Tzarissamanili
(He is dead!)

Ildrich mitzdonja — astatootch
Ninj — iffe kniek —
Ninj — iffe kniek!
Arr — karr
Arrkarr — barr
Karrarr — barr —
Arr —

Arrkarr —
Mardar
Mar — dóórde — dar —

Mardoodaar!!!

Mardoodd — va — hist — kniek — —
Hist — kniek?
Goorde mee — niss — — —
Goorde meel!!
Narin — tzarissamanilj —
Narin — tzarissamanilj!!!
Hee — hassee?
O — voorr!

Kardirdesporvorde — hadoorde — klossnux
Kalsinjevasnije — alquille — masré
Alquille masréje paquille — paquille
Ojombe — ojombe — oje — — — —
Narin — tzarissamanilj —
Narin — tzarissamanilj!!!
Vé — O — voorr —!
Vévoorr —
Vrmbbbjjj — sh —
Sh — sh — —
Ooh!!!
Vrmbbbjjj — sh — sh —
Sh — sh —
Vrmmm.

Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, 'Klink-Hratzvenga
(Deathwail)', *The Little Review*, 6, 10 [March 1920, 10-12;
reprinted in *Subjoyrides*, ed. Rudolf Kuenzli, Los Angeles:
Green Integer, 2005]

Elsa VON FREYTAG-
LORINGHOVEN

The Modest Woman [1921]

Artists are aristocrats.

Artists who call themselves artists — not aristocrats —
are plain working people, mixing up art with craft, in vulgar
untrained brain.

Who wants us to hide our joys (Joyce?)
If I can eat I can eliminate — it is logic — it is why I eat!
My machinery is built that way. Yours also — though you do
not like to think of — mention it — because you are not
aristocrat.

Your skirts are too long — out of 'modesty', not
decoration — when you lift them you do not do it elegantly —
proudly.

Why should I — proud engineer — be ashamed of my
machinery — part of it?
Joyce is engineer! one of boldest — most adventurous —
globetrotter — I to talk shop is his sacred business — we
want him to — to love engine that carries him through
flashing glades to his grave — his glorious estate.

If your ears are too vulgar — put white cotton into — in
tufts — bunches! fitting decoration! Afflicted people should

stay home — with family — friends. You are immodest —
because you are not healthy.
America's comfort: — sanitation — outside machinery —
has made American forget own machinery — body! He
thinks of himself less than of what should be his servant —
steel machinery.

He has mixed things! For: he has no poise — no
tradition. Parvenu — ashamed of his hide — as he well
might.

That is American! it is truly disgusting to imagine him
in any 'physical functions' — eating not excluded.
Eats stupidly also.

Has reason to hide — feels that — and: — because newly
rich — in vast acquisition — feels also he has something to
say — everything — everybody.

Smart aleck — countrylout — in sunday attire — strutting!
Yawning — all teeth — into space — sipping his coffee
with thunder noise — elbow on table — little finger
outspread stiffly — he knows how to behave in society!

Why — America — can you not be modest? stay back —
attentive — as wellbred child? You have so much to learn —
just out of bushes!

But — you are no wellbred child — you are noisy — nosey
— bad-mannered — assumptive.

... Goethe was grandly obscene — what do you know
about it? Flaubert — Swift — Rabelais — Arabian Nights —
Bible if you please! only difference — Bible is without
humour — great stupidity! So: how dare you strut — step out
— show yourself with your cotton-tuft in ear?

In Europe — when inferiors do not understand
superiors — they retire modestly — mayhap baffled — but in
good manner. By that fact — that they do not understand —
they know their place. They are not invited — of class
inferior — the dance is not theirs.

They can not judge — for: they lack real manners —
education — class.

If they are desirous of judging — sometime — they must
think — study — rise — *slowly!* So society is made — in Europe
— slowly —! so: culture — so: aristocratic public.

That attitude of the learner — the inferior — you should
feel in regard to James Joyce.

That you do not — shows you have less inherent culture
than European washer-lady.

Here — madame — every bank clerk meddles.
Ancient Romans had proverb — one of few great
principles of world-structure — culture: *Quod licit Jovi, non
licit Bovi.*

To show hidden beauty of things — there are no
limitations! Only artist can do that — that is his holy office.
Stronger — braver he is — more he will explore into depths.

Do not eat the *Little Review*.
Therein all strong angels are!
I have not read 'Ulysses'. As story it seems impossible
— to James Joyce's style I am not yet quite developed
enough — makes me difficulty — too intent on my own
creation — no time now.

Sometime I will read him — have no doubt — time of
screams — delights — dances — soul and body — as with
Shakespeare.

From snatches I have had shown me it is more worth
while than many a smooth coherent story by author of real

genuine prominence.

The way he slings ‘obscenities’ – handles them – never forced – never obscene – vulgar! (thank Europe for such people – world will advance.)

Shows him one of highest intellects – with creative power abundant – soaring!

Such one you dare approach – little runt?

Whatever made you read him – *Little Review* – anyway?

Back to my astonishment!

You see how ridiculous you are?

Well – if not – others will.

That is why I wrote this –!

Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, ‘The Modest Woman’, *The Little Review*, 7, 2 [Spring 1921, 3–40; reprinted in Mary Ann Caws, ed., *Manifesto: A Century of isms*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001] 324–326.

Anonymous French Artists Spur on an American Art [1915]

For the first time Europe seeks America in matters of art. For the first time European artists journey to our shores to find that vital force necessary to a living and forward-pushing art. And, as voiced by Frederick MacMonnies, the celebrated sculptor, the effect of this migration to our shores is likely to be more far-reaching than even the most enthusiastic now imagine.

When young Marcel Duchamp, known to us as the painter of the famous staircase nude, came over the art world took his journey as a manifestation of curiosity and stood apart in piquant expectancy, confidently waiting for him to express the time-worn disgust with America and its standards generally ladled out to this country by artists. He didn’t. He praised, and gloried in the vibrant electricity of this wholly new and young and strong force in the world. And then came Albert Gleizes, one of the foremost of French cubists, and his wife, Juliette Roche Gleizes, on their honeymoon, and fast on their heels Francis Picabia and Frederick MacMonnies, and Jean and Ivonne Crotti, and fluttering in their wake letters from their artist colleagues in the trenches announcing that they, too, were spending their spare time studying English, because they intended to come to the United States as soon as the war ceased.

And New York awoke to find that it is witnessing a French invasion – an invasion of the young and rebellious in the art of Europe, which will give of itself to the art of the United States, and in turn take from us what we have to offer. And that, in the words of these artists, is life, in contradistinction to the living death of Europe, a stagnation that was felt a year or two before war actually began.

And if we are to furnish the buoyancy of crude life to these newcomers, they in turn will pay us with what is perhaps equally necessary, the courage to break from the tradition of Europe. And it is an American who has lived

and achieved in Europe who points this out [...]

Francis Picabia, one of the three or four most prominent ‘modernists’ of France, served eight months in the French army, after which he was recalled, and he arrived in New York four months ago, and will remain at least as long as a secret mission continues to demand his presence here – perhaps all the rest of his life, if this can be arranged. ‘This visit to America,’ the painter enthusiastically maintained, ‘has brought about a complete revolution in my methods of work. I began as a landscape painter, was later classed as a cubist, and gradually came into my own – which is a state I cannot otherwise classify than entirely individual. But prior to leaving Europe I was engrossed in presenting psychological studies through the mediumship of forms which I created. Almost immediately upon coming to America it flashed on me that the genius of the modern world is machinery, and that through machinery art ought to find a most vivid expression.

MACHINERY THE SOUL OF HUMAN LIFE

‘I have been profoundly impressed by the vast mechanical development in America. The machine has become more than a mere adjunct of human life. It is really a part of human life – perhaps the very soul. In seeking forms through which to interpret ideas or by which to expose human characteristics I have come at length upon the form which appears most brilliantly plastic and fraught with symbolism. I have enlisted the machinery of the modern world, and introduced it into my studio.

‘Naturally, form has come to take precedence over colour with me, though when I began painting colour predominated. Slowly my artistic evolution carried me from colour to form, and while I still employ colour, of course, it is the drawing which assumes the place of first importance in my pictures.

‘Of course, I have only begun to work out this newest stage of evolution. I don’t know what possibilities may be in store. I mean to simply work on and on until I attain the pinnacle of mechanical symbolism. Since coming to America I have painted a great deal. My brush has been very busy. And for two reasons. First and foremost, naturally, is the fact that I have a whole new scheme to evolve. But a very important item is the fact that in America work of an artistic nature is possible where it is utterly impossible in Europe today. The war has killed the art of the Continent utterly. Even those who miserably try to seclude themselves and find a little nook where work may be carried on undisturbed find that distractions creep in. The horror of war is everywhere. It penetrates to the furthest outposts. In America work is possible. I am making the most of my time.

‘Since machinery is the soul of the modern world, and since the genius of machinery attains its highest expression in America, why is it not reasonable to believe that in America the art of the future will flower most brilliantly [...]’

And the Quartier Latin? Do these artists forget it? ‘I assure you,’ says Marcel Duchamp, ‘the Quartier Latin is a gloomy *endroit* these days! The old gay life is all vanished.

The ateliers are dismally shut. Art has gone dusty. You know, at the outbreak of the war all Latin Quarter cafés closed up at 8 o’clock in the evening. When I abandoned Paris last spring the hour had been advanced to 10:30. But it is a very different life from the happy, stimulating life one used to encounter. Paris is like a deserted mansion. Her lights are out. One’s friends are all away at the front. Or else they have been already killed.

‘I came over here, not because I couldn’t paint at home, but because I hadn’t any one to talk with. It was frightfully lonely. I am excused from service on account of my heart. So I roamed about all alone. Everywhere the talk turned upon war. Nothing but war was talked from morning until night. In such an atmosphere, especially for one who holds war to be an abomination, it may readily be conceived existence was heavy and dull.

‘So far as painting goes – it is a matter of indifference to me where I am. Art is purely subjective, and the artist should be able to work in one place quite as well as another. But I love an active and interesting life. I have found such a life most abundantly in New York. I am very happy here. Perhaps rather too happy. For I have not painted a single picture since coming over.

‘From a psychological standpoint I find the spectacle of war very impressive. The instinct which sends men marching out to cut down other men is an instinct worthy of careful scrutiny. What an absurd thing such a conception of patriotism is! Fundamentally all people are alike. Personally I must say I admire the attitude of combating invasion with folded arms. Could that but become the universal attitude, how simple the intercourse of nations would be.’

This young artist’s studio in Beekman Place contains a few of his paintings. The celebrated ‘Nude Descending the Stair’ is at present on exhibition in San Francisco. Monsieur Duchamp carefully explained that this work is not cubist, that none of his work is cubist. Like Madame Gleizes, he is doing things his own way. I asked whether he were still painting after the manner of the ‘Nude’.

‘Oh, no,’ he answered. ‘I have passed that long ago. My methods are constantly changing. My most recent work is utterly unlike anything that preceded it.’

‘Do you think, monsieur, that you will find in America a public capable of appreciating your work?’

He shrugged his shoulders. ‘That I cannot say. Pioneers must always expect to be misunderstood. It is a matter of great indifference to me what criticism is printed in the papers and the magazines. I am simply working out my own ideas in my own way. Those who do not understand what it is we are attempting to portray simply cannot be shown. I cannot explain my paintings. Either one grasps their purport or one doesn’t. To any one admitting an incapacity to understand this art, I say: Study all the paintings of the genre you can. It is only through constant observation that the plan becomes clear’.

Monsieur Duchamp expressed himself as delighted with America.

‘I adore New York,’ he said. ‘There is much about it which is like the Paris of the old days. Many artists have come over, and I think many more will come. As I said, I can paint wherever chance sets me down. I am perfectly

emancipated in that regard. But I must admit the atmosphere of Paris just now is not such as to inspire artists.'

Among the more noted of this artist's work is a study of chess players and of a king and a queen. These are highly interesting paintings and exemplify some of Duchamp's strongly individual ideals.

'You will observe, in the picture of the chess players,' he remarked, 'that a very intense absorption in the game is evinced. This is produced by a technique which must be visioned to be understood. The impression of watchers, who form the background, is conveyed in the same manner. With this king and queen,' he continued, turning to the other picture, 'sex is established by the same method of suggestion. To me the execution of the king is very much more masculine than that of the queen. Motion, you will observe, is supplied by a procession of rapidly moving nudes. Of course, both of these pictures are fruit of an epoch in my life which is past. There is nothing static about my manner of working. I am never deceived myself into thinking that I have at length hit upon the ultimate expression. In the midst of each epoch I fully realize that a new epoch will dawn.

'Regarding the attitude of the public toward my work, and, indeed, to all the work of this genre, I think it is more the execution than the spirit which is misunderstood and not comprehended. At the bottom, we are all working toward the same goal. Mere details of execution do not constitute the real spirit of art. Every artist has his own way of working with the materials at hand. For my part, the fact that my ideals reflect a period of growths proves that the spirit of art may be approached from many angles. Until all have been tried, it is impossible to affirm, with any degree of veracity, that the manner has been achieved. Art is all a matter of personality.'

'The Nude Descending the Stair', in the finished state, with which the public is familiar, did not spring into being without intermediate steps. Marcel Duchamp has in his studio a photograph of an earlier treatment of the same theme, which affords an interesting comparison. Ranging the two studies side by side makes very apparent the expenditure of much thought between the conception of the idea in the first place and its ultimate treatment. The latter is much more powerful and moving. Also it is worked out more subtly, expanding, in a number of salient directions, what the earlier study rather hinted than expressed.

Anonymous, 'French Artists Spun on an American Art', *New York Tribune* [24 October 1915, Section 4, 2-3; reprinted in *New York Dada*, ed. Rudolf E. Kuenzli, New York: Willis Locker & Owens, 1986] 128-134.

Marcel DUCHAMP

The-Nude-Descending-a-Staircase Man Surveys Us [1915]

Marcel Duchamp says he has come to America to stay as long as possible though he may have to return for military duty. Both of his brothers are at the front, one a well-known sculptor and the other an architect.

By Marcel Duchamp

The American woman is the most intelligent woman in the world today – the only one that always knows what she wants and therefore always gets. Hasn't she proved it by making her husband in his role of (store-banker) look almost ridiculous in the eyes of the whole world? Not only has she intelligence but a wonderful beauty of line is hers possessed by no other woman of any race at the present time.

And this wonderful intelligence, which makes the society of her equally brilliant sisters sufficient to her without necessarily insisting on the male element protruding in her life, is helping the tendency of the world today to completely equalize the sexes, and the constant battle between them in which we have wasted our best energies in the past will cease.

This will not by any means produce race suicide, for the women of this state of the far future will be called upon to bear children at a due time, just as a man is called upon to pay taxes, all responsibility for her offspring being taken from her.

As things stand today this would be a heavy toll to pay under citizenship, but assuredly a time will come when science will have achieved that death in childbirth be unknown.

I cannot understand the views my compatriots have expressed about New York. I know of no city where I would rather be for the next two years – always provided my country does not call me back to it.

The capitals of the Old World have laboured for hundreds of years to find that which constitutes good taste and one may say that they have found the wealth thereof. But why do people not understand how much of a bore this is? In Paris, for instance, everything is perfectly blended and in perfect harmony – never in a whole day does one see anything the tiniest bit out of place. But here – from the very instant one lands one realizes that here is a people yearning, searching, trying to find something.

If only America would realize that the art of Europe is finished – dead – and that America is the country of the art of the future, instead of trying to base everything she does on European traditions! And yet in spite of it, try as she will, gets beyond these traditions, even if in dimension alone.

Look at the skyscrapers! Has Europe anything to show more beautiful than these? I have been trying to get a studio in one of their highest turrets, but unfortunately I find people are not permitted to live in them.

Why this adoration for classic art? It is as old-fashioned as the superstitions of the religions, and the reverence given to it is mere stupidity.

And this fetish of 'ideals'! There is no such thing. Every single factor of life should stand on its own individual merit.

Why do Americans make a God of Rodin? This 'official' art is ante-diluvian – why always go backward instead of forward?

People have no idea yet of what the futurist is doing even. They come to my studio and timidly ask me what the canvases represent. And it is a little difficult to explain to them that they do not represent concrete material things, but abstract movement.

I have, for instance, just completed a painting on glass which I call a 'glissoir', (it represents) simply the act of sliding and is supposed to be an irony on the feats of the modern engineer ...

Marcel Duchamp, 'The-Nude-Descending-a-Staircase Man Surveys Us', *New York Tribune* [12 September 1915, Section 4, 2; reprinted in Harriet Watts, ed., *Dada and the Press*, gen. ed. Stephen C. Foster *Crisis and the Arts*, New York: Gale Group/G.K. Hall, 2004] 377-79.

Marcel DUCHAMP

from The Green Box [1934]

[1. MARGINAL NOTES]

The Bride stripped bare by her bachelors even.
to separate the mass-produced readymade from the readymade – The separation is an operation [...]

[2. LAWS AND GENERAL NOTES]

[...] Establish a society in which the individual has to pay for the air he breathes (air meters; imprisonment and rarefied air, in case of non-payment simple asphyxiation if necessary (cut off the air)
on condition that (?)
Ordinary brick satiates the knot.
to be tired of [...]

Identifying

To lose the possibility of recognizing 2 similar objects – 2 colours, 2 laces, 2 hats, 2 forms whatsoever to reach the Impossibility of sufficient visual memory, to transfer from one like object to another the memory imprint.
– Same possibility with sounds; with brain facts

[3. LANGUAGE]

Conditions of a language:
The search for 'prime words' ('divisible' only by themselves and by unity).

Take a Larousse dict. and copy all the so-called 'abstract' words. i.e., those which have no concrete reference.

Compose a schematic sign designating each of these words. (this sign can be composed with the standard stops)

These signs must be thought of as the letters of the new alphabet.

A grouping of several signs will determine (utilize colours – in order to differentiate what would correspond in this [literature] to the substantive, verb, adverb declensions, conjugations etc.)

Necessity for ideal continuity. i.e.: each grouping will

be connected with the other groupings by a *strict meaning* (a sort of grammar, no longer requiring a paedagogical sentence construction. But, apart from the differences of languages, and the 'figures of speech' peculiar to each language – weighs and measure some *abstractions* of *substantives*, of *negatives*, of relations of subject to verb etc, by means of standard-signs. (representing these new relations: conjugations, declensions, plural and singular, adjectivation inexpressible by the *concrete alphabetic* forms of languages living now and to come).

This alphabet very probably is only suitable for the description of this picture.

[4. READYMADES]

Specifications for 'Readymades'.

by planning for a moment to come (on such a day, such a date such a minute), 'to inscribe a readymade' – The readymade can later be looked for. – (with all kinds of delays)

The important thing then is just this matter of timing, this snapshot effect, like a speech delivered on no matter what occasion but at *such and such an hour*. It is a kind of rendezvous.

– Naturally inscribe that date, hour, minute, on the readymade as *information*.

also the serial characteristic of the readymade.

Reciprocal Readymade = Use a Rembrandt as an ironing-board – [...]

: shadows cast by Readymades.

shadow cast by 2, 3, 4, Readymades. '*brought together*' (Perhaps use an enlargement of that so as to extract from it a figure formed by an equal [length] (for ex.) taken in each Readymade and becoming by the projection a part of the cast shadow

for ex. 10cm in the first Rdy made

10cm " " 2nd "

etc.

each of these 10 cm. having become a part of the cast shadow

Take. these 'having become' and from them make a tracing without of course changing their position in relation to each other in the original projection [...]

[8. THE BRIDE]

The Bride stripped bare by the bachelors

2 principal elements:

1. Bride

2. Bachelors

Graphic arrangement.

a long canvas, upright.

Bride above – bachelors below.

The bach. serving as anarchitectonic base for the bride the latter becomes a sort of apotheosis of virginity.

– steam engine on a masonry substructure on this brick base. a solid foundation, the bachelor-machine fat lubricious – (to develop.)

At the place (still ascending) where this eroticism is revealed (which should be one of the principal cogs in the bachelor machine.

This tormented gearing gives birth to the desire-part of

the machine This desire-part – then alters its mechanical state – which from steam passes to the state of internal combustion engine.

(Develop the desire motor, consequence of the lubricious gearing.)

This desire motor is the last part of the bachelor machine. Far from being in direct contact with the Bride. the desire motor is separated by an air cooler. (or water).

This cooler. (graphically) to express the fact that the bride, instead of being merely an asensual icicle, warmly rejects. (not chastely) the bachelors' brusque offer this cooler will be in transparent glass. Several plates of glass one above the other.,

In spite of this cooler. there is no discontinuity between the bach. machine and the Bride. But the connections. will be. *electrical*. and will thus express the stripping: an alternating process. Short circuit if necessary—

Take care of the fastening: it is necessary to *stress* the introduction of the new motor: the bride.

Bride.

In general, if this bride motor must appear as an apotheosis of virginity. i.e. ignorant desire. blank desire. (with a touch of malice) and if it (graphically) does not need to satisfy the laws of weighted balance. nonetheless. a shiny metal gallows could simulate the maiden's attachment to her girl friends and relatives. (the former and the latter corresponding graphically to a solid base. on firm ground, like the masonry base of the bachelor machine. which also rests on firm ground

The Bride basically is a motor. But before being a motor which transmits her timid-power. – she is this very timid-power – This timid-power is a sort of automobiline, love gasoline, that, distributed to the quite feeble cylinders, within reach of the *sparks of her constant life*, is used for the blossoming of this virgin who has reached the goal of her desire – (Here the desire-gears will occupy less space than in the bachelor machine. – They are only the string that binds the bouquet.)

The whole graphic significance is for this cinematic blossoming.

This cinematic blossoming is controlled by the electrical stripping (see the passage of the bach. machine to the bride)

This cinematic blossoming which expresses the moment of the stripping, should be grafted on to an arbor-type of the Bride. This arbor-type has its roots in the desire-gears. but *the cinematic effects of the electrical stripping*, transmitted to the motor with quite feeble cylinders, leave (plastic necessity) the arbor-type at rest – (graphically, in Munich I had already made 2 studies of this arbor-type) and do not touch. the desire-gears. which by giving birth to the arbor-type, find within this arbor-type the transmission of the desire to the blossoming into stripping voluntarily imagined by the bride desiring.

This electrical stripping. sets in motion the motor with quite feeble cylinders which reveals the blossoming into stripping by the bach. in its action on the clockwork gears.

Grafting itself on the arbor-type – the cinematic blossoming (controlled by the electrical stripping) This cinematic blossoming is the most important part of the

painting. (graphically as a surface)

It is, in general, the halo of the bride, the sum total of her splendid vibrations: graphically, there is no question of symbolizing by a grandiose painting this happy goal – the bride's desire; only more clearly, in all this blossoming, the painting will be an inventory of the elements of this blossoming, elements of the sexual life imagined by her the bride-desiring. In this blossoming, The bride reveals herself nude in 2 appearances: the first, that of the stripping by the bachelors. the second appearance that voluntary-imaginative one of the Bride. On the coupling of these 2 appearances of pure virginity – On their collision, depends the whole blossoming, the upper part and crown of the picture.

Develop graphically

1st the blossoming into the stripping by the bach

2nd the blossoming. into the imaginative stripping by the bride-desiring.

3rd From the 2 graphic developments obtained find their conciliation. which should be the 'blossoming' without causal distinction.

Mixture, physical compound of the 2 causes (bach. and imaginative desire) unanalyzable by logic.

The last state of this nude bride before the orgasm which may (might) bring about her fall graphically, the need to express in a completely different way from the rest of the painting, this blossoming.

1st *Blossoming into the stripping by bach.*

Electrical control

This blossoming-effect of the electrical stripping should, graphically, end in the clockwork movement (electric clocks in railway stations) Gearwheels, cogs, etc (develop expressing indeed the throbbing jerk of the minute hand.

The whole in matte metal. (fine copper, steel silver,

2nd Blossoming as stripping voluntarily imagined by the bride-desiring.

This blossoming should be the refined development of the arbor-type.

It is born, as boughs on this arbor-type.

Boughs frosted in nickel. and platinum. As it gradually leaves the arbor, this blossoming is the image of a motor car, climbing a slope in low gear. (The car wants more and more to reach the top, and while slowly accelerating, as if exhausted by hope, the motor of the car turns over faster and faster, until it roars triumphantly.

3rd Blossoming-crown (Composed of the 2 preceding).

The 1st blossoming. is attached to the motor with quite feeble cylinders.

The 2nd to the arbor-type, of which it is the cinematic development.

The arbor-type – has its roots in the desire-gear, a constituent, skeletal part of the bride.

The motor with quite feeble cylinders is a superficial organ of the bride; it is activated by the love gasoline, a secretion of the bride's sexual glands and by the electric sparks of the stripping. (to show that the bride does not refuse this stripping by the bachelors, even accepts it since she furnishes the love gasoline and goes so far as to help towards complete nudity by developing in a sparkling

fashion her intense desire for the orgasm.

Thus the motor with quite feeble cylinders a constituent but superficial organ of the bride, is the 2 foci of the blossoming ellipse. (the 1st focus the centre of the blossoming into stripping by the bach. 2nd focus, centre of the voluntarily imagined blossoming into stripping of the bride. 2nd focus, actuating the desire gears (the skeletal part of the Bride) giving birth to the arbor-type etc.

The Bride. skeleton.

The Bride, at her base, is a reservoir of love gasoline. (or timid-power). This timid-power, distributed to the motor with quite feeble cylinders, in contact with the sparks of her constant life (desire-magneto) explodes and makes this virgin blossom who has attained her desire.

Besides the sparks of the desire-magneto, the artificial sparks which are produced by the electrical stripping should supply explosions in the motor with quite feeble cylinders.

Hence, this motor with quite feeble cylinders has 2 strokes. The 1st stroke (sparks of the desire-magneto) controls the immobile arbor type. This arbor-type is a kind of spinal column and should be the support for the blossoming into the bride's voluntary stripping. The 2nd stroke (artificial sparks of the electrical stripping) controls the clockwork machinery, graphic translation of the blossoming into stripping by the bachelors. (expressing the throbbing jerk of the minute hand on electric clocks.)

The bride accepts this stripping by the bachelors, since she supplies the love gasoline to the sparks of this electrical stripping; moreover, she furthers her complete nudity by adding to the 1st focus of sparks (electrical stripping) the 2nd focus of sparks of the desire-magneto.

Marcel Duchamp, *The Green Box* [Paris: Éditions Rose Sélavy, 1934; trans. George Heard Hamilton, *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*, London: Lund, Humphries, n.d.; reprinted in *Salt Seller: The Writings of Marcel Duchamp*, eds Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson, New York: Oxford University Press, 1973; London: Thames and Hudson, 1975] 26, 31–32, 33, 41–44, 45, 48.

Marcel DUCHAMP

Kind of Sub-Title [1934]

DELAY IN GLASS

Use 'delay' instead of picture or painting; picture on glass becomes delay in glass – but delay in glass does not mean picture on glass –

It's merely a way of succeeding in no longer thinking that the thing in question is a picture – to make a delay of it in the most general way possible, not so much in the different meanings in which delay can be taken, but rather in their indecisive reunion 'delay' – a delay in glass as you would say a poem in prose or a spittoon in silver

Marcel Duchamp, 'Kind of Sub-Title', *The Green Box* [Paris: Éditions Rose Sélavy, 1934; trans. George Heard Hamilton, *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*, London: Lund, Humphries, n.d.; reprinted in *Salt Seller: The Writings of Marcel Duchamp*, eds Michel Sanouillet and Elmer

Peterson, New York: Oxford University Press, 1973; London: Thames and Hudson, 1975] 26.

Marcel DUCHAMP

Interview with James Johnson Sweeney [1946]

Futurism was an impression of the mechanical world. It was strictly a continuation of the Impressionist movement. I was not interested in that. I wanted to get away from the physical aspect of painting. I was much more interested in recreating ideas in painting. For me the title was very important. I was interested in making painting serve my purposes, and in getting away from the physicality of painting. For me Courbet had introduced the physical emphasis in the nineteenth century. I was interested in ideas – not merely in visual products. I wanted to put painting once again at the service of the mind. And my painting was, of course, at once regarded as 'intellectual' 'literary' painting. It was true I was endeavouring to establish myself as far as possible from 'pleasing' and 'attractive' physical paintings. That extreme was seen as literary. *My King and Queen* was a chess king and queen ...

Dada was an extreme protest against the physical side of painting. It was a metaphysical attitude. It was intimately and consciously involved with 'literature'. It was a sort of nihilism to which I am still very sympathetic. It was a way to get out of a state of mind – to avoid being influenced by one's immediate environment, or by the past: to get away from clichés – to get free. The 'blank' force of dada was very salutary. It told you 'don't forget you are not quite so "blank" as you think you are'. Usually a painter confesses he has his landmarks. He goes from landmark to landmark. Actually he is a slave to landmarks – even to contemporary ones.

Dada was very serviceable as a purgative. And I think I was thoroughly conscious of this at the time and of a desire to effect a purgation in myself. I recall certain conversations with Picabia along these lines. He had more intelligence than most of our contemporaries. The rest were either for or against Cézanne. There was no thought of anything beyond the physical side of painting. No notion of freedom was taught. No philosophical outlook was introduced. The cubists, of course, were inventing a lot at the time. They had enough on their hands at the time not to be worried about a philosophical outlook; and cubism gave me many ideas for decomposing forms. But I thought of art on a broader scale. There were discussions at the time of the fourth dimension and of non-Euclidean geometry. But most views of it were amateurish. Metzinger was particularly attracted. And for all our misunderstandings through these new ideas we were helped to get away from the conventional way of speaking – from our café and studio platitudes.

Brisset and Roussel were the two men in those years whom I most admired for their delirium of imagination. Jean-Pierre Brisset was discovered by Jules Romains

through a book he picked up from a stall on the *quais*. Brisset's work was a philological analysis of language – an analysis worked out by means of an incredible network of puns. He was sort of a Douanier Rousseau of philology. Romains introduced him to his friends. And they, like Apollinaire and his companions, held a formal celebration to honour him in front of Rodin's *Thinker* in front of the Panthéon where he was hailed as *Prince of Thinkers*.

But Brisset was one of the real people who has lived and will be forgotten. Roussel was another great enthusiasm of mine in the early days. The reason I admired him was because he produced something that I had never seen. That is the only thing that brings admiration from my innermost being – something completely independent – nothing to do with the great names or influences. Apollinaire first showed Roussel's work to me. It was poetry. Roussel thought he was a philologist, a philosopher, and a metaphysician. But he remains a great poet.

It was fundamentally Roussel who was responsible for my glass, *La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même*. From his *Impressions d'Afrique* I got the general approach. This play of his which I saw with Apollinaire helped me greatly on one side of my expression. I saw at once I could use Roussel as an influence. I felt that as a painter it was much better to be influenced by a writer than by another painter. And Roussel showed me the way.

My ideal library would have contained all Roussel's writings – Brisset, perhaps Lautréamont and Mallarmé. Mallarmé was a great figure. This is the direction in which art should turn: to an intellectual expression, rather than to an animal expression. I am sick of the expression '*bête comme un peintre*' – stupid as a painter.

James Johnson Sweeney, 'Interview with Marcel Duchamp', in 'Eleven Europeans in America', *The Museum of Modern Art Bulletin*, 13, 4–5 [1946; reprinted in Lucy R. Lippard, ed., *Dadas on Art*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1971] 141–42.

Marcel DUCHAMP

Apropos of 'Readymades' [1961]

In 1913 I had the happy idea to fasten a bicycle wheel to a kitchen stool and watch it turn.

A few months later I bought a cheap reproduction of a winter evening landscape, which I called pharmacy after adding two small dots, one red and one yellow, in the horizon.

In New York in 1915 I bought at a hardware store a snow shovel on which I wrote 'In Advance of the Broken Arm'.

It was around this time that the word readymade came to mind to designate this form of manifestation.

A point which I want very much to establish is that the choice of these 'readymades' was never dictated by aesthetic delection.

This choice was based on a reaction of visual indifference with at the same time a total absence of good

or bad taste ... in fact a complete anaesthesia.
One important characteristic was the short sentence which I occasionally inscribed on the 'readymade'.
That sentence instead of describing the object like a title was meant to carry the mind of the spectator towards other regions more verbal.
Sometimes I would add a graphic detail of presentation which in order to satisfy my craving for alliterations, would be called 'readymade aided'.

At another time wanting to expose the basic antinomy between art and readymades I imagined a 'reciprocal readymade': use a Rembrandt as an ironing board!
I realized very soon the danger of repeating indiscriminately this form of expression and decided to limit the production of 'readymades' to a small number yearly. I was aware at that time, that for the spectator even more than for the artist, art is a habit-forming drug and I wanted to protect my 'readymades' against such contamination.

Another aspect of the 'readymade' is its lack of uniqueness ... the replica of a 'readymade' delivering the same message; in fact nearly every one of the 'readymades' existing today is not an original in the conventional sense.

A final remark to this egomaniac's discourse:
Since the tubes of paint used by the artist are manufactured and ready made products we must conclude that all the paintings in the world are 'readymades aided' and also works of assemblage.
Marcel Duchamp, 'Apropos of "Readymades"', *Art and Artists*, 1, 4 [July 1966, 46-47, transcribed from a talk delivered at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 19 October 1961; reprinted in Richard Kostelanetz, ed., *Esthetics Contemporary*, Buffalo: Prometheus, 1978] 93-94.

Jean CROTTI

Tabu [1921]

TABU is in art
A new Thought
A new Expression
A new Religion
ENOUGH of sensuality
of materialism
of naturalism
of deformation

We want to express Mystery
 That which can not be seen
 That which can not be touched

Everywhere we surround mystery
Everywhere unknown and invisible things solicit our curiosity
The field of action is infinite for we are trying to express the Infinite itself

TABU does not address itself to the crowd
is not human
is not social

is not concerned with the plague
syphilis
misery
war
peace

TABU is MYSTERY
and wants to express mystery
First attempt at plastic TABU
CHAINLESS MYSTERY
at the Salon d'Automne
by Jean CROTTI
P.S. We entrust this to the meditation of the thinking Elite.
TABU is already no longer new.

Jean Crotti, 'Tabu', tract distributed at the Salon d'Automne, Paris [11 November 1921; trans. Margaret I. Lippard, in Lucy R. Lippard, ed., *Dadas on Art*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1971] 159-60.

Walter Conrad ARENSBERG

Autobiographic [1916]

Permanently in a space that is anywhere here
While I am I,
I am temporarily
Always now.

And at the eternal
Instant
I look –
The eye-glassed I
At the not I, the opaque
Others,
Eye-glassed too.
And I who see of them
Only the glasses
Looking,
See of myself
In looking-glasses
Faces
Distorted.

And throughout the transparent
Spaciousness,
Which is so extensively
The present
Point
Located personally –
A solid geometry
Of vacancy
Bounded by the infinite
Absence,
I
Foreshorten
To the end
Of me ...
Walls and ceilings

Of my cellular
Isolation
Wrecked by perspective,
Habitable cubes
Of static
Surfaces of plaster
Prolonged in flight.
And it is I who hold them back,
And it is I who let them go,
These gray planes plunging
In an emptiness
Blue,
These rampant sides of pyramids
That converge
To nothing

While I am I.
Walter Conrad Arensber, 'Autobiographic', *Idols* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1916; reprinted in Francis Naumann, *New York Dada*, 1915-23, New York: Abrams, 1994] 29-30.

Walter Conrad ARENSBERG

Vacuum Tires: A Formula for the Digestion of Figments [1919]

à la la
When the shutter from a dry angle comes between the pin and a special delivery it appears at blue. Likewise in concert with strings on any other flow the clock of third evenings past Broadway is alarming, because it is written in three-four time to chewing gum; if you upset the garter, the r remains west, or to the left of flesh, as in revolving or Rector's. The whole effect is due to blinds, drawn in arithmetic to a sketch of halves, which are smoked into double disks. By such a system of instantaneous tickets a given volume of camera, analyzed for uric acid, leaves a deposit of ten dollars, and the style decrees that human surfaces be worn for transparencies, the price mark being removed from the lapel.
If, however, the showcases are on trolleys, bottles must be corked for the make-up of negroes. Or if a goitre appears in the elevation of the host, a set of false teeth, picked for the high lights by burnt matches, must be arranged at once in three acts. For the first provide electric fixtures that are tuned to cork tips. For the second consideration is flour, thirds being a key that is rarely advertised. Notwithstanding the thermometer into which the conductor spits, the telephone meets in extremes. A window will change the subject for standing room only.
Yet in spite of a Sunday ceiling to the same schedule, condensed into the bucket of a Melba lip-stick, the traffic-cop will empty the ladder to an equal number of rounds. This bandage is the legislature of taxis to taxidermists,

hanging the dessert for bricklayers to little remains of cube root. The up town exist may, or may not, be in manuscript, but as a result of the binomial theorem of closing time, the water-mains, whenever they are directed to funerals, will make a vacuum flash.

Walter Conrad Arensberg, 'Vacuum Tires: A Formula for the Digestion of Figments', *TNT* [March 1919; reprinted in Rudolf E. Kuenzli, ed., *New York Dada*, New York: Willis, Locker & Owens, 1986] 153.

Mina LOY

from Songs to Joannes [1917]

I
Spawn of Fantasies
Siltng the appraisable
Pig Cupid his rosy snout
Rooting erotic garbage
'Once upon a time'
Pulls a weed white star-topped
Among wild oats sown in mucous-membrane

I would an eye in a Bengal light
Eternity in a sky-rocket
Constellations in an ocean
Whose rivers run no fresher
Than a trickle of saliva

These are suspect places

I must live in my lantern
Trimming subliminal flicker
Virginal to the bellows
Of Experience
Coloured glass

II
The skin-sack
In which a wanton duality
Packed
All the completion of my infructuous impulses
Something the shape of a man
To the casual vulgarity of the merely observant

More of a clock-work mechanism
Running down against time
To which I am not paced
My finger-tips are numb from fretting your hair
A God's door-mat
On the threshold of your mind

III
We might have coupled
In the bed-ridden monopoly of a moment
Or broken flesh with one another
At the profane communion table
Where wine is spill'd on promiscuous lips

We might have given birth to a butterfly

With the daily news
Printed in blood on its wings

Mina Loy, 'Songs to Joannes', *Others*, 3, 6 [April 1917, 3-20; reprinted in Roger L. Conover, ed., *The Last Lunar Baedeker*, Highlands, N.C: Jargon Society, 1982] 53-54.

MAN RAY

Statement [1916]

Throughout time painting has alternately been put to the service of the church, the state, arms, individual patronage, nature appreciation, scientific phenomena, anecdote, and decoration.

But all the marvellous works that have been painted, whatever the sources of inspiration, still live for us because of absolute qualities they possess in common.

The creative force and the expressiveness of painting reside materially in the colour and texture of pigment, in the possibilities of form invention and organization, and in the flat plane on which these elements are brought to play.

The artist is concerned solely with linking these absolute qualities directly to his wit, imagination, and experience, without the go-between of a 'subject'. Working on a single plane as the instantaneously visualizing factor, he realizes his mind motives and physical sensations in a permanent and universal language of colour, texture, and form organization. He uncovers the pure plane of expression that has so long been hidden by the glazings of nature imitation, anecdote, and the other popular subjects.

Accordingly the artist's work is to be measured by the vitality, the invention, and the definiteness and conviction of purpose within its own medium.

Man Ray, 'Statement', exhibition catalogue, *The Forum Exhibition of Modern American Painters* [March 1916, New York: Anderson Galleries; reprinted in Lucy R. Lippard, ed., *Dadas on Art*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1971] 156

MAN RAY

Letter to Tristan Tzara [1921]

De l'amérique
Cher Tzara — dada cannot live in New York. All New York is dada, and will not tolerate a rival, — will not notice dada. It is true that no efforts to make it public have been made, beyond the placing of your and our dadas in the bookshops, but there is no one here to work for it, and no money to be taken in for it, or donated to it. So dada in New York must remain a secret.

No additional sales have been made of the consignment you sent to 'Société Anonyme'. The 'anonyme' itself does not sell anything. The appearance of New York dada was made possible through the generosity of a few poor friends, but it cannot go on so. Perhaps in the future we may do something again. I have not come across any *coupures*, but will watch for them.

What has happened between you and Picabia? I saw a little article from some French paper. It is unfortunate.
Thanks very much for the photos of yourself and friends.

I shall send you some more New York dadas.
Duchamp is returning this week to France, you will meet him, no doubt, and have a talk with him.
Merci pour Mlle Bernice's sentiments! I am doing nothing of interest now to anyone or to myself!
Most cordially
Man Ray
directeur du mauvais movies
Letter from Man Ray to Tristan Tzara [June 1921; reprinted in Jean-Michel Bouhours and Patrick de Haas, ed., *Man Ray: Directeur du mauvais movies*, Paris: Éditions du Centre Pompidou, 1997] 8-9.

MAN RAY

Statement [1958]

Who made Dada? Nobody and everybody. I made Dada when I was a baby and I was roundly spanked by my mother. Now, everyone claims to be the author of Dada. For the past thirty years.

In Zurich, in Cologne, in Paris, in London, in Tokyo, in San Francisco, in New York. I might claim to be the author of Dada in New York. In 1912 before Dada.

In 1919, with the permission and with the approval of other Dadaists I legalized Dada in New York. Just once. That was enough. The times did not deserve more. That was a Dadadate. The one issue of *New York Dada* did not even bear the names of its authors. How unusual for Dada! Of course, there were a certain number of collaborators. Both willing and unwilling. Both trusting and suspicious. What did it matter? Only one issue. Forgotten — not even seen by most Dadaists or antidadaists. Now, we are trying to revive Dada. Why? Who cares? Who doesn't care? Dada is dead. Or is Dada still alive? We cannot revive something that is alive just as we cannot revive anything that is dead. Is Dadadead?
Is Dadalive?
Dada is.
Dadaism.

Man Ray, 'Statement', exhibition catalogue, *Dada Dokumente einer Bewegung* [Düsseldorf: Kunsthalle, 1958; reprinted in Mary Ann Caws, ed., *Manifesto: A Century of Isms*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001] 320.

Tristan TZARA

Authorization Letter [1921]

NEW YORK DADA:
You ask for authorization to name your periodical Dada. But Dada belongs to everybody. I know excellent people who have the name Dada. Mr. Jean Dada; Mr. Gaston de Dada; Fr. Picabia's dog is called Zizi de Dada; in G. Ribemont-Dessaigne's [sic] play, the pope is likewise

named Zizi de Dada. I could cite dozens of examples. Dada belongs to everybody. Like the idea of God or of the toothbrush. There are people who are very dada, more dada; there are das everywhere all over and in every individual. Like God and the toothbrush (an excellent invention, by the way).

Dada is a new type; a mixture of man, naphthaline, sponge, animal made of ebonite and beefsteak, prepared with soap for cleansing the brain. Good teeth are the making of the stomach and beautiful teeth are the making of a charming smile. Halleluiah of ancient oil and injection of rubber.

There is nothing abnormal about my choice of Dada for the name of my review. In Switzerland I was in the company of friends and was hunting the dictionary for a word appropriate to the sonorities of all languages. Night was upon us when a green hand placed its ugliness on the page of Larousse – pointing very precisely to Dada – my choice was made. I lit a cigarette and drank a *demitasse*.

For Dada was to say nothing and to lead to no explanation of this offshoot of relationship which is not a dogma nor a school, but rather a constellation of individuals and of free facets.

Dada existed before us (the Holy Virgin) but one cannot deny its magical power to add to this already existing spirit and impulses of penetration and diversity that characterize its present form.

There is nothing more incomprehensible than Dada. Nothing more indefinable.

With the best will in the world I cannot tell you what I think of it.

The journalists who say that Dada is a pretext are right, but it is a pretext for something I do not know.

Dada has penetrated into every hamlet; Dada is the best paying concern of the day.

Therefore, Madam, be on your guard and realize that a really dada product is a different thing from a glossy label.

Dada abolishes 'nuances'. Nuances do not exist in words but only in some atrophied brains whose cells are too jammed. Dada is an anti 'nuance' cream. The simple motions that serve as signs for deaf-mutes are quite adequate to express the four or five mysteries we have discovered within 7 or 8,000 years. Dada offers all kinds of advantages. Dada will soon be able to boast of having shown people that to say 'right' instead of 'left' is neither less nor too logical, that red and valise are the same thing; that 2765=34; that 'fool' is a merit; that yes=no. Strong influences are making themselves felt in politics, in commerce, in language. The whole world and what's in it has slid to the left along with us. Dada has inserted its syringe into hot bread, to speak allegorically into language. Little by little (large by large) it destroys it. Everything collapses with logic. And we shall see certain liberties we constantly take in the sphere of sentiment, social life, morals, once more become normal standards. These liberties no longer will be looked upon as crime, but as itches.

I will close with a little international song: Order from the publishing house 'La Sirene' 7 rue Pasquier, Paris, DADAGLOBE, the work of das from all over the world. Tell your bookseller that this book will soon be out of print.

You will have many agreeable surprises.

Read Dadaglobe if you have troubles. Dadaglobe is in press. Here are some of its collaborators:

Paul Citroen (Amsterdam); Baader Daimonides; R. Hausmann; W. Heartfield; H. Hoeh; R. Huelsenbeck; G. Grosz; Fried Hardy Worm (Berlin); Clement Pansaers (Bruxelles); Mac Robber (Calcutta); Jacques Edwards (Chili); Baargeld, Armada v. Dulgedalzen, Max Ernst, F. Haubrich (Cologne); K. Schwitters (Hannovre [sic]); J. K. Bonset (Leyde); Guillermo de Torre (Madrid); Gino Cantarelli; E. Bacchi; A. Fiozzi (Mantoue); Krusenitch (Moscou); A. Vagts (Munich); W. C. Arensberg, Gabrielle Buffet, Marcel Duchamp; Adon Lacroix; Baroness v. Loringhoven; Man Ray; Joseph Stella; E. Varese; A. Stieglitz; M. Hartley; C. Kahler (New York); Louis Aragon; C. Brancusi; André Breton; M. Buffet; S. Charchoune; J. Crotti; Suzanne Duchamp; Paul Eluard; Benjamin Peret, Francis Picabia; G. Ribemont-Dessaignes; J. Rigaut, Soubeyran; Ph. Soupault; Tristan Tzara (Paris); Melchior Vischer (Prague); J. Evola (Rome); Arp; S. Taeuber (Zurich).

The incalculable number of pages of reproductions and of text is a guaranty of the success of the book. Articles of luxury, of prime necessity, articles indispensable to hygiene and to the heart, toilet articles of an intimate nature.

Such, Madame, do we prepare for Dadaglobe: for you need look no further than to the use of articles prepared without Dada to account for the fact that the skin of your heart is chapped; that the so precious enamel of your intelligence is cracking; also for the presence of those tiny wrinkles still imperceptible but nevertheless disquieting.

All this and much else in Dadaglobe.

Tristan Tzara, 'Authorization Letter', *New York Dada* [New York, April 1921] 2.

Beatrice WOOD The Richard Mutt Case [1917]

They say any artist paying six dollars may exhibit.

Mr Richard Mutt sent in a fountain. Without discussion this article disappeared and never was exhibited.

What were the grounds for refusing Mr Mutt's fountain:

1. Some contended it was immoral, vulgar.
2. Others, it was plagiarism, a plain piece of plumbing.

Now Mr Mutt's fountain is not immoral, that is absurd, no more than a bathtub is immoral. It is a fixture that you see every day in plumbers' show windows.

Whether Mr Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has no importance. He **CHOSE** it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view – created a new thought for that object.

As for plumbing, that is absurd. The only works of art America has given are her plumbing and her bridges.

Beatrice Wood, 'The Richard Mutt Case', *The Blind Man*, 2 [1917, 5-6; reprinted in Lucy R. Lippard, ed., *Dadas on Art*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971] 143.

Louise NORTON Buddha of the Bathroom [1917]

I suppose monkeys hated to lose their tail. Necessary, useful and an ornament, monkey imagination could not stretch to a tailless existence (and frankly, do you see the biological beauty of our loss of them?), yet now that we are used to it, we get on pretty well without them. But evolution is not pleasing to the monkey race; 'there is a death in every change' and we monkeys do not love death as we should. We are like those philosophers whom Dante placed in his Inferno with their heads set the wrong way on their shoulders. We walk forward looking backward, each with more of his predecessors' personality than his own. Our eyes are not ours.

The ideas that our ancestors have joined together let no man put asunder! In *La Dissociation des Idées*, Remy de Gourmont, quietly analytic, shows how sacred is the marriage of ideas. At least one charming thing about our human institution is that although a man marry he can never be *only* a husband. Besides being a monkey-making device and the *one* man that *one* woman can sleep with in legal purity without sin he may even be as well some other woman's very personification of her abstract idea. Sin, while to his employees he is nothing but their 'Boss', to his children only their 'Father', and to himself certainly something more complex.

But with objects and ideas it is different. Recently we have had a chance to observe their meticulous monogamy.

When the jurors of *The Society of Independent Artists* fairly rushed to remove the bit of sculpture called the *Fountain* sent in by Richard Mutt, because the object was irrevocably associated in their atavistic minds with a certain natural function of a secretive sort. Yet to any 'innocent' eye how pleasant is its chaste simplicity of line and colour! Someone said, 'Like a lovely Buddha'; someone said, 'Like the legs of the ladies by Cézanne'; but have they not, those ladies, in their long, round nudity always recalled to your mind the calm curves of decadent plumbers' porcelains?

At least as a touchstone of Art how valuable it might have been! If it be true, as Gertrude Stein says, that pictures that are right stay right, consider, please, on one side of a work of art with excellent references from the Past, the *Fountain*, and on the other almost any one of the majority of pictures now blushing along the miles of wall in the Grand Central Palace of ART. Do you see what I mean?

Like Mr. Mutt, many of us had quite an exorbitant notion of the independence of the Independents. It was a sad surprise to learn of a Board of Censors sitting upon the ambiguous question, What is ART?

To those who say that Mr. Mutt's exhibit may be Art, but is it the art of Mr. Mutt since a plumber made it? I reply simply that the *Fountain* was not made by a plumber but by the force of an imagination; and of imagination it has been said, 'All men are shocked by it and some overthrown by it.' There are those of my intimate acquaintance who

pretending to admit the imaginative vigor of Mr. Mutt and his porcelain, slyly quoted to me a story told by Montaigne in his *Force of the Imagination* of a man, whose Latin name I can by no means remember, who so studied the very 'essence and motion of folly' as to unsettle his initial judgment forevermore; so that through overmuch wisdom he became a fool. It is a pretty story, but in defense of Mr. Mutt I must in justice point out that our merry Montaigne is a garrulous and gullible old man, neither safe nor scientific, who on the same subject seriously cites by way of illustration, how by the strength simply of her imagination, a white woman gave birth to a 'black-a-moor'! So you see how he is good for nothing but quotation, M. Montaigne.

Then again, there are those who anxiously ask, 'Is he serious or is he joking?' Perhaps he is both! Is it not possible? In this connection I think it would be well to remember that the sense of the ridiculous *as well as* 'the sense of the tragic increases and declines with sensuousness'. It puts it rather up to you. And there is among us today a spirit of 'blague' arising out of the artist's bitter vision of an over-institutionalized world of stagnant statistics and antique axioms. With a frank creed of immutability the Chinese worshipped their ancestors and dignity took the place of understanding; but we who worship Progress, Speed and Efficiency are like a little dog chasing after his own wagging tail that has dazzled him. Our ancestor-worship is without grace and it is because of our conceited hypocrisy that our artists are sometimes sad, and if there is a shade of bitter mockery in some of them it is only there because they know that the joyful spirit of their work is to this age a hidden treasure.

But pardon my praise for, sayeth Nietzsche, 'In praise there is more obtrusiveness than in blame'; and so as not to seem officiously sincere or subtly serious, I shall write in above, with a perverse pen, a neutral title that will please none; and as did Remy de Gourmont, that gentle cynic and monkey without a tail, I, too, conclude with the most profound word in language and one which cannot be argued – a pacific Perhaps!

Louise Norton, 'Buddha of the Bathroom', *The Blind Man*, 2 [1917, 5-6; reprinted in *Marcel Duchamp in Perspective*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974] 70-72.

Francis PICABIA Big Girls and Great Men at the Arensbergs' [1917]

In the white light
They are eating
In the white light
Some girls were sitting on the floor
In the white light
The patron goes wherever he wants

Chinese music
It was wonderful
Chinese music

Leaning poses
Chinese music
They cross their legs

Charming spectacle
Of big nonchalant girls
Charming spectacle
Of chess players
Charming spectacle
Of dancers

In the studio of my friends
There is no enigma
In the studio of my friends
There is no soldier
In the studio of my friends
All eyes are pure.

Francis Picabia, *Big Girls and Great Men at the Arensbergs'* [1917; trans. Francis M. Naumann and Chantal Combes, in Francis M. Naumann, *New York Dada*, 1915-23, New York: Abrams, 1994] 68.

Kenneth BURKE Dada, Dead or Alive [1925]

Waldo Frank says that America is too Dada for a Dadaist movement, since Dada can grow only as a reaction from an environment of order and tradition. Dada feeds off tradition, says Frank – and America is not entitled to a Dada movement until we have created, after several hundred years, a cultural integer ripe for disintegration. Thus, what America needs today is a counter-Dada. 'The first step in the absorption and control of our Dada multiverse is the achievement of a serious, of a literally religious temper.' Closing his eyes and talking on, Frank imagines this brave little group: 'a handful of serious creators – men unafraid of unpopular words like philosophy, profundity, saintliness, devotion'. This article is in 1924, issue number 3.

In one place Frank accuses Americans of getting their Dada from Europe, and in another he says, 'No wonder they (the French) imported our essential chaos to lighten the regularities of France! This is not a contradiction; it may be clarified by further development. Thus: America is Dada in its actual mode of life, and has produced popular artists to express this Dada. The French Dadas express rather a reaction against their old, well-ordered system, and look to the chaotic conditions in America with relief. American intellectuals go to Paris where they learn to be patriots, returning to America with the religion of Joe Cook and Crazy Kat. They mimic the more literary variety of French Dada, rather than the American stock with its greater vigour (greater vigour because it is the potato bug proper to the potato). Dada in Europe is a prodigal son. In America it is Topsy, and just grewed.

W.C. Brownell, in *The Genius of Style*, points out that when the command 'As you were' is given, the regiment falls out of line and style ceases. Obviously, this is where Dada begins. Which is to say, Dada is the result of neither

regimentation nor chaos, but of pronounced regimentation coexisting with pronounced chaos.

Moral standards were never more fluctuant? Time-tables were never more trustworthy. Dada could arise in Europe and America simultaneously because in both regions regimentation and chaos thrive side by side, each engendering a keener sense for the other.

The architecture of the moving van is Dada. Or the eye which notes that architecture is Dada. (Read 'was Dada'. For Dada, like God, is dead.)

Whereupon our definition. Dada is perception without obsession. In a civilization of much grotesqueness (of pronounced opposites) Dada is the recording of this grotesqueness. Dada is the child who, seeing a lame man hobble down the street, attempts through neither sympathy nor mockery, but sheer curiosity, to hobble.

I rescue from the obscure files of a 1921 New York Tribune, and place here in the eternal archives, a paragraph I once composed on Dada:

'There is a certain warehouse in New York with four entrances for receiving goods. Above each entrance is the name of the produce received. They are: bar steel, bar iron, sheet steel, plate steel. A person standing idly in front of this warehouse is apt to find these words operating uncalled for in his head. They twist and squirm into various new orders. Thus they may become bar bar, steel iron, sheet plate, steel steel. Or steel bar, iron bar, steel sheet, steel plate. The usual reaction is to clear the head as soon as such a bondage is discovered. The Dadaist, on the contrary, recognizes the legitimacy of his inspiration because it has existed. Consequently, these four warehouse entrances form a perfect Dadaist enterprise ... Surely, this principle is not entirely valueless. We have insane psychology and child psychology and mob psychology; here are the elements of an idle psychology.'

Since then, as may be observed, my nomenclature has ripened. And now, instead of 'idle psychology', I write 'perception without obsession', or 'observation without purpose', or 'pure literature'.

Mr. Harvey L. Dickinson, in the outhouse of his farm near Roanoke, saw a page of a Sears Roebuck catalogue torn by accident in such a way that it was pieces of women. Down one side there was an ear, somewhere else the left half of a smile, in another corner merely two legs crossed. This had been a page advertising women's underwear, but in its present fragmentary state it became Dada. Had Mr. Dickinson appreciated this, he would have been Dada: he would have seen something grotesque which was there to see. Philosophy, profundity, saintliness, devotion are not called in.

Whatever we do, let it be done, not by counter-Dada, but by Dada aggrandized. Frank's programme threatens to be less a process of integration than a deliberate ruling out of certain predominant factors in life, in life where we must halt the talk of supernal beauty until the brass band goes by. An integration which is not an avoidance must be Dada plus, supernal beauty AND the brass band. Plato was Sophistry plus.

A friend writes from Canada: 'A neighbour, moving near by, was for some days involved in the turmoil of resettling; and his dog, to that extent disoriented, walking a

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quarter of a mile up the road to explore the new territory, stopped gravely to observe me in the garden. His owner is James MacDonald; so I, not knowing the dog's name, and yet hoping to find some bond of communication between us, called out, "Heigh, MacDonald". Whereupon MacDonald, agreeably surprised by hearing this familiar name, entered the garden and stood beside me. I next asked, "How's business?" and MacDonald presented his ears to be scratched. I scratched his ears, and he forthwith began attempting the virtue of my leg, so that in anger I ordered him out of the garden. Later I reflected on this strange encounter: how quickly our acquaintance had ripened into friendship, our friendship deepened into intimacy, and our intimacy burned itself out in passion – and in this rapid telescoping of events, I decided, there was Dada.'

Where, Waldo Frank, is the counter-Dada? My Canadian friend's perception was adequate to the subject. Why philosophy, profundity, saintliness, devotion? You are saying, 'Let us deliberately limit the subject. Let us see only those aspects of life which justify the use of my four words. Let us integrate by simplifying our vision.' In this light your four words become a sturdy, but shameless suicide.

You answer that the characters in Racine never go to the W.C. 'Here,' you say, 'is integration by avoidance.' You point out that all art is integration by avoidance, that art, contrary to Dada, is perception with obsession, observation dictated by purpose. I retort: The Racinian integration, flower of a perfectly integrated society (and thus, a result, and not an antidote) is the last kind possible today. Any attempt at ceremony which violates the spirit of the contemporary (the tide-ghost?) will result in hot-house products, abortions, monsters of sickliness. It would be a symptom of contemporary disorders, not a solution of them.

The artist does not run counter to his age; rather, he refines the propensities of his age, formulating their aesthetic equivalent, translating them into terms of excellence. The artist, as artist, is not a prophet; he does not change the mould of our lives: his moral contribution consists in the element of grace which he adds to the conditions of life wherein he finds himself. Over against the Racinian integration, there is the Shakespearean integration: kings and populace, stately kings and runny-nosed populace, supernal beauty and brass bands, affirmation and actuality, your four words and Dada.

Kenneth Burke, 'Dada, Dead or Alive', *Aesthete* 1925, 1, 1 [February 1925, 23–26; reprinted in Rudolf E. Kuenzli, ed., *New York Dada*, New York: Willis Locker & Owens, 1986] 124–26.

William Carlos WILLIAMS

The Baroness Elsa Freytag von Loringhoven [c. 1922]

I am singularly free from envy – perhaps it has all been spent. Jealous I am for moments – but compared to my insane tempers as a child what I now experience is

nothing. (I am older than almost anyone I know in these things.)

It has been first with me to find out what life means and though I have got nowhere it does not mean sex – not in my experience. Nor apparently in the case of the Baroness.

To me a friend is an oasis, a garden of pleasure where I am free – I suppose none knows the meaning of 'oasis' but an arab. Therefore the force of the experience has come into every language in the world, that intensity of relief – a friend is where one is not forced but free – that then is why they are not satisfied with me – I have denied them what they would have of me – perhaps. But turn it around. I do not seek anything material of a friend; I do not want more on my part than freedom of understanding – where I may retreat to prepare for the material battle – outside.

In short I do not find myself as juvenile as they imagine. I find myself not this side but that side of wisdom and they perhaps beautifully but at any rate stuck in the middle.

I can see the fun in Blake's female 'Fun' or laughter or comedy or whatever she is in addition to the pubic V. I find myself out there hard on life, at least when I am not downcast, suicidally intent.

That to me is my gaiety. It is apparently something else to those who are heavy.

All the mechanical fol de rol of politics and organizations generally, the 'discoveries' of science, the triumphs of law and of surgery and philosophy seem oddly old fashioned to me in a primitive world of understanding. No one is living anymore but a few (I am speaking of writers they are all writing their experiences they are not living in their writing).

Men I have found insignificant to me, interested in fire engines or – that. Women I have found tremendous, absorbed in the body of their opponent, real.

All this stuff they fight over and write their Sunday editions about and become perfect and wise in is pre-writing. Writing in all its imperfect actuality is more like a man, it must be placed first, it is not perfected by itself.

It is better, I think, to go another way, to write, to be on writing – like McAlmon, so little understood – with mistakes (another man) but on it always and let the ability come with the fact – or not as happens.

My lightheartedness has become suspect by my friends. It has seemed juvenile very often or at best incomplete. I have suffered bitterly from slights too immaterial to be of visible consequence but curiously important to me. They have come from friends who believed me a liar in deed since I did not carry my 'spring' through, that I stopped there. That that is why I live as I do working in an unimportant society (if you will call it such), that I do not go out and face a dangerous and rewarding world. In short that I am too much a writer, not enough a doer. Thus how can I write? Especially when I myself say continually that writing is only, and by this I mean solely, in its excellence, the reflect of life in its newest actual reaches.

All that is done of writing, otherwise, and this is the limit of the popular-informed American conception, is pre-actual. That writing begins only with action, the man

himself, which it rides into the unknown of himself, carelessly, fearlessly, uncertain of what will be found. One writes to prepare for this. A few roughly go that far. I suppose they say what they mean. But then comes the matter of form which is finally the synthesis.

It is a hard thing to lose a friend. The Baroness tried to destroy me. That made no difference to me because she couldn't, but the form it took was familiar. 'Come with me and I will make a man of you.' Yea, yea.

The thing it has been late for me to learn is that men are selfish liars – this must of course include myself. I have believed in honesty in order that the problems of life may remain actual. Where a lie enters there is no problem. With an actual face to the difficulty I myself have unsolvable <unsolved> difficulties of existence enough before me to work upon. This I have asked my friends to take for granted. I do not ask the world at large to be interested – as I do not ask quarter for my attempts at form.

Even a taste of reputation is nauseous. One may learn to like [it] I suppose, as one likes poi finally if he is a South Sea Islander, but it has never entered into my calculations since I was seventeen.

But my friends I have thought of as always honest, always unselfish, always tolerant and always patient – It seems that I myself have deceived them. I did not want to go the limit as they thought I should. The amazing [thing] that has struck me now is that Can it have been because of their own selfishness that [they] have made these demands of me?

My 'youth' my gaiety, which they have obviously enjoyed, is suspect: But why must I blame myself for everything wrong even in my small world. There is no need for me to do – all that anyone happens to ask of me. I can't give my house away.

The Baroness looked at the house I lived in and said, looking also at the sign on the street corner, Ridge Rd. – Ah, Rich Road. It was meant as a cutting rebuff to my pretensions. And these things are the stuff of what I mean. These are the things which injure. – Surely I have wanted to give everything –

Perhaps my saving has been that I have actually done, selfishly, myself, what I pleased, as my fault has been that I have seemed to promise too much, more than I could fulfil. But I expected their generosity to understand that. Anyhow, I have been industrious hard working, saving in order to permit me to remain free of 'the world' in order to be free to live with my friends. I have believed in a springtime of relationships in a slow unnatural rhythm which would cover my life, the spring of it going slowly and lasting say till I was forty five. Then I should have manoeuvred myself into a position where I could go on, with my friends, and new friends. It has been a 'fancy' perhaps, I should have lived carelessly in a more actual world, perhaps. Anyhow I didn't. And yet I am finding that I did after all.

Anyhow, one place I have not compromised. I have faced the world where others imagined they could ignore it. I have asked no help. I wanted to do one thing, write. I have done it. I have done it uncompromisingly, out of the stuff I could gather while working in the face of as unpromising – as difficult a scene as need be. I do not do

this because I love to seem myself beaten –

It can fairly be said that I chose my environment – It can be said that I chose it in order to keep myself from going too far, as a brake to the great liberalities. No. I have done what seemed closest, most needful, most immediately significant to me. I have worked where it seemed most profitable to me not from the cash viewpoint but from the point of view that I did not want to alight the material means of my writing since I believed that it all goes back to the character centre, that writing is finally as Hartley has recently said, the man in all his parts – and some were ignoring playing with themselves in ways I don't admire.

Let them. I wanted work. Damned if I'd ask anybody for anything.

This (the preceding) has no relationship to general theories but to me. So when I see a woman who offers me a passage – I offer her morning. A thing I have found true – talk chiefly – the bond is likely to be sealed. It is that, when I have chosen, that attracts them. (talk) Let it be a school girl doubtfully giving herself (through a proffered sexual surrender) whispering her little story, song sparrow in March – passage to a morning – which I am, since –

But the place is not empty. At least I have not found it so. There is an inhabitant, a presence – But too long devotion is fatiguing and the clarity of it passes. It is my – my firm devotion cries out in despair. I want to but the words will not come. I myself, being one only must do what I can to light the fire of my words which desire only one thing, to be near only one to remain constantly against that purity. It is a purity which is like the morning. It is a sunkissed morning – I see it every clear day from my east windows. If I could stay steady upon that strain I should desire nothing else.

So I truthfully say that every love is the aroma and the fires about one love. We say 'she'. It expresses what – all I am willing or care to say. She is there. I run from here when her image which I saw once in inspiration and had photographed on my spirit, a purity I have never had equalled in me. That is remarkably fast in me. Nothing even approaches it. It is curiously so. Even my worst behaviour seems somehow an attachment of that purity. Whatever I say here is firm if that is firm. The Baroness was that to me – but she was schooled in a tougher school than mine – She was like Cortez coming to Montezuma and she wanted to do the same stupid thing he did. Destroy. They imagine somehow that clarity and delight are to be gained by shedding the blood of someone. No doubt it is true also – if it could not be seen in their eyes that they were after something else.

The Baroness laid seige to me for two years when she could easily have walked up my front steps and rung the bell any time she wanted to and my wife would have asked her to come in.

Damn these clandestine fakers. She was one in spite of her value. There have been others. Oh well.

But there has been good of striking profusion in them and I do not say that I am always the bravest or the most honourable in the world. But I have wanted one thing. Nothing else. The Baroness to me was a great field of cultured bounty in spite of her psychosis, her insanity. She

was right. She was courageous to an insane degree. I found myself drinking pure water from her spirit. I found it so that is all. I could not go to bed with her. Disease has no attraction for me. I couldn't. But I did feel a shame.

The pure, the serious world of love –

Women – have a physical importance to me, quite apart from what they might turn into for my particular meeting. Men are obviously unimportant –

What do I live to see? Anything – with clear eyes. Young darkies carrying coal from a wagon and dumping it into a metal chute, or making bricks at Little Ferry. Anything – not especially the sexual orchid with its limp petals.

It is this I think that they must want of me, this freshness. It is all I have, really, to offer – apart from a swift sweetness in passing. This has proven so at any rate.

And so I find it. Her image which gave my young immature instincts the fact. Living. Actual. I offer it. They despise me for it and want another thing, another way and yet that is all I can offer. The most, at least, in my own conception.

Talk is what I give best – reflective of a clarity which I seek always. They wish me to remain – They insist or else I am even more insistent. I could resist the Baroness' siege – with difficulty, tormented – helpless to end it – It is a mean boast. She was poor, unhappy. I wanted to lift her up – couldn't – up for what I knew she was –

Therefore to me the sex is a useful thing whose function is that of a corridor to a clarity; of tremendous importance but passing interest. It is the thing beyond, which I share in common with children, not childishly, which I desire. I wish even to pass rapidly. I find I cannot hold the other satisfaction long. The way to it must be passed and repassed like a path to a well. But there is no lingering with sex with me. Affection is strong, in those I must use sex must be illuminated by what I desire beyond it. Then let us hurry with the business lingeringly enough to say it is true, a thing in itself, justifiable that others may stay here and find it an art or a universe, I do not know – but for me I wish it to pass, its fever to subside. The mind afterward is my field. Coming to that with the satisfaction of performance ensanguined in me the mind is lit, serene, the eyes are as if released from cages, the breath comes unobstructed and the mind rushes to its inventions.

I know well that this delight is passing also and that it owes to the completion of the round, through the tunnel, and that it will occur again but – again I will run swiftly.

The odours, the lights the filamentous stimulæ of the sexual contact, the languorous delights are well known to me. I know the building up of the constriction in every phase from the first electric shock to the fainter, refused parries. I see that it is a country. I too have lived there. Nevertheless it is not my country. The serenity of morning and the people who inhabit that Urania I love best. I desire them continuously even through the sexual tropic.

This is the thing that gives me my difficulty –

William Carlos Williams, 'The Baroness Elsa Freytag von Loringhoven', *Twentieth-Century Literature*, 35, 3 [Fall 1989] 279-84.

Jane HEAP

Dada [1922]

'The trouble is the *Little Review* never knows when to stop. Just now it is headed straight for Dada; but we could forgive even that if it would drop Else [sic] von Freytag-Loringhoven on the way.' From an article by Harriet Monroe in *Poetry*.

Any one may say anything he pleases as long as he is willing to stand by what he says.

I don't think Harriet Monroe knew when to stop. But then we're different: we don't feel that we have ever suggested we were going to stop, not even at or in jail.

Harriet Monroe in a lyrical article in *Poetry*: 'Renewal of Youth': 'Therefore let youth be free and strong, let it have room for its race and its shout, lest bars and shackles enslave the next age' ... And then 'bars' for Dada, 'bars' for Else von Freytag – two sets of bars for the same thing! Miss Monroe should watch the poetic situation a little more carefully. The Baroness is the first American dada. We published her with joy in June, 1918. Dada wasn't so very old in Europe at that time.

The german dadaists are closer to madness than the french. The french still have expiations to make. The baroness does not belong to the german dadaists. She fails whenever she trips over her german skeleton and falls into a Goethe-Nietzsche wrestling with God. When she is dada she is the only one living anywhere who dresses dada, loves dada, lives dada.

However we do intend to drop the baroness – right into the middle of the history of American poetry!

Is Miss Monroe against dada because dada laughs, jeers, grimaces, gibbers, denounces, explodes, introduces ridicule into a too churchly game? Dada has flung its crazy bridges to a new consciousness. They are quite strong enough to hold the few in this generation who will pass over. Dada is making a contribution to nonsense. —jh.

Jane Heap, 'Dada', *The Little Review* [Spring 1922] 46.

BERLIN

Denouncing bourgeois Expressionism as a movement that turned

inwards and shut out life, the Berlin Dadas lived in 'the din of the streets' and took part in the political events of the post-war years. They parodied capitalism with texts such as 'Invest in Dada', invented a series of popular, subversive slogans, founded their own advertising agency and created a 'media empire' that distributed anti-government leaflets and Dada magazines – often with George Grosz's highly political drawings on the cover – in editions of up to 12,000 copies. Their manifesto 'What is Dadaism and What Does it Want in Germany?', with its demands for progressive unemployment and immediate expropriation of private property, was in part a parody of American President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points. The Berlin Dadas published political, interventionist texts at the risk of imprisonment during the upheavals in Berlin after the war.

Richard HUELSENBECK

Collective Dada Manifesto

[1918]

Art, in its production and direction, depends on the time in which it lives, and artists are creatures of their epoch. The highest art will be one in which the thousandfold issues of the day are revealed in its consciousness, an art which allows itself to be noticeably shattered by last week's explosions, which is forever trying to collect itself after the shock of recent days. The best and most challenging artists will be those who every hour snatch the tatters of their bodies out of the turbulent whirl of life, who, with bleeding hands and hearts, hold fast to the intelligence of their time.

Has Expressionism fulfilled our expectations of such an art, which should be a measure of our most vital concerns?

No! No! No!

Have the Expressionists fulfilled our expectations of an art that burns the essence of life into our flesh?

No! No! No!

Under the pretext of turning inward, the Expressionists in literature and painting have banded together into a generation which even now is longingly expecting its historical validation and is campaigning for honourable bourgeois recognition. On the pretext of cultivating souls,

they have, in their opposition to naturalism, found their way back to the abstract, emotional gestures which presuppose a comfortable life free from content or motivation. The stages are full of kings, poets, and all sorts of Faustian types; the theory of a melioristic world-philosophy, whose child-like, psychologically naïve manner remains significant for a full critical understanding of Express-ionism, haunts idle heads. A hatred of the press, hatred of advertising, hatred of sensations bespeaks people for whom an armchair is more important than the noise of the street, and who even make being swindled by every small-time profiteer into a virtue. That sentimental resistance to the times, which are neither better nor worse, neither more reactionary nor more revolutionary than any other times, that feeble opposition, which sidles up to prayers and incense when it does not prefer to make paper cannons out of Attic iambs – these are traits of a youth who never knew how to be young. Expressionism, discovered abroad and – true to style – transformed in Germany into a fat idler with hope of a good pension, has nothing in common with the efforts of active men. The signers of this manifesto have, under the battle cry
DADA!!!!
assembled together to put forward a new art, from which they expect the realization of new ideals. What then is DADAISM?

The word Dada symbolizes the most primitive relation to the surrounding reality; with Dadaism a new reality

comes into its own. Life appears as a simultaneous whirl of noises, colours, and spiritual rhythms, which Dada takes unflinchingly into its art, with all the spectacular screams and fevers of its feisty pragmatic attitude and with all its brutal reality. This is the sharp dividing line separating Dadaism from all artistic directions up until now and particularly from FUTURISM, which not long ago certain weak minds took to be a new version of impressionist realization. By tearing to pieces all the platitudes of ethics, culture, and inwardness, which are merely cloaks for weak muscles, Dadaism has for the first time ceased to take an aesthetic position toward life.

The BRUITIST poem represents a streetcar as it is, the essence of the streetcar with the pensioner Schulze yawning and the brakes screeching.

the SIMULTANEIST poem teaches a sense of all things in mad, chaotic pursuit of one another; while Herr Schulze is reading, the Balkan Express crosses the bridge at Nish, a pig squeals in Butcher Nuttke's cellar.

the STATIC poem makes words into individuals ... The word DADA instantly signals the internationalism of the movement, which is bound to no frontiers, religions, or professions. Dada is the international expression of the times, the great rebellion of artistic movements, the artistic reflex of all these offensives, peace congresses, riots in the vegetable market, suppers at the Esplanade, etc., etc. Dada

champions the use of the new materials in painting.

Dada is a CLUB, founded in Berlin, which you can join without commitments. In this club every man is chairman and every man can have his say in artistic matters. Dada is not a pretext for the ambition of a few literary men (as our enemies would have you believe), Dada is a state of mind that can be revealed in any conversation whatever, so that you are compelled to say: this man is a DADAIST – that man is not; the Club Dada consequently has members all over the world, in Honolulu as well as New Orleans and Meseritz. Under certain circumstances, to be a Dadaist may mean to be more a businessman, more a political partisan than an artist – to be an artist only by accident – to be a Dadaist means to let oneself be moved by things, to oppose all sedimentation; to sit in a chair for a single moment is to risk one's life (Mr Wengs pulled his revolver out of his pants pocket). One feels torn, one says yes to a life that seeks to progress by saying no. Affirmation – negation: powerful hocus-pocus of existence fires the nerve of the true Dadaist – whether he is reclining, hunting, cycling – half Pantagruel, half St Francis, laughing and laughing. Down with the aesthetic-ethical attitudes! Down with the bloodless abstraction of expressionism! Down with the world-bettering theories of empty-headed literati. Up with Dadaism in word and image, with all the Dada things that happen in the world! To be against this manifesto is to be a Dadaist!

Tristan Tzara. Franz Jung. George Grosz.
Marcel Janco. Richard Huelsenbeck. Gerhard Preiß.
Raoul Hausmann. Walter Mehring.

O. Lüthy. Frédéric Glauser. Hugo Ball.
Pierre Albert-Birot. Maria d'Arezzo. Gina Cantarelli.
Prampolini. R. van Rees. Madame van Rees.
Hans Arp. G. Thäuber. Andrée Morosini. François
Mombello-Pasquati.

Richard Huelsenbeck, 'dadaistisches manifest', *Dada Almanach* [Berlin: E. Reiss, 1920, 36-41; reprinted in Rose-Carol Washton Long, ed., *German Expressionism: Documents from the End of the Wilhelmine Empire to the Rise of National Socialism*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995] 267-69.

Richard HUELSENBECK [under the pseudonym ALEXIS]

A Visit to the Cabaret Dada [1920]

Gentlemen, the spectacle begins before you can possibly know it! We walked down a long corridor, each holding a candle with the ladies in front and the men in the rear. The leader, dressed in a white fur coat with a *mitra* on his head, called out several times: 'Lift your hands up high and let your belly fall. Grab the kettledrum in your ear and pull the

coffin out of your nose – for who knows what good they are?' Then he slammed his earhorn against the wall causing the limestone to break and fall. Yet we felt constantly ill at ease when his voice rang out. Uncertainty rested heavily upon our breasts and upon Councilman Spätzle, a well-known member of the German National Socialist Party. We all began to sink to our knees, although Councilman Spätzle attempted to hold himself erect as long as humanly possible by means of his moral turpitude. We walked for more than two hours through this corridor that stank of coal and garbage ... climbing over railroad ties, wooden blocks, and rotten mattresses and eventually found ourselves in a room evidently destined for ecclesiastical purposes ... There stood the first Dada priest whom I have ever seen, dressed in violet underpants, holding a cat. On his head, he wore a great wig in which two peacock feathers were stuck. When he spoke, handfuls of teeth fell from his mouth, and in his ears pinwheels rotated to the clash of military music ... The floor shifted so many times and proved to be so slanted that many of the guests fell down, causing some of the women a good deal of anxiety – least the sight of their legs turn the liberal men's attention away from the ceremony. Steam came pouring out through a crack in the masonry, and jets of hot water burst forth from the corners. (Ladies and gentlemen – it was simply overwhelming!) The priest lifted a papier-mâché bust and manipulated the eyes, which he controlled by means of a string, to flash back and forth. His voice was like the thunder that ascends from watering cans when the evening sun shines on them. He had a beard in which little mice squeaked 'good night', and the express trains were waiting on the abyss of his neck. 'I am the priest,' he said, 'from the beginning until the end. I am the tulip of Valparaíso and the butterchurn from the Bismark-Archipelago.' In our party, the voices of those who saw through this swindle grew; they wanted nothing more than to return to their norm of peace and quiet. 'We need work and an organized reconstruction of the fatherland,' said a gentleman next to me, who later prospered as a very radical politician ... 'We want our money, we want our money back,' shouted a woman with a throaty delivery. In general, the consensus was that one could have spent a more profitable evening reading a good book, worshipping Goethe, or drinking beer – in short, by promoting German culture. Meanwhile, the priest had sat down on his right side, pulled a rabbit out of his toes, and said, 'I am the young moon which stands on the waterfall. When I laugh, the earth goes out, and the houses, which stand so rigid knowing nothing, reassemble themselves on the Kaiser-Friedrich Platz. Hail! Hail! The heavens burst, the flute splits apart. Still, morning is not all darkness nor even the equinox of the travel bureau.' The man next to me said, 'You may not believe it, but behind Dadaism stands the scantiest intelligence. These men are only craft frauds, who know very well that the people are enticed by the irrational; and in that cunning manner, they pull the money from the people's pockets. Look there! That guy is laughing so hard that the tears are rolling down his cheeks.' Just then a young woman became indignant. 'He isn't laughing,' her voice a falsetto, 'that is truly enrapture! I've seen the Dadas in Dresden, when chairs were broken

over their bodies and pianos shot at their heads. What we call courage is Dada!' The priest in his violet underpants began to roll around on the floor. A moving sidewalk brought in the prima donna from the Metropolitan Opera House, who knew how to whistle the ragtime song, 'La délice', on one leg. One could hardly look at the leg without becoming flushed with emotion. The sea cows came very close, perhaps when they wanted to eat out of our hands, and the huge green lizard that hung on the ceiling began to spin like a fan. Everyone talked about the hothouse atmosphere and the ventriloquist-voice about which Capasses has so many significant words to say in his famous novel, *Chevilles*. I did not notice it but Councilman Spätzle was growing into a tremendous rage. 'What,' he screamed. 'What? How dare this be offered to me! Me, who was born of respectable parents, who had a good primary education, who took nine years of classes at a liberal arts *gymnasium*. I have always been in favour of progress. However, what is too much, is too much.' He looked around. 'And from a nationalistic point of view (he laughed sarcastically) these Dadas are only opposed to the Entente in order to make revolution. Look at him (the Dadasoph had suddenly appeared) is he a man or an animal?' A heated discussion ensued as to whether the Dadasoph who had just come up out of a trap-door was a man or an animal. The latter was decided upon. No sooner had the Councilman grown silent than a great procession of Dada-like Last Judgements began. It was as if the building would collapse upon our heads. On an immense sofa, they brought in the so-called President of the Universe, Johannes Baader, formerly a tailor who was provided with the necessary accoutrements to distinguish him as a madman and Dionysian dullard. Hot water flowed by the gallons from his ears, and on the seat of his pants he had sewn boxing gloves, on which should have been inscribed the motto or his eternal enterprise: 'The Beloved Life of Dadaism.' On either side of him stood the Dadasoph Hausmann and Huelsenbeck, who, it is said, is the creator of this nonsense. The Dadasoph rode on an owl, the beast of wisdom, and carried in his hand the symbol of Zarathustra, the serpent and the eagle. 'The world as a problem of knowledge,' he said, 'is Taboo-Dada. From the Eternal One we came to the pigs. Hopsassa!' At these words, a gentleman in our company, who with great difficulty had read Hegel and Schopenhauer, became agitated. The Propaganda-Marshall Grosz appeared with a kettledrum – that symbol of Dada world domination. Close behind him followed the well-known Dada Minister of Commerce and Monteurdada Heartfield. It was an impressive assemblage. An endless procession joined in. The Dadas of all leading countries followed on the backs of cows and horses or on foot. They carried toy trumpets and rattles, and all of them were characterized by the same facial expressions. The troubadour and epicurean of the Paris movement, Herr Tristan Tzara, was there in the uniform of a subway employee. Kurt Schwitters, the world famous author of *Anna Blume*, was seen at a distance. The din was so great that our eardrums cried like little children. Great soft bones fell from the ceiling. (No one knew what purpose that served.) Then the tailor Baader screamed, 'Dada is the victory of cosmic intelligence over the Demi-

urgos. Dada is the Cabaret of the world, just as the world is Cabaret Dada. Dada is God, Spirit, Matter, and roast veal at the same time.' The man next to me yelled in a rage. 'Dada,' he said, 'is planned nonsense. Dada means the end of the German elementary school and the destruction of the German soul!' I joined in the argument and left the Cabaret with him the very same way from which we had come...

Alexis, 'Ein Besuch Cabaret Dada', *Schall und Rauch*, 1, 6 [May 1920, 6-8; reprinted in Mel Gordon, ed. & trans., *Dada Performance*, New York: PAJ Publications, 1987] 83-85.

Richard HUELSENBECK An Explanation of the Dada Club [1920]

Dada is chaos from which thousands of systems arise and are entangled again in Dada chaos. Dada is simultaneously the course and the content of all that happens in the universe.

The Dada Club invites the leading representatives of the best German spirit to a dispute over dada principles: Men are angels and live in the heavens. They themselves and all substance surrounding them are cosmic accumulations of the most powerful degree. Their chemical and physical transformations are magical processes, greater and more mysterious than any end of the world or any creation of a world in the region of the so-called stars. Any intellectual and spiritual utterance is a more wonderful thing than the most incredible event described in the *Tales of a Thousand and One Nights*. Everything done by man and by all other bodies occurs in support of the heavenly pastime as a game of the highest order, which is beheld and experienced in as many different ways as there are individual awarenesses confronting it. An individual consciousness is not only man, but also all other systems of the world-Gestalt, of which man consists, and within which he lives as an angel. Death is a fairytale for children and belief in God was a rule for the game of human consciousness during the time when it was not known that the earth is a piece of the heavens, as is everything else. World consciousness needs no God.

The Dada Club urgently requests your opinion and will present the same for general recognition in No. 5 of its publications.

Dada Club

Richard Huelksenbeck, 'Eine Erklärung des Club Dada', *Dada Almanach* [Berlin: E. Reiss, 1920, 132-33; trans. Gabrielle Bennett, in Lucy R. Lippard, ed., *Dadas on Art*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971] 54.

Raoul HAUSMANN Synthetic Cinema of Painting [1918]

Whoever wants to sustain imposed conventions, does so. Previously, life appeared to us as an immense, complete uproar; as a tension amid the collapsing expressions never unilaterally directed, and an important inflation of profound inconsiderations toward form, with no ethical somersaults on a narrow base; Dada art is the plane for the appearance of conflicts, of the insolence of the protesting creator; art, the lie without contingency, showing to the point of farce a (quasi) interior necessity, art never has a more profound sense than the nonsense of narcissism, taken seriously by pure innocents, traversed by games of tragic complexes crossing each other.

The painter paints as the cow lows; this solemn insolence of congealed croupiers, mixed with profound sense, has given way to guarded hunts, especially for German art critics.

The doll or the coloured rag rejected by the child are more necessary expressions than those of an ordinary jackass who wants to immortalize himself by means of oil paintings hung in fine salons. The dissolution of complexes in exactly interlaced with inner necessity are an ethical excuse projected on a painting, they are the primitive attempt to heal by psycho-physiological prayer. But cure by prayer, like psychoanalysis, is objective medicine, more than a capacity for subjective equilibrium, in the contradictions of dissolutions without disgrace, the most important of which remains sexuality. All expressions are sexual – the most extraordinary differentiations, the most obvious degenerations show us this. The lying swindle still practised at the expense of art is an element lacking in ethical positions of flight from itself. Expressionism always seems unilateral and can only be accorded to the animal, for he perfectly realizes himself in his complex and functional auto-relations.

Man is simultaneously monster to himself and to the stranger, now, before, after, and at the same time: Buffalo Bill staring from a false romanticism, from the unlimited realities of a comportment ceaselessly concerning the most contradictory complexes: his relations with the Other. In the form of children's shoes as well as in telepathy, theosophy, occultism, suggestion, magnetism, fear of crime, assurance in tradition, against the capacity to abolish the limits of incest, homosexuality, polygamy and polyandry, of the inner necessity of art and the restrictions of complexes, a force is already roused today, displaying the extraordinary possibilities of the receptivity of man's sexopsychic capacity which no longer needs the ethical somersaults of any ordinary art. The attempts by science and art to reinforce the sensorial organs remain, in spite of everything, simple gestures of dissolution; of inverse aggressions directed against man, where art still marks an advantage over science by its conscious, nonobjective immorality, and registers it as property. So Cubism, Futurism – material of the expression of a visual intellectuality with the grand gesture of piercing through demeanour into the fourth dimension – remain attempts toward an enlargement of the complexes of the perception of chemical optical tropisms.

The most spontaneous knowledge, surpassing by far the theories of Od, a quasi-naturalism of our interlacings of contrasts, functioning until then only on the inside, was

probably realized in Orphic Cubism and Futurism.

Expressionism, symbol of this reversal of impulses (inner necessity) always more profoundly engulfed in aesthetically surpassing the world is, today, for those quitters constrained of being, only a registered notion, a vital need like the charcoal ticket or the black market.

Orphic Cubism, Futurism, by their means: colours on canvas, cardboard, artificial hair, wood, paper, having succeeded in their veritable *interrelations*, are finally limited by their own scientific objectivity. Dada art will offer them enormous refreshment, an impetus toward the perception of all relations.

Dada is the perfect well-wishing malice; beside exact photography, the only justified form of figurative expression and equilibrium in communal life: anyone who frees his own tendencies in himself is Dada.

In Dada you will recognize your real state of mind: miraculous constellations in real materials: wire, glass, cardboard, tissue, corresponding organically to their own brittle or bulging fragility.

Here and for the first time, there are neither retreats nor anguished obstinacies; we are far from the symbolic, from totemism, from the electric piano, from gas attacks, from reports on installations, from men screaming in military hospitals; let us – with our marvellous contradictory organisms – help attain a justification, a central turning axis, the reason to stand up straight or to fall.

By the efficacious perfection of materials employed in a supreme art of auto-representation in evolution, abandoning the traditional atmosphere and assurances incorporated in an entourage of unemployed.

Raoul Hausmann, *Synthetisches Cino der Malerei* [1918; trans. Mimi Wheeler, in Lucy R. Lippard, ed., *Dadas on Art*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971] 59-61.

Raoul HAUSMANN The German Philistine is Annoyed [1919]

Why? Just who is the German philistine to be annoyed about Dada? It is the German poet, the German intellectual, bursting with fury because his perfectly larded soul was left to stew in the sunshine of laughter, who rages because he has been hit dead centre in his brain which, in his case, is located where he sits. Now he has nothing left to sit on. No, do not attack us, gentlemen, we are our own opponents already and know better than you do how to get to us. Understand that we couldn't care less how you react, we are made of different stuff. Just use your physical powers to beat the drum of your spiritual business, beat firmly about your bellies so that some God may be moved to pity. We threw that old drum in the trash long ago. We pipe, squeak, curse, and laugh out the irony: Dada! Because we are – Antidadaists!

There you have it! Give your oppressed bones a rest and mend your tattered traps, you did it all in vain! We feel like celebrating because you cannot line us up against the wall. And so we want you to spill your guts so we can

present you with an account of your celebrated values.

After [our] emotional vitality had been thinly diluted into aesthetic abstractions and moral-ethical farces, there arose out of the European sausage-pot the Expressionism of the German patriot, which, laying the enthusiasm on thick, fashioned a profitable little war business out of a decent movement started by Frenchmen, Russians, and Italians. The same old story about pure poetry, painting, music played in Germany on an exceptionally competent business basis. But this pseudo-theosophical German tea party, which got as far as winning recognition of the East-Prussians, Junkers, shall not concern us here, no more than the business machinations of Mr Walden, who, typical German philistine, thinks he needs to drape his transactions in a buddhistic-bombastic garb. Respect to his business genius, but his aesthetics and his art-prussianism should go where they came from, the shyster's office. If Walden and his poet-school were revolutionary in the least, they would have to understand this one fact first, that art cannot be aesthetic harmonization of bourgeois ideas of ownership.

Oh my Herr Philistine, you say art is in danger? Don't you know that art is a beautiful female form, without clothes; it counts on being taken to bed, or at least arousing someone. No, my Herr, art is not in danger – because art does not exist any more. It is dead ... Give up the sex-romantic, my dear poets – we don't feel like that any more; rather show your nice tattooed bellies, spit out words, splash geometry with colours and call it abstract art – we care as much for that as we care for your tightrope act around Expressionism. The absolute inability to say something, to grasp a thing, to play with it – this is Expressionism, a spiritual truss for herniated guts, leftovers bad from the start, which caused great ceremonial bellyaches. The bourgeois writer or painter could feel himself properly sanctified, finally he somehow grew beyond himself into an indeterminate, common world-fuddle – oh, Expressionism. You, the world apogee of romantic deception! But the farce only became unbearable at the hands of the activists who wanted to bring the spirit and the art they saw in Expressionism to the people. These imbeciles, who somehow read Tolstoy once and of course never understood him, now drip with an ethic one can only approach with a pitchfork. These dolts, unfit to pursue politics, have invented Activist/Eternist sauce in order to approach the proletarian too. But the proletarian is not so dense, excuse my expression, that he would fail to notice the absolute vacuity surrounding such raving. Art to him is something that comes from the bourgeoisie. And we are Antidadaists enough that if any one of us wants to set up something beautiful, aesthetical, a safely fenced in little feeling of well-being such as abstract art for example – that we will knock his well-spread sandwich into the muck. To us the world makes no deep sense except that of a most unfathomable nonsense; we don't want to hear about spirit or art. Science is silly – probably the sun still revolves around the earth today. We do not promote any ethic – which always remains ideal (swindle) – but we don't consequently want to tolerate the bourgeois who hangs his money-bags over life's possibilities ... We wish to sort out economy and sexuality

in a reasonable manner, and we don't give a hoot for culture which was not tangible. We wish it to come to an end, and thus an end to the philistine poet, the manufacture of the ideals which were nothing but his excrement. We want the world in motion and emotional, unrest instead of rest – away with all chairs, away with the sentiments and noble gestures! And we are Antidadaist because for us the Dadaist is still too concerned with feelings and aesthetics. We have the right to any amusement, be it in words, forms, colours, noises; but all this is wonderful nonsense, which we consciously make and cherish – an immense irony just like life itself: we finally recognize perfect mastery of nonsense as the only sense in the world!!

Down with the German philistine!

Raoul Hausmann, 'Der deutsche SPIESSER ärgert sich', *Der Dada*, 1 [December 1919, 1; reprinted in Rose-Carol Washton Long, ed., *German Expressionism: Documents from the End of the Wilhelmine Empire to the Rise of National Socialism*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995] 270–72.

Raoul HAUSMANN A Dadasoph's Opinion of What Art Criticism Will Say about the Dada Exhibition [1920]

Max Liebermann is illustrating the Bible!

First of all, it should be emphasized that this Dada exhibition is a very common bluff, a mean speculation on the curiosity of the public – it is not worth a visit. While Germany is trembling and shaking in a governmental crisis of unforeseeable duration, while the meeting in Spa pushes our future fate further and further into uncertainty – these boys come along making wretched trivialities out of rags, trash, and garbage. Such a decadent group, showing no ability at all and lacking in serious intent, has seldom appeared so boldly in public, as these dasas dare to. They don't surprise one anymore; everything goes down in cramps of originality mania, which, devoid of all creativity, lets off steam with foolish nonsense. 'Mechanical art work' may pass in Russia as a type of art – here it is talentless and artless mimicry, the utmost in snobbism and insolence towards serious criticism. Even the single middling talent among this bunch, the draughtsman Grosz, is disappointing; it is precisely his case that demonstrates how weakness of character and inability to resist the pressures of fashion and the search for the 'newest' can lead a talent into a swamp of boredom, aberration, and dull bar-room jokes. Oh Grünewald, Dürer, and you other great Germans, what would you say about it? The works shown at this exhibition are without exception on such a low level that one wonders how an art gallery could dare show these concoctions for such a high admission price. The perhaps misled owner of this gallery

should be warned – but the dasas should receive merciful silence.

Raoul Hausmann, 'Was die Kunstkritik nach Ansicht des Dadasophen zur Dadaausstellung sagen wird', *Erste internationale Dada-Messe: Katalog* [Berlin: Kunsthandlung Dr Otto Burchard, 1920; trans. Gabrielle Bennet, in Lucy R. Lippard, ed., *Dadas on Art*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1971] 58.

Ben HECHT Dadafest [1964]

It was a large concert hall. Huge, excitingly painted posters advertising the Great Art Festival had signalled for weeks from hundreds of Berlin walls and fences. The posters proclaimed the FIRST GERMAN POST-WAR RENAISSANCE OF THE ARTS. ADMISSION, 20 GOLD MARKS. FORMAL DRESS REQUIRED.

I sat in my box and looked down on an audience of Berlin's most distinguished citizens in their finest military and civilian plumage.

The ornate assemblage of culture lovers looked patiently on the brightly lighted, bare stage. A figure in a frock coat and a yellow straw hat walked on to the stage.

I didn't recognize Grosz for several minutes, because he spoke in German and was in black-face.

Another man in a dress suit appeared, carrying a cello. He sat down on a kitchen chair and started tuning his instrument. During the tuning Grosz executed what he fancied was a Negro jig. The tuning over, both performers exited. There was no applause.

My tall friend, Dr. Doehman, appeared next, in tails and opera hat. He held up a hand for silence and then cried out the motiff for the evening. I knew enough German by that time to make it out.

'Art is in danger!' Dr. Doehman announced.

The black-face Grosz rushed from the wings and roared at the audience another warning:

'Take your foot out of the butter before it is too late.'

A series of acts followed. Grosz, Doehman, and Tautz, up from Munich for the Art Festival, did the announcing. I remember a few of them. There was a race between a girl at a sewing machine and a girl at a typewriter. Grosz fired a starting gun. The girls began sewing and typewriting at top speed. The sewing machine operator was pronounced the winner. She received a set of false whiskers, and went off the stage, proudly wearing them. There was no applause.

The first 'Pan-Germanic Poetry Contest' followed. Eleven seedy-looking fellows shuffled out on the stage. They wore large ribbon badges with their entry numbers on them. Several of them were barefoot. They were introduced by Doehman as Germany's leading poets. A twelfth figure appeared and was identified as a *Gepacktraeger* (a baggage smasher). He and the eleven poets were to compete for a grand prize.

Grosz appeared and fired his starter's gun. The eleven poets and the red cap began to recite their twelve different poems, simultaneously, at the top of their voices. They made gestures, brushed tears from their eyes, held hands

over their hearts.

At the height of the impassioned static from the poets, Grosz fired his gun as a finishing signal. Dr. Doehman strode on to the stage and announced the contest was a draw. The cellist appeared, sat down, and started tuning his instrument, again. Grosz repeated his jig.

There was also a 'Recital for the Eye of Modern Music.' This event had been specially advertised in the festival posters: BEETHOVEN, BACH ARE DEAD – BUT MUSIC MARCHES ON.

Three girls in tights appeared. They placed a dozen large canvases, one by one, on an easel. Each canvas contained the drawing of a single musical note.

Grosz joined me in my box.

'It is a great success, is it not,' he said, trying to speak in Negro dialect... 'I am very happy tonight. I have fallen in love with an exceedingly fine young lady, the one who put F sharp on exhibition. She is a typist. It was her first appearance in tights, that is, to an audience. In private she undresses the same as all women do, of every age. But it is not her nudity I am in love with, but her name. Her name is Eva.'

Grosz darted off. The Dadaist battle-cries of art in danger and a foot too long in the butter began rising from different parts of the concert hall.

Finally, the audience started its counterrevolution. Officers drew guns and fired at the stage. Police and soldiery appeared. High officers demanded the arrest of the hooligans who had swindled and mocked Berlin's elite. But there was no one to arrest. The Dadaists had melted into the spring night.

Ben Hecht, 'Dadafest', *Letters from Bohemia* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964; reprinted in Mel Gordon, ed., *Dada Performance*, New York: PAJ Publications, 1987] 80-81

Otto GROSS from Protest and Morality in the Unconscious [1919]

'Therefore whoever slayeth Cain,' according to the Scriptures, 'vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.' There can be only one interpretation of this verse: Cain is worth any seven men as a result of his act. However, only the destructive aspect of this act is stressed and special emphasis is put on the senseless-primitive character of its conscious motivation, which hardly occurred to the perpetrator himself. *For this act is the birth of revolutionary protest.* Not eternal hope, as according to the Greek tradition, but *eternal discontent* had come into the debased world as the only good thing. And behind this apparently senseless, evil act which emerges with enigmatic abruptness out of the dark unconscious, the eternal moment of that *unforgettable and unrelinquishable good* manifests itself as the profoundest reality.

The psychology of the unconscious now reveals to us the area of hidden values which, preformed in human disposition but repressed from consciousness through

the psychic pressure of education and all forms of authoritarianism, are being methodically restored to consciousness. These values enable us to produce *an image of man closer to the original with his potentials, his innate characteristics and his primary determined-ness by means of his disposition itself*, as opposed to the accepted norms and their effects. *The psychology of the unconscious thereby offers us the first substratum for a questioning of the value of values – the starting point of revolutionary thinking. The demand for revolution as a result of the psychology of the unconscious becomes absolute as soon as it is demonstrated that the repression of these predisposed values means sacrificing the greatest human potential.*

For this reason the psychoanalytic school and its great founder Sigmund Freud stopped short, just before this became evident. No one on his own and alone on such far-advanced roads to knowledge is capable of breaking through the blockades that surround the value and validity of a principle which is so intimately bound up with one's own personality. The limits of classical psychology are drawn just before the discoveries through which all traditional authority is called into question and which shake the basis of existence of those who feel safe and secure in the authority of the existing order. Thus, its important revelatory work ended with the disclosure of that level in the unconscious which *covers* the most deeply repressed psychic elements, the innate characteristics, and whose content can be empirically demonstrated to be *a chaotic perversity of impulses and emotions*. This *hideousness of motives in the unconscious* seemed to justify the existing authority principle, the oppression of the individual and the accepted norms. Consequently, in classical psychoanalysis psychotherapy could restrict itself to purposely controlling the negative character of the revealed impulses and to correct and suppress them according to the governing norms of the unconscious.

We, however, maintain that a consistent and unrestricted psychology of the unconscious reveals *the exact opposite* as its most significant discovery. For us, the terrible distortions and degradations of impulses and emotions, which, pent up behind the borders of consciousness, sabotage all psychic events, are the normal aberrations and fits of despair of a psyche that is already broken and alienated by external constraints and inducements. The repression of its own power of orientation, its innate value system, is the prerequisite for this condition of the psyche. Behind every inner strife we see the irreconcilability of innate and alien motives. It is obvious to us that all predispositions are necessarily unified, and it seems absurd not to recognize the obvious purposefulness of the innate and predisposed as a harmony, a preformed-harmonious working together. We assume that the innate impulses are purposeful, not only in the sense of an individual but also, and above all, a *social purposefulness*. This sovereign predisposed-social and innate-ethical propensity, which we are now in a position to recover from a state of repression by using the methods of the psychology of the unconscious, has already been made known to us in the discoveries of Krapotkin: the inborn '*instinct to help each other*'. By means of a comparative biological proof of this instinct, Krapotkin has

begun to establish the basis for a *genuine ethics* as both a genetically-founded and normative discipline.

We are now capable of penetrating the unconscious all the way down to the basic values of disposition itself, to the most deeply repressed motives, and we are able to do this by means of a technical utilization of our new premises about the repressed ethical dispositions which become a specific principle of psychoanalytic work. The phenomenon of the *indestructibility, or better, the unrelinquishability of the elementary symptoms of neurosis*, which has been so enigmatic until now, *can be traced back to the fact that every single symptom, no matter how frightening, hideous or grotesque it may be, is firmly attached to a deep-rooted, original motive – a motive that will always belong to the unrelinquishably good and which, therefore, can never be cut off. Only by separating this motive from the associations fixed to it and by enabling it to perform its unique function in a free act of consciousness will the previously fixated symptom disappear through which this distorted, malformed and paradoxical motive forged its way to life and expression.* In this way, the masochistic attitude of many women can be overcome by making them aware of the underlying desire for motherhood; negatively distorted self-isolation can be overcome by exposing a certain, morally required defence mechanism, etc. Innumerable cases of pathological sabotage to oneself and to others can be resolved by *releasing an impulse for revolutionary protest and by the situational-moral projection of both the instinct for the preservation of one's own psychic character and the instinct to help each other.*

Through the methods of the psychology of the unconscious we are capable of releasing a virtually immeasurable abundance of very positive psychic power – a possibility never before available to an era. We can, therefore, prepare ourselves with new hope and responsibility for the crisis which we will have to endure and which has previously brought catastrophe to every culture at this same point in its development.

At a particular stage in its development, namely, with the full maturation of urban culture, every society is confronted with the alternative of downfall or change. The sovereignty of the city in the cultural life of a society and its prerequisite – a civilized form of life – means the complete displacement of a long period in which *living from the soil determined the elementary units of the organization of labour and, within this organization, the basic form of personal relations.* The economic unit of man-wife-children carried out the shared tasks posed by working the soil, and *patriarchy was the typical basic organization suited to agriculture.*

The transition to urban life terminates this bond of existence and the adaptation of all important things to the soil and its cultivation. *With this deliverance from the soil comes a new awakening of expansive vitality – like that which existed before man was bound to the soil.*

This renewal of surging inner life mobilizes an immense amount of creative powers and makes these times of approaching decision into one of those typical high periods of chaotically spurting re-formation.

On this level of development there occurs in every

culture, without exception, a crisis in sexual morality. The irreversible process of disintegration in the area of morality demonstrates the complete obsolescence of this institution. In the period when agriculture dominated it was still viable as an agro-economic institution, but from the moment of total severance from the soil it is as alien to man in the new period as it was to primitive man.

The patriarchal family, severed from the soil, loses its economic value of relative suitability – the only thing that alleviated the intolerable character of such unnatural relations – and now becomes economically oppressive as well, burdening the individual. The only good quality it retains is the *social assurance of financial responsibility for each child*. The individual's human protest against meaningless pressure that restricts and distorts the individual, can no longer be suppressed without increasing the stress of internal conflict. The dissonance between a new inwardness and the increasingly baseless tradition will become ever greater. The efforts to over-compensate with 'morality', characteristic of such times, are obviously, and without exception, vain attempts to replace or supplement the inadequate motives of the old norms, and to restore the old power by means of an inevitable and empty propaganda. Morality always tends to burden private life, at times even to encroach on it. This in turn stimulates the development of the diametrically opposite phenomenon which is incomparably more significant and more influential for the cultural life of such phases – namely, *immorality* as a principle. Immorality is the manifestation of the deep-seated, latent helplessness in such critical times; it results from a confusion of the existing morality, which is in itself and from the outset extremely relative and now totally obsolescent, with the concept and possibility of ethical values and norms as such. A misreading of the signs of the time lies at the base of both immorality and morality. *For 'moral decay' points to the necessity of replacing the old norms by new ones.*

Thus, this stage of our development, through which we have to go, is set. It is the same stage which has brought crisis and catastrophe to every culture. Never before has the fateful challenge of this moment been sufficiently met: *the challenge to create and realize in a productive way something completely new, a new institution and new values, values that this time will be more faithful to the human psyche and will help solve the still remaining and very important problem: the problem of giving women the economic capability of taking on the tasks of motherhood.* This alone is the true social and ethical question, the first and most pressing question for society. If this question is posed with conviction and understanding in this decisive time, then the answer can be postulated automatically: *it is society's obligation to protect mothers financially and to provide for the upbringing of children.* Thereby, the law will be realized according to which all significant reforms are recurrences of initial forms on a higher level and order. Severance from the soil leads all forms of experience and demands as well as the inner comprehension of the world, fellow human beings and one's own self and the claims on society, its perpetuating forces, its institutions and values, back to the freedom of primitive times, but the level of differentiation has been raised considerably as a result of

endlessly endured suffering and the vastly increased power of revolutionary protest.

The time itself provides the immeasurable inner force which, as spirit and destruction, desire and rage, presses chaotically forward towards change or downfall. The greatest part of this force is dissipated by internal conflict with the accepted norms and is pent up in the unconscious. *Whatever stands ready in this area of the repressed – the innate, eternal values as well as the regenerating forces of this transitional period – we are in a position today to make available to resolute utilization.* This we have finally attained as our hope and our responsibility to all other times; it is a task that requires unceasing effort and devoted attention to detail. Above all, primary importance must be accorded it in our *educational system so that we can find the way to the psyche of each individual human being.* And it must be carried through without restraints, by accepting all consequences, and *with the full awareness of the absolute, irreconcilable opposition to everything and anything that today in the name of authority, institution, power and custom, stands in the way of the fulfilment of mankind.*

Otto Gross, 'Protest and Morality in the Unconscious', *Die Erde* [15 December 1919, 681-85; trans. Ted Gundel, *New German Critique*, 10, New York, Winter 1977] 105-109.

Jefim GOLYSCHOFF, Raoul HAUSMANN, Richard HUELSENBECK What is Dadaism and What Does it Want in Germany? [1919]

1. Dadaism demands:

- 1) The international revolutionary union of all creative and intellectual men and women on the basis of radical Communism;
- 2) The introduction of progressive unemployment through comprehensive mechanization of every field of activity. Only by unemployment does it become possible for the individual to achieve certainty as to the truth of life and finally become accustomed to experience;
- 3) The immediate expropriation of property (socialization) and the communal feeding of all; further, the erection of cities of light, and gardens which will belong to society as a whole and prepare man for a state of freedom.

2. The Central Council demands:

- a) Daily meals at public expense for all creative and intellectual men and women on the Potsdamer Platz (Berlin);
- b) Compulsory adherence of all clergymen and teachers to the Dadaist articles of faith;
- c) The most brutal struggle against all directions of so-called 'workers of the spirit' (Hiller, Adler), against their

- concealed bourgeoisism, against expressionism and post-classical education as advocated by the Sturm group;
- d) The immediate erection of a state art centre, elimination of concepts of property in the new art (expressionism); the concept of property is entirely excluded from the super-individual movement of Dadaism which liberates all mankind;
- e) Introduction of the simultaneist poem as a Communist state prayer;
- f) Requisition of churches for the performance of bruitism, simultaneist and Dadaist poems;
- g) Establishment of a Dadaist advisory council for the remodelling of life in every city of over 50,000 inhabitants;
- h) Immediate organization of a large scale Dadaist propaganda campaign with 150 circuses for the enlightenment of the proletariat;
- i) Submission of all laws and decrees to the Dadaist central council for approval;
- j) Immediate regulation of all sexual relations according to the views of international Dadaism through establishment of a Dadaist sexual centre.

The Dadaist revolutionary central council.

German group: Hausmann, Huelsenbeck

Business Office: Charlottenburg, Kantstrasse 118.

Applications for membership taken at business office.

'Was ist der Dadaismus und was will er in Deutschland', *Der Zweemann*, 1, 2, [1919/1920, 18-19; reprinted in *Art in Theory, 1900-2000: An Anthology of changing ideas*, eds Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, London: Blackwell, 1992, 2nd ed. Malden, Mass. 2003] 259-60.

Wieland HERZFELDE Introduction, First International Dada Fair [1920]

Painting once had the distinct goal of making it possible for people to see things, landscapes, animals, buildings, etc. which they could not see with their own eyes. Today these tasks have been taken over by photography and film, which perform them incomparably more perfectly than the painters of all times.

But painting did not die off with the loss of this goal; it searched for new ones. Since then all efforts in art can be summarized as follows: they share a tendency to emancipate themselves from reality no matter how different they are.

Dadaism is the reaction to all those attempts to deny the factual, attempts which were the driving force of the Impressionists, Expressionists, Cubists, and also the Futurists (in that they did not want to capitulate to film); but the Dadaist does not try to compete again with the photographer's apparatus, or even to imbue it with soul by preferring (like the Impressionists) the worse lens: the human eye – or (like the Expressionists) by turning the apparatus around and constantly portraying only the world within their own breast.

The Dadaists say: if at an earlier time, love and effort were expended on the painting of a body, a flower, a hat, a

shadow, etc., we only have to take the scissors and cut out all these things we need from among the paintings, photographic reproductions; if it concerns something smaller we don't even need a depiction at all, but can take the objects themselves, for example pocket-knives, ashtrays, books, etc., all things which have been quite beautifully painted in the museums of old art, but painted just the same.

Now the famous question: Yes, but the content, the spiritual?

Over the centuries, the uneven distribution of life – and developmental possibilities has produced outrageous conditions in the field of art just as in all other fields. On the one side are a clique of so-called able and talented people who, partly through decades of training, partly by protection, tenacity, in part too through inherited gifts, have monopolized all judgements about art. On the other side are the mass of people whose modest and naïve desires to portray, communicate, and come to terms with themselves and their surroundings have been suppressed by that clique of trendsetters. Today the young person who does not want to give up all claim to education and to the broadening of his native talents has to submit to the thoroughly authoritarian system of artistic education and the artistic public judgement.

In contrast, Dadaists are saying that production of pictures is not important, and that at least one should not assume a position of authority when one does make pictures. In this way, the pleasure the masses may take in the creative activity would not be ruined by the professional arrogance of a haughty guild. For this reason the contents and also the media of dadaistic pictures and products can be extraordinarily varied. By itself any product is dadaistic which is created without influence from and regard for public authority and criteria of judgement. And it remains dadaistic as long as the image works against illusion, out of the need to subversively assist the contemporary world, which obviously is in a state of disintegration and metamorphosis. The past is important and relevant only insofar as its cult must be opposed ... Today no man, even one who speaks with the language of art – a genius – could create works whose conditions belong to past centuries and millennia.

The Dadaists consider it an accomplishment to be vanguard opponents of dilettantism, because an artistic dilettante is nothing other than the victim of a prejudiced, arrogant, aristocratic point of view. The only programme the Dadaists recognize is the duty to make current events, current in both time and place, the contents of their pictures. This is the reason they do not consider the 'Thousand-and-one-nights' or 'Pictures from Indochina' as sources for their work, but rather the illustrated magazine and the lead stories in the press.

Wieland Herzfelde, 'Zur Einführung', *Erste internationale Dada-Messe: Katalog* [Berlin: Kunsthandlung Dr Otto Burchard, 1920; reprinted in Rose-Carol Washton Long, ed., *German Expressionism: Documents from the End of the Wilhelmine Empire to the Rise of National Socialism*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995] 273-74.

Anonymous

Invest in Dada! [1919]

dada is the only savings bank that pays interest in eternity. The Chinese has his tao and the Indian has brahma. dada is more than tao and brahma. dada doubles their income. dada is the secret black market and protects against inflation and malnutrition. dada is the war bond of eternal life; dada is comfort in dying. dada should be in every citizen's testament. Why should I unveil dada? dada works in the cerebellum and in the cerebrum of apes as well as in the hindquarters of statesmen. Whoever puts his money in the dada savings bank need not fear confiscation, for whoever touches dada is dada-tabu.

Every hundred-mark bill multiplies according to the law of cellular division. 1,327-fold a minute. dada is the only salvation from the slavery of the entente. Every dada savings-bank cheque is valid all over the world. When you are dead, dada will be your only nourishment; even the ancient Egyptians fed their dead with dada.

Gautama thought he was going to Nirvana, and when he died, he stood not in Nirvana but in dada. dada floated over the waters before dear God created the world and when he said: let there be light! there was not light but dada. And when the Twilight of the Gods fell, the only survivor was dada. Invest your money in dada. dada is not subordinate to the sovereignty of the inter-allied economic commission. Even the *Deutsche Tageszeitung* lives and dies with dada. If you wish to obey this summons, then go at night between 11 and 2 o'clock to the spot in the Siegesallee between Joachim the Lazy and Otto the Milksop and ask the policeman where the secret dada depot is. Then take a one-hundred-mark bill and paste it on the golden H of Hindenburg and shout three times, the first time piano, the second forte, and the third fortissimo: dada. Then the Kaiser (who does not, as claimed for tactical reasons, live in Amerongen but between Hindenburg's feet) will climb through a trapdoor out of a secret passageway with an audible dada, dada, dada and give you our receipt. Be sure that 'W.I.I.' is followed not by 'I.R.' but by 'dada.' I.R. will not be honoured by the savings bank. In addition you can transfer your balance to dada at any branch office of the Deutsche Bank, the Dresdner Bank, the Darmstädter Bank and the Discount company. These four banks are called the 'D' or dada-banks and the emperor of China and the emperor of Japan and the new emperor Koltschak of Russia have their court-dada in every bank (they used to be called 'Goldschitter', but now they are called 'dada'; one is standing on the left corner tower of Notre Dame). All credits are collected and directed through Versailles to the Vatican, where the holy dada blesses them and shoves them into the lap of the holy mama. Yes, yes, dada cannot be unveiled. dada multiplies everything to the hundredth and thousandth degree. Tao and brama are dada. Dada makes children and grandchildren. Dada is fertile and multiplies. Only dada is the saviour from misery and sorrow. Invest your money in dada! 'Legen Sie Ihr Geld in dada an!', *Der Dada*, 1 [1919, 7-8; trans. Gabrielle Bennett, in Lucy R. Lippard, ed., *Dadas on Art*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971] 55-56.

Walter MEHRING

Simultaneous Berlin

First original Dada Couplet

For Richard Huelsenbeck

[1920]

In motoring gear a self-made gent!

Step aside! The president!

The Sally Army

Storms the Café!

A spiritual prole

Croaks in crap

A girl is waving tartan bows

A fella haggles with the pros

Gimme that cheque

Laund'ring money,

I don't care a rap,

Come on honey!

Whether a scrap,

or a neck

one two three

Go-o-o

take a running jump

running jump

The Berolina

Carriage on the city switchback

'Grrreat Berrleena'

Berlin Berlin

Ev'ryone can Ev'ryone can Ev'ryone can

With Mama Green

The people rise up! The flags unfurl!

Till morning's light my little girl

In the Ufa fillum

Hail Kaiser Willum!

Reactions flutter from the dome

With mustard gas and swastika

Monocle versus beaky hooter

Off to the pogrom!

At the Hippodrome!

It's all just shit

Lay off your mitts

With election scam

And coup de main

One two three

Go-o-o

take a running jump

running jump

The Berolina

Carriage on the city switchback

'Grrreat Berrleena'

Berlin Berlin

The reds and the greens

Berlin draws a dud Berlin draws a dud Berlin draws a dud!

If you've never had a win

When the market takes a spin

If you've never let go

Played the gigolo
 Jews out! Stomachs in!
 To mass murder with Yohimbin
 Hail the national class haven
 From shore to sea and then: amen
 You'll not give a hoot
 In a wooden suit!
 Why the sad song
 Everything's gone
 One two three
 Go-o-o
 take a running jump
 running jump
 The Berolina
 Carriage on the city switchback
 'Grrreat Berrleena'
 On the grass outside an inn
 Cock a snook at old Berlin
 Out in the open Out in the open Out in the open

Walter Mehring, 'Berlin Simultan', *Dada Almanach* [Berlin: E. Reiss, 1920, 45–47; trans. Malcolm Green in *Dada Almanac*, London: Atlas Press, 1998] 52–54.

John HEARTFIELD, George GROSZ The Art Scab [1920]

What is the worker supposed to do with the spirit of poets and philosophers, who, in the face of everything that constricts his life breath, feel no duty to take up battle against the exploiters?

Yes, what is the worker supposed to do with art? Have painters given their works the appropriate content for the working people's struggle for liberation, the content that would teach them to free themselves from the yoke of a thousand years of oppression?

No, despite this disgrace they have painted the world in a calming light. The beauty of nature, the forest with the twitter of birds and evening twilight! Do they show that the forest is in the oily hands of the profiteer, who declares it far and wide to be his private property, over which he alone disposes, who chops it down when his wallet requires it, but fences it in, so that freezing people cannot fetch wood.

Yet art remains detached. Look and see! [...]

That is why in works of art they preach escape for feelings and thoughts, away from the unbearable conditions of the earth, to the moon and stars, into heaven, vouchsafed by the machine guns of democracy, whose purpose is to send the dispossessed on a journey into the purer Beyond. That is why a weakling like the poet Rainer Maria Rilke, supported by the perfumed do-nothings, writes: 'Poverty is a great radiance from within' [*Book of Hours*].

Workers! By presenting to you the ideas of the Christian churches, they wish to disarm you, in order to deliver you more easily to the state machine.

Workers! By representing things in their paintings that the bourgeois can cling to, things that give you a reflection

of beauty and happiness, they sabotage your class consciousness, your will to power.

By directing you to art with the cry: 'Art to the People', they wish to seduce you into believing in a common possession that you share with your oppressors, for the love of which you should cease the most just struggle the world has ever known. They once again wish to use the 'spiritual' to make you submissive and to instil in you the awareness of your own smallness in relation to the wondrous works of the human spirit.

A swindle! A swindle!

The vilest betrayal!

No, art belongs in the museums, to be goggled at on the walking tours of petit-bourgeois tourists; art belongs in the palaces of the blood hounds, in front of the safes [...]

Workers, you, who continually create the surplus value that allows the exploiters to hang their walls with this 'aesthetic' luxury, you who thereby guarantee the livelihood of artists, which is nearly always more affluent than your own; workers, now listen how such an artist regards you and your struggle.

After the Kapp Putsch, in which you armed yourselves, to the irritation of the antimilitarists and pacifists [...] during these days a little art chap by the name of Oskar Kokoschka, republican Professor at the Dresden Art Academy, displaying the traditional cowardice of the intellectuals, directed the following pithy manifesto to the inhabitants of Dresden:

'I urgently request all those who intend to use firearms in order to promote their political theories, whether of the radical left, the radical right or the radical centre, to be kind enough henceforth to hold their combat exercises away from the Gemäldegalerie [art gallery] of the Zwinger – on the shooting ranges of the heath, for example, where works of human culture will not be in danger. On Monday, the 15th of March, a masterwork of Rubens was damaged by a bullet. [...] Certainly the German people will later find more joy and meaning in these preserved pictures than in the collected views of the politicized Germans of today. I do not venture to hope that my alternative proposal will find favour, whereby in the German Republic, as in classical times, feuds should be resolved by single combat between the respective political leaders – in the circus, perhaps – with the effect enhanced by the Homeric scorn of their parties. This would be less harmful and confused than current methods.'

Oskar Kokoschka

Professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Dresden

We urgently request all who have not yet become such complete imbeciles as to concur with the snobbish statement of this art scab to oppose it publicly. We exhort everyone to whom it is inconsequential that bullets damage masterworks, since they tear human beings to pieces, to rescue themselves from the fangs of the bloodsuckers. [...]

The people would welcome it if, following the examples of Vienna, these pictures would be offered to the allies in exchange for food supplies. That would be doing more for

the 'poor people of the future' than leaving them the opportunity of standing, their legs crippled by rickets, in front of the unblemished masterpieces in the galleries. [...] The struggles of 'the collected views of the politicized Germans of today' are the logical outcome of the will to survive and offer future generations conditions of existence other than those which make it possible only for the divinely illumined Kokoschka to eat his fill and wisecrack about the hungry. Sated people naturally need quiet for their digestion. [...] He who wishes his business with the brush to be regarded as a divine mission is a scab. Today the cleaning of a gun by a Red soldier is of greater significance than the entire metaphysical output of all the painters. The concepts of art and artist are an invention of the bourgeoisie and their position in the state can only be on the side of those who rule, i.e. the bourgeois caste.

The title 'artist' is an insult.

The designation 'art' is an annulment of human equality.

The deification of the artist is equivalent to self-deification.

The artist does not stand above his milieu and the society of those who approve of him. For his little head does not produce the content of his creation, but processes (as a sausagemaker does meat) the worldview of his public. [...]

Kokoschka's statements are a typical expression of the attitude of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie places a culture and its art higher than the life of the working class. This, too, leads to the conclusion that there can be no reconciliation between the bourgeoisie, its approach to life, and the proletariat.

Workers, we see the attempts of the Independents [the Independent Socialists or USPD] to preserve this culture and its mendacious views on art for the proletarian reconstruction of the world. We expect very shortly from Herr Comrade Felix Stössinger [editor of the USPD weekly newspaper *Freie Welt*], that he will soon illustrate for you works by the important painter Oskar Kokoschka and demonstrate to you their significance for the proletariat, just as he introduced to you the churchly rubbish of the Isenheim Altar [the work of Matthias Grünewald] or the individualistic artistic torments of a Van Gogh. Egocentric individualism went hand-in-hand with the development of capital and must fall with it.

With joy we welcome the news that the bullets are whistling through the galleries and palaces, into the masterpieces of Rubens, instead of into the houses of the poor in the working-class neighbourhoods!

We welcome it if the open struggle between capital and labour takes place in the domain of this disgraceful culture and art, which consistently served to suppress the poor while edifying the bourgeois on Sunday, so that on Monday he could all the more calmly resume ... his exploitation! [...]

We summon all to oppose the masochistic reverence for historical values, to oppose culture and art! [...]

We know, workers, that you will create your workers'

culture entirely alone just as you have created your own organization for the class struggle.

John Heartfield and George Grosz, 'Der Kunstlump', *Der Gegner*, 1, 10-12 [1920, 48-56; reprinted in Anton Kaes, Martin Jay and Edward Dimendberg, eds., *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994] 483-86.

George GROSZ

My New Pictures [1921]

Today art is absolutely a secondary matter. Anyone able to see beyond his studio walls will admit this. In spite of this, art is something which demands a clear-cut decision from artists. You can't be indifferent about your position in this activity, about your attitude toward the problem of the masses, no longer an issue for those who can see straight. Are you on the side of the exploiters or on the side of the masses, who are giving these exploiters a good tanning?

You can't avoid this issue with the old trick about the sublimity and holiness and transcendental character of art. These days an artist is bought by the best-paying jobber or patron – this middleman's trade is called, in a bourgeois state, the advancement of culture. But today's painters and poets don't want to know anything at all about the masses. How else can you explain the fact that virtually nothing is exhibited which in any way reflects the ideals and efforts, the will of the rising masses.

What should you do to give content to your paintings?

Go to a proletarian meeting and look and listen how people there, people just like you, discuss some small improvement of their lot.

And understand – these masses are the ones who are reorganizing the world. Not you! But you can work with them. You could help if you wanted to! And that way you could learn to give your art a content which was supported by the revolutionary ideals of the workers.

As for my works in this portfolio [omitted here], I want to say the following: I am again trying to give an absolutely realistic picture of the world. I want every man to understand me – without that currently obligatory profundity into which one cannot plunge without a veritable diving outfit stuffed with spiritual, kabbalistic, and metaphysical deceit. In my efforts to develop a clear and simple style I can't help drawing closer to Carra. Nevertheless, I am separated from him by everything that wants to be enjoyed metaphysically and that reflects bourgeois attitudes. My work should be interpreted as training, a systematic, hands-on work-out, without any view to eternity! I am trying in my so-called works of art to construct something with a completely realistic foundation. Man is no longer an individual to be examined in subtle psychological terms, but as a collective, almost mechanical concept. Individual destiny no longer matters. Just as the ancient Greeks, I would like to create absolutely simple sport symbols, understandable to everyone and enjoyable without commentary.

I am suppressing colour. Lines are used in an impersonal, photographic way in order to construct

volumes. Once more stability, construction, and practical purpose – e.g., sports, engineer, and machine, but devoid of Futurist romantic dynamism.

Once more control over line and form is being established – it's no longer a question of conjuring up on canvas brightly coloured Expressionistic soul-tapestries – the concreteness and clarity of an engineer's drawing is a better model than the uncontrollable twaddle of the Kabbalah, metaphysics, and saintly ecstasy.

... I see the future development of painting taking place in workshops, in pure craftsmanship, not in the holy temple of the arts. Painting is manual labour, no different from any other; it can be done well or poorly. Today we have a star system, so do the other arts – but that will disappear.

Photography will play an important role; nowadays a photographer can give you a better and cheaper picture of yourself than a painter. Besides, artists today prefer to distort things after their own fashion – and they have a peculiar aversion to resemblance in representation. The anarchism of Expressionism must stop! Today painters are forced into this situation because they are unenlightened and have no links with working people. But a time will come when artists – instead of being scrubby bohemian anarchists – will be clean, healthy workers in a collectivistic community. Until this goal is realized by the working class, the intellectual will remain cynical, skeptical, and confused. Not until then will art be able to break out of its narrow and shallow confines where it flows anemically through the life of the 'upper ten-thousand', not until then will it become a great stream capable of nourishing all of working humanity. Then capital's monopoly of spiritual things will be ended.

And here also communism will lead to an enrichment and further development of humanity, to a truly classless society.

George Grosz, 'Zu meinen neuen Bildern', *Das Kunstblatt*, 5, 1 [1921, 11-14; reprinted in Rose-Carol Washton Long, ed., *German Expressionism: Documents from the End of the Wilhelmine Empire to the Rise of National Socialism*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995] 275-77.

George GROSZ, Walter MEHRING

The Race Between the Sewing Machine and the Typewriter [1919]

MASTER OF CEREMONIES: (*To the Sewing Machine.*) Böff, World Champion in Procreation and Perforation of Culture! (*To the Typewriter.*) Walt Merin, Featherweight! Böff 'Schnurre, schnurre – basselurre.' Walt Tacktack! Bumstil Ping, ping! Böff (*Solo on the okarina.*) Tülitütüt, lüttitüt! O sole mio! Old man's river; Mississippi ... Walt ... et Rataplan, rataplan!

Böff Wille, wille. Wau, wau!

Walt (*In an aside.*) ... by Wolfgang Goethe!

Böff & Walt (*In unison.*) Eiapoepai! Tandaradei! Hipp, hipp Dada ... Dada-capo!

George Grosz and Walter Mehring, *The Race Between the Sewing Machine and the Typewriter* [1919; reprinted in Mel Gordon, ed. and trans., *Dada Performance*, New York: PAJ Publications, 1987] 82.

George GROSZ, Wieland HERZFELDE

Art is in Danger – An Attempt at Orientation [1925]

IN UNIFORM

I [George Grosz] saw the war as a manifestation of the common fight for possessions, degenerated into atrocity. In detail this fight was disgusting to me, not to mention in totality; nevertheless I could not prevent being temporarily made into a Prussian soldier. To my astonishment I became aware of other people who also were less than enthusiastic. I hated these people somewhat less. The life of a soldier inspired me to many a drawing. A few comrades obviously enjoyed these drawings; they shared my feelings, and I preferred this appreciation to the recognition of this or that art collector, who would evaluate my works merely from the speculative point of view.

DAWN

For the first time I drew, not only for pleasure, but because I knew other people shared my experiences and convictions. I began to understand there was a better goal than to work just for oneself and the art dealer. I wanted to become an illustrator, a journalist. High art, so far as it strove to portray the beauty of the world, was of less interest to me than ever – I was interested in the tendentious painters, the moralists: Hogarth, Goya, Daumier, and such artists. Although I was very occupied with the lively discussions taking place at that time among the young art movements, and received many a formal stimulus from them, I could not share the general indifference of these circles toward social conditions and current events. I drew and painted out of opposition and attempted in my work to present the world in all its ugliness, sickness, and untruthfulness. At that time I had no success worth mentioning. I had no particular hopes, but felt quite revolutionary since I looked upon my resentments as understandings.

The war changed none of that basically. I remained distrustful, even of my friends; such a thing as camaraderie had no place in my theory of life; I wanted to have no illusions. I began to hear, of course, of revolutionary movements, but unfortunately I did not come in direct contact with them, and remained sceptical: One had only to look at the SPD [*Sozialistische Partei Deutschlands*] – big talk of fraternization among mankind

and consent to war credits, all in one breath. That's the way it was. To be sure, a Swedenborgian Hell and demonic powers did not exist for me any longer; I began to see the real devils and princes of hell: bearded men in long pants with or without decorations. A number of my friends had hopes of peace and revolution, which I felt to be unfounded.

DADA AND TURNIPS

A civilian again, I witnessed in Berlin the origin of the Dada movement, which began in Germany in the time of the turnip.

JESUS IN THE TRENCHES

The German Dada movement was rooted in the realization, which came simultaneously to several of my comrades and myself, that it was complete insanity to believe that 'spirit' [Geist] or people of 'spirit' ruled the world. Goethe under bombardment, Nietzsche in rucksack, Jesus in the trenches – there were still people who continued to believe in the autonomous power of spirit and art.

Dada was the first significant art movement in Germany in decades. Don't laugh – through this movement all the 'isms' of art became yesterday's inconsequential studio affairs. Dada was not a 'made' movement, but an organic product, originating in reaction to the head-in-the-clouds tendency of so-called holy art, whose disciples brooded over cubes and Gothic art while the generals were painting in blood. Dada forced the devotees of art to show their colours.

DADA AS EXTERMINATOR

What did the Dadas do? They said it's all the same, whether one just blusters – or gives forth with a sonnet from Petrarch, Shakespeare, or Rilke; whether one gilds boot-heels or carves Madonnas: the shooting goes on, profiteering goes on, hunger goes on, lying goes on; why all that art? Wasn't it the height of fraud to pretend art created spiritual values? Wasn't it unbelievably ridiculous that art was taken seriously by itself and no one else? 'Hands off holy art!' screamed the foes of Dada. 'Art is in danger!' 'Spirit is being dishonoured!' This prattle about the spirit, when the only spirit was the dishonoured one of the press, which wrote: Buy war bonds! – What prattle about art, as they finally arrived at the task of overpainting with beauty and interesting features the face of Anno 13, which daily unmasked itself more and more.

AGAINST WINDMILLS

Today I know, together with all the other founders of Dada, that our only mistake was to have been seriously engaged at all with so-called art. Dada was the breakthrough, taking place with bawling and scornful laughter; it came out of a narrow, overbearing, and overrated milieu, and floating in the air between the classes, knew no responsibility to the general public. We saw then the insane end products of the ruling order of society and burst into laughter. We had not yet seen the system behind this insanity.

IT DAWNS

The pending revolution brought gradual understanding of

this system. There were no more laughing matters, there were more important problems than those of art; if art was still to have a meaning, it had to submit to those problems. In the void in which we found ourselves after overcoming art phraseology, some of us *dadas* got lost, mainly those in Switzerland and France, who had experienced the cultural shocks of the last decade more from the newspaper perspective. The rest of us saw the great new task: Tendency Art in the service of the revolutionary cause.

GALLOP THROUGH ART HISTORY

The demand for Tendency irritates the art world, today perhaps more than ever, to enraged and disdainful opposition. Admittedly all times have had important works of tendentious character, although such works are not appreciated for their tendentiousness, but rather for their formal, 'purely artistic' qualities. These circles completely fail to recognize that at all times all art has a tendency, that only the character and clarity of this tendency have changed. A few roughly sketched examples: the Greeks propagated the 'beautiful man': sport, physical culture, and, related to that, Eros, military proficiency, their religious beliefs; in a word, the 100-per cent Greek. The Gothics put themselves exclusively at the disposal of Christian propaganda. In the Middle Ages artists created what kings, patricians, and merchants wanted; prehistoric cavemen, aborigines, Negroes, they have their art of the hunt, sex, and idol ...

WANDERERS INTO THE VOID

However, there are still artists who consciously and emphatically attempt to avoid tendency of any kind by renouncing completely the representational, even the problematical. Often they believe they can work instinctively and aimlessly, like Nature, which, without visible purpose, gives form and colour to crystals, plants, stones – everything that exists. They give their paintings obscure names, or just numbers. Evidently this method is based upon the attempt to produce pure stimulus, as in music, through intentional elimination of all other effectual possibilities. The painter is to be nothing but a creator of form and colour. Whether these artists believe their work has no 'deeper meaning', or whether they impart to it an emotional or metaphysical meaning hardly perceptible to the spectator, the fact remains that they intentionally renounce all the artist's possibilities of ideological influence (in the areas of eroticism, religion, politics, aesthetics, morality, etc.), standing silent and indifferent, that is, irresponsibly, in relation to social occurrence, or – in cases where that is not the intention – they work in vain through ignorance and ineptitude.

NO ANSWER IS ALSO AN ANSWER

When such artists enter the service of industry and applied art, there can be as little objection raised as when a politician engages himself as a craftsman. A matter of talent.

When this art of literary attraction is pursued for its own sake, decidedly blasé indifference and irresponsible individualistic feelings are propagated.

SKILL DOES NO HARM

Obviously, the artist's relationship to the world is always expressed in his work and that relationship inevitably gives it its tendency. Thus it is only justifiable to blame an artist for his tendency when that tendency contradicts the artist's broad view, as unintentionally revealed in his style; or when an artist tries to compensate for ineptitude by adding a tendentious motif or title. Someone might use inadequate means in support of a tendency of which he is completely convinced; there too, one cannot object to the tendency because of his inadequate ability to express it.

But one has never heard of Grützner being reproached with his propaganda for German beer or for the monastic joys of manhood, or of Grünewald being reproached with his Christian belief. When artlovers attempt to dismiss a work because of its tendency, as a principle or as a vehicle of sensation, they do not approach the artist's work critically, but are hostile to the idea for which he stands.

WHOSE BREAD I EAT, HIS PRAISE I SING

The artist, whether he likes it or not, lives in continual correlation to the public, to society, and he cannot withdraw from its laws of evolution, even when, as today, they include class conflict. Anyone maintaining a sophisticated stance above or outside of things is also taking sides, for such indifference and aloofness is automatically a support of the class currently in power – in Germany, the Middle Class. Moreover, a great number of artists quite consciously support the bourgeois system, since it is within that system that their work sells.

WHAT WILL I THINK TOMORROW?

In November 1918, as the tide seemed to be turning – the most sheltered simpleton suddenly discovered his sympathy for the working people, and for several months mass-produced red and reddish allegories and pamphlets did well in the art market. Soon afterward, however, quiet and order returned; would you believe it, our artists returned with the greatest possible silence to the higher regions: 'What do you mean? We remained revolutionary – but the workers, don't even mention them. They are all bourgeois. In this country one cannot make a revolution.' And so they brood again in their studios over 'really' revolutionary problems of form, colour, and style.

THE YOUNG MAN DIGESTS EVERYTHING

Formal revolution lost its shock effect a long time ago. The modern citizen digests everything; only the money chests are vulnerable. Today's young merchant is not like his counterpart in Gustav Freytag's times: ice-cold, aloof, he hangs the most radical things in his apartment ... Rash and unhesitating acceptance so as not to be 'born yesterday' is the password. Automobile – the newest, most sporty model. Nothing said about professional mission, obligations of wealth; cool, objective to the point of dullness, sceptical, without illusions, avaricious, he understands only his merchandise, for everything else – including the fields of philosophy, ethics, art – for all culture, there are specialists who determine the fashion, which is then accepted at face value. Even the formal revolutionaries and 'wanderers into the void' do fairly well, for, underneath, they are related to those gentlemen, and

have, despite all their apparent discrepancies, the same indifferent, arrogant view of life.

PAINT USEFULLY

Anyone to whom the workers' revolutionary cause is not just a phrase or 'a beautiful idea, but impossible to realize', cannot be content to work harmlessly along dealing with formal problems. He must try to express the workers' battle idea and measure the value of his work by its social usefulness and effectiveness, rather than by uncontrollable individual artistic principles or public success.

LAST ROUND

Let us summarize: the meaning, nature, and history of art are directly related to the meaning, nature, and history of society. The prerequisite for the perception and evaluation of contemporary art is an intellect directed at the knowledge of facts and of correlations with real life and all its convulsions and tensions. For a hundred years, man has been seizing the earth's means of production. At the same time, the fight among men for possession of these means assumes ever more extensive forms, drawing all men into its vortex. There are workers, employees, civil servants, commercial travellers, and stockholders, contractors, merchants, men of finance. Everyone else represents stages of these two fronts. The struggle for existence of a mankind divided into the exploited and the exploiters is, in its sharpest and final form: class warfare.

Yes, art is in danger:

Today's artist, if he does not want to run down and become an antiquated dud, has the choice between technology and class warfare propaganda. In both cases he must give up 'pure art'. Either he enrolls as an architect, engineer, or advertising artist in the army (unfortunately very feudally organized) which develops industrial powers and exploits the world; or, as a reporter and critic reflecting the face of our times, a propagandist and defender of the revolutionary idea and its partisans, he finds a place in the army of the suppressed who fight for their just share of the world, for a significant social organization of life.

George Grosz and Wieland Herzfelde, *Die Kunst ist in Gefahr* [Berlin: Malik Verlag, 1925; trans. Gabrielle Bennett, in Lucy R. Lippard, ed., *Dadas on Art*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971] 79–85.

George GROSZ

Dadaism [1946]

As Dadaists, we held meetings and charged a few marks admission but gave in return no more than truisms. By that I mean, we just insulted the people roundly. Our manners were downright arrogant. We would say, 'You heap of dung down there, yes, you, with the umbrella, you simple fool.' Or, 'Hey, you on the right, don't laugh, you ox.' If they answered us, as they naturally did, we would say as they do in the army: 'Shut your trap or you'll get kicked in the butt.'

Our popularity spread quickly, so that our evening gatherings and Sunday afternoons were soon sold out in advance to people who were both amused and irritated by us. By and by we had to have the police at our meetings, as fights were always breaking out. It reached the point where we had to get permission from the police to hold these meetings. We simply mocked everything. That was Dadaism. Nothing was holy to us. Our movement was neither mystical, communistic, nor anarchistic. All of these movements had some sort of programme, but ours was completely nihilistic. We spat upon everything, including ourselves. Our symbol was nothingness, a vacuum, a void. To what extent we were the expression of a despair that knew no salvation, I cannot say. I am not attempting to make or seek any explanation. I am merely reporting what I experienced.

I was very proud of some of the slogans I invented. There was 'Dada today, Dada tomorrow, Dada forever'; the little political parody 'Dada, Dada *über alles*'; 'Come to Dada if you like to be embraced and embarrassed'; 'Dada kicks you in the behind and you like it.' We had these slogans printed on small stickers which we plastered all over the shop windows, coffee-house tables, and shop doors of Berlin. They were alarming little stickers, particularly since the slogans were so mystic and enigmatic. Everyone began to wonder who we were. The popular afternoon paper, *BZ am Mittag*, devoted a whole editorial to the Dada menace. People were aroused against us. They could not understand a movement that made so little sense. But we continued to have wonderfully wild times. We pasted our stickers just everywhere we went. Even the waiter, carrying his tray of drinks and cigars, would have a 'Dada kicks me in the behind' sticker on the back of his frock coat and a 'Dada forever' on his box of cigars ...

George Grosz, 'Dadaism', *A Little Yes and a Big No* [New York: Dial Press, 1946; reprinted in Lucy R. Lippard, ed., *Dadas on Art*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971] 85–88.

Hannah HÖCH

The Painter [c. 1920]

Once upon a time there was a painter. He wasn't called Dribble, or anything like that, as he might have been in earlier times. It was around 1920 – the painter was a modern painter – so his name was Heavenlykingdom. Unlike the real painters of earlier times, he was not asked to work only with brush and palette. This was his wife's fault: she thwarted the boundless flight of his genius. At least four times in four years, he was forced to wash dishes – the kitchen dishes. The first time, actually, there had been a pressing reason. She was giving birth to the baby Heavenlykingdom. The other three times had not seemed absolutely necessary to Heavenlykingdom, Sr. But he wanted to keep the peace – because after all God had created the male to do just that – and so had no choice but to obey her Xanthippian demand. Yet the matter continued to weigh on him. He felt degraded as a man and as a painter under its dark shadow. On the days of crisis he would suffer nightmares. He kept seeing Michelangelo

washing up the cups. He knew enough about psychoanalysis to confront the woman with the truth that such demands always arise out of the desire to dominate, no matter what other reasons there might be. As a modern person he felt that in theory he had to agree with the equality of the sexes – still, if one looked closely at the situation one could not – and then, especially in your own house – her demand seemed to him comparable to an enslavement of his soul ...

Now one day he began to paint a picture. A dark force moved him, because he was full of dark forces. He wanted to represent, to cube really, the essential likeness between the nature of chives and the female soul. In theory the whole problem was solved. He saw the emptiness that fills both these objects precisely and with total intellectual clarity. There is more to genius than intellect, however, and, when he connected the herb's snake-like form with the previously mentioned soul, his unusually developed instinct gave him mystical knowledge. No genius would deny a certain complement of mysticism.

Our Heavenlykingdom was deeply wounded by something he had also heard about from his fellow men: although these little women are often really tiny, they can still not be shaped and modelled into the form one needs for physical and psychic comfort. Had he been a writer, he would have been compelled to enrich literature with a ponderous work on the theme, 'When you got to Woman, do not forget the whip.' But under the circumstances that you know about now, his painting was to be called, 'The Chive and the Female Soul: A Comparison'. I think it was already announced for exhibition, while the canvas still shone blankly, spotlessly receptive. One has to do everything in good time. Gotthold – that was Heavenlykingdom's first name – suffered under the female soul in the totality of his manhood. And we all need to confront what makes us suffer. No wonder, then, that Heavenlykingdom (secretly) began to think of himself as on a level with a redeemer – let's admit it, with Christ – because of the likeness he has discovered.

But you have to imagine the painting properly – as it were, a scientifically dissected representation – the female soul, totally clear in a segmented cubist painting – so that everyone able to adopt an abstract point of view could read, there she is, that's her innermost being. And next to that the analogy and parallel: chives. Wouldn't everyone see it as clear as day? We also know that when we recognize what ails us, we are cured. So what perspectives would open up with the creation of this painting? Wouldn't the most burning question of our time be solved? Yet we have had to admit too often that theory and practice don't coincide. He had worked on his picture for two years and two days already. He laboured and laboured mightily, unable to advance beyond the chives. In the first place, the painting remained green. As soon as he used a different colour, the disturbance that resulted was so great that he covered it with green again. For a while he thought that the treacherous female soul (treachery no doubt its most important element alongside emptiness) could appear as a cubist lemon-yellow spiral among the green – a shape more or less like one of those sofa-springs that winds crookedly upward. But alas, painting is colour as well as

form. The yellow refused to meld with the massive green of his chive allegory. He had no choice but to remove the winding spiral. A painter must remain enough of an aesthete to refuse to paint badly for the sake of his idea. The same thing happened with the composition. He tried and tried, even falling into trances, but nothing beyond the dull repetitive up-and-down of the chive motif would develop. Over and over again he hoped to fix the damnable female soul in a fluted doughnut-shape. But his eye remained objective and told him the truth without pity: this fretwork muddies the powerful melody of the chive movement. His most intimate friend, looking at the painting, remarked that it had the kind of power that liberated itself in an overwhelming sense of bore ... No, that's not what he said. He said, liberates itself in sameness. Then he decided with a heavy heart to abandon the female soul and to devote himself only to chives from now on.

A month later, and the President, who has just opened the exhibition, is propelling his presidential belly around the myriad chambers that display the works of all the painters of the realm. Suddenly he stops. His face displays emotion. His entourage observes closely. He begins to speak. 'A masterpiece,' he stammers. Has my administration ever produced anything better? He questioned everyone around him. All that green – what can it remind me of? His adjutant (unless an assistant goes by another name in a Republic) suggested helpfully, 'Of the revolution? Of the revolution, my President?'

'Absolutely right. The revolution.'

They say the State bought the painting for the National Gallery. They say that when its creator was asked for the title, he omitted mention of the chives and proudly called it 'The Female Soul'. They say Gotthold Heavenlykingdom will be the next candidate for a Nobel Prize.

Hannah Höch, 'Der Maler', *Hannah Höch: Eine Lebens-Collage* [Berlin: Archiv-Edition, 1989, 1, 747-49; reprinted in Maud Lavin, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife: The Weimar Photomontages of Hannah Höch*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993] 216-18.

Hannah HÖCH

Interview with Edouard Roditi [1959]

Roditi Very few of my Berlin friends had any idea how to get here, when I asked them for advice. I was even warned by some that it would be unwise to try to visit you in Heiligensee; they insisted that it is beyond the limits of West Berlin, in the Eastern Zone.

Höch What nonsense! But it's actually because this part of Berlin is so quiet and so little known that I moved to Heiligensee in 1938, just before the war. Under the Nazi dictatorship, I was much too conspicuous and well known to be safe in Friedenau, where I had lived for many years. I knew that I was constantly being watched and denounced there by zealous or spiteful neighbours, so I decided, when I inherited enough money to buy a little house of my own,

to look around for a place in a part of Berlin where nobody would know me by sight or be at all aware of my lurid past as a Dadaist or, as we were then called, as a 'Culture Bolshevik' ...

In those years I would have felt lonely anywhere in Berlin. Those of us who were still remembered as having once been 'Cultural Bolsheviks' were all blacklisted and watched by the Gestapo. Each of us avoided associating even with his oldest and dearest friends and colleagues, for fear of involving them in further trouble. Most of the former Berlin Dadaists had in any case emigrated by 1938. Hans Richter and George Grosz were in America, Kurt Schwitters had emigrated to Norway, Raoul Hausmann was in France. Of the really active members of the old Berlin Dada group, I was the only one still here.

Roditi How and when did the Berlin Dada group first begin to be active?

Höch We held our first exhibition here in 1919, but we had already been working together as a group for a couple of years before actually adopting the same name and the same programme as the Zurich Dadaists.

Roditi Was it really the same programme? It has always seemed to me that the Berlin Dadaists, as a group, were far less aesthetically and more socially subversive than the Zurich Dadaists. This is perhaps because of your closer contact with Moscow artists like Lissitzky during the years of the Russian Revolution, perhaps also because of the more disturbed or revolutionary atmosphere in Germany, perhaps too because of the more political nature of the satirical genius of such Berlin Dadaists as George Grosz.

Höch You are probably right. The situation here, in 1917, was not at all like that in Zurich, a neutral city, whereas Berlin was the capital of an empire which was tottering as it faced defeat. I myself had come to Berlin before 1914, from a very bourgeois family background in Thüringia. At first I studied art under Orlik, who was to some extent a disciple of the French Impressionists. When the war broke out, all art schools were closed for a while, and I returned to live with my family. But I came back to Berlin in 1915, and it was then that I first met Raoul Hausmann. We were both, in those days, enthusiastic admirers of almost all the art that was being shown in the exhibitions of Herwarth Walden's Der Sturm Gallery. But Hausmann remained until 1916 a figurative Expressionist, a close friend and disciple of Haeckel and at the same time an admirer of Delaunay and of Franz Marc, whereas I had already begun in 1915 to design and paint abstract compositions in the same general tradition as those that Kandinsky had first exhibited a couple of years earlier in Munich.

Roditi Were there any other abstract artists of significance in Berlin as early as 1915?

Höch On the whole, most of the Berlin avant-garde was still figuratively either Expressionist or Fauvist. Painters like Ludwig Meidner, for instance, were still working in the same tradition as Haeckel and other artists of the Dresden Brücke group or as Kokoschka, whereas other Berlin painters, like Rudolf Levy, were more in tune with the Post-Fauvists. Among our own friends, the only abstract painter of any prominence was Otto Freundlich, who had returned to Berlin, from Paris, in 1914. But Freundlich had been living at one time in Montmartre with Picasso and some of

the Paris Cubists and was still painting mainly figurative compositions. It was only after his return to Paris, in 1924, that his work gradually became exclusively abstract.

Roditi Was Freundlich ever associated with the Berlin Dada movement?

Höch Otto sympathized with us from the very start, because he shared our pacifist views, those of the Monistenbund, and our determination to reject all the moral and aesthetic standards of the existing social order, which seemed to us to be doomed. But he was much too serious and earnest to participate in any of our youthfully scandalous manifestations. We were a very naughty group, all of us still very wild, whereas Freundlich belonged already to a more established community of nonconformist writers and artists, all regular contributors to Franz Pfemfert's *Die Aktion*.

Roditi If I remember right, the contributors to *Die Aktion* included Gottfried Benn and Johannes R. Becher, Freundlich and Meidner, Yvan Goll and Hermann Kazack, in fact all sorts of writers and artists who, in the light of their later political or intellectual evolution, would now make very strange bedfellows ...

Höch The same might now be said of our own group of Berlin Dadaists. When we held our first exhibition in 1919, the 'Erste Internationale Dadamesse', in Dr. Otto Burchard's gallery at Lutzowufer 13, the catalogue included the names of George Grosz, Dadasoph Raoul Hausmann, and Monteurdada John Heartfield. But John Heartfield and his brother, the writer Wieland Herzfelde, later founded the Malik Verlag, which remained for many years the leading German Communist literary publishing house, and they are now both living in Eastern Germany and still active in all sorts of Communist organizations, whereas George Grosz, Walter Mehring, and most of the other Berlin Dadaists of 1919 soon ceased to associate at all with Communists or to be in any way politically active.

Roditi Nevertheless, the Berlin Dadaists had originally been quite closely associated with some Communist intellectual and artistic groups.

Höch ... Between 1915 and 1925. We were very young and politically inexperienced, and Communism itself, in those days, appeared to be much more liberal and freedom-loving than it does today. During the First World War, we had all been pacifists and had found ourselves in close sympathy with other pacifists, some of whom happened to be Communists. Besides, we were still quite naively enthusiastic about anything that appeared to be opposed to the established order, and some of us even pretended to maintain close personal contacts with the enemy. To assume an English or American pseudonym, as Hans Herzfelde did when he called himself John Heartfield, was already an act of provocation in the eyes of German nationalists. George Grosz also claimed to be American in some mysterious way and spelled his name 'George' instead of 'Georg', affecting at the same time an American manner and style of dress. As soon as the war was over, we were among the first German artists and writers to establish contact with similar avant-garde groups in New York, Paris, and Moscow. In 1922, the German Dadaists even held an international conference in Weimar, attended by El Lissitzky, representing the Moscow Constructivists,

Theo van Doesburg, representing Mondrian's De Stijl group from Amsterdam, and Tzara and Hans Arp, representing the Zurich and Paris Dadaists.

Roditi Today, to have once been a close associate of Lissitzky is more compromising in Soviet Russia, under the dictatorship of the Socialist Realists, than it would be in New York, Paris, or here, where all sorts of highly respected painters and sculptors like Chagall, Pevsner, and Gabo are known to have been at one time close friends or associates of Lissitzky and other ill-starred Russian advance-guard artists of thirty years ago. The Suprematists and Constructivists were even blacklisted or deported to Siberia under the Stalinist regime, long before the Dadaists were at all threatened here.

Höch Very few people can understand today how innocent and truly unpolitical our connection with Communists had once been. In 1917, we were living in a social order that had approved the declaration of a disastrous war, which even the Socialist party had failed to condemn. In the next few years, it began to look as if this whole order were about to collapse under the impact of military defeat and of the rising discontent of the masses on the home front. There were mutinies in the armed forces, then revolts of the workers here in Berlin and elsewhere in Germany. As young people who had never believed in the justice of the German cause in the war, we were still idealistic enough to found our hopes only on those doctrines which seemed to be entirely new, in no way responsible for the predicament in which we found ourselves, and to promise us with some sincerity a better future, with a more equitable distribution of wealth, of leisure, and of power. For a while, we really believed in the slogans of the Communists.

Roditi And now, for the past thirty years or more, you have been saddled with such compromising evidence of your political past as these photographs of the gallery where you held your first Dada exhibition, with all its subversive slogans and posters on the walls.

Höch Yes, these are the sins of our youth that we are never allowed to forget. But you must admit that our slogans were effectively shocking. Of course today they would no longer seem so very novel, and I'm afraid that nobody would take them as seriously as the respectable Berlin bourgeoisie of 1919 did.

Roditi This slogan might still get you into trouble today: '*Dada steht auf Seiten des revolutionären Proletariats*' [DADA stands on the side of the revolutionary Proletariat]. But most of those that I can distinguish on the walls of the gallery, in these few photographs, seem pretty harmless today: '*Sperren Sie endlich Ihren Kopfauf / Machen Sie ihn frei für die Forderungen der Zeit*' [Open up at last your head / Leave it free for the demands of our age]; '*Nieder die Kunst / Nieder die Bürgerliche Geistigkeit*' [Down with art / Down with bourgeois intellectualism]; '*Die Kunst ist tot / Es lebe die neue Maschinenkunst Tatlins*' [Art is dead / Long live the machine art of Tatlin]. Or else: '*DADA ist die Willentliche Zersetzung der Bürgerliche Begriffswelt*' [DADA is the voluntary destruction of the bourgeois world of ideals].

Höch Those few slogans were evidence enough, in the Nazi era, to have us all tried and condemned as

Communists. I sometimes wonder today how I was courageous or foolish enough to keep all this incriminating material in my own home during those dreadful years. There was enough concealed in that cabinet, where I keep all my drawings, to condemn me and all the other former Dadaists who were still in Germany.

Roditi It's very fortunate that you should never have destroyed, or lost in an air raid, this unique collection of documents and relics of the heyday of the Berlin Dada movement. But it would interest me to know – since you alone seem to possess enough of this material to be able to look back on the whole movement objectively – what you now consider the Berlin Dada movement's most original and lasting contribution to modern art.

Höch I believe we were the first group of artists to discover and develop systematically the possibilities of photomontage.

Roditi How did you first discover this technique?

Höch Actually, we borrowed the idea from a trick of the official photographers of the Prussian army regiments. They used to have elaborate oleolithographed mounts, representing a group of uniformed men with a barracks or a landscape in the background, but with the faces cut out; in these mounts, the photographers then inserted photographic portraits of the faces of their customers, generally colouring them later by hand. But the aesthetic purpose, if any, of this very primitive kind of photomontage was to idealize reality, whereas the Dada photomonteur set out to give to something entirely unreal all the appearances of something real that had actually been photographed.

Roditi Of course, the camera is a far more objective and trustworthy witness than a human being. We know that Brueghel or Goya or James Enson can have visions or hallucinations, but it is generally admitted that a camera can photograph only what is actually there, standing in the real world before its lens. One might therefore say that the Dada photomonteur sets out to falsify deliberately the testimony of the camera by creating hallucinations which seem to be machine-made.

Höch Yes, our whole purpose was to integrate objects from the world of machines and industry in the world of art. Our typographical collages or montages set out to achieve this by imposing, on something which could only be produced by hand, the appearances of something that had been entirely composed by a machine; in an imaginative composition, we used to bring together elements borrowed from books, newspapers, posters, or leaflets, in an arrangement that no machine could yet compose.

Roditi The collages of the Berlin Dadaists seem to me to be conceived according to principles which are not at all the same as those of the collages of the earlier Paris Cubists, where a piece of newspaper in a painted still life represents a newspaper, or has been inserted for its nature, like any other artist's material, rather than to create an illusion of the same kind as the illusions of a Dada montage. At the same time, the montages of the early Berlin Dadaists are quite different, in their principles, from the '*Merz*' compositions of Schwitters, who salvaged the remnants of his compositions from the dust bin, the

wastepaper basket, and the junkyard, creating objects of artistic value out of materials that were considered quite valueless, in fact 'a thing of beauty and a joy forever' out of elements that would scarcely be expected ever to suggest beauty or joy. The montages of the Berlin Dadaists represent an extension, in the realm of art, of the mechanical processes of modern photography and typography.

Höch That is why they continue to be a source of inspiration to so many photographers, typographical artists and advertising artists. Even today, I sometimes find myself staring at a poster in a Berlin street and wondering whether the artist who designed it is really aware of being a direct disciple of Dadasoph Hausmann, of Monteurdada Heartfield, or of Oberdada Baader.

Roditi Who were, in your opinion, the most imaginative or creative among the artists of the Berlin Dada movement?

Höch At first our group consisted only of Hausmann and myself, Johannes Baader, Heartfield, Grosz, Deetjen, Golyscheff, and a few writers, such as Wieland Herzfelde and Walter Mehring. I'm leaving aside those who, like Schmalhausen, the brother-in-law of George Grosz, were only intermittently active as artists or writers in our group. I would say that the most active and productive artists in our group were Grosz, Baader, Heartfield, Hausmann, and myself. Golyscheff was very gifted, but he soon dropped out of our group, and I have no longer seen any of his work or heard of him for many years.

Roditi Would you be able to define the individual style that distinguished the Dada productions of each one of these artists?

Höch Grosz was of course more of a moralist and a satirist than any of the others, a caricaturist of great genius even in such an early Dada collage as his *Dadaisten besteigen einen Pudding*, where the heads which he had added to his comical figures were photographs of his fellow Dadaists.

Roditi But wouldn't you agree that Heartfield was also a satirist?

Höch Certainly, though he was always more doctrinaire in his political intentions. A Communist often tends to be didactic and orthodox rather than truly free in his fantasies and his humour. But Hausmann remains, in my eyes, the artist who, among the early Berlin Dadaists, was gifted with the greatest fantasy and inventiveness. Poor Raoul was always a restless spirit. He needed constant encouragement in order to be able to carry out his ideas and achieve anything at all lasting. If I hadn't devoted much of my time to looking after him and encouraging him, I might have achieved more myself. Ever since we parted, Hausmann has found it very difficult to create or to impose himself as an artist, though he still continued for many years to provide his friends and associates with an inexhaustible source of ideas. As for Baader, he was our Oberdada, the very incarnation of the spirit of the Berlin Dadaists of 1919 and 1920. He had thrown himself quite recklessly into our movement, without any thought for the consequences, much as I had thrown myself into my seven years of friendship with Raoul Hausmann. Later, Baader became a kind of anachronism, a survivor of a period and a movement that no longer had any reality except in a context of history.

Roditi Have any of the other Dadaists achieved any importance as artists?

Höch Golyscheff, as I said before, was very gifted but seems to have vanished completely. Deetjen too, though she continued for many years to work as an artist, somehow failed ever to achieve a very distinctive style or a lasting reputation. As for Schmalhausen, I can now remember only one of his Dada works, a plaster death mask of Beethoven to which he had added a moustache and a crown of laurel leaves.

Roditi Did any important artists join the Berlin Dada movement after 1920?

Höch Certainly: Kurt Schwitters and Moholy-Nagy, who both came to Berlin after our first two Dada exhibitions, and of course Hans Arp, who was often with us in Berlin after the war, and Hans Richter, who was mainly active with Viking Eggeling in making experimental Dada films, and some Russians, such as El Lissitzky, who later returned to Soviet Russia, and Pougny and his wife, who both settled later in Paris. But our Dada movement also began, after 1922, to develop along lines similar to those of the Paris Surrealists. Around 1925, Berlin Dadaism ceased to be of much significance as a movement. Each one of us began to develop independently as an artist, or joined other movements, as Moholy-Nagy did when he became associated with the Weimar Bauhaus. Only Schwitters and I continued, for a while, to pursue more or less the same objectives. Besides, we were closely associated, after 1920, with Theo van Doesburg and some of the Dutch abstract artists of De Stijl. I even lived several years in Holland, shortly after the war, and was a close friend of Mondrian and of most of his associates, though I never shared their philosophy of art. To me, it seemed to be rather pedantic and to have narrowed the scope of painting to such an extent that it had become almost impossible to avoid repetition.

Roditi When would you say that you first began to experiment in a style that one might call specifically Dadaist?

Höch I suppose that was in 1917, with Raoul Hausmann, when we both began to develop a Dada style of our own. It was already to some extent Surrealist and had something in common with some of those puzzling paintings of Giorgio de Chirico.

Roditi Do you mean those of his Pittura Metafisica period?

Höch Yes, Hausmann and I were trying to suggest, with elements borrowed from the world of machines, a new and sometimes terrifying dream world, as in this 1920 watercolour of mine, *Mechanischer Garten*, where the railroad tracks follow an impossible and nightmarish zigzag course. Here's a photograph of another watercolour of mine in this style, *Er und sein Milieu*, which I painted in 1919 ...

This feeling of alienation was very much in the air, here in Berlin between 1917 and 1922. We were living in a world that nobody with any sensitivity could accept or approve. But I have always been of an experimental turn of mind, and I soon began, in 1922 and 1923, to try my hand at 'Merzbilder' too, I mean at the same kind of collages as those of my friend Schwitters. He reproduced one of my

works, for instance, in the seventh issue of *Merz*. After 1924 I returned to a more traditional kind of painting, though my compositions of that period still used many of the tricks of photomontage ...

Roditi But I would now like to hear you discuss some of your old friends and associates of the heyday of the modern art movement in Berlin.

Höch I thought I had already spoken of them.

Roditi Yes, but I'm very inquisitive. I would like to know more, for instance, about George Grosz.

Höch It's difficult for me to speak objectively about him today, so soon after the shock of his death. Only this morning, after reading about it two days ago in the newspapers, I received in my mail this black-framed announcement from his family. I hadn't even seen Grosz since he had finally returned from America, only a few weeks ago, to live in Berlin again. It seems to me now as if there had been something spooky about his return to the haunts of his youth, only to die there ...

He remains in my memory as he was in his most brilliant and productive years, an artist capable of feeling very deeply, but who preferred to conceal his sensitivity beneath the brittle and provocative appearance of a dandy. He sometimes even wore a monocle ...

Roditi Monocles seem to have been very fashionable among the Dadaists. I've seen photographs of Raoul Hausmann, Tzara, Van Doesburg and even Arp wearing monocles and looking for all the world like young aesthetes of the generation of Oscar Wilde.

Höch The very sight of a monocle in those days offended the stuffed shirts who claimed to be progressive.

Roditi It still infuriates most Americans.

Höch People were particularly annoyed if a Dada dandy wearing a monocle appeared on a platform in a meeting of Communist workers.

Roditi The Berlin Dadaists were past masters in the art of annoying people.

Höch It was part of our wanting to be entirely different.

Roditi Did this attitude of alienation manifest itself in Grosz in any other ways?

Höch Yes, in his insistence on some mysterious and probably imaginary American origins, and in his very carefully chosen clothes that always gave one the impression of being American or English rather than German. But Heartfield and Hausmann were just as careful about how they dressed.

Roditi I understand that Hausmann even designed a new style of shirt.

Höch We were all of us in favour of new styles and systems. Johannes Baader had invented his own Dada system of reckoning time and dates. He even spoke of having a special watch constructed to keep time according to his own new system.

Roditi It sounds as if Dada had been, in a way, a kind of parody of a typically German *Reformbewegung* ...

Höch Looking back on it now, I suppose it was. But we were trying to point out that things could also be done differently and that many of our conventional ways of thinking, dressing, or reckoning are no less arbitrary than others which are generally accepted. At the same time, we also shocked people by affecting not to take our own

movement seriously. Theo van Doesburg, for instance, called his dog 'Dada', and some people argued that an art movement using the same name as the dog of one of its leaders can scarcely be intended to deserve serious attention.

Edouard Roditi, 'Hannah Höch und die Berliner Dadaisten: ein Gespräch mit der Malerin', *Der Monat*, 12 [1959, 60-68; first published in English as 'Interview with Hannah Hoch', *Arts Magazin*, vol. 34, no. 3, New York, December 1959; reprinted in Lucy R. Lippard, ed., *Dadas on Art*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971] 68-77.

HANOVER AND HOLLAND

Kurt Schwitters, the

creator of collages and the *Merzbau*, was also a prolific writer of humorous stories, in which logic and reality are suspended. He expanded the notion of poetry, using any material for his visual and sound pieces: barking and sneezing sounds, numbers, nonsense syllables and shapes of letters. As in his collages and assemblages, the rhythmic arrangement of the materials was important. The twenty-eight-minute 'Ursonata' consists of nonsensical patterns of the alphabet. Even in 'Revolution in Revon', one of his more overtly political texts, the rhythmical repetitions drown out the overall meaning. In his attempt to efface the boundaries between the different arts, Schwitters conceived of a cinema-like 'Merz composite artwork', in which the sounds of language and the shapes and sounds of objects would perform on stage. Theo van Doesburg shared Schwitters' notion that poetry was the non-utilitarian play with language. His own poems, which he published under his dada pseudonym I.K. Bonset, are illogical, rhythmic word sequences that break down conventional structures of grammar and poetry.

Kurt SCHWITTERS

Merz-Painting [1919]

The pictures – *Merzmalerei* – are abstract works of art. Essentially the word 'Merz' means the combination of all imaginable materials for artistic purposes and technically the fundamentally equal valuation of the individual materials. Thus Merz-Painting does not use only colour and canvas, brushes and palette, but all materials visible to the eye, and all necessary tools. Therefore it is unimportant whether the used materials have previously been shaped for some purpose or not. The wheel of a baby carriage, the wire net, string, and cotton are all factors on a par with paint. The artist creates by choosing, dividing, and de-forming the materials.

Materials can be de-formed by their mere distribution onto the picture surface. The effect is heightened by dividing, bending, covering, or over-painting. In Merz-Painting the crate lid, the playing-card, the newspaper clipping, all become the surface; string, brush stroke, or pencil mark become line; wire netting, over-painting, or

waxed paper become varnish; cotton becomes softness.

Merz-Painting aspires to produce an immediate expression by shortening the path between intuition and the moment the work of art becomes visible.

The words are supposed to provide insight into my art and make it easier for those who are honestly prepared to follow me. Not many will want to. They are going to accept my works the same way they always have when something new appears, with indignation and ridicule.

Kurt Schwitters, 'Merzmalerei', *Der Zweemann*, 1, 1 [November 1919, 18; reprinted in Rose-Carol Washton Long, ed., *German Expressionism: Documents from the End of the Wilhelmine Empire to the Rise of National Socialism*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995] 278.

Kurt SCHWITTERS

Merz [1920]

Today even the striving for expression in a work of art seems to me deleterious to art. Art is a primordial concept,

exalted as a godhead, inexplicable as life, indefinable and pointless. The work of art comes into being through the artistic evaluation of its elements. I know only how I do it, I know only my materials, from which I take, I know not to what end.

The material is as unessential as myself. The only essential thing is giving form. Because the material is unessential, I use any material the picture demands. By harmonizing different types of materials among themselves, I have an advantage over mere oil painting, for besides playing off colour against colour, I also play off line against line, form against form, etcetera, and even material against material, for example wood against burlap. I call the worldview from which this mode of artistic creation arose 'Merz'.

The word 'Merz' had no meaning when I formed it. Now it has the meaning which I gave it. The meaning of the concept 'Merz' changes as the insight of those who continue to work with it changes.

Merz wants freedom from all fetters for the sake of creating artistic form. Freedom is not dissoluteness, but the result of strict artistic discipline. *Merz* also means

tolerance towards any limitations based on art. Every artist must be permitted to compose his picture from nothing but blotting paper, for example, provided he can give it form.

The reproduction of natural elements is not essential for the work of art. But inartistic representations of nature, as such, can form parts of a picture if they are played off against other elements of the picture.

To begin with I concerned myself with other genres, for example with the art of poetry. The elements of poetry are letters, syllables, words, sentences. Poetry arises from the playing off of these elements against each other. Meaning is only essential if it is to be used as one such factor. I play off sense against nonsense. I prefer nonsense, but that is a purely personal matter. I pity nonsense, because until now it has been so neglected in the making of art, and that's why I love it.

Here I must mention dadaism, which cultivates nonsense just as I do. There are two kinds of Dadaists, the kernel and the husk das, the latter living principally in Germany. Originally there existed only kernel Dadaists, the huskdadaists peeled off from this original kernel under the leadership of Huelsenbeck and in the split took part of the kernel with them. The peeling off happened amid loud howls, singing of the 'Marseillaise', and distribution of kicks with foot and elbow, a tactic which Huelsenbeck still uses today. Under Huelsenbeck dadaism became a political affair. The well-known manifesto of the German Central Committee of Revolutionary Dadaists demands the introduction of radical communism as a dadaistic dictate. Huelsenbeck writes in his history of dadaism, published in 1920 by Steegemann: 'Dada is German bolshevism.' The above mentioned Central Committee Manifesto further demands 'the most brutal fight against Expressionism'. In his *History of Dadaism* Huelsenbeck also writes: 'Anyway, art should get a sound beating.' In the introduction of the recently published *Dada Almanach* Huelsenbeck states: 'Dada carries on a kind of anti-culture propaganda.' Huelsendada is clearly politically motivated and is directed against art and culture. I am tolerant and let everybody have his own view of the world, but I have to mention that such views are alien to *Merz*. As a matter of principle *Merz* strives only to create art, because no man can serve two masters.

But 'the Dadaists' conception of Dadaism varies greatly', as Huelsenbeck himself has to admit. And thus Tristan Tzara, the leader of the kernel Dadaists, writes in his 1918 Dada manifesto: 'Everyone makes his own kind of art,' and further on: 'Dada is the billboard of abstraction.' I have to mention that *Merz* entertains a close artistic friendship with this version of kernel dadaism and with the art of kernel dadaists like Hans Arp, of whom I am particularly fond, Picabia, Ribemont-Dessaignes and Archipenko. In Huelsenbeck's own words, husk dadaism 'has made itself into God's clown,' while kernel dadaism holds fast to the good old tradition of abstract art. Husk Dada 'foresees its own demise and laughs about it,' while kernel dadaism will live as long as art itself. *Merz* too strives after art and is the enemy of kitsch, even of kitsch-as principle, though the latter may call itself dadaism under Huelsenbeck's leadership. Not everyone who lacks

the ability to judge art should be entitled to write about art: 'quod licet jovi non licet bovi.' *Merz* energetically and as a matter of principle repudiates Mister Richard Huelsenbeck's inconsequential and dilettantish views on art, while it officially recognizes the above-stated views of Tristan Tzara.

I should clear up another misunderstanding that could arise through my friendship with certain kernel Dadaists. It might be thought that I consider myself Dadaist, especially as the word 'Dada' appears on the cover of my collection of poems entitled *Anna Blume*, as published by Verlag Paul Steegemann.

The same cover has drawings of a windmill, a head, a locomotive running backwards and a man hanging in the air. This only means that in the world in which Anna Blossom lives, in which men walk on their heads, windmills turn and locomotives run backwards, Dada also exists. So as not to be misunderstood I have written 'antidada' on the outside of my Cathedral. That doesn't mean that I am against dadaism but that in this world there also exists a movement directed against dadaism. Locomotives can run in both directions. Why shouldn't a locomotive run backwards for a change?

As long as I paint, I also model. At present I am making *Merz* sculptures: Lustgallows and Culpump. Like the *Merz* paintings, the *Merz* sculptures are made from various materials. They are conceived as round sculptures and can be looked at from all sides.

Merz House was my first architectural *Merz* work. Sprengemann comments on it in issue 8–10 of *Zweemann*: 'In *Merz* House I see a cathedral: *the* cathedral. Not a church building, no, but the building as truly spiritual conception of that which raises us into the infinite: absolute art. This cathedral cannot be used. Its inner space is so filled up with wheels that people cannot find room in it ... this is absolute architecture with an exclusively artistic meaning.'

To busy myself with various genres was for me an artistic need. The reason for it was not so much a desire for a widening of the scope of my work, but rather the endeavour to be an artist and not a specialist in one genre. My aim is the total *Merz* at work, which combines all genres into an artistic unity. First I married off single genres. I pasted words and sentences together into poems in such a way that their rhythmic composition create a kind of drawing. The other way around, I pasted together pictures and drawings containing sentences that demand to be read. I drove nails into pictures in such a way that besides the pictorial effect a plastic relief effect arose. I did this in order to erase the boundaries between genres. The total *Merz* artwork is, however, the *Merz* stage, which so far I have been able to work out only theoretically. The first public statement about it appeared in the eighth issue of the *Sturm-bühne*: 'The *Merz* stage serves for the performance of the *Merz* stage work. The *Merz* stage work is an abstract work of art. As a rule, drama and opera arise from a written work, which in itself is already a complete work even without a stage. Stage set, music and performance serve only as illustrations of this text, which is itself the illustration of an action. In contrast to drama or opera, all parts of the *Merz* stage work are inseparably

linked; it cannot be written, read or heard, it can only be experienced in the theatre. Up until now one has differentiated between stage set, text and score in theatre productions. Each part was elaborated separately and could thus also be enjoyed separately. The *Merz* stage knows only the fusion of all the parts into the total work. Materials for the stage set are all solid, liquid and gaseous bodies such as white wall, man, barbed-wire fence, water stream, blue distance, light cone. Use surfaces that can become solid or dissolve into gossamer meshes, surfaces that can fold like curtains, shrink or expand. Let things turn on themselves and move; let lines broaden into surfaces. Parts will be inserted into the set while other parts will be removed. The materials for the score consist of all sounds and noises that can be created by violin, drum, trumpet, sewing machine, ticking clock, water stream, etcetera. The materials for the text are all experiences that excite the brain and the emotions. These materials are not to be used logically in their objective relationships, but only within the logic of the work of art. The more intensively the work of art destroys rational objective logic, the greater the possibilities of artistic form. Just as in poetry word is played off against word, so in this instance one will play off factor against factor, material against material. Imagine the stage set as a kind of *Merz* painting. The parts of the set move and transform themselves, and the set lives its own life. The movement of the set can be silent or accompanied by noise or music. I demand the *Merz* stage. Where is the experimental stage?

'Take giant surfaces, conceived as infinite, cloak them in colour, twist and push them around menacingly, disfigure their smooth shamefulness. Bend and turbulate finite parts, shatter drilling parts of nothingness infinitely together. Glue over smoothing surfaces. Wire up lines, movements, true movement climbs actual rope of wire mesh. Flaming lines, crawling lines, surfacing lines crossed. Let lines fight amongst themselves and caress themselves in giving tenderness. Let points burst like stars in between, dance in circles and realize themselves into lines. Bend the lines, crank and crook angles strangling whirls around a point. In waves of whirling storm a line roars past, prehensile as wire. Sphere the spheres whirling air touch themselves. Penetrating each other disunite surfaces. Boxes edged up, straight and crooked and painted. Collapsible top hats disappear into themselves strangle boxes, crates. Posit lines pulling drawing a net ultramarining. Nets contain narrow the pain of Antonius. Let nets billow and swell, run out into lines, thicken into surfaces. Net the nets. Let veils flutter, soft folds fall, make cotton drip and water spray. Hurl air softly and white through thousand-candled arc lights. Then take wheels and axles, hurl them up and let them sing (Watergiant holdover). Axles dance mid-wheel roll spheres barrel. Ratchet wheels sense ratchets, find a sewing machine that yawns. Screwing upwards or hunkered down, the sewing machine beheads itself, feet up. Take a dentist's drill, a meat grinder, a trolley scraper, buses and automobiles, bicycles, tandems and their tyres, even wartime ersatz tyres, and deform them. Take lights and deform them in the most brutal manner. Let locomotives crash into each other, let curtains and portières, spiderweb threads and window

frames dance and break grovelling glass. Explode steam boilers to make railroad smog. Take petticoats and the like, shoes and wigs and ice skates, and throw them in the right place, where they belong, and do it always at the right time. Also take, and why not, man-traps, automatic pistols, infernal machines, the tin fish and the funnel, everything of course in an artistically deformed state. Rubber hose is highly recommended. In short, take everything from the elegant lady's hairnet to the emperor's screw, always according to the dimensions required by the work.

‘Even people can be used.
‘People can be tied to backdrops
‘People can also appear actively, even in their daily situations, can talk on two legs, even in coherent sentences.
‘Now begin to wed these various materials to one another. Marry for example the waxed tablecloth to the home owners’ stock company; bring the lamp cleaner into a relationship with the marriage between Anna Blossom and A-natural, concert pitch. Feed the sphere to the surface and let a cracked corner be utterly destroyed by 22-thousand candle power arc light. Let people walk on their hands and carry hats on their feet, like Anna Blossom. (Cataracts.) Foam is sprayed.

‘And now comes the lava of musical saturation. Behind the stage set organs sing and say: “Fütt, fütt.” The sewing machine screeches ahead. From behind a backdrop a man yells: “Bah.” Another one appears suddenly and states: “I’m stupid.” (Reproduction by any means strictly prohibited.) A clergyman kneels upside down among them and loudly calls and prays: “O mercy swarms distounds hallelujah boy, boy espouses drop of water.” A waterpipe drips unchallenged monotone. Eight.

‘Drums and flutes dash death, and a trolley conductor’s whistle shines brightly. A jet of ice cold water in a pot runs down over the back of the man perched on the backdrop. He sings C-sharp D, D-sharp E-flat, the whole of the workers’ song. A gas flame has been lit under the pot to boil the water and a violin melody shimmers pure and tender as young girls. A veil overwidens widths. Deep dark red the middle boils embers. Something stirs gently. In waves arise long violin sighs and expire. Light darkens stage, even the sewing machine is dark.’

Meanwhile this publication aroused the interest of the actor and theatrical director Franz Rolan who had kindred ideas, namely to make the theatre independent of the playwright and to let the performances grow out of the available materials of the theatre: stage, backdrops, colour, light, actors, director, painter and public. Together we have thoroughly worked through the idea of the *Merz* stage in relation to its practical application, theoretically for the present. This has turned into a voluminous manuscript that will soon be ready to o to print. Maybe later on we will also have the occasion to witness the total *Merz* work of art. Create it ourselves we cannot, because we too would only be parts of it, mere material.

Kurt Schwitters, ‘Merz’ [1920; *Der Anarat*, 2, 1921, 3-9; reprinted in *Pppppp: Poems, Performance Pieces, Proses, Plays, Poetics*, eds and trans. Jerome Rothenburg and Pierre Joris, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993; reprinted Cambridge, Massachusetts: Exact Change, 2002].

Kurt SCHWITTERS

Anna Blossom Has Wheels

[1919]

O Thou, beloved of my twenty seven senses,
I love thine!
Thou thee thee thine, I thine, thou mine. – we?
That belongs (by the side) not here!
Who art Thou, uncouted woman?
Thou art – art Thou? –
People say, Thou werst, –
Let them say, they don't know, how the churchtower stands.
You wearest your head on your feet and wanderst on your hands,
On thy hands wanderst Thou.
Hallo thy red dress, clashed in white folds,
Red I love Anna Blossom, red I love Thine!
Thou Thee Thee Thine, I Thine, Thou mine, – we?
That belongs (by the side) in the cold glow.
Red Blossom, red Anna Blossom, how say the people?

Price question:
1. Anna Blossom has wheels.
2. Anna Blossom is red.
3. what colours are the wheels?
Blue is the colour of thy yellow hair.
Red is the whirl of thy green wheels.
Thou simple maiden in everyday-dress,
Thou dear green animal,
I love Thine!
Thou Thee Thee Thine, I Thine, Thou mine - we?
That belongs (by the side) in the glow box.
Anna Blossom,
Anna,
A-N-N-A
I trickle your name.
Thy name drops like soft tallow.
Does thou know it, Anna,
Does though already know it?
One can also read thee from behind,
And thou, thou most glorious of all,
Thou art from the back, as from the front:
A-N-N-A
Tallow trickles to strike over my back.
Anna Blossom,
Thou drippes animal,
I
Love
Thine!
Kurt Schwitters, *Anna Blume; Dichtungen* [Hannover: P. Steegemann, 1919; trans. Kurt Schwitters, 1942, in *Kurt Schwitters, Das literarische Werk*, Cologne: DuMont Buchverlag, 1973].

Kurt SCHWITTERS

from Ursonata [1922–32]

prelude:
Fümms bö wö tää zää Uu,
pögiß,
kwii Ee.

Oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo,

dll rrrrrr beeeee bö,
dll rrrrrr beeeee bö fümms bö,
rrrrrr beeeee bö fümms bö wö,
beeeee bö fümms bö wö tää,
bö fümms bö wö tää zää,
fümms bö wö tää zää Uu:

first movement:
theme 1:
fümms bö wö tää zää Uu,
pögiß,
kwii Ee.

theme 2:
Dedesnn nn rrrrrr,
li Ee,
mpiff tillff too,
tillll,
Jüü Kaa? (sung)

theme 3:
rinnzekete bee bee nnz krr müü?
Ziiuu ennze, ziiuu rinnzkrmmüü,

rakete bee bee.

theme 4:
Rrummpff tillff toooo?
Kurt Schwitters, ‘Ursonate’, *Merz*, 24 [1932; reprinted in *Kurt Schwitters, Das literarische Werk*, Cologne: DuMont Buchverlag, 1973].

Kurt SCHWITTERS

Cigarren (elemental) [1921]

Cigarren
Ci
garr
ren
Ce
i
ge
a
err
err
e
en

Ce	1/2 4	great wholes already formed, so as to shorten the distance	237
CeI	4, 4, 4	between intuition and visualization of the artistic concept,	
CeIGe	1/2 4	avoiding waste through friction. i supposes this distance	
CeIGeA	4, 4	as equal to zero, = 0. Concept, material, and work of art are	
CeIGeAErr	4	the same thing. i considers the work of art in nature. Here	
CeIGeAErrEr	4	artistic creation means the recognition of rhythm and	
CeIGeAErrErr	4	expression in one part of nature. Here there is no reason to	
ErrEEEn		fear any waste through friction: there is no perturbation	
EEEn		during creation. I demand i, not as the only artistic form	
En		but as a particular form.	
Ce			
i			
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a			
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err			
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en			
Ci			
garr			
ren			
cigarren			
Kurt Schwitters, <i>Cigarren</i> [1921; reprinted in <i>Kurt Schwitters, Das literarische Werk</i> , Cologne: DuMont Buchverlag, 1973].			

Kurt SCHWITTERS

Poem 25 (elemental) [1922]

25
25, 25, 26
26, 26, 27
27, 27, 28
28, 28, 29
31, 33, 35, 37, 39
42, 44, 46, 48, 52
53
9, 9, 9
54
8, 8, 8
55
7, 7, 7
56
6, 6, 6
56
6, 6, 6
3/4 6
57
5, 5, 5
2/3 5
58
4, 4, 4
1/2 4
59
4, 4, 4
1/2 4
25
4, 4, 4

Kurt SCHWITTERS

Cow Manifesto [1922]

First, I find it very unnatural to milk different cows into a single pail. You should milk different cows into different pails. Even like that it isn't really ideal, because I think it completely contrary to general human morals for different people to drink milk from the same pail. You could remedy this by milking the same cow into different pails meant for different people. But then it's still very unnatural to milk a cow into a pail, or even (as it happens frequently these days) to bottle the milk. By its nature, milk should be either in the cow or in the veal's or human's stomach, but never in a bottle. On the other hand, given the rhythm of present life, it isn't easy for people living in big cities to run off to the country when they want to drink milk, so that each of them can drink from the udder of his personal cow. On the other hand, because of space, it would be rather difficult to raise enough cows in cities. Consequently, there is only one solution hygienically irreproachable for the modern man, adapted to modern times and worthy of a cow:

Let the cows graze tranquilly and peacefully in their pastures, with flexible rubber tubes attached to their udders and connected at the other end to subterranean conduits leading to the big cities, like those used for gas. It is essential that the conduits never communicate and that they be parallel. These conduits can be placed right in the buildings and come out into the room at some practical height. You can put a tasteful faucet there to close off the tube. You can place a nipple on this faucet whenever necessary. That way, whenever an owner of a cow is thirsty, he can milk his nipple. As you see, this is hygienically irreproachable, healthy, worthy of a cow, and harmless for general morals.

Kurt Schwitters, 'Manifeste Vache', *Das literarische Werk*, 2 [94; reprinted in Mary Ann Caws, ed., *Manifesto: A Century of Isms*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001] 390-91.

Kurt SCHWITTERS

i (a manifesto) [1922]

Today every child knows about *Merz*. But what's i? i is the middle vowel, it designates the coherence and the intensity of *Merz* in the way it apprehends artistic form. To make a work of art, *Merz* uses as a basic material those

The first i drawings were shown to the public when I had my exhibit at *Sturm* on May 22 of this year. For the art critics I will add that, of course, it takes much more knowledge to cut out a work of art within nature, unformed from an artistic point of view, than to construct a work of art starting with its own artistic rules, and that with an unimportant material. In art the material isn't important, you just have to give it form to make it a work of art. For i however, the material is far from unimportant, to the extent that a world of nature doesn't necessarily become a work of art. That is why i is a particular form. But at least this time it's a matter of coherence. Do you think an art critic can grasp that?

Kurt Schwitters, 'I (ein manifest)', *Der Sturm*, 13, 5 [May 1922, 80; reprinted in Mary Ann Caws, ed., *Manifesto: A Century of Isms*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001] 391.

Kurt SCHWITTERS

from Revolution in Revon [1922]

They must be curious trees indeed, where the big elephants go walking, without bumping each other! The child was playing. And saw a man standing. 'Mama,' said the child – the Mother: 'Yes.' 'Mama,' – 'Yes!' 'Mama,' – 'Yes!' 'Mama, a man is standing there!' – 'Yes!' 'Mama, a man is standing there!' – 'Yes!' 'Mama, a man is standing there!' – 'Where?' 'Mama, a man is standing there!' – 'Where is a man standing?' 'Mama, a man is standing there!' – 'Where is a man standing?' 'Mama, a man is standing there!' – 'Why, no!' 'Mama, a man is standing there!' – 'Why don't you let the man stand?' 'Mama, a man is standing there!' – The mother arrives. Really, a man is standing there. Strange, I wonder what he means by standing there? We had better call Father. Mother: 'Father!' – Father 'Yes!' 'Father!' – 'Yes!' 'Father!' – 'Yes!' 'Father, there's someone standing there!' 'Yes!' 'Father, there's someone standing there!' – 'Let him stand!'

'Father, a man is standing there!' – 'What does he want?'

'Why don't you ask him, I don't know' – 'Let the man stand!'

'Father, you'd better come over here, there's someone standing and standing here.'

The father arrives. Someone's standing and standing there.

'Sir, why are you standing there?' No reply.

'Sir, why are you standing there?' The man remains standing.

'Sir, I ask you now for the third time, what is the reason you are standing there?' The man remains standing.

This is really extraordinary! There is a man standing here who refuses to answer!

Someone is passing by.

'Hey, neighbour, come over here a minute, a man is standing here!' – 'What's the matter?'

'Hey, neighbour, come over here a minute, a man is standing here!' –

The neighbour arrives – really a man is standing here.

More people pass by and stop. Questions are articulated, like: 'Where is the man standing?' – 'Man, what are you standing there for?' 'Sir why are you standing?' The man remains standing.

In the crowd surrounding the man there is also a stranger. No one knows him. The author betrays the fact that the latter's name is Alves Bromestick. More people pass by and stop. Questions are articulated, like:

'Why are the people standing there?' – 'Why do the people stand there?' – 'Has some one met with an accident?'

'A man is standing there!' – 'Where is a man standing?'

'A man is standing there!' – 'Where is a man standing?'

'He is standing there!' – 'Where is he standing?'

'He is standing there.' – 'What does he want?'

'He is standing there.' – 'What do you mean he's

standing there – he must be wanting something.'

'He is standing there.' – 'What does he want?'

'We'd like to know ourselves.'

– Meanwhile Dr Leopold Pothook passes by. Dr Friedrich August Leopold Pothook stops short.

Suddenly Dr Friedrich August Leopold Kasimir Amadeus Pothook says to his wife, Frau Doktor Amalie Pothook:

'Amalie,' suddenly said Dr Friedrich August Leopold Kasimir Amadeus Gneomar Lutetius Pothook to his wife: 'Amalie, there is a riot here.' 'What kind of a riot?' – suddenly asks Frau Doktor Amalie Pothook her husband, Dr Friedrich August Leopold Kasimir Amadeus Gneomar Lutetius Obadja Pothook.

'A rioting mob, of course,' he answers.

Frau Doktor Amalie now stops short also, and be it said en passant, in an entirely gracious manner. She puts on her lorgnette and looks in the direction of the mob.

Suddenly Frau Doktor Amalie says to her husband:

'Leopold, please ask somebody what's the matter there.'

Dr Leopold asks a man: 'What's wrong here?' – 'I don't know.'

'What's happened here?' – 'A man is standing there.'

'Where is a man standing?' – 'He's standing there.'

'But where is he standing?' – 'He's standing there.'

'What does he want?' – 'He's standing there.'

'But there must be something he wants?' – 'He's standing there.'

'But surely no man is standing there.' – 'A man is standing there.'

'But why should a man be standing there?' – 'A man is standing there.'

'But why, with all this mob, should a man be standing there?' – 'A man is standing there.'

'But, sir, just think – why should, with all this tremendous mob a man be standing there?' – 'Still, in spite of this tremendous mob, a man is standing there.'

Dr Leopold works his way through the mob; he really wants to see the man stand. To be sure, a man is standing there.

His spouse follows him. Really a man is standing there.

Dr Friedrich August Leopold Kasimir Amadeus Gneomar Lutetius Obadja Pothook and his spouse are astounded. A man is really standing there.

Really a man is standing there!

'Now,' says the doctor, 'arises the sole, and not unimportant question, why is that man standing there.'

For Dr Pothook is by profession an art critic – therefore the question.

'You're right,' says Frau Doktor Amalie to her husband, 'Now arises the sole, though not entirely unimportant question, why the man is standing there.'

Alves Bromestick at that moment becomes aware of Pothook – besides, he is just occupied with assuming the unobtrusive name of Meier.

'I suppose the simplest thing would be,' said the doctor, 'for me to ask the man himself?'

'You're right,' said Frau Doktor Amalie to her husband, 'the simplest thing would be for you to ask the man himself.'

Whereupon the doctor says: 'Sir, why are you standing there?' –

The man remains standing.

'Sir, what are you standing there for?' – The man stands.

'Sir, why are you standing there?' – The man stands.

'Sir, just why are you standing there?' – The man stands.

'Sir, how come, that you are standing there?' – The man stands.

'Sir, what's the reason you are standing there?' – The man stands.

'Sir, I now ask for the seventh or the eighth time, how and why you are standing there?' – The man stands.

'Man, are you deaf?' – The man stands.

'Sir, I don't understand what you have to stand here for?' – The man stands.

For Doctor Pothook is an art critic by profession – therefore he understands with difficulty.

'Can't you at least answer me?' – The man stands.

– Now this is too much for Frau Doktor Amalie. She pushes her spouse to one side and turning to the man says: 'My husband has asked repeatedly what you have to stand here for. Who are you, anyway? Who are you,

anyway, that you fail to answer my husband? Don't you happen to know who is standing before you? My husband is the Honourable, Herr Doktor Friedrich August Leopold Kasimir Gneomar Lutetius Obadja Jona Micha Mahu Habakuk Zephania Huggui Sacharja Maleschi Pothook, Doctor, Editor and Manager of the newspaper *Revon*, which means the Law. Now you know it. Answer my husband, the manager!' – The man stands.

Frau Doktor Amalie now gets excited. She puts her lorgnette on and takes it off again. In case of rheumatic toothache and head-ache 2 or 3 Revon-tablets, principally on the abdomen, are almost always enough. Frau Doktor Amalie feels that everybody is looking at her.

Frau Doktor Amalie feels that she is the principal person today. She feels instinctively that she must say something.

Frau Doktor Amalie snorts for a few seconds and then says suddenly:

'What does this fellow think about anyway? I am Frau Doktor Amalie Pothook, and this man is standing here. I and my husband, we both ask this man repeatedly, what he is here standing for, and this man answers neither me, nor my husband – Sirrrrrrrrrr!!! I don't permit such impertinent insults!!' – The man stands.

'Amalie!' the doctor and editor tried to calm her.

'The woman's absolutely right,' suddenly said the stranger, Alves Bromestick, who was about to hang up the telephone receiver. If you put down the toy again, it goes on running by itself. The wrapping will be charged at purchase prizes.

'The man's right,' some one spoke up in the crowd.

'Who's right?' a voice asked.

Doktor Leopold was just about to say something again, when his spouse felt that she would have to say something again.

'This man', she said, 'This man is a lout.'

Pothook shuddered.

'The man is a criminal,' said Alves Bromestick. Nobody paid any attention to him.

'This man,' said Frau Doktor Analie, 'This man is an entirely uncultured man,' and as if

she suddenly had lost her mastery over herself, she used an expression, an expression which she probably had heard from a very uncultured fellow, an expression which she most likely never had let pass over her noble lips, an expression which I, as an author, would never have used, to wit: '*Lousy brute!*'

'The man is a scoundrel,' a voice called. 'Filou,' somebody called. 'Turnip-swine' – 'The man is a criminal,' said Alves Bromestick very distinctly again.

Here the author lets follow a self-composed poem, the title of which is '*Quadrangle*.'

Quadrangle

Lukewarm milk fight thine soul triangle.
Flowers bloomen yellow moons in the sun.
Moon yellow blue, blue days,
And the frog slants the chosin question.
Dew Eyes towards you.

Lukewarm milk fight *Thine* soul's triangle,
To thee
And thou,
And eyes choose question velvet the frog [...]

Doktor Friedrich August Leopold Kasimir Amadeus Gneomar Lutetius Obadja Jona Michi Nahum Habakuk Zephanja Huggui Sacharja Maleschi Pothook, doctor, editor and manager of the newspaper *Revon*, which means the Law, therefore, went personally to a few adjacent streets and looked around, until he found a policeman who was hiding.

For it was the custom in that rather sensitive city of Revon that the police intervened in the most pressing cases only, that is when the cases were really indifferent, and when the official could arrest an entirely harmless fellow without danger and with a large gesture. I expressly mention here that that only happened in Revon, while in other places the police did this and that always, because it was their duty and prescribed to them as such. But whenever the official saw any gatherings of people, he disappeared unobtrusively, with tact and in wise precaution.

The Honourable Doktor Friedrich August, therefore, had difficulties in finding a policeman, and after he had found him, in convincing the latter that his cooperation was necessary here. Sois donc gentil! For the official had the wrong idea that he was to arrest the agitator Alves Bromestick. But when he learned that there was only a man at stake, who was stupidly standing, he, of course, went along at once.

'Sir,' he said to the man, 'I regret to say I am forced to establish your identity. What's your name?' The man stands.

Anna Blossom in that second lived through worlds. – The man stands.

'Sirrr,' said the official. 'I am very sorry, but I am forced to arrest you.'

The man stands.

'Come along,' said the official, 'a refusal would' – the man stands – 'although I'm sorry' – the man stands – 'be equal to resisting authority.'

Then something unheard-of happened. The man turned his head to one side.

Terror burrowed into eye-lids, entrails hissed. The policeman laughed a lacquered apple. The public was tense with excitement. Everybody waited madly to know what would happen. The last of the spectators stood on the tips of their toes. A few saw again the name of Pra in big first letters, coloured according to patterns. A young artist cried: 'At bottom an artist is something ridiculous, don't you think so? That vocation can only be excused, if one knows something.' A child was crushed between two stout women. Am I not a sweet lad? They threw the crushed remains of the child heedlessly under their feet. The eye sees the heaven open. A few of the smaller persons took possession of the dead child, and stood on it, because they wanted to see something, too.

Frau Doktor Amalie felt painfully that she was no longer the centre of interest. Do you know, Anna, do you know it already, you can also be read from the back, and

you, most magnificent one of all, you are from the back as well as in front: ANNA.

'Come along,' said the official and lifted his left leg. The man stands.

'Come along,' said the official, and lifted his right arm, as well as his left leg.

The man stands.

'Sir!' said the official, 'if you don't come along, I shall have to, although I regret it, call for' – the man stands – 'reinforcements'.

Then the most unexpected thing happened.

Slowly, and with the tranquillity of a perfect machine, the man left, amiably greeting everybody, but not with the official, no, in an opposite direction.

The men stood trees.

The women shrieked.

The children ran shout.

The official stood, like the man before, and

THE MAN LEFT !!!!!

Within a short time the scene of this action offered distinctly the picture of a stupendous revolution. Just as the powder magazine is exploded by a spark, so did the people, as though gripped by a fearful panic run off in every direction. Tumult whipped terror into a wild flight. Some of them stumbled over the corpse of the crushed child, and fell down. These unfortunate ones were dashed to pieces by the furious mob. Frau Doktor Amalie received on this occasion the blow of a boot in the region of her abdomen, and therefore recovered relatively quickly from her second fainting fit, only to fall into a third one.

Just as with the revolution a few foundation walls remain inviolate, so did here, one, two, three, four, five persons remain behind, not counting the dead bodies.

The official, too, remained standing and wrote down the facts, one of the chief tasks of the local police.

He noted down, that an unidentified man, who had remained also unknown to those present, was responsible as a result of his illegal behaviour, for the death of one, two, three, four, five persons and a child of the Free State of Revon. Consequently the official found himself obliged, though with regret, to arrest the man in time.

But to his regret the man escaped arrest by such a rapid flight that, to his great regret, this flight could not be prevented, especially since the police at that time and that place did not consist of adequate forces.

To his regret, or rather as a result, however, there occurred a few regrettable accidents, and then followed their enumeration.

The remaining spectators were noted down as witnesses. Alves Bromestick gave his name on that occasion as Lutetius Hagedorn.

Then followed the official seizure of the dead bodies. They were stamped, weighed, examined for trichinas, or taken to the morgue for the establishment of their identities, one of the chief tasks of the local police.

A hunch-backed youth drawn by billy-goats, however, ran with an electric bell through Revon and cried:

'Extraordinary session of Parliament, extraordinary session of Parliament; the question at stake is nothing less than the outbreak of the great and glorious revolution in Revon.'

Concluding Song:

They must be curious trees indeed, where the big
Elephants go walking,
without bumping each other,
without bumping each other,
without bumping each other,
without bumping each other,
without bumping each other,
without bumping each other!

Kurt Schwitters, 'Ursachen und Beginn der grossen glorreichen Revolution in Revon', *Der Sturm*, 13, 11 [November 1922, 158-66; trans. Eugene Jolas in *Transition*, 8, November 1927] 60-76.

Kurt SCHWITTERS from Theo van Doesburg and Dada [1931]

Everyone knows the Van Doesburg of the *Stijl* magazine, the artist of poise, consecutive development, and logical construction, but only a few know his importance for Dada. And yet he introduced Dadaism to Holland in 1923 with unparalleled success, and himself enacted a good bit of Dada in the process. [...]

At the end of 1922, Theo van Doesburg invited the leading Dadaists to a Congress in Holland, which was to take place the following year. Unfortunately we underestimated the receptivity of the Dutch, and so, aside from Van Doesburg, I was the only Dadaist who appeared for the introductory evening at the Hague Kunstkring. Theo van Doesburg delivered an explanatory lecture about Dadaism and I was supposed to provide an example of Dadaism. But the truth is that Van Doesburg, as he appeared on the platform in his dinner jacket, distinguished black shirtfront, and white tie, and on top of that, bemonocled, powdered all white, his severe features imprinted with an eerie solemnity, produced an effect that was quite adequately Dada; to cite his own aphorism: 'Life is a wonderful invention.'

Since I didn't know a word of Dutch, we had agreed that I should demonstrate Dadaism as soon as he took a drink of water. Van Doesburg drank and I, sitting in the middle of the audience, to whom I was unknown, suddenly began to bark furiously. The barking netted us a second evening in Haarlem; as a matter of fact it was sold out, because everyone was curious to see Van Doesburg take a drink of water and then hear me suddenly and unexpectedly bark. At Van Doesburg's suggestion, I neglected to bark on this occasion. This brought us our third evening in Amsterdam; this time people were carried out of the hall in a faint, a woman was so convulsed with laughter that for fifteen minutes she held the public

attention, and a fanatical gentleman in a homespun coat prophetically hurled the epithet ‘idiots’ at the crowd. Van Doesburg’s campaign for Dadaism had gained a decisive victory. [...]

I should very much have liked to appear more often with so gifted a Dadaist as Van Doesburg. World Dadaism has lost in Van Doesburg one of its greatest thinkers and warriors.

Kurt Schwitters, ‘Theo van Doesburg’, *De Stijl* [January 1932; trans. Ralph Mannheim, in Robert Motherwell, ed., New York: Wittenborn, Schulz, 1961; reprinted in Lucy Lippard, ed., *Dadas on Art*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1971] 108-10.

I. K. BONSET
X-images [1920]

X-IMAGES
hey hey hey
have you experienced it physically
have you experienced it phsically
have you ex PER ienced it PHYSICALLY
On
— ruimte and
— tijd
past present future
the behindhereandyon
the hodgepodge of nothingness and appearance
little tattered almanac
that one reads upside down

MY CLOCK STANDS STILL
ZIG-ZAG
chewed-up cigarette butt on the
WHITE NAPKIN
moist brown
decomposition
SPIRIT
346 FREIGHT TRUCK
ATHWART
trembling barrren centre
caricature of the ponderous
electric man
rose and grey and deep winered
the fragments of the universe i find in my tea

I.K. Bonset, ‘X-images’, *De Stijl*, vol. 3, no. 9 [July 1920, 77; trans. Hannah Hedrick, *The Structurist*, vol. 9, ‘New Translations of Van Doesburg’s Writings’, 1969] 83.

I. K. BONSET
Characteristics of Dadaism
[1923]

No one has as yet worn the Sun in his buttonhole.
— Peter Rohl

Dada is the serious morality of our Time.
— Kurt Schwitters

DADA — and for one instant everyone awakens from his daily somnambulism which he calls living.
DADA — and the sick are healed, move about, and sing ‘The Watch on the Rhine’ or dance a Shimmy.
DADA — and the blind see; they see that the world is dada and laugh ceaselessly at the weighty hair-splitting of our moralists and politicians.
DADA — and the bourgeois sweats rubber, makes a camp bed out of his most beautiful Rembrandt, and dances a one-step to choir music. Each bourgeois is a miniature Landru; behind the mask of culture, humanism, aesthetics, and philosophy he gives his instincts free rein.
Culture — what is it but the degree of refinement with which our true instincts are expressed?

Dada has discovered the world such as it is and the world has recognized itself in Dada. Dada is a mirror in which the world sees itself. The dadaists do not wish the world to be different than the way they see it, namely, dada: at once orderly and disorderly, yes and no, me and not me. ‘The Dadaist is a mirror carrier,’ says Kurt Schwitters and the dada lyricist Hans Arp gives us advice in a poetical manner in ‘The Cloud-Pump’ on how to beware of artifice.

I.K. Bonset, ‘Karakteristiek van het Dadaïsme’, *Mecano*, 4-5 [1923; trans. Claire Nicholas White, in Lucy R. Lippard, ed., *Dadas on Art*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1971] 112.

I. K. BONSET
Towards a Constructive
Poetry [1923]

Destruction is part of the rebuilding of poetry.
Destruction of syntax is the first necessary preamble to the new poetry.
Destruction has expressed itself in the following ways:

- 1. In the use of words (according to their meaning).
- 2. In atrocity (psychic disturbance).
- 3. In typography (synoptic poetry).

In (1) were instrumental: Mallarmé, Rimbaud, Ghil, Gorter, Apollinaire, Birot, Arp, Schwitters, etc ...
In (2) de Sade, Lautréamont, Masoch, Péladan, all religious writings, Schwitters etc ...
In (3) Apollinaire, Birot, Marinetti, Beauduin, Salvat Papaseit, Kurt Schwitters, etc.

POETRY IS UNTHINKABLE WITHOUT AN AESTHETIC FOUNDATION

To take the purely utilitarian as the only general basis of a new artistic expression = nonsense.

Utilitarian poetry
Utilitarian music = nonsense
Utilitarian painting
Utilitarian sculpture
nonsense — nonsense — nonsense etc.

We are living in a provisional period. We suppose: that there is no difference between the soul and the spinal marrow, between coitus and art.

But when we make art we use no soap (perhaps the painters do if they have inclinations to cleanliness) and one cannot rise up to heaven on a tomato.

One cannot brush one’s teeth with art.

Each thing contains its own usefulness

SYPHILIS IS NOT THE OBJECT OF MAKING LOVE

But: the sailors of the new constructivist art insist that:

A piece of iron nailed to weed;
A chair without a back;
A car which does not drive;
A gramophone without a voice;

OR

A house without a groundplan;
A sword without a blade;
A (red) poem without content;

all that is utilitarian art.
In other words, art rooted in reality!
No, all that is just art-syphilis.
Is there any poetry on which one can sit, as on a chair? Or in which one can drive as in a car? No. Perhaps there only exists a poetry on which one can spit: the utilitarian revolutionary poetry. (I beg the gentlemen to replace the pig’s bladders on their head and the tubes in their nose.)

Thus, it does not matter to the reconstruction of Art whether the product has any practical application. In so far as a statue or a painting has a purpose — say to sit on — it is not a statue or a painting but a ‘chair’:

And: in any case, usefulness does not limit itself to the organs of our sensual being. And even if this were so, what we call our spirit belongs equally to our bodily organs.

Let us try to make a poem without feet which would be as good as a shoe.
Do you know, gentlemen, what a city is? A city is a tension in breadth and a tension in height, nothing else. Two straight connecting wires depict a city. Each individual tries by means of: legs, the train, a trolley, or explosives (the transportation of the future) to find the meeting point of these two tensions.

And a poem is just like a city. Everyone tries, as

immediately as possible, to represent the square of the two outer tensions. Immediately, that is to say:

The constructivist poet makes himself a new language with the alphabet: the language of great distances, of depth and height, and by means of this creative language he conquers the space-time movement.

The new poet depicts only by conquering, by abolishing, by destroying (like our politicians) through unhumanist abstraction. In the new poetry, to construct means to reduce. In short: the new poet constructs his language with the ruins of the past, and since everything exists only through language, he forms, in spite of 'disinterested abstraction', the new man and the world with him.

THAT IS HIS FUNCTION.

I.K. Bonset, 'Tot een constructieve Dichtkunst', *Mecano*, 4-5 [1923; trans. Claire Nicholas White, in Lucy R. Lippard, ed., *Dadas on Art*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971; reprinted in Mary Ann Caws, ed., *Manifesto: A Century of Isms*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001] 422-24.

I. K. BONSET

About the Sense of Literature [1926]

in writing it is a question of whether the sentence is 'full', charged. hence the (dutch) term: *volzin*.

the sentence may be charged in many ways.

conceptually, *i.e.*, with various kinds of ideas; poetically, if the sentence is full of creative discovery; and purely literary when, through the rearrangement of words and phrases, a new reality acquires a special form, whether conceptually or a-logically. the conceptually charged sentence is obviously meaningless to poetry. the nonsensical sentence, on the other hand, may well be meaningful to modern poetry. writing, as creation with and from the word material, is pure poetry. the new verse rests upon creative invention, which is not possible without absolute destruction of syntax and the idea (and of everything relating to ordinary reason). this destruction of syntax and idea is accompanied by the abolition of time and space.

the new poetry has truly been completely liberated from these logical classifying elements of human consciousness. it knows neither a next-to-each-other nor an after-each-other. its dimensions are in the spaceless and the timeless, this applies however, only to the new poetry. it is *a priori* super-dimensional, super-real and counter-morphic.

certainly there were among the *tachtigers* (poets of the 1880s) small movements in this direction, but, at the same time in france, there were, proportionally speaking, enormous amounts of real poetry in circulation (ghil, mallarmé, de sade, de lautréamont, etc.). the *tachtigers*, however, lacked confidence in the word-as-matter, as

independent means of expression, which led, in consequence, to a rapid degeneration into bourgeois romantic or tendentious laying on of words, which had ultimately to end in a morass of words (*quérido*).

I.K. Bonset, 'Over den zin der letter kunde', *De Stijl*, 7, 77 [1926, 78; reprinted in *De Stijl: Extracts from the Magazine*, ed. Hans L.C. Jaffé, trans. R.R. Symonds, New York: Abrams, 1970] 212-13.

COLOGNE

The Cologne Dadas fought notions of genius and modern art with the slogan 'dilettantes rise up'. In *Bulletin D*, the catalogue of the first dada exhibition in Cologne, Johannes Theodor Baargeld's text '... knocks the warm egg out of the hand!', which served as the introduction, denounces Expressionism, Picasso, Manet ('Let's stuff Manet'), Cézanne ('Cézanne is chewing gum'), celebrating life in the playful language that he found in dada publications; Max Ernst declares that a readymade piano hammer is the 'most perfect sculpture'. He continues his critique of the Expressionists and Wilhelm Worringer in his contribution to *Die Schammade*, the elaborate single-issue journal of Cologne Dada. Arp's 'Declaration', published in *Dada au Grand Air*, which he, Tristan Tzara and Max Ernst edited in Tyrol, humorously defends Tzara against Picabia's accusation that Tzara had nothing to do with finding the word 'Dada' in Zurich. But growing impatient with the question of who invented Dada, Arp concludes: 'The morality of idiots and their belief in geniuses makes me shit'.

Johannes BAARGELD

... knocks the warm egg out of the hand! [1919]

AHEHE: Cézanne is chewing gum. The Grünewald digests van Gogh's yellow denture. Van Gogh had an offensive breath and is dead. Eljen dada!

BEHEHE: the Phallustrade of the Expressionists exhausts the lecithin store of the whole built-up and known stomach crust. The abdominal bandage of Patti has been buried. Dr Rudolf Steiner's coroners joined the international DADA Association (iadede). Eviva dada!

CEHEHE: oncasso cassa picasso. Citizen Pablo Picasso distributes his finished oeuvre to Madrid's widows. Now the widows are able to take a course in Swedish massage in order to ... picasso Umdada?

DEHEHE: The tooth counsellor (?) was a woman. Expressionism is a skin bandage of umbilical cord character. Report: Conjunctiva ok.

EHEHE: Therefore Professor Oskar Kokoschka can now with certainty be considered the inventor of the automechanical leech 'Selfhelp'. Et Propopo, et Propopos!

FEHEHE: Hasenclever in white tennis shorts!

Hasenclevers, unite! Da, ut dem dada.

GEHEHE: Art grows on society's abdomen. Art grows into the abdomen. The secret of the upper belly is its abdomen. Art is revolutionary up to the abdomen. Society has inserted into it Expressionism, a = o = expr. = abdomen = haemorrhoidal suppository.

HEHEHE: Expressionist poets write because expressionist non-poets are not silent. Heaven, hell and logabouthing – threefold lyrical shouting – Däublerbrilliantine is the star – lightwellwerfel is afar – Becher needs to learn rubinern, dada.

IHEHE: Waldenism autosecessionizes each pre-Waldenism while maintaining American bookkeeping. Its composition can be found on page three of the general catalogue of the Grands Magasins des Quatre Saisons for 1920 and contributions are only considered by sending in the full amount for a year's subscriptions in stamps.

KEHEHE: Soon he plocks Dada

Aniunde – in tomatopelvis

Waldas Toria by mistough ge-trickle

Koloman Psilander Hodenberg Rockdada

LEHEHE: Humanitarians! Ce qu'on dom is Dostoyevsky.

The right side of the piper-demon is still 0.879 dada away from the Gulf of Biscaya (across Europe). The

International Dada Association resolved at its last meeting

to paint a toilet seat on the Biscaya. Dada.

MEHEHE: There is no 'activist' art. The artist is part of life which he destroys. Activism is the mark of all that is alive. The prattle about activism shows us that blasting the womb becomes the vital question for the new. The constricted activism of the womb finds our activism ready. The old covers itself and calls itself 'life in any case.' Only life and lives to the full (Expressionism for the Expressionist). Egocentric act: a gentleman ... no lady. 'Life in any case' exists as grub for the new. The old wastes away to the materiatur of its Anti-christ. Kyrie eleison Anti-christ! NEHEHE: Ideonopolis is burning. Ideonopolis never burns. Einstein is a cigar and cuts himself off. Eljen Karolyi! Down with Ideonopolis! Down with the idionome art ... Let's stuff Manet. Let us, let us. Painting is not worth a single hare's button. Dada = hare's button. Franz Marc is the founder of the cul de Berlin and is carried by women in front of their wombs To hinder. The behind. Read the Dada manifestos. 0.000001 dada = chemically pure. Long live the iadede! caracho! cocha bamba!!!

Johannes Baargeld, '... Schlägt das warme Ei aus der Hand!', *Bulletin D*, 1, [1919; reprinted in Mel Gordon, ed., and Henry Marx, trans., *Dada Performance*, New York: PAJ Publications, 1987] 94-95.

Johannes BAARGELD

Tinkle Resonance II [1920]

Mountain-moths butterflying in a petroleum-sky
Swathed masts branching swan's candles
Teleplastically stares the Cherimbin swarm
In the overopened porter's hearts
Inhast the heaven-tinkle

Field-post-letter recoquettes from crisis-sky
blind beater star-spashes his cross-longing
Yuste Berling still jerks straight the mother-forceps
Fumble-moon and faroff craze
Fustian pants flag the cactus poles
Lamb-fiddler stretching clothesline
Wash loins loosen hop and fold
Cigar-rinds smear upon the elders
Weather-manikin scratches on her leg
Until all tinkle-bells are stopped.

Johannes Baargeld, 'Bimmelresonanz II', *Die Schammade*, 1 [1920, 28; trans. Gabrielle Bennett, in Lucy R. Lippard, ed., *Dadas on Art*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1971] 135.

Max ERNST

On Cézanne [1919]

Everyman loves everyman's Cézanne and rolls his eyes:
'That paaynting! Ooo that paaynting!' *Je m'en fous de Cézanne* [I don't give a damn about Cézanne], for he is an enormous hunk of painting. Everyman also loves everyman's expressionists, but he turns away in disgust from the gifted drawings in pissoirs. On the other hand the most perfect sculpture is the piano hammer. dada.

Max Ernst, 'Über Cézanne', *Bulletin D*, 1 [1919, 7; trans. Gabrielle Bennett, in Lucy R. Lippard, ed., *Dadas on Art*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1971] 125.

Max ERNST

Worringer, Profetor

DaDaistikus [1920]

6 o'clock to, the profet perceives in his ear conch the furor dadaistikus of the new deep-slurping association. hihi.
8:12 to, missa exhibitionalis in the invisible cathedral of the spiritual and private profets. titi.
9:17 to 9:25 to, ambiguity and appreciation of the erring error kokoschka in little goose slippers. lilli.
9:26 to 10:13 to, would man a priori be good to the new mankind conturbine DaDa? pffifi.
10:14 to 10:14 to. ubi bene ibi DaDa. pippi bibbi
10:14 to, photograph of the unending testicity of the gothic lilli in irish ornate minni.
10:15 to, today red tomorrow gothic mimmi. kri.

10:16 to 11:9 to, with the empathetic finger of the right hand DaDaindadaout— but !! willi
11:10 to 5:23 aftern. unio expressiva erotica et logetica or mating cramps of brother pablo mysticus and sister scholastica Feininger or the ethic of picasso. kille killi
6:00 n. picastrate Eum!

Max Ernst, 'Worringer, Profetor DaDaistikus', *Die Schammade*, 1 [1920, 7; trans. Gabrielle Bennet, in Lucy R. Lippard, ed., *Dadas on Art*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1971] 125.

Max ERNST

Wordless Thoughts [1920]

Wordless thoughts are the Mastarm of the uppermost electric *poésie* and virtue training they contain the pieces which every man must know to achieve eternal bliss endlessly the horse-apples roll from the mystical bung-hole into the aquarian blood-blocks of the desiccated reader they discolour porfry-like you would think it was a glacialshite.

Max Ernst, 'Pensées sans langage', *Die Schammade*, 1 [1920, 8; trans. Gabrielle Bennet, in Lucy R. Lippard, ed., *Dadas on Art*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1971] 127.

Anonymous

Whe Latest Fashion [1920]

On Sunday, I could not follow the invitation, painted on an unhinged door, to visit the Spring exhibition of Dadaist art in Cologne ... The show was re-arranged on Monday, and on Tuesday the exhibition rooms finally opened ...

You go through a door in a building behind a Cologne bar and run into an old stove; to your left is a vista of stacked-up bar chairs, and to your right, the art begins. (My companion thought the left-hand view was nicer.) At first the room is a little dark, making it difficult to read the catalogue, which is printed on red paper; but around the corner to the right it gets lighter, though here the rain starts dripping on your head ...

It is almost touching to see the way people walk around in it [the exhibition], desperately attempting, though sadly in vain, to find some relationship to this Dadaist art ... As far as the drawings go, I shall not even dare to attempt to describe them ... But then there is, for instance, a work of plastic art, which according to the catalogue bears the splendid title 'Bone-Mill for Non-Violent Barbers.' Imagine a good, solid board on which, devoid of all rhyme or reason, using only hammer and nails, are fastened spools jutting with nails, lengths of boards, telegraph wires, and construction lumber of every caliber, and the result subsequently painted in all colours of the rainbow ...

Some will ask themselves whether these people are fools or wise men having a laugh at the public's expense and seeing how far they can go in distorting art and scorning the public ... in one of the incomprehensible 'drawings' there was a lot of white paper left over, and

beneath it was written, 'Every visitor to this exhibition is entitled to enter a dadaist or anti-dadaist motto on this drawing. Trespassers will not be prosecuted.' A considerable number of visitors took advantage of this invitation. It turned out that none of them was a Dadaist, though some certainly made no bones about their opinion ... Actually, the exhibition is nothing but a practical joke. On the one hand, it makes fun of old-style art, while on the other, the participants subject one another to ridicule or irony or criticism ... The audience, by the way, provides a barometer of human temperament. While some get angry at being hoaxed, others laugh it off, and still others leave, shaking their heads ... And on the way out, they pass a couple of open garbage cans full of eggshells and all kinds of junk, and cannot decide whether these belong to the exhibition or are 'natural originals'.

'The Latest Fashion', review of the Dada Early Spring Exhibition, *Kölnische Volkszeitung* [1 May 1920; reprinted in William A. Camfield, *Max Ernst: Dada and the Dawn of Surrealism*, Munich: Prestel, 1993] 70-71.

Max ERNST

Arp [1921]

ARP
From the Place de l'Opéra we see him by day as by night
detaching himself from the sky

ARP
to him we owe the sixty formations of skulls since the
night of fog until the patch of colour.
it is he who occupies 3,000 zymometers per day
the reparation of boredom will be most difficult without
the midwife's hands
it is an invention of high precision and even greater
importance than the key of love found by auguste rodin.

ARP
As for the farting vulture, it seems to us that this little
madame-hole contains all the truth of the charming
excursion into the extreme crust of the Zambezi whose
reckless scheme he established despite the wind and
inclemencies
but if one met there the little leopard-hole whose arabic
passage is formed of the first leopard killed naturally the
remaining words contain a patriotic madrigal it is the
merchant who marches up to the reader now to admire the
courageous constructor arp

ARP
Yemen and Gynandria accede three times a day to his
child-sized coffin
with his teeth he breaks the new ensiform osselet growing
south of his sternum
not yet twenty-five years old already he hears the train-
train

ARP
We very much regret that he is still lacking the constipation
of material cultivated so carefully by pablo pi pablo
in addition he has sometimes been reproached for
forgetting the wealth of anatomical plantations and the
tubiferous colour we so greatly admire in Max Ernst

in the same way as the illusory sister germaine handled so
graciously by the fathers of the church
in the same way as the delicious little machine for
pulverizing ancestors
but all that doesn't make the thaumaturge-tumbler piss
by the gravitation by water and by sixty-nine numbers of
wind he sells practicables ice-slide plateaus and the
multicoloured droplets of small-caliber fossils
but he makes his parents transparent without counting
the shipwrecks he has avoided.

ARP

His good sistine fairy will repeat six times a week that this
remarkable spirit does not know how to eat meat and
immediately catches leprosy
but I have seen him sell his pox with good appetite I have
seen him bring (by a little wheelbarrow constructed for
that purpose) two kilos of tits and sausages per day into
the paternal home

ARP

citizens!
read the cloud pump
read the farting vulture
read the old man who knows how to steal
read love for three and bird to bird
probe work read

ARP

Since birth he has taken fact and cause for the three
theological virtues and for Archimedes' theorem which
says the body must be measured by the corporeal

ARP

so as not to violate his brother's taste he divides in two his
lips and tattoos all the constellations on his tongue
in the same way as the diagrams of all inflorescences
in the same way as octopi

ARP

That does not hinder him from always listening favourably
to the little daisies entering at the sound of teats
in his breast he keeps perspective lightning flashes
in the crevices of his shoulder-blades the wall swallow
nests
in the conch of his ear he seizes aerolites on the wing
his heart and his kidneys are perfectly decomposable
Max Ernst, 'Arp', *Littérature*, 19 [May 1921, 10, 12; trans.
Lucy R. Lippard, in Lucy R. Lippard, ed., *Dadas on Art*,
Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1971] 129-31.

Max ERNST
Song of the Old Mutineer
[1921]

The magic flute's little breasts
Jack the Ripper's lively lusts
The old goats' market cries
Polish the somnambulist's lips
smooth and glossy
They play with magic wands and bonds
They swallow their *pousse-café*
As if it were a *feuilleton*

As if it were the absurdity of absurdities
As if it were an adept's fried egg
So watch out, humanity –
We're lighter than opium
We're slighter than Europeum
We're slightly Americanized.
We wear boots of hamster skin
Because chemically we're next of kin.
We're mutinous, we're mutinous
We're mutinous all day long, O
We're mutinous in the morning
And mutinous all through the night.

Max Ernst, 'La Chanson des vieux mutins', *Création*, 2
[November 1921; reprinted in *Max Ernst: A Retrospective*,
London: Tate Gallery; Munich: Prestel, 1991] 296.

Max ERNST
Max Ernst [1921]

Born in 1891 in Brühl, present residence Cologne. Now in
his early thirties, good-looking, very intelligent, a painter,
not so much out of a love of art as out of laziness and age-
old tradition. His colours vary from the perforated to the
tubular. His secretions are full of vegetable and animal
remains. He is known as a sharp crowfoot. Those suffering
from palsy and shipwreck can always rely on him for depth
soundings and information on cold coastal waters. The
Pythagorean theorem has become completely ingrained in
him. He deserted father and mother at the tender age of
twelve to go hunting adolescent railways and major
flatfish. Ever since, he has loved toying with the styloid
appendages of maritime countries and promontories.

To him woman is a sandwich roll filled with white
marble.
To him Alsace-Lorraine is a political problem.
To him three minus two is still one.
On the other hand, he completely lacks the well-known
division of the circle into dimensions, coins and
weights.

Instead, he is intimately acquainted with the Northern
Celestial Hemisphere. He is extremely fond of observing,
in the close proximity of Mizar, a star of the fifth magnitude
known as Aktor or the Little Horseman. This star has
served as a test of sharp vision ever since antiquity. A
shame Aktor went to the stud so soon. It would have been
a midsummer sensation.

His Fatagaga pieces are available in a silent version,
that is, unsigned.
His iris can be trusted to indicate the dew point.
His lunar bone predicts better weather.
His tropic is defloration.

Max Ernst, 'Max Ernst', *Das Junge Rheinland*, 2 [2 November
1921, 2; reprinted in *Max Ernst: A Retrospective*, London:
Tate Gallery; Munich: Prestel, 1991] 296.

Max ERNST
from Inspiration to Order
[1932]

'One rainy day in Cologne on the Rhine, the catalogue of a
teaching-aids company caught my attention. It was
illustrated with models of all kinds – mathematical,
geometrical, anthropological, zoological, botanical,
anatomical, mineralogical, palaeontological, and so forth
– elements of such a diverse nature that the absurdity of
the collection confused the eye and mind, producing
hallucinations and lending the objects depicted new and
rapidly changing meanings. I suddenly felt my 'visionary
faculties' so intensified that I began seeing the newly
emerged objects against a new background. To capture it,
a little paint or a few lines were enough, a horizon, a sky, a
wooden floor, that sort of thing. My hallucination had been
fixed. Now it was a matter of interpreting the hallucination
in a few words or sentences. Such as: "Above the clouds
midnight passes. Above midnight glides the invisible bird
of day. A little higher than the bird the ether spreads and
the walls and roofs float." – "At Thunderstone the lovely
centrifugal drum hums unconsciously in soundless
space." – "Carefully poisoned, adolescent girls are put in
specimen jars. The little American girl we're promoting
this spring gleefully offers her breast to seals and sharks.
The human eye is a network of glass tears, salted snow and
congealed air."

Max Ernst, 'Inspiration to order', *This Quarter*, 5, 1
[September 1932, 79-85; reprinted in *Max Ernst: A
Retrospective*, London: Tate Gallery; Munich: Prestel, 1991]
290.

Hans ARP
Declaration [1921]

I hereby declare that on February 8, 1916, Tristan Tzara
discovered the word DADA. I was present with my twelve
children when Tzara pronounced for the first time this
word which has aroused in us such legitimate
enthusiasm. This took place at the Café Terrasse in Zurich,
and I wore a brioche in my left nostril. I am convinced that
this word has no importance and that only imbeciles and
Spanish professors can be interested in dates. What
interests us is the Dada spirit and we were all Dada before
the existence of Dada. The first Holy Virgins I painted date
from 1886, when I was a few months old and amused
myself by pissing graphic impressions. The morality of
idiots and their belief in geniuses makes me shit.

Hans Arp, 'Déclaration', *Dada au Grand Air: Der Sängerkrieg
in Tiro1*, *Dada*, 8 [1921, 4; trans. Lucy R. Lippard, in Lucy
R. Lippard, ed., *Dadas on Art*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J:
Prentice-Hall, 1971] 22.

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PARIS

Journals and magazines were the dominant vehicles for the dissemination of visual works and writing in Paris. Enthusiasm for Dada prompted almost every member to found a new journal. The gallery Au Sans Pareil published Philippe Soupault's poems 'Rose of the Wind', Louis Aragon's 'Bonfire', André Breton and Soupault's 'The Magnetic Fields', Paul Eluard's poems, and Tristan Tzara's 'Cinema Calendar of the Abstract Heart' (illustrated with nineteen woodcuts by Hans Arp). For Tzara, Paris became a receptive stage for large, anarchic performances, at which his absurd plays 'The First Celestial Adventure of Mr. Antipyrine' and 'The Gas Heart' were the most provocative presentations. Francis Picabia and Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes hurled their own invectives at the public. Breton grew tired of Tzara's mass demonstrations, and when Tzara opposed his 'International Congress' that was meant to decide the direction of the 'New Spirit', Breton attacked him in his essay 'After Dada', using the same false accusations by Christian Schad that had jeopardized the relationship between Picabia and Tzara a year earlier.

Francis PICABIA Cannibal Dada Manifesto

[1920]

Arise. You are all accused. The advocate can only speak to you if you are standing up.

Stand up as if for the *Marseillaise*, stand up as if for the Russian national anthem, stand up as if for God Save the King, stand up as if before the flag. And finally, stand up before Dada which represents life and which accuses you of liking everything for reasons of snobbery as soon as it costs a lot of money.

You have sat down again? Very well, that way you will pay more attention to me.

What are you doing here, planted on your backsides like a load of serious-minded mugs – because that's what you are, serious, isn't it?

Serious, serious, serious until death stops you being serious.

Death is a serious business, isn't it?

One either dies a hero or like an idiot, both of which

amount to the same thing. The only word that is not ephemeral is the word death. You like the death of other people.

Death! Death! Death!

The only thing that never dies is money, but takes off on holiday on its own.

Money is a God, the one we all respect, a serious individual – money respects the family. All honour to money; the man who has money is a man of honour.

Honour is bought and sold like the arsehole. The arsehole, like chips, represents life, and all you serious people, you smell worse than cow dung.

DADA, as for it, it smells of nothing, it is nothing, nothing, nothing.

It is like your hopes: nothing.

like your heaven: nothing

like your idols: nothing

like your politicians: nothing

like your heroes: nothing

like your artists: nothing

like your religions: nothing.

Whistle, shout, smash my face in and then what? I tell you that you are all mugs. In three months my friends and I will

be selling you our paintings for plenty of francs.

Francis Picabia, 'Manifeste cannibale dada', *Der Dada*, 1, 3 [1920, 14; trans. Terry Hale in *Dada Almanac*, ed. Malcolm Green, London: Atlas Press, 1998] 55–56.

Francis PICABIA I am Javanese [1920]

Whipped cream ... what exquisite taste ...

Let's chat about the serious things of civilisation

That's a poetry made for Don Quixotes

I kiss all you dear lady readers on your beautiful eyes

You cannot deny existence

The unnatural does not exist

We've got lots of things to say

Where do you live?

My underlying thoughts and their proper publication

A great book distils my faculties

Nonsense, isn't it?

Everything is nonsense – in America everything is DADA

My name is Francis Picabia

That's my handicap
 Love of art is the greatest love of all
 As I don't want to see my servants while eating
 All that is rather sad
 I study myself in the mirror
 I look like a flower offered to Saint Antony
 That's the important thing
 Because I dress like a woman to go dancing
 Philosophical reflections
 Beefsteak and brandy beer Egyptian syphilis
 A third of the world
 Is a tattoo on a cowpat
 The immense boredom is a pair of underpants
 For elephants
 Marching bare-foot around the sun
 I'll have you know that negresses
 Have backsides made of mud
 And breasts like a pair of tongs
 Their tin-plated sex is a barque
 The birth of the thighs and that of Christ is a balloon
 If I had eleven sous I would go to the brothel
 I take aim
 And turn somersaults intermittently

Francis Picabia (Paris)

Francis Picabia, 'Je suis des Javanais', *Cannibale*, 2 [25 May 1920, 7; trans. Terry Hale in *Dada Almanac*, ed. Malcolm Green, London: Atlas Press, 1998] 106–107.

Francis PICABIA Dada Manifesto [1920]

The Cubists want to cover Dada with snow; that may surprise you, but it is so, they want to empty the snow from their pipe to bury Dada.

Are you sure?

Perfectly sure, the facts are revealed by grotesque mouths. They think that Dada can prevent them from practising this odious trade: Selling art expensively.

Art costs more than sausages, more than women, more than everything.

Art is visible like God! (see Saint-Sulpice.)

Art is a pharmaceutical product for imbeciles.

The tables turn thanks to spirit; the paintings and other works of art are like strong-box *tables*, the spirit is inside and becomes more and more inspired according to the auction prices.

Farce, farce, farce, farce, farce, my dear friends.

Dealers do not like painting, they recognize the mystery of spirit...

Buy copies of autographs.

Don't be snobs, you will never be less intelligent because your neighbour possesses something exactly like yours.

No more fly specks on the walls.

There will be some anyway, that's clear, but a few less.

Dada is certainly going to become less and less detested, its police-pass will permit it to bypass processions chanting 'Come, Ducky', what a sacrilege!

Cubism represents the dearth of ideas.

They have cubed paintings of the primitives, cubed Negro sculptures, cubed violins, cubed guitars, cubed the illustrated newspapers, cubed shit, and the profiles of young girls, how they must cube money!!!

Dada itself wants nothing, nothing, nothing, it's doing something so that the public can say: 'We understand nothing, nothing, nothing.'

The Dadaists are nothing, nothing, nothing – certainly they will come to nothing, nothing, nothing.

Francis Picabia

who knows nothing, nothing, nothing

Francis Picabia, 'Manifeste DADA', 391, 12 [March 1920, 1; trans. Margaret I. Lippard, in Lucy R. Lippard, ed., *Dadas on Art*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971] 166.

Francis PICABIA Art [1920]

The principle of the word BEAUTY is merely an automatic and visual convention. Life has nothing to do with what the grammarians call *Beauty*. Virtue, like patriotism, exists only for mediocre intellects who have devoted their entire lives to the tomb. This fountainhead of men and women who regard *Art* as a dogma whose *God* is the accepted convention must be dried up. We do not believe in *God*, no more than we believe in *Art*, or in its priests, bishops, and cardinals.

Art is, and can only be, the expression of contemporary life. *Beauty*, as an institution, uniquely resembles the *Musée Grévin* and ricochets easily off the *souls* of dealers and connoisseurs of *Art*, keepers of the church *Museum* of crystallizations of the past.

Tralala Tralala

We do not advance

We find no nourishment in the *worship* of souvenirs and the representations of Robert Houdin.

You don't understand what we are doing, or do you? Ah well, dear *Friends*, we understand it even less, what luck, eh, you are right. But do you believe that God knew French and English??? ???

You explain *Life* to him in these two beautiful languages Tralala Tralala Tralala Tralala Tralala.

Now observe with your sense of smell, forget the fireworks of beauty at 100,000, 200,000, or 199,000,000 dollars.

And now I've had enough. Those who do not understand will never understand and those who understand because they have to understand have no need of me.

Francis Picabia, 'L'Art', *Littérature*, 13 [May 1920, 12–13; trans. Margaret I. Lippard, in Lucy R. Lippard, ed., *Dadas on Art*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971] 167.

Francis PICABIA Francis Picabia is an Imbecile, an Idiot, a Pickpocket!!! [1921]

FRANCIS PICABIA

Is an imbecile, an idiot, a pickpocket!!!

BUT

he saved Arp from constipation!

THE FIRST MECHANICAL WORK WAS CREATED BY
 MADAM TZARA THE DAY SHE PUT LITTLE TRISTAN
 INTO THE WORLD, HOWEVER SHE DIDN'T KNOW IT
 FUNNY-GUY

MEN COVERED WITH CROSSES RECALL CEMETERIES

FRANCIS PICABIA

is an imbecilic spanish professor

who has never been dada

FRANCIS PICABIA IS NOTHING!

FRANCIS PICABIA likes the morality of
 idiots

Arp's Binocle is Tristan's testicle

FRANCIS PICABIA IS NOTHING!!!!!!!!!!!!

BUT: ARP WAS DADA BEFORE DADA

FRANCIS PICABIA

IS a wag

IS an idiot

IS a clown

IS NOT a painter

IS NOT a literary man

IS an imbecile

IS a Spaniard

IS a professor

IS NOT serious

IS rich

IS poor

Binet-Valmer too

Ribemont-Dessaignes too

Philippe Soupault too

Tristan Tzara too

Marcel Duchamp too

Théodore Fraenkel too

Louis Aragon too

Picasso too

Deraïn too

Matisse too

Max Jacob too

etc. ... etc. ... etc. ...

EXCEPTING FRANCIS PICABIA

The only complete artist!

FRANCIS PICABIA

advises you to go see his

paintings at the Salon d'Automne

and gives you his fingers to kiss

FUNNY-GUY

IF YOU WANT TO HAVE CLEAN IDEAS, CHANGE THEM
 LIKE SHIRTS

Francis Picabia, 'Francis Picabia est un imbécile, un idiot,

un pickpocket!!!!', from a tract distributed at the Salon d'Automne [Paris, 1921; trans. Lucy R. Lippard, ed., *Dadas on Art*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1971] 168.

Francis PICABIA

The Genius and the Fox Terrier [1922]

Those who possess a true creative faculty need only express themselves through themselves. The skills they have acquired are only a means to exteriorize themselves more completely in relation to others. They need not look for a personality, a new process, a new representation: the innovation is in them, because there are neither new art nor new men, but simply men with the gift of feeling, then expressing, what others never suspect in their environment. These men with antennas disturb us and attract us; genius can be discovered among them.

The art schools resemble schools for engineers – engineers who invent nothing, but know by heart what others have invented, and who often work to overwhelm very precise machines under the pretext of making ‘something else’. Thus certain artists seek to perfect, to arrange the work of men of genius; they diminish that element which might shock the public; they dress that work in chastity belts or in bathing suits – since the genius is always wrong to manifest himself with so much life and freedom that he frightens those living in hothouses! And that is why the current ‘genius’ is made up, or looks ill: looking ill is even more fashionable than makeup; it is presented to us as though there were nothing better! However, the true genius is not a fashion, is not a type, does not invent himself: *he is*. Genius is not a curiosity, but the direct manifestation of life.

Today, there are men so malicious that they fabricate false money in a marvellous manner, and there are other men so interested that they accept this false money, by which they are not fooled, in the hopes of passing it on. What always amuses me is that it works ...

Art schools have increasingly found ways to mock genius by declaring that everyone who came before them is an idiot: Beethoven? He doesn't exist! Puvis de Chavannes? A bore. Rembrandt? He was good at cold-cuts! ...

Now, if it is permissible to say that one is not *interested* by those people mentioned above, one cannot deny that they have done something, and even, in my opinion, something better than the art of Mr Derain, for example. As for the Impressionists, they are treated as poor little painters who might just be permitted to say their prayers in the Cubist temple! Well, I, for one, find that the geniuses created by worn-out fantasy, the ‘flabbergasted types’, resemble that bad cassoulet found on Saturdays in a certain Montparnasse saloon. This ‘specialty’ is made of trickeries, intrigues, speculations; no one likes it, no one believes in it, but everyone wants to taste it; partly out of snobbery, a good deal more out of the fear of missing a cheap meal. They only regret not having found buyers for

the subproducts of their digestion ... In the meantime, all this *cuisine* serves the ambition of young and old poets whose only objective is to have their works read in an official theatre by some faker who knows how to amaze the public by blowing rouge in its eyes.

The genius doesn't give a s--- for all that, he loves only his liberty; every jewel box calling itself an *Institution* is a stifling prison. To him, even the chariot of glory seems irksome to drag along ...

The genius does not notice that he is alone, or if he notices, he does not complain of it – one is never so alone as among the so-called friends of the so-called movements, the so-called schools and the so-called admirers!

The genius does not think he must ‘do something’: he acts, and does so without preoccupying himself with all those around him who criticize him and gently discourage him from evolving, fearing they will be forced to change their furniture. For many, in fact, to evolve uniquely consists of transporting the bathroom into the kitchen or the parlour into the wc! The New Spirit, dear Mr Ozenfant, director of a review less audacious than *I know all*, is to walk on all fours! That's all our good little modern artists have found out by thinking for so long that men stand on two feet!

Today they are trying to make us believe that everyone can have genius; men would like equality and God has created contrasts, but the hypothesis of God is the genius's image.

I know how dangerous it is to say these things out loud, so listen instead to this little story, and you will understand me:

Out for a walk the other day, in Barcelona, I met a Spanish friend followed by a dog who was a combination of German shepherd and red basset hound! An animal full of arrogance, he seemed not at all conscious of his ridiculousness; his gestures had little in common with his exterior appearance, and he played handsome all the time!

‘What is that animal? It's a frightful bastard’, I said. My friend looked worried, signalled me to be quiet, and waited until the dog had gone off under a tree. Then he whispered: ‘You mustn't discuss his race in his presence or he'll bite. He thinks he is a fox terrier!’

Francis Picabia, ‘Le Genie et le Fox-Terrier’, *Comoedia* [16 May 1922; trans. Lucy R. Lippard, in Lucy R. Lippard, ed., *Dadas on Art*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1971] 169–70.

Francis PICABIA

Thank you, Francis! [1923]

One must become acquainted with everybody except oneself; one must not know which sex one belongs to; I do not care whether I am male or female, I do not admire men more than I do women. Having no virtues, I am assured of not suffering from them. Many people seek the road which can lead them to their ideal: I have no ideal; the person who parades his ideal is only an arriviste. Undoubtedly, I am also an arriviste, but my lack of scruples is an invention for myself, a subjectivity. Objectively it would consist of

awarding myself the légion d'honneur, of wishing to become a minister or of plotting to get into the Institute! Well, for me, all that is shit!

What I like is to invent, to imagine, to make myself a new man every moment, then forget him, forget everything. We should be equipped with a special eraser, gradually effacing our works and the memory of them. Our brain should be nothing but a blackboard, or white, or, better, a mirror in which we would see ourselves for a moment, only to turn our backs on it two minutes later. My ambition is to be a man sterile for others; the man who sets himself up as a school disgusts me, he gives his gonorrhea to artists for nothing and sells it as dearly as possible to amateurs. Actually, writers, painters, and other idiots have passed on the word to fight against the ‘monsters’, monsters who, naturally, do not exist, who are pure inventions of man.

Artists are afraid; they whisper in each other's ears about a boogey man which might well prevent them from playing their dirty little tricks! No age, I believe, has been more imbecilic than ours. These gentlemen would have us believe that nothing is happening anymore; the train reversing its engines, it seems, is very pretty to look at, cows are no longer enough! The travellers to this backward Decanville are named: Matisse, Morandi, Braque, Picasso, Léger, de Segonzac, etc. etc ... What is funniest of all is that they accept, as stationmaster, Louis Vauxcelles, whose great black napkin contains only a foetus!

Since the war, a ponderous and half-witted sentiment of morality rules the entire world. The moralists never discern the moral facts of appearances, the Church for them is a morality like the morality of drinking water, or of not daring to wash one's ass in front of a parrot! All that is arbitrary; people with morals are badly informed, and those who are informed know that the others will not inform themselves.

There is no such thing as a moral problem; morality like modesty is one of the greatest stupidities. The asshole of morality should take the form of a chamber-pot, that's all the objectivity I ask of it.

This contagious disease called morality has succeeded in contaminating all of the so-called artistic milieus; writers and painters become serious people, and soon we shall have a minister of painting and literature; I don't doubt that there will be still more frightful assininities. The poets no longer know what to say, so some are becoming Catholics, others believers; these men manufacture their little scribblings as Félix Potin does his cold chicken preserves; people say that Dada is the end of romanticism, that I am a clown, and they cry long live classicism which will save the pure souls and their ambitions, the simple souls so dear to those afflicted by dreams of grandeur!

However, I do not abandon the hope that nothing is finished yet, I am here, and so are several friends who have a love of life, a life we do not know and which interests us for that very reason.

Francis Picabia, ‘Francis Mercil’, *Littérature*, new series, 8 [1 January 1923, 16–17; reprinted in Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, eds., *Art in Theory: 1900–1990*, Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992] 272–73.

Francis PICABIA

Notes for Entr’Acte [1924]

Wednesday evening.

My dear friend, I am enclosing the ideas for the cinematic part of the ballet.

Yours sincerely,
Francis Picabia

Curtain raiser:

Slow-motion loading of a cannon by Satie and Picabia; the shot must make as much noise as possible. Total length: one minute.

During the interval:

- Boxing attack by white gloves, on a black screen. Length: fifteen seconds. Written explanatory titles: ten seconds.
- Game of chess between Duchamp and Man Ray. Jet of water handled by Picabia sweeping away the game: Length: thirty seconds.
- Juggler and father Lacolique. Length: thirty seconds.
- Huntsman firing at an ostrich egg on a fountain; a dove comes out of the egg and lands on the huntsman’s head; a second huntsman, firing at it, kills the first huntsman: he falls, the bird flies away. Length: one minute. Written titles: twenty seconds.
- Twenty-one people lying on their backs, showing the soles of their feet. Ten seconds. Handwritten titles: fifteen seconds.
- Dancer on a transparent mirror, filmed from beneath. Length: one minute. Written titles: five seconds.
- Blowing-up of rubber balloons and screens, on which figures will be drawn, accompanied by inscriptions. Length: thirty-five seconds.
- A funeral: hearse drawn by a camel, etc. Length: six minutes. Written titles: one minute.

Francis Picabia, *L’Avant-scène*, 86 [November 1968, 11; reprinted in Mel Gordon, ed., *Dada Performance*, New York: PAJ Publications, 1987] 164.

Georges RIBEMONT-DESSAIGNES

Dadaland [1920]

Dada has been accused of a crime: of being German. It has become a crusade. A little girl or a little boy, blinded by sniffing up their own snot, threw the ball into the air, and the thousand and one imbeciles who constitute the voice of the public picked it up so as to make a bomb of it. German art. What about French art then?

There is a parcel of land which because of its physical nature gives rise to a spirit in which the dissolvent characteristics of the ocean predominate. Whatever falls beneath the claws of this spirit becomes its own visible skin. French Spirit and French Art.

All the medals and decorations of the glory that is France are made in Germany or in Italy and other places, and are only then gilded in France. The classical periods

issued from Greece, Italy, Flanders, Arabia, China. The modern period comes from England, Scandinavia, Germany and, most recently, Africa, Polynesia, Japan and Spain.

Is it feasible then to imagine that every Frenchman has sold out to the rest of the world, and has betrayed his own wet-nurse? Blissful wealth.

And can anyone cite me a single instance of indigenous French art produced by someone who has not been so corrupted?

The virtue of the French is precisely this ability to absorb without fatal consequences a whole heap of different products and to reassemble them in such a manner that there is not a country in the whole world which could fail to recognize where the synthesis occurred, so that from America to Czechoslovakia the refrain is heard: ‘How exquisite! That’s French taste for you!’

Dada is not French. But it is not German, it is not from any one country. Is it a disease of retribution, a plague? So be it. The guilt will flake off. The French like any other.

Obviously, gentlemen, if you fear for the morality of your wives, the education of your children, the peace of mind of your cooks and the faithfulness of your mistresses, the solidity of your armchairs, of your chamber pots and the established order, the manner in which your brothels are licensed and the security of the State, then you are right. But what can you do about it? You are rotten and the fire has been lit.

Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes, ‘Dadaland’, *Dada Almanach* [Berlin: E. Reiss, 1920, 96-98; trans. Terry Hale in *Dada Almanac*, ed. Malcolm Green, London: Atlas Press, 1998] 103-104.

Georges RIBEMONT-DESSAIGNES

To the Public [1920]

Before descending amongst you in order to eradicate your decayed teeth, your scabby ears, your canker-ridden tongues.

- Before breaking your rotting bones –
- Opening your bilious stomach and removing, for use as livestock feed, your swollen liver, your filthy spleen and your diabetic kidneys –
- Before ripping off your vile sex, lecherous and slimy –
- Before extinguishing your taste for beauty, ecstasies, sugar, philosophy, pepper and cucumbers, metaphysical, mathematical and poetic –
- Before disinfecting you with vitriol and so rendering you clean and repollinating you with passion –
- Before all that –
- We shall take an enormous antiseptic bath –
- And we warn you –
- It is we who are the murderers –
- Of all your new-born babies –
- And to end with there is this song –
- Ki Ki Ki Ki Ki Ki Ki Ki

- God is here mounted on a nightingale –
- He’s beautiful, he’s ugly –
- Madam, your gob smells of pimps’ sperm.
- In the morning –
- Because at night it’s like the backside of an angel in love with a lily –
- Pretty, isn’t it?
- Goodbye, my friend.

Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes, ‘Au public’, *Littérature*, 13 [May 1920, 18; trans. Terry Hale in *Dada Almanac*, ed. Malcolm Green, London: Atlas Press, 1998] 105.

Georges RIBEMONT-DESSAIGNES

Ô [1920]

- He placed his hat upon the ground and filled it full of earth, And sowed therein a tear with his finger.
- A large geranium grows, sprang up.
- Countless pumpkins ripen among the leaves.
- He opened his mouth of gold-crowned teeth, and said: Oo-wii!!
- He shook the branches of the weeping willows which cooled the air.
- And through the skin of her womb his pregnant wife Showed their child the crescent of a still-born moon.
- He placed on his head the hat imported from Germany.
- The woman aborted Mozart,
- While in an armoured car
- A harpist went by
- And amid the sky, doves,
- Gentle Mexican doves, ate Spanish flies
- Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes, ‘Ô’, *Dada Almanach* [Berlin: E. Reiss, 1920, 49; trans. Terry Hale in *Dada Almanac*, ed. Malcolm Green, London: Atlas Press, 1998] 56-57.

Georges RIBEMONT-DESSAIGNES

The Delights of Dada [1920]

- Dada, like everyone, has his pleasures. Dada’s principal pleasure is to see himself in others. Dada provokes laughter, curiosity, or anger. As these are three very attractive qualities, Dada is very happy.
- Dada is still more happy when he is spontaneously laughed at. Since Art and Artists are very serious inventions, especially when they resort to the comic, one goes to the Comique to laugh. Nothing of that here. We take nothing seriously. Thus they laugh, but only to make fun of us. Dada is very happy.
- Curiosity is also aroused. Honest men, who know in their hearts how miracles like those of Father Colic or the tears of the Virgin are prepared, say to themselves that it would be more amusing to amuse themselves with us.
- Nor do they want to raze the whole Sacred Heart of Art,

rather they rub shoulders with us to discover our recipe. Dada has no recipe, but it is always hungry. Dada is very happy.

As for anger, it is delicious. That is how great loves begin. The only concern for the future would be to be too well-loved. True, there would still remain the capacity to reverse the roles and laugh, desire, or become angry in our turn. (But what profit is there in waiting?) The beautiful mouth of someone who is vomiting insults is wide open, and Dada knows very well how to play at low-ball. Dada is very happy.

Dada also loves to throw stones in the water, not to see what will happen, but to gaze stupidly at the little waves. Fishermen do not like Dada.

Dada loves to ring doorbells, to strike matches, to set fire to hair and beards. He puts mustard in the ciboriums, wine in the holy-water fonts, and margarine in the colour tubes of painters.

He knows you and knows those who lead you. He loves you and does not love them. With you one can have fun. You probably love living, but have bad habits. You are too fond of what you have been taught to like. Cemeteries, melancholia are tragic loves. Venetian gondolas. You bay at the moon. You believe in Art and respect Artists.

It is enough to demolish all your little castles of cards and to restore your complete freedom, then you become friends of Dada. Beware of those who lead you. They are merely using your thoughtless love of fakery and posing to lead you by the nose for their own gain.

Are you so fond of your chain that you can be used with impunity as a dancing carnival bear? They flatter you and call you wild bears, Carpathian Bears. They speak of freedom and high mountains. This is to harvest the tithes of the bourgeois spectators. For a rotting carrot and the smell of honey, you dance. If you were not cowardly and enfeebled by being forced to look too long upon nonexistent heights and abstractions and all the humbug mounted in dogma, you would stand up straight, and you would, like us, play the massacre game. But you are afraid of no longer believing, and of bobbing like corks on the surface of a can of sparkling lemonade. You do not realize that one can be attached to nothing and still be joyful.

If the day should come when you snap out of it, Dada will rattle his jawbones as a sign of friendship. But if you get rid of the bedbugs to keep the flea-bags, Dada will use his little bug-bomb.

Dada is very happy.

Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes, 'Les Plaisirs de Dada', *Littérature*, 13 [May 1920, 10-11; trans. Lucy R. Lippard, in Lucy R. Lippard, ed., *Dadas on Art*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971] 177-78.

Georges RIBEMONT-DESSAIGNES

Buffet [1921]

Art? Not Art?
Dada is against Art. Which means?

If you touch your fingers to dada flesh it comes away damp, sticky, and smelly. Odour *sui generis* [sic]. Rejecting Art internally, the Dadas secrete it eternally. We must be fair, it is not their fault. Not the fault of all of them. In other men Art is at ease inside and outside.

Sitting on this milestone we may ask ourselves if Dada is anything more than a new literary, pictorial, etc school – And then damn it! What military music to accompany the return to the barracks. D'Annunzio, however, is a horse of another colour.

But it must be said: NO. You understand: NO, NO, no. And then the little bird goes on singing forever: one day, and another day, and then another day.

Here we are – all enemies, each his own grenade. Burst? Dada, dada, dada. Bits scattered about. All at once, Art. A new minute is being born. Twenty-six candles, then Art. There are thus some metals that cannot be left lying around. Venus in the sea is only a fish. On land, she is a great artist.

Poetry: Art; not Poetry: Art. Words like a game: Art. Pure sentences: Art. One sole meaning: Art; no meaning: Art. Words drawn by lot: Art. Mona Lisa: Art. Mona Lisa with moustaches: Art. Shit: Art. Newspaper announcement: Art.

We don't want it. But after a second and one glance, that's that. With all the more reason on the page of a book. And when Dada is cited. Oh, my God! – there are also those who are concerned with themselves and aspire to the papacy. On each step they leave the coagulated imprint of their personality. Yes, yes, they express themselves: if they look at their feet out of the corner of an eye they are indeed obliged to realize that they have walked in art. Moreover, this brings happiness, and it is not the crowd that will hold it against them. What is only a repeated cutting of the personal diamond cannot appear to be art. The action of each facet on the spectator's mind takes care of deflowering the virgin.

What is to be done? Act against oneself? Art. There remains the purge. Certainly the masses as they now stand will immediately fashion an artistic undergarment from the result of this purge, and will resell it deodorized at a reduced price. Dear friend, don't buy it. Purge yourself. And don't let momentary reason appear and say: it smells bad – because its whole purpose is to clean itself. And the very principle of our cleaning is to offer its residue on the same plane as the perfumed breath of our health.

As for the famous diamond, don't look for it in there. Neither there nor elsewhere. It is enough to recognize it in your stomach thanks to X-rays guaranteed to give you the potbelly of Art.

And afterwards? There is no afterwards. Purge yourself forever. Aside from that, take up the grocery business, farming, medicine, business with Abyssinia, politics, assassination, philosophy, suicide, and even Art.

And Dada?
Dada, is ... – No, no.
But of course,
NO YES

Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes, 'Buffet', *Littérature*, 19 [May 1921, 7-8; trans. Margaret I. Lippard, in Lucy R. Lippard,

ed., *Dadas on Art*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971] 175-77.

André BRETON, Philippe SOUPAULT
from The Magnetic Fields
[1920]

The corridors of the grand hotels are unfrequented and cigar-smoke keeps itself dark. A man descends the stairs of sleep and notices that it is raining; the window-panes are white. A dog is known to be resting near him. All obstacles are present. There is a pink cup, an order given and the men-servants turn round without haste. The skies' great curtains open. A buzzing denotes this hurried departure. Who can be running in such a leisurely way? Names lose their faces. The street is no more than an abandoned track.

Towards four o'clock that day a very tall man was crossing the bridge that links up the various islands. The bells or the trees were ringing. He thought he could hear the voices of his friends: 'The bureau of lazy excursions is on the right,' someone called to him, 'and on Saturday the painter will be writing to you.' The neighbours of the solitudes leant down and the wheezing of the street-lamps could be heard all night long. The erratic house loses its blood. We all love conflagrations; when the sky changes colour, it is a dead man's passing. What better could one hope for? Another man in front of a perfumer's shop was listening to the rollings of a distant drum-beat. The night that was hovering above his head came down to perch on his shoulders. Conventional fans were up for sale: they weren't producing fruit any more. Without knowing the results people were running in the direction of the maritime inlets. The desperate clocks were telling the beads of a rosary. The virtuous hives were organizing themselves. There was no one passing near those main avenues that are the strength of towns. a single storm was sufficient. Far away or close up the damp beauty of prisons went unrecognized. The best shelters are railway-stations since travellers never know which route to pursue. It could be read in the lines of palms that the most fragrant pledges of fidelity have no future. What can we do with the children with well-developed muscles? The warm blood of bees is preserved in mineral-water bottles. Sincerities have never been seen unmasked. Well-known men lose their lives in the recklessness of those fine houses which set hearts a-flutter.

How small these rescued tides appear! Earthly delights flow in torrents. Each object offers paradise.

A great bronze boulevard is the most direct way. The magical squares are not good stopping-places. The slow advance is unerring: at the end of a few hours one catches sight of the pretty nose-bleed plant. The consumptives' panorama lights up. All the footsteps of subterranean travellers can be heard. But the most ordinary silence reigns in these narrow spaces. A traveller comes to a halt,

perturbed. Amazed, he approaches this coloured plant. No doubt he wants to pluck it but can only shake the hand of another traveller adorned with stolen jewels. Their eyes exchange sulphurous flames and they talk for a long time about their marvellous cries. A dry moon's murmur is thought to be audible, but a glance dispels the most prodigious encounters. Nobody has been able to identify these pale-skinned travellers.

André Breton and Philippe Soupault, *Les Champs magnétiques* [Paris: Au Sans Pareil, 1920; trans. David Gascoyne in *The Magnetic Fields*, London: Atlas Press, 1985] 79–80.

André BRETON

Two Dada Manifestos [1920]

I
Historical anecdotes are of little importance. It is impossible to know where and when DADA was born. The name, which one of us was happy to find for it, has the advantage of being perfectly equivocal.

Cubism was a school of painting; Futurism, a political movement: DADA is a state of mind. To compare one to the other demonstrates either ignorance or bad faith.

When it comes to religion, freethinking does not resemble a church. DADA is artistic freethinking.

So long as they make children recite prayers in the form of book reports and museum visits, we will cry out against despotism and try to disrupt the ceremony.

DADA devotes itself to nothing: not love, not work. It is unforgivable of someone else to leave a trace of his time on earth.

DADA, recognizing only instinct, condemns explanation *a priori*. According to it, we should exercise no control over ourselves whatsoever. We can no longer admit the dogma of morality and taste.

II
We read the newspaper like any other mortal. Without meaning to depress anyone, it is fair to say that the word DADA lends itself fairly easily to puns. That's even part of the reason we have adopted it. We do not know how to treat any subject seriously, least of all ourselves. Therefore, everything written about DADA can only make us glad. There isn't a single human-interest anecdote for which we would not trade the entire history of art criticism. Anyway, the wartime press hardly prevented us from seeing Marshal Foch as a trickster and President Wilson as an idiot.

We ask nothing better than to be judged on appearances. The word has gone round that I wear glasses. If I told you why, you would never believe me. It's in memory of a grammar example: 'Noses were made to hold up eyeglasses; therefore I wear eyeglasses.' What's that you say? Oh, right: that really dates us.

Pierre is a man. But there is no DADA truth. One has only to utter a sentence for the opposite sentence to become DADA. I've seen Tristan Tzara asking mutely for a pack of cigarettes at the tobacconist's; I have no idea what's wrong with him. I can still hear Philippe Soupault

insistently demanding live birds at the hardware store. As for myself, at this moment I might be dreaming.

All things considered, a red host is worth a white host. DADA does not claim to get you into heaven. *A priori* it would be absurd to expect a DADA masterpiece in the fields of literature and painting. We no longer believe, of course, in the possibility of any social improvement, even if we despise conservatism above all and declare our support of any revolution, whatever it might stand for. 'Peace at any price' was DADA's watchword in wartime, just as in peacetime DADA's watchword is: 'War at any price.'

Contradiction is no more than an appearance, no doubt the most flattering of all. I speak and I have nothing to say. I do not claim the slightest ambition, although I might seem perfectly active to you: how could the idea that my right side is but the shadow of my left side, and vice versa, not leave me completely paralysed? In the most general sense of the word, we pass for poets because above all we attack language, the worst convention there is. One can know the word *hello* and still say 'farewell' to the woman one meets again after a year's separation.

In conclusion, I wish to take only pragmatic objections into account. DADA uses your own reasoning against you. If we reduce you to claiming that it is more advantageous to believe, rather than not believe, in the teachings of all the religions of beauty, love, truth and justice, it is only because you are not afraid to place yourselves at DADA's mercy, by agreeing to meet us on our chosen terrain, which is doubt.

André Breton, 'Patinage Dada' and 'Géographie Dada', *Littérature*, 13 [May 1920, 9–10, 17–18; trans. Mark Polizzotti in *The Lost Steps: André Breton, Les Pas perdus*, Lincoln, Nebraska and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1996] 44–46.

André BRETON

For Dada [1920]

It is impossible for me to conceive of a mental joy other than as a breath of air. How could it be comfortable within the limits in which nearly every book, every event, confines it? I doubt that even one person, at least once in his life, has not been tempted to deny the outside world. He would then realize that nothing is so serious or definite as all that. He would move on towards a revision of moral values, which would not prevent him from then returning to common law. Those who experienced this marvellous moment of lucidity at the cost of permanent disorientation are still called poets: Lautréamont, Rimbaud – but the fact is, literary childishness ended with them.

When will we grant arbitrariness the place it deserves in the creation of works or ideas? The things that touch us are generally less willed than we would believe. A felicitous expression or sensational discovery is announced in miserable fashion almost nothing achieves its goal, unless, exceptionally, something surpasses it. And the history of theses groupings – psychological literature – is hardly instructive: despite its pretensions, no novel has ever proven anything. The most illustrious examples of the

genre are not worth setting before our eyes: the most appropriate response we could give it is total indifference. Unable as we are to embrace at once the entirety of a painting, or a misfortune, where do we get the right to judge?

If young people have it in for convention, we should not dismiss them as ridiculous: who knows whether reflection makes good counsel? I intend to praise innocence wherever I find it, and I note that it is tolerated only in its passive form. This contradiction alone would be enough to make me sceptical. To keep oneself from being subversive means quelling everything that is not absolutely submissive. I see no valour in that. Revolts are plotted in solitude; there is no need to distance the storm from these ancient sacramental words.

Such considerations strike me as superfluous. I make statements for the pleasure of compromising myself. It should be against the law to use dubious modes of speech. The most convinced or authoritarian individual is not the one we think. I still hesitate to speak about what I know best.

SUNDAY

*The aeroplane weaves telegraph lines
and the source sings the same song
at the Coachman's Meeting House the drinks are orange
but the train mechanics have white eyes
The lady has lost her smile in the woods*

The sentimentality of today's poets is something on which we should agree. From the concert of imprecations they so enjoy, a voice proclaiming that they have no soul occasionally rises to enchant them. One young man who at age twenty-three held the most beautiful gaze I know on the universe has mysteriously left us. It is easy for the critics to claim that he was bored: Jacques Vaché was not about to leave behind a last will and testament! I can still see him smiling as he pronounced the words final wishes. We are not pessimistic. The one who was painted lying on a reclining chair, so *fin-de-siècle* that he would not have been out of place among collections of psychological works, was the least weary and most subtle of us all. I still see him sometimes; in the trolley car a rider guides his provincial cousins down 'Boulevard Saint-Michel: university quarter'; the trolley windows wink in connivance.

We have been chided for not confessing endlessly. Jacques Vaché's good fortune is never to have produced anything. He always kicked aside works of art, the ball-and-chain that retains the soul after death. At the moment when, in Zurich, Tristan Tzara was launching his decisive proclamation – the Dada Manifesto of 1918 – Jacques Vaché was unwittingly verifying its principal tenets. 'A philosophical question: from which angle: to start looking at life, god, ideas, or anything else. Everything we look at is false. I don't think the relative result is any more important than the choice of pastry or cherries for dessert.' 'A spiritual fact being given, there is some haste to see it reproduced in the moral sphere. 'Make gestures,' they call to us. But, as André Gide will agree, 'measured against the scale of Eternity, every action is vain',³ and we can make the effort required for a childish sacrifice. I am not merely situating myself in time. The scarlet waistcoat,⁴ rather than the profound thinking of an era: that, unfortunately, is

what everyone understands.

The obscurity of our words is constant. The riddle of meaning must remain in the hands of children. Reading a book to learn something denotes a certain simplicity. The little that the most famous works can teach us about their authors, or about their readers, should rapidly dissuade us from trying this experiment. It is the thesis that disappoints us, not its expression. I regret having to pass through these unclear sentences, receiving confidences without object, feeling at every moment, through the fault of some blabbermouth, a sense of knowing it already. The poets who have recognized this hopelessly flee the intelligible: they know that their work has nothing to lose. One can love an insane woman more than any other.

Dawn fallen like a shower. The corners of the room are distant and solid. White plane. Comings and goings unmingled, in the shadows. Outside, in an alleyway with dirty children, with empty sacks that speak volumes, Paris by Paris, I discover. Money, the road, red-eyed journeys with luminous skulls. Daylight exists so that I can learn living, time. Ways-errors. Great agitate will become naked honey illness, poorly game already syrup, drowned head, weariness.

Thought by happenstance, old flower of mourning, odourless, I hold you in my two hands. My head is shaped like a thought.⁵

We are wrong to liken Dada to a subjectivism. No one who currently accepts the Dada label is aiming for hermeticism. ‘Nothing is incomprehensible,’ said Lautréamont. If I share the opinion of Paul Valéry – that ‘the human mind seems to me so made that it cannot be incoherent to itself’ – I also think that it cannot be incoherent to anyone else. I believe that this requires not the extraordinary meeting of two individuals, or of one individual with the person he no longer is, but simply a series of acceptable misunderstandings, along with a small number of commonplaces.

Some have spoken of systematically exploring the unconscious. For poets, it is nothing new to let oneself go and write according to the vagaries of one’s mind. The word *inspiration*, which for some reason has fallen into disuse, was once seen in a very favourable light. Almost every true imagistic innovation, for example, strikes me as being a spontaneous creation. Guillaume Apollinaire quite rightly thought that clichés such as ‘lips of coral’, whose fortune could pass for a criterion of value, was the product of an activity that he termed *surrealist*. The origins of words themselves are probably no different. He went so far as to make of the principle that one should never build on a previous invention the very condition of scientific perfection and of ‘progress’, so to speak. The idea of the human leg, lost in the wheel, resurfaced only by chance in the locomotive connecting rod. In the same way the biblical tone is starting to reemerge in poetry. I would be tempted to explain this latter phenomenon by the decreased intervention, or nonintervention, in the new writing processes, of personal choice.

What most effectively threatens to harm Dada in public opinion is the interpretation that two or three false sages have given of it. Up until now they have especially tried to see in it the application of a system that is enjoying a great

vogue in psychiatry, Freud’s ‘psychoanalysis’ – an application, moreover, that the present author foresaw. Mr H.-R. Lenormand even seems to believe that we would benefit from psychoanalytic treatment, if only one could make us submit to it. It goes without saying that the analogy between Cubist or Dadaist works and the ravings of the insane is highly superficial, but it is not yet proven that the so-called absence of logic absolves us from admitting a singular choice, that ‘plain’ language has the disadvantage of being elliptical, and finally that only the works in question could show their authors’ abilities and consequently give critics a reason for existing that they have always lacked:

*At the school of infinite thoughts
Of the most beautiful people
Hymenoptera architectures
The books I’d write would be madly tender
If you were still
In this novel composed
At the top of the stairs⁶*

All this, moreover, is so relative that for every ten people who accuse us of being illogical, there is one who blames us for going to the opposite extreme. Mr J.-H. Rosny, noting Tristan Tzara’s declaration that ‘in the course of campaigns against every dogmatism and in a spirit of irony toward the creation of literary schools, Dada became the “Dada movement”,’ remarks, ‘Thus the origin of Dadaism is not the founding of a new school, but the repudiation of all schools. There is nothing absurd about such a viewpoint, quite the contrary: it is even logical, all too logical.’

No one has made any attempt to have Dada account for its will not to be considered a school. People love to insist on the words group, ringleader and discipline. They even go so far as to claim that, in the guise of extolling individuality, Dada constitutes a real danger to it, without stopping to notice that we are especially bound together by our differences. Our shared exception to artistic or moral rules affords us only fleeting satisfaction. We are well aware that beyond this an inexpressible personal whim will have its way, which will be more ‘Dada’ than the existing movement. This is what Jacques-Emile Blanche helped us to understand when he wrote: ‘Dada will survive only by ceasing to exist.’

*Let us draw the victim’s name out of a hat
Aggression hangman’s noose
The one who was speaking dies
The murderer stands and says
Suicide
End of the world
Furling of seashell flags.⁷*

To begin with, the Dadaists have taken pains to state that there is nothing they want. To know. No need to worry; the instinct for self-preservation always carries the day. When someone naively asked us – after a reading of the manifesto that goes, ‘No more painters, no more writers, no more religions, no more royalists, no more anarchists, no more socialists, no more police,’ and so on – whether we would ‘let humanity remain’, we smiled, hardly wanting to put God on trial. Aren’t we the last to forget that there are limits to understanding? If it so happens that I

get such pleasure from these words by Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes, it’s just that at bottom they constitute an act of extreme humility: ‘What is beautiful? What is ugly? What are big, strong, weak? What are Carpentier, Renan, Foch? Don’t know. What is me? Don’t know. Don’t know, don’t know, don’t know.’

1 Philippe Soupault.
2 Tristan Tzara.
3 Although Breton might appear to be quoting Gide, this is a snippet (as was the preceding one) from Tzara’s ‘Dada Manifesto 1918’. The reference to ‘gestures’ comes from a spectator’s heckling at one of the first Dada demonstrations – as Gide had mockingly reported several months earlier in his own article on Dada (*La Nouvelle Revue Française*, 1 April 1920).
4 A reference to poet Théophile Gautier’s famous attire at the 1830 premiere of Victor Hugo’s play *Hernani*, at which differences between Romantics and Classicists in the audience erupted into a full-scale brawl. In the current context the waistcoat symbolizes the purely scandalous side of Dada demonstrations rather than the deeper interrogation that some (notably Breton) sought to derive from them.
5 Paul Eluard.
6 Francis Picabia.
7 Louis Aragon.
André Breton, ‘Pour Dada’, *Nouvelle Revue Française*, 15 [August 1920, 208-15; trans. Mark Polizzotti in *The Lost Steps*, André Breton, *Les Pas perdus*, Lincoln, Nebraska and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1996] 51-56.

André BRETON

After Dada [1922]

My friends Philippe Soupault and Paul Eluard will not contradict me if I say that ‘Dada’ was never seen by us as anything more than the vulgar image of a state of mind that it in no way helped to create. If it occurs to them, as it did to me, to reject the label and realize the abuse to which they have fallen victim, perhaps this first principle will be saved. In the meantime they will forgive me for informing the readers of *Comœdia*, in order to remove all misunderstanding, that Mr Tzara had no part in the invention of the word *Dada* – as attested by a letter from Schad and Huelsenbeck, his companions in Zurich during the war, which I am quite prepared to publish – and that he no doubt had very little hand in writing the ‘Dada Manifesto 1918’, which determined our welcome and the credit we extended him.

The paternity of this manifesto is, in any case, formally claimed, by Val Serner [sic], a doctor of philosophy who lives in Geneva and whose German-language manifestos, written before 1918, have not been translated into French. We know, furthermore, that the conclusions reached by Francis Picabia and Marcel Duchamp even before the war, alongside those reached by Jacques Vaché in 1917, would have been sufficient to orient us in and of themselves. Up until now, I had been reluctant to denounce Mr Tzara’s bad faith and had let him blatantly arm himself with the proxy

votes of the very individuals whose pockets he had picked in their absence. But today, when he is trying to grab his last chance to make some noise by falsely declaring his opposition to one of the most impartial enterprises that could be,' I have no qualms about ordering him to be silent.

Dada, thank goodness, is no longer an issue, and its funeral in around May 1921 engendered no brawls. The procession, numbering very few people, followed in the wake of Cubism-Futurism, which the students at the Beaux-Arts went to drown in effigy in the Seine. Although it had, as they say, its hour of fame, Dada left few regrets: in the long run its omnipotence and tyranny had made it unbearable.

Nonetheless I noted with some bitterness at the time that several of those who had given it handouts – generally those who had given the smallest handouts – found themselves reduced to poverty. The others lost no time in rallying around Francis Picabia's strong statements, inspired, as we know, only by a love of life and a horror of all corruption. Which is not to say that Picabia meant to re-create our unity around himself –

It's hard to imagine

How stupid and stolid success can make people'

— and he is more prepared than anyone to do without it. But, although there is no question of substituting a new group for our individual tendencies (Mr Tzara must be joking), Louis Aragon, Pierre de Massot, Jacques Rigaut, Roger Vitrac and I could not long remain indifferent to the marvellous detachment from all things of which Picabia gave us the example and that we are happy to state here.

For myself, I point out that this attitude is not new. If I abstained last year from taking part in the demonstrations organized by *Dada* at the Galerie Montaigne, it was because this sort of activity had already lost its attraction for me – because I saw in it the means of reaching my twenty-sixth or thirtieth birthday without striking a single blow, and I am determined to flee anything that masks itself in that kind of facility. In an unpublished article of the time, which few people have read, I deplored the stereotyped character that our gestures were taking on, and I wrote, verbatim, 'After all, the issue is not our insouciance or momentary good humour. Personally, I have no wish to be amused. It seems to me that sanctioning a series of utterly futile "Dada" acts means seriously compromising one of the attempts at liberation to which I remain the most strongly attached. These ideas, which count among the finest, are at the mercy of their too-rapid popularization.

'Our age might well be ill-disposed towards concentration, but must we always accept being content with superficialities? "The mind", it has been said, "is not so independent that it cannot be distracted by the slightest disturbance made around it." What, then, can we predict for it if it insists on making that disturbance itself?'

Still today, it is hardly my intention to act as a judge. 'The place and the formula' might always elude me, but – and this cannot be said often enough – the important thing is this quest and nothing else. Hence the great void that we are forced to create in ourselves. Without going so far as to develop a taste for the pathetic, I am prepared to

do without practically everything. I do not wish to slip on the waxed floor of sentimentality. There is no error, properly speaking: at most one could call it an unlucky wager, and those who are reading me are free to feel that the game is not worth the candle. For myself, I will try once more to involve myself even further, if possible – without, however, making Francis Picabia's words ('One must be a nomad, cross through ideas as one crosses though countries or cities') into a rule of hygiene or a duty. Even if every idea were fated to disappoint us, I would still take it as my starting point to devote my life to them.

1 The Congress of Paris (for the determination and defence of the modern spirit), April 1922.

2 The statement, seemingly by Picabia, is actually an excerpt from Apollinaire's 'Victory' (in *Galligrammes*).

3 This expression, cited by Breton on numerous occasions, is from Rimbaud's poem 'Vagabonds'.

André Breton, 'Après Dada', *Comoedia* [2 March 1922; trans.

Mark Polizzotti in *The Lost Steps*, André Breton, *Les Pas*

perdus, Lincoln, Nebraska and London: University of

Nebraska Press, 1996] 74–76.

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Central European writers saw the First World War as a liberating event that led to the formation of new nation states; they welcomed Dada as a cleansing force. Avant-garde movements included Zenitism, Poetism and Integralism. (They were reluctant to call themselves 'Dada', which in Slavic languages means 'yes, yes', not the most suitable label for a radical movement.) Dragan Aleksić called for tearing down civilization: 'Let's tear it down tear it down all the way. Let language explode and a great DADA remain.' Bedřich Vaclavek regretted the prior adoption of Constructivism: 'That is why we make up for it today by grabbing a bit of Dada here and there ... We failed to carry out its destructive work that would leave behind virginal land ready for the real work of new builders'. And Karel Teige recognized that 'Dada, a blossom opening on ruins, is the reaction of vitality against annihilation and destruction'. Aleksić describes Russian Futurism as 'ultra DADA': 'Slap in the Face of Public Taste' anticipates Tristan Tzara's manifestos, and performances at the Pink Lantern Cabaret in Moscow prefigure the Cabaret Voltaire.

David BURLIUK *et al.* Slap in the Face of Public Taste [1912]

To the readers of our New First Unexpected.

We alone are the *face of our* Time. Through us the horn of time blows in the art of the word.

The past is too tight. The Academy and Pushkin are less intelligible than hieroglyphics.

Throw Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, etc., etc. overboard from the Ship of Modernity.

He who does not forget his *first* love will not recognize his last.

Who, trustingly, would turn his last love toward Balmont's perfumed lechery? Is this the reflection of today's virile soul?

Who, faintheartedly, would fear tearing from warrior Bryusov's black tuxedo the paper armourplate? Or does the dawn of unknown beauties shine from it?

Wash Your hands which have touched the filthy slime

of the books written by those countless Leonid Andreyevs.

All those Maxim Gorkys, Kuprins, Bloks, Sologubs, Remizovs, Averchenkos, Chornys, Kuzmins, Bunins, etc. need only a dacha on the river. Such is the reward fate gives tailors.

From the heights of skyscrapers we gaze at their insignificance! ... We *order* that the poets' *rights* be revered:

1. To enlarge the *scope* of the poet's vocabulary with arbitrary and derivative words (Word-novelty).
2. To feel an insurmountable hatred for the language existing before their time.
3. To push with horror off their proud brow the Wreath of cheap fame that You have made from bathhouse switches.
4. To stand on the rock of the word 'we' amidst the sea of boos and outrage.

And if for the time being the filthy stigmas of Your 'Common sense' and 'good taste' are still present in our lines, these same lines *for the first time* already glimmer with the Summer Lightening of the New Coming Beauty of

the Self-sufficient (self-centred) Word.

DAVID BURLIUK, ALEXEY KRUCHENYKH, VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY, VELIMIR KHLEBNIKOV

David Burliuk, Alexey Kruchenykh, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Velimir Khlebnikov, 'Slap in the Face of Public Taste' [trans. Anna Lawton and Herbert Eagle in *Russian Futurism through its Manifestoes, 1912-1918*, Cornell University Press, 1988; reprinted in Mary Ann Caws, ed., *Manifesto: A Century of Isms*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001] 230.

Ilia ZDANEVICH, Mikhail LARIONOV

from *Why We Paint Ourselves:*

A Futurist Manifesto [1913]

[...] We have joined art to life. After the long isolation of artists, we have loudly summoned life and life has invaded art, it is time for art to invade life. The painting of our faces is the beginning of the invasion. That is why our hearts are beating so.

We do not aspire to a single form of aesthetics. Art is not only a monarch, but also a newsman and a decorator. We value both print and news. The synthesis of decoration and illustration is the basis of our self-painting. We decorate life and preach – that's why we paint ourselves.

Self-painting is one of the new valuables that belong to the people as they all do in our day and age. The old ones were incoherent and squashed flat by money. Gold was valued as an ornament and became expensive. We throw down gold and precious stones from their pedestal and declare them valueless. Beware, you who collect them and horde them – you will soon be beggars.

It began in '05. Mikhail Larionov painted a nude standing against a background of a carpet and extended the design on to her. But there was no proclamation. Now Parisians are doing the same by painting the legs of their dancing girls, and ladies powder themselves with brown powder and like Egyptians elongate their eyes. But that's old age. We, however, join contemplation with action and fling ourselves into the crowd.

To the frenzied city of arc lamps, to the streets bespattered with bodies, to the houses huddled together, we have not brought the past: unexpected flowers have bloomed in the hothouse and they excite us.

City dwellers have for a long time been varnishing their nails, using eyeshadow, rouging their lips, cheeks, hair – but all they are doing is to imitate the earth.

We, creators, have nothing to do with the earth; our lines and colours appeared with us. If we were given the plumage of parrots, we would pluck out their feathers to use as brushes and crayons.

If we were given immortal beauty, we would daub over it and kill it – we who know no half measures.

Tattooing doesn't interest us. People tattoo themselves once and for always. We paint ourselves for an hour, and a change of experience calls for a change of painting, just as picture devours picture, when on the other side of a car windscreen shop windows flash by running into each other: that's our faces. Tattooing is beautiful but it says little – only about one's tribe and exploits. Our painting is the newsman.

Facial expressions don't interest us. That's because people have grown accustomed to understanding them, too timid and ugly as they are. Our faces are like the screech of the trolley warning the hurrying passers-by, like the drunken sounds of the great tango. Mimicry is expressive but colourless. Our painting is the decorator.

Mutiny against the earth and transformation of faces into a projector of experiences.

The telescope discerned constellations lost in space, painting will tell of lost ideas.

We paint ourselves because a clean face is offensive, because we want to herald the unknown, to rearrange life, and to bear man's multiple soul to the upper reaches of reality.

Iliia Zdanevich and Mikhail Larionov, 'Why We Paint

Ourselves: A Futurist Manifesto', *Argus* [St. Petersburg, December 1913; trans. John E. Bowlt in *Manifesto: A Century of Isms*, ed. Mary Ann Caws, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001] 244–45.

Velimir KHLEBNIKOV

We Incant and Recant ... [1914]

We incant and recant.

There incanting, here recanting,

Now recantor, now incantor,

Here recantist, there incantist.

From recantate peers incantate.

There're recantards, there're incantards.

And incantries! And recantries!

And recantlers! And incantlers!

And incantments and recantments.

Keep recanting and incanting.

Alternative Translation:

We invoke and revoke.

There invoking, here revoking,

Now revoker, now invoker,

Here revokeman, there invokeman.

From revokeate peers invokeate.

There're revocards, there're invocards.

And invocries! And revocries!

And revoclers! And invoclers!

And invokements and revokements.

Keep revoking and invoking.

Also:

We appeal and repeal, etc.

We attract and retract, etc.

We allure and conjure, etc.

Velimir Khlebnikov, 'My churaemnya i charuemnya', in

Collected Works [Leningrad: Sobranie proizvedenii, 1928–33; reprinted in Velimir Khlebnikov, *Snake Train: Poetry and Prose*, ed. and trans. Gary Kern, Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1976] 59–60.

Velimir KHLEBNIKOV

Proposals [1914–16]

* To breed edible creatures in the lakes which are invisible to the naked eye, so that every lake will be a pot of soup – already made, even if uncooked.

* Crowds of diners will swim and lol about on the banks – the food of the future.

* To base the exchange of labour on an exchange of heartbeats. To calculate each form of labour by the number of heartbeats – the monetary unit of the future, according to which every living person will be equally rich. To consider the median number of beats equal to 365,317 per 24 hours.

* To calculate the international exchange of trade by this unit.

* To conclude the great war with the first flight to the moon.

* To create the written language of the Aryans, scientifically constructed, for everyone.

* To effect an innovation in land ownership by recognizing that the area of land for individual usage can be no less than the surface of the terrestrial globe.

* Let sailing through the air be one leg and the gift of spark-speech be the other leg of mankind. What comes next – we'll wait and see.

* To construct the art of waking up easily from dreams.

* To see the dust in the capitals pile up into bundles of standing waves, according to the law of a sounding plate (the diagrams of Kundt) [...]

* To provide all the thoughts of the earth (there are so few of them) with their own number, like houses, and to converse and exchange thoughts by using the language of sight. To name by number the speeches of Cicero, Cato, Othello, Demosthenes and to replace imitative speeches, which no one needs, with a simple signboard and the number of the speech. This principle has been partially carried out in the codes of law.

Languages will remain for art and will be freed from a humiliating burden. We're tired of hearing. [...]

*. To establish a special desert island for eternal, unceasing warfare between desirous people of all countries, for example Iceland (a superb death).

* To use sleep-weapons (sleep-bullets) in ordinary wars.

* To introduce the same order and conformity in the matter of birth as now exists in the matter of killing; troops of births, a limited number of them.

* To reforge the plague-wind of wars into a sleep-wind.

Then the governments will win our admiration and deserve our respect. [...]

Velimir Khlebnikov, 'Predlozheniya', in *Collected Works*

[Leningrad: Sobranie proizvedenii, 1928–33; reprinted in Velimir Khlebnikov, *Snake Train: Poetry and Prose*, ed. and trans. Gary Kern, Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1976] 191–93.

Vasilii KAMENSKY

A Tango with Cows [1914]

to Vl. Mayakovsky

LIFE is shorter than a sparrow tweet

is a dOg SwimminG THERE

on the Ice down a springtime RIVER

WITH PEWter MERRIment we LOOk

on FATE

tied into a seaman's knot of loneliness

We Discoverers of COUNTRIES

beyond-rind WORMS

K I n G S of orange groveS and

and CATTLEDeAIerS

Perhaps we will drink a goblet of WINE to

the hEaltH of the pLants eLApSinG

oR

Better

we'll wiNd up
THE GRAMOPHone NOW
YOU GO TO HELL
HoRNIess and
fLaTiRoNs
I want to dance ALONE
A TANGO WITH COWs
to bUild
BIGS
rDe
from TeARS
ofbullish
————— Jealousy
to the TeArs
of a CRIMSON girl

Vasilii Kamensky, 'Tango s korovami', *Izd. Pervogo Zhurnala russkikh futuristov (First Journal of the Russian Futurists)* [1914; reprinted in Gerald Janeczek, *The Look of Russian Literature: Avant-garde Visual Experiments, 1900-1930*, Princeton University Press, N.J., 1984] 276.

Ilia ZDANEVICH

Yanko King of Albania [1918]

host
sitiznz heerz tha akshun ov yanko king ov albania ov tha
famus albanian poet brbr kolum ov tha stokekschange
dedikaetid to olga lyashkova heer they dont know thee
albanian langwidge and a bludliss killing givz thee akshun
willy-nilly without tranzlayshun sintz thee albanian
langwidge from rushun comz from it yu will notiss wordz
similer to rushun wunz like dunkee blokhed galoshez and
suchlaik but bekauz tha wordz ar albanian ther meening iz
not rushun like dunkee meenz (nessessarily aye woont giv
tha meening) and suchlaik wy dont get upset remember
heer tha langwidge iz albanian
akts
yanko iz in pants from somewon elsez bak shood in nu
taim prins prenkibbdada
Ilia Zdanevich, 'Yanko kru' albanskay' [Tiflis: Sindikat,
1918; reprinted in Gerald Janeczek, *The Look of Russian
Literature: Avant-garde Visual Experiments, 1900-1930*,
Princeton University Press, N.J., 1984] 280.

Sergei YUTKEVICH

We Prefer a Pinkerton Cover to the Concoctions of Picasso [1922]

WE
VALUE ART AS AN INEXHAUSTIBLE
BATTERING-RAM
SHATTERING THE WALLS OF CUSTOM
AND DOGMA.
But we also have our forerunners!

THEY ARE:

The geniuses who created the posters for cinema, circus
and variety theatres, the unknown authors of dust-jackets
for adventure stories about kings, detectives and
adventurers; like the clown's grimaces, we spurn Your
High Art as if it were an elasticated trampoline in order to
perfect our own intrepid *salto* of Eccentrism!
The only thing that has escaped the corrupting scalpel
of analysis and intellect is the POSTER. Subject and form
are indivisible. What is there to celebrate in them?
Risk, bravery, violence, chase, revolution, gold, blood,
laxative pills, Charles Chaplin, wrecks on land, sea and in
the air, surprise cigars, operetta prima donnas, adventures
of all sorts, skating-rinks, American boots, horses,
struggle, *chansonettes*, a *salto* on a bicycle and thousands
and thousands of events that make our Today beautiful.

ALL THE TWO HUNDRED TOMES OF THE
PHILOSOPHY OF GERMAN EXPRESSIONISM ARE NOT
AS EXPRESSIVE AS A CIRCUS POSTER!!!
We prefer a Pinkerton cover to the concoctions of Picasso!!!
Sergei Yutkevich, 'We Prefer a Pinkerton Cover to the
Concoctions of Picasso', *Eccentrism* [Petrograd, 1922;
trans. Richard Taylor in *Utopias: Russian Modernist Texts
1905-1940*, ed. Catriona Kelly, London: Penguin, 1999]
137-38.

Stanisław Ignacy WITKIEWICZ

Manifesto (Festo-Mani) [1921]

The most beautiful of arts, and who knows
if not the most difficult, is mendacity.
(From a conversation with my friend Chwalistor Womiejek-
Hoax in the café 'Destruction')
In the last days of August 1921, two important and so to
say connected (conjoins) movements came into being:
n'importe-quoi-isme and *comme-pour-quisme*, meaning
anythingism and for-whomism. Their main
representatives are: Paul Desbauches, Tristan de
Tourmentelles, and Mademoiselle Claire Lafondru. We
acknowledge these as the main creators of these novelties
(though they are insufficiently theoretically informed) and
wish to import the movements to our country, on
condition that we will try to formulate in strictly theoretical
terms that which, to the aforementioned artists, is simply
a powerful instinct, dilating their body and soul.
An avalanche of 'movements' is tumbling down on
mankind. Scarcely does the most radical of them raise its
head and start becoming official, but another is already
emerging, whose representatives consider the previous
one as 'barbaric' as a musty mummy and fling themselves
still further into the jaws of the Unknown. This process
grows faster by the minute. Famous for its novelty, S.I.
Witkiewicz's 'Pure Form' and the Futurists' 'realist
nonsense', are already crumbling beneath the sincere
efforts of the Dadaists. For the youngest of us (we are only

between 16 and 18, except Józefa Pigon who is 13), who do
not wish to tread the sincerely hackneyed Dadaist
pavements but also to make some use of artistic life, these
novelties amount to nothing. Why? The simple answer:
because of their outward appearance of sincerity, which
hides masked intrinsic hoaxing. Our brothers in France
have failed to realize this, so we, the Polish pure hoaxers,
the name we use to comprise both the aforementioned
'connected' movements, will be the first to make this clear.

1) Sincerity has become an impossibility. Already scarce,
the sincere mammoths of Futurism and Formism are
sighing with despair (not that we or the public care — ha!
ha!). Hoaxing shapes movements in ways which are
unclear, and for this reason fatal, to their creators.
2) What could be in higher repute than Dadaism?
To some, it may seem pointless to ask this question. But
we need at last to tear away the mask which has stifled so
many generations and condemned the most talented
hoaxers to be pickled in their own juices. It must be said
that this way of presenting the problem already contains
the substance of a new agenda. Once again we ask: how
one can outstrip Futurism and Dadaism?' BY PURE
HOAXING. What freedom! What bliss! to be able at last to
begin hoaxing blissfully and luxuriously. Hooray!!!! Our
 chests expand, our hair blows free, our eyes pop out of our
heads. Pure Hoaxing!! The first and the last to do so, WE
speak, shout and howl this magical word, which nobody
else has had the courage to pronounce. Nobody is going to
outstrip us. Moreover, our hoaxing is real — it is not
concerned with external appearances as printed poems
are, for example.

What do the discoveries of Futurism and Dadaism matter
compared to this shattering avowal? Away from stinking
recesses and partitions of dubious width — to the sea, to
the Oceans of Pure Hoaxing! We, and the whole of
mankind, feel light all of a sudden. That which once
seemed to be an impossible dream, has come true: we
have outdone the Futurists and the Dadaists, not to
mention Pure Form, which is, because it implies
programmatic sincerity and metaphysics (ha! ha!), a dried
up and crumbling mummy. Hooray!! How light and
wonderful everything is!! Hooray!! We also manage to
avoid the dangers of the small dimensions of our
compositions. A sincere fellow makes a cross out of four
threads, makes a woodcut or an engraving of it and then
sells them in luxury folders. 'Why have you done so little?'
buyers ask him. 'Had I made but one more line, had I
worked but five minutes longer, I would have been
insincere.' It cannot be helped — he is right. It is the same
with poetry. Two words are enough to make a poem, so
long as we add to them a circle on a stick. 'It could not be
helped — I could not be insincere.' This problem does not
exist for us: we can create kilometre long poems and
hectare large canvases with a clear conscience, hoaxing
without a care. At the same time we knock the deadly
weapon — the accusation of insincerity — out of the
Philistines' hands.
Marceli Duchanski-Hoax

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1 The futuristification and dadaification of Formists will be a matter of weeks – at most months, unless these deluded sincere mammoths, standing on the edge of a precipice, wake up to themselves. [author’s note]

Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, ‘Manifest (Fest-mani)’, *Papierek Iakusowy* [Zakopane, 1921; trans. Klara Kemp-Welch in *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-gardes, 1910–1930*, eds Timothy O. Benson and Éva Forgács, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2002] 340–41, 343.

János MÁCZA

The Black Tomcat [1921]

Prologue:
Ladies and gentlemen
brothers and comrades
I am stone, glass, and steel
the spotlight’s beam of light
I am sound, and word, and canvas
even the stage manager
and: YOU.
Go ahead and laugh!
Idiots, sponge-heads
parrots and crowbirds
sages artists and those with V.D.
I lift the curtains from your eyes
Let me put the nickel in the nickelodeon
Brrr – nyek – poot
You can start laughing!

IJános Mácza, ‘A fekete kandúr’, *Ma*, 6, 9 [21 September 1921; trans. John Bakti in *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-gardes, 1910–1930*, ed. Timothy O. Benson and Éva Forgács, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2002] 320.

Sándor BARTA

Green-Headed Man [1921]

THE GREEN-HEADED MAN
or
an active cadaver’s manifesto to cab horses and to elevators
or
TO ALL TUBERCULOTICS OF THE WORLD
or
esteemed humanity
or
the intensity of every faith equals the total amount of inertia
or
SÁNDOR BARTA
OR 1920
... but there is no justice and even if there is it’s
always independent of justice. So why not simply, honestly

LET EVERYBODY PROCESS
HIS OWN!
BECAUSE
it is physical death to lose an argument
physical death to believe anything
PHYSICAL DEATH TO AGREE WITH ANYONE
PHYSICAL DEATH TO SENSE THE TRUTH OF ANYTHING
PHYSICAL DEATH TO BE A PART OF ANYTHING
part of the soil, part of some faith
BECAUSE
1) a) b) c) d) i)
I am an active cadaver
AND
e) f) g) h) aitch)
I have no intention of ENDING UP UNDER A BELL
lovely syphilitic girls on rollerskates
scream glass under a saccharine-toothed moon!
There is no space immaterial colour form
absolutum
all is material geometry and the all has
no geometry ... I must not argue
for only I know that truth is violent sexuality
Truth: the cross-section of stasis
Truth: the drain of energies into inertia
The Truth
equally kills
GOOD and EVIL
THERE ARE NO
TRUTHS,
this is not true either
there are no truths, no common roots
to actions no truths so no common goals
for all humankind no truths so
NO COLLECTIVE ACTS
THERE IS
SUN
PHOSPHORUS
CARBON and AIR
there is
CHEMISTRY
there is
therefore suggestive matter
I too am suggestive matter
BECAUSE a cab horse reared up in front of me
with the NEEDLEhaired little old lady
BECAUSE a girl joys herself to a swoon
on my meat
BECAUSE yesterday a student stabbed himself
with a kitchen knife on top of the highest
streetlight
Watch out !! / literature! / to be omitted!!
I AM THE BROTHER OF CAB HORSES AND ELEVATORS
BECAUSE they are suffering matter incapable of
either belief or denial
BECAUSE they are the whinnying mortar for my
constructions
in the groin of
buildings
streets
harbours

BECAUSE they are the ones who
never hurt me and I can still
reach down into their throats
they simply revolve with bloody-toothed cows
and swim around in plank-lined streets
above them only one house left standing
without windows
and madmen weep red telephone wires
into the march
THE INSANE ARE THE ONLY SERIOUS
MEMBERS OF SOCIETY
the insane sing all night
the insane sing all day
and from behind white fences graze into the sun
I AM INSANE
AND THE SOBER FOLKS ship around me warm gardens
schools to make you smart and preserved virgins
and lantern-brained churches
FOR MADMEN ARE THE MOST SUGGESTIVE MATERIAL
FOR MADMEN ARE THE PUREST HARMONY
THE SUN is insane WATER insane THE NIGHT insane
those who meet in them laugh and scream in fright
only
madmen stand on mountaintops and lightning rods
singing
the silver in mines is on their side
spaceless electricity is on their side
come!!! approach them!!!
LOGIC IS A CAGE
and you mustn’t peak and you can’t fit inside
and nothing is logical under the sun
IT’S LOGICAL to dive head first at a soldier’s bayonet
LOGICAL if a sooty slut bites through your neck under
the lamp-post
LOGICAL rooftop chimneys fields blind beggars waterfalls
THE GREEN DAY IS LOGICAL
tuberculotics are LOGICAL
all day walking on their heads to stay in touch
with matter at least on that point
LOGICAL that a girl silently started to levitate
over the most crowded marketplace
and raised her rachitic hands like two
flowers of pure gold by her ears
LOGICAL that a shoemaker’s son is a shoemaker
and suddenly it is night
FAITH IS LOGICAL
and the depth of every faith equals the total amount of
inertia
How much laughter is there in the bawl of a slaughtered ox
and how much less composition
nobody can compose me
warm unstoppable motion am I and always
more or less than myself
AND COMPOSITION IS STASIS
But I can gargle myself out in a guffaw
and sing myself out in a howl
Culture will spit me in the eye I know but I have long ago
spat out culture and would not call myself a man of culture
not for a handful of manure
I do not know geography mineralogy and zoology
do not know water is made of wood

do not know the sun is green blue and red
as for the dead madonnas in museums I would like to
bite them off the walls and hang the visions of madmen
there
and their forever trumpeting brains
AGAINST REASON
THE ONE THING THAT DOES NOT EXIST
AGAINST REASON
BECAUSE IT'S BELLOWED AT ME AS AN ABSOLUTE
and what's the reason for the rooster's cry
the kids' whistle the derailed express train
the consecrated cannons the sinking cities
REASON IS DAYTIME
SEX
because at night we are simply pigs at our cows'
udders. And I cannot be understood
but I can be grazed up like tasty alfalfa
Horses graze me up and whinny me out into the air
and I too whinny out hard buckteeth smells breasts
and penises
and never try to get close to my own reason
for that would be my most unreasonable manifestation
AGAINST RESPONSIBILITY
because it's a bell they want to tie to my ankle
AGAINST RESPONSIBILITY
because there are no shared measuring tools
AGAINST RESPONSIBILITY
because there is no one I owe
because only losers' lives can share a common ground
and there are no losers
RESPONSIBLE I AM NOT
because the wind blew a car into the river
because a woman gave a revolutionary lye to drink
because revolutionaries sing the harmonies of madness
NOT RESPONSIBLE NOT EVEN FOR MYSELF
BUT I CAN PROVE to anyone anytime
both I and my opponent are right
also THE OPPOSITE
BECAUSE THE OPPOSITE OF EVERYTHING IS ALSO
TRUE

I'm a worthless good-for-nothing I know
and know there's not even futility any more
I only want to know one thing
WHAT COULD SIRIUS SMELL LIKE
and anyway it's all the same but
now it's night already red dragons
barked forth by brothel hovels the wind
gargles pressed cats' heads in the alleys
in place of my heart green
cows low at the moon over the towers

Sándor Barta, 'A zöldfejú ember', *Ma*, 6, 3 [March 1921;
trans. John Bakti in *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central
European Avant-gardes, 1910-1930*, ed. Timothy O. Benson and
Eva Forgács, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA;
Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2002] 324-28.

Sándor BARTA from The First Gathering of the Mad in a Garbage Bin [1922]

It was at night. You could still hear the guffawing of the
moon. Under a street lamp I spied the garbage bin out of
which a chorus of male bassos swirled upward like smoke.
I stepped over to the ventilation hole and my
eyes saw a horrible sight.

2 marionette-like women and 5 men with
matted hair
sat with bulging eyes, leaning back against the
wall of the bin, that makes 7 of them
The silence was ghostly. A dreamy daze.
Stillness of night.
12 church clocks each struck 12 times = 144
A housemaid holding a bottle of lye sat upon Christ's
shoulder. A streetcar conductor with blue trouser button
eyes on his beer belly.
OH WOE!
WHEREUPON I ENTERED
The snoring of seals placed under the doorsill painted my
face yellow [...]

Collective Lajos asked permission to speak in order to
explain his misunderstood words:
And he spake:
Dear company!
My highly esteemed sirs
This is not how we play; balls to the highly esteemed
practical speaker before me – the cosmos we are talking
about is on my side!
Quiet Melancholy and The Man Passing for Sober for a
good reason are two painters, but my good sirs, painting is
+

killed by life itself, dearly beloved fellow mourners (he
faltered), that bestial Life which we kept capitalizing in our
proclamatory lines. I however will bring it back to you
again, ah, tread softly around it, its name, ah, is beautiful,
but its ears, alas, are awfully full of spiders and linger
disconsolately in the department store called twilight.
But it is the only one that does not want
anything.

For 'picture architecture does not want
anything'.
Picture architecture exists because it can!
But painting does not exist for it is dead.
I am Collective Lajos.
My wife is the first Dadaist actress.
Sándor Barta is a genius.
And this will never end.

And now Simple Jolán stepped out of the closet bearing a
condensing vessel tied with a blue ribbon upon her right
palm and she too instantly announced that surely a-oo-da
ba-oo-da hojo-modo-ho, and what's more it's snow, and

then stood on two legs and her vo-o-o-ice so-o-o-oared
(vvvvvvvvv) and it was made of hedgehogs
(vvvvvvvvvvvv) and tissue paper airplanes that tried
in vain to mount the spiral stairway leading to the stars
and kept crashing among the towers, amidst the simple-
minded buttercups.
Sándor Barta, 'Az örültek első összejövetele a
szemetesládában', *Akasztott Ember*, 1, 1 [1922; trans. John
Bakti in *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European
Avant-gardes, 1910-1930*, ed. Timothy O. Benson and Éva
Forgács, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; Cambridge,
Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2002] 328, 329-30.

Lajos KASSÁK Pictorial Architecture [1922]

Down with art! Long live art!
Since the disintegration of the primitive Christian
concept of the world there has never been so great a need
to 'solve' the problems of the human way of life as today,
when individual materialism has become bankrupt. Man
is born and man cannot endure his life. There are open
roads before us and yet we cannot set out because we have
no goal in us to spur us on our way. What we desire, the
externals of life and their acquisition, is not necessarily
indispensable, but all this would mean to us is material
enrichment. Therefore as civilized beings we are incapable
of making any sacrifice – not even sufficient to rid
ourselves of the forms of life today, in other words, our
moral endowments – to achieve it. This was what made
the World War possible, and this is the root of the collapse
in themselves of the social revolutions which undoubtedly
began with a strong impulse. Who today believes in the
future as 'the only sacrament'? Who is spurred to action
today by the 'glorification of an idea'? It is plain that it is
alive somewhere in the depths of human consciousness,
that he who set as his aim the conquest of the world
cannot conquer the world. In order that we may become
ordinary human beings we must extend our desires to the
superhuman, for along the road we shall certainly reach
the human. He who is ready to travel can only be a man
with a concept / *Weltanschauung* of the world. Marxian
socialism as a scientific theory cannot be a concept of the
world.

A *Weltanschauung* is not something that one knows: it
is something that one, above all feels.
Science is practicalities.
Art is a *Weltanschauung*.
Creation alone is life, and life the materialization of the
Weltanschauung of the world. Art is creation and therefore
the most complete life.
That is the end and that is the road too.
Art never had any beginning and will never come to an
end.
From eternity art has been an ever-present force, like
ethics, like revolution, like the whole world itself.
Thus there is no new art and no old art.
There is only art.
And since the artist is not the master but the servant of

WE

VALUE ART AS AN INEXHAUSTIBLE

BATTERING-RAM

SHATTERING

THE WALLS OF CUSTOM AND

DOGMA

art, the art-products of certain ages show us not the face of art but only the nature of good or bad material which humanity alive at those times had to communicate art.

For art is life, while man can only develop into one who expresses this life.

Therefore art cannot be made.

The artist is like a mother: pregnant with life. A new product of art is as valuable as a newly-born human being.

At certain times only men of a certain calibre can come to birth: at certain times only certain products of art can come to birth.

The artist is inwardly compelled to strive to express the world, in other words himself, as completely as possible.

Since the world is for ever changing this aim cannot be realized yet the artist works only to realize this aim.

This is his 'tragedy' and this makes him like a 'god'.

The more perfect man is, the more perfect is his god.

The more perfect an artist is, the more perfect is his art.

There is no doubt that once again we have arrived closer to the constructive concept of the world, like the collective belief of the first Christians maintained through a totally disorganized wilderness out of which only one or two painful tragedies succeeded in making their tortured way to the zenith. But our belief is not in Christian religiosity, a form which has already exhausted itself, but in communism, in whose essence totality is like Unity, but as opposed to the hierarchical structure of the Christian religion, the One is also like totality. We feel cosmic life in ourselves and the problems of progress will solve themselves.

In our concept of the world we live life itself; we have completed the bloody vicious circle, and man has once again become capable of expressing the world. Not imitating it, but creating it.

The artist of today, as a man with a concept of the world, again bears his art with him as a manifesto.

Not his view of the world, but the essence of the world. Architecture.

The synthesis of the new order.

In the fine arts (but I emphasize that what is true of one branch of art as a speciality of form is also true of art itself as a creative unity) the first to desire this new synthesis were the Cubists, Expressionists and the *Merz* painters. They desired it, but did not yet sense it fully.

Of the three groups it is the searches of the Cubists that point along the surest road to – art. They misunderstood the disintegrated world and in their art searched their way back to the essence of things, to construction. What they achieved depended entirely on their individual values. Their creations put into forms a concept of the world that is not entirely unified. Their synthesis is not *a priori*, but the result of a deep analysis. Their composition is not the embodiment of the compulsion of an inner emotion that cannot be expressed otherwise, but the illustration of a scientific will by using artistic means. Their pictures are not creations for their own sake, but transpositions into painting of a world recognized by optical or psychological means – though mercilessly opposed to 'naturalism' and recognizing the laws of plane surfaces. Their forms are restricted to the corporeal nature of objects seen or known, and with their

colours they try to put a natural perspective on the canvas; and with this the 'picture' finally loses life as a picture and becomes illusory. As a theory, Cubism laid the foundation-stone of art in the 'modern' period, but the Cubists themselves only progressed beyond Impressionism in form. With geometrical division of form they paint a human being, an animal, a violin, etc., three-dimensional figures on a two-dimensional plane. Their scientific theories derived from the recognition of the plane have not been successfully transferred into forms of composition even by their most representative artists, like Léger and Gleizes. Instead of the 'psychic' depiction of man they have turned to the depiction of 'monumental' compositions. This, however, simply implies a difference of theme from the depiction of Picasso's violinist, for example. It is certain that today we have come much closer, just because of the development of our concept of the world, to the sensory perception of machines and great cities, than did our predecessors whose mood was idyllic; but from the standpoint of artistic pretensions the symbolic 'composition' of these into pictures indicates nothing more than a second-degree composition. And in the long run how much more does this indicate than Impressionism? At most, the one transposes with discernment, the other without it.

Art, however, is a creative act with strict inner laws.

Of the Expressionists it was Kandinsky who went farthest. His forms have scarcely any optical bases; he calls his art absolute painting. And is Kandinsky's painting really absolute painting? Yes. But are Kandinsky's pictures absolute pictures too? No ... A picture as a creation on a flat plane cannot bring to mind any foreign body (such as a body not present in the picture) and cannot exhibit anything. No, not even a psychic process. But Kandinsky's pictures have a story to tell. From his first story-pictures right to the compositions of 1920 one can survey the whole process; the same emotional motifs which appeared on canvas in the first period with dwarfs and fairy queens are still present in his latest creations, though without borrowed forms. Thus the artist has not created a new world: he has merely abstracted himself from the 'real' world. There is no doubt that even today he paints not pictures but sensations. He transfers life that is living in some other area to the area of the plane. It is certain, however, that he does it with magnetic intensity, just like a good actor who gives 'colossal' life to the prescribed rôle. And both of these are just secondary creations.

Art, however, is simply bringing something into existence out of nothing.

And Kurt Schwitters, the *Merz*-painter, says in one of his articles that *Merz* paintings are abstract creations. What does he mean by 'abstract'? The abstract does not exist. Transforming something out of its most characteristic form into something or into some quality – this procedure is called abstraction. In other words from something into some kind. Schwitters, just like Kandinsky, forms emotions into pictures. Only in the choice of the material needed to express their emotions do the two artists differ from each other. Kandinsky, the absolute painter, expresses himself with paints and colours; Schwitters on the other hand carries his emotions through

the totality of materials (and here is his unconscious collective significance as opposed to Kandinsky) into plastic art. It is his emotions that he transfers. His pictures have defined titles: Franz Müller's wire-spring, The Great I etc. Can these pictures be any different from the conscious elaboration of some memory or invention of the artist? No. And what can these pictures give to us? The illusion of a world that exists, once existed or may exist.

But in the best instance illusion can only be what creation is.

But art is creation.

A man of unreality lives with illusions.

The concept of the world is the sense of security: the greatest reality.

The only scale of values to the artist is his concept of the world.

The artist with a concept of the world can create anything.

Creation is the constructive good deed.

Construction is architecture.

The absolute picture is *Bildarchitektur*.

The material revolutions, if they have not achieved anything else, have brought home to the thinking man the truth that it is impossible to solve the problems of modern life by relying solely on organizations of violence or solely by economic revolution. The capitalist order of society possesses not only militarism, which is good for patricide, and a conservative bureaucracy, but also a fearful moral strength, and for this reason the hunger-riots of the oppressed will always prove too little to oppose it. For unfortunately this hunger, which is opposed to a more humane fear of life on the part of the capitalists, can be satisfied at any time with a larger slice of bread. The revolution which sets out to change the world trips up on a crumb of bread and dies as a rebellion. It dies because it has no concept of the world to support it. The mass did not set out because it could not put up with the life it has today, but because the prospects of a better life were set before it. And in order that humanity may be able to redeem itself it is not enough to have just a desire for a better life: first and foremost it is necessary to be completely unable to bear with life as it has been hitherto ... Let there be no way back any more! And this can only be completely achieved by means of a psychic liberation either beforehand or in the best instance at the same time. And it is a mistake to believe that man is seriously capable of doing something for 'the future'. We are alive and we wish to live. Anything beyond this truth may be a revolutionary catchword and it may be a counter-revolutionary catchword. And only the artist can be the one who particularizes and revolutionizes our emotions.

The artist is one who does not command us to do anything but who makes us able to do the greatest things.

Art transforms us, and we become capable of transforming our surroundings.

And as has always been so, in the present world-cataclysm too art has come nearest to the point from which the new concept of the world will be formed.

Applied knowledge tends to revert to the service of reaction, and art has arrived wholly at its own, in other words at the essence of the world, in architecture.

Now we can clearly see that art is Art, and no more and no less than this.

And not according to the interests of tendentious classes or parties, but it is itself a pure life-tendency.

Of all artistic creations hitherto it is architecture alone that demonstrates this life-tendency.

Thus *Bildarchitektur* does not 'represent' a powerful god, a fearful war or idyllic love: it is a power that demonstrates itself!

Bildarchitektur does not resemble anything, tells no story, has no beginning and no end anywhere.

It simply exists.

It is like unvalled cities, an ocean that can be traversed by ships, a rambling wood or the creation that is closest to it – the Bible.

Wherever we enter it, we may sense the whole at any point.

So it simply exists, for it had to come to birth by its own power.

And in this existence it is merciless.

It is one of the characteristics of modern schools of art that they try to assimilate, just like their predecessors. For example, if we wanted success for an expressionist picture, we had to search for a suitable and preferably 'pleasant' milieu for it. If we placed it in a bad milieu, it died like a broken flower, its colours faded or became mottled and its forms became blurred. The 'expert' said it could not bear these surroundings. With *Bildarchitektur* the reverse is true. It appears in its surroundings as a fundamental force living on its own reserves, and what surrounds it does not command it but is subjected to it. Whoever comes to like *Bildarchitektur* must become nauseated by his petty bourgeois surroundings and consequently by his bourgeois self. *Bildarchitektur* is not illusory but realistic, not abstract, but naturalism in the strictest sense. So much so that beside the imitative painting christened 'Naturalism' it appears as nature to be imitated, and is no different from trees, men or any other 'natural marvels'.

Thus *Bildarchitektur* is no longer a picture in the academic sense of the word.

It is an active companion in our life, the symbol of the universe to whom I must attach myself or against whom in the interests of my life I must struggle.

It is enrichment and a force compelling to enrichment.

Through the blur of colours and labyrinth of lines in the galleries *Bildarchitektur* has come to meet us like a trinity of simplicity, security and truth. It has come as the representative of the age and presented us with a knowledge of the plane as a realistically usable space and with the forms of a collective belief in life. Up to now the artist stood before the canvas full of inspiration, and the happiest of them was the one who was so able to receive the influences of the world that he could sweat or foist on to the plane surface 'perspectives' that deceived himself and the public. We know that if we are painting a picture we are not boring a tunnel or building a house. But we are building a picture.

Bildarchitektur is constructed not inwards from the plane but outwards from it. It takes the surface simply as a given foundation and does not open perspectives inwards, which may be illusory at all times, but with its layers of

colour and forms steps out into real space, and thus the picture is given natural perspective, the unlimited potentialities of the life of a picture. *Bildarchitektur*, like architecture in general, counts on the laws of gravity and chemistry. The perspective between forms and colours originates not from the apparent construction of bodies depicted behind each other, but from the corporeality of the colours actually present and the flat forms themselves. Thus these colours and forms live; they live their own real lives, as opposed to the decoration of colour and form, as the good critics will term this kind of art. Decoration is filling up the flat surface, *Bildarchitektur* is building on the flat surface. Its pictures are therefore not 'like', but are what they are. They have a direct impact and their impact cannot be as if an imitative portrait or landscape or an illusory construction showing the latest machine were about to talk or begin to move. And for this reason our art is a primary creation and we, like all building, set out from our own region on the flat surface, as from a foundation into the air, as men who wish no longer to dance attendance but to transform the world in our own image.

And not by means of tactics like politicians and not by technique, like the chewers of pencils and slaves of the brush.

For technique is not necessary for art. Technique is routine and routine is skimming the surface. It is precisely the opposite of art.

Bildarchitektur rejects all schools – including the schooling of ourselves.

Bildarchitektur does not confine itself to particular materials and particular means; like *Merz*-art it regards all kinds of materials and means as useful to express itself.

Bildarchitektur does not dabble in psychology.

Bildarchitektur does not want anything.

Bildarchitektur wants everything.

Bildarchitektur has liberated itself from the arms of 'art' and has gone beyond Dadaism.

Bildarchitektur believes of itself that it is the beginning of a new world.

Bildarchitektur truly does not wish to be situated in a room.

Bildarchitektur wants to be the room itself, the house itself, indeed it wishes to be your own most intimate life.

Bildarchitektur is as simple as the sole of a boot and yet it is the root of perfection.

Bildarchitektur is the enemy of all art, because only from it can art set forth.

Bildarchitektur is $2 \times 2 = 4$.

Bildarchitektur is the alpha.

Bildarchitektur has killed mawkish zigzags and idyllic variety.

Bildarchitektur sees an endless spiral even in a straight line.

Bildarchitektur has transferred the spectrum of colours into white and black.

Bildarchitektur professes itself to be the human zenith.

Bildarchitektur does not wish to die on the wall.

Bildarchitektur wishes to be a town of American calibre, a look-out tower, a sanatorium for consumptives and a popular entertainment.

For *Bildarchitektur* is art, and art is creation and

creation is everything.

Lajos Kassák, 'Képarchitektúra', *Ma*, 7, 4 [25 March 1922; trans. George Cushing in *The Hungarian Avant-garde: The Eight and the Activists*, London: Arts Council of Great Britain (now Arts Council England), 1980] 114–17.

Ödön PALASOVSKY, Iván HEVESY Manifesto [1922]

MANIFESTO 1922

Culture for the Masses

We Demand a New Art

Down with Mouldy Figs

A Manifesto for a New Mass Culture

We Demand a New Art

Down with art, for it has sold out.

Down with still-lives.

Down with decoration.

Down with the caterwauling of aesthetes.

Down with the fancy mouldy figs of hedonism.

We demand a rapturous, great art for the masses.

We demand the art of the liberated man.

Out into the streets, and face the masses!

NEW MIRACLES FOR THE MARKETPLACES,

new mythologies on the advertising posters, new visions on the walls, new chorales and new tragedies for the open air. [...]

Artists have sold out,

they are decorating with lanterns the hanging gardens of fish-mongers. The artist has sold out; the fate of humankind no longer bothers him; he would rather design rose arbors for pseudo-virgins and decorate the glorious residences of salami manufacturers. And in turn he is greeted by the chorus of salami manufacturers: All hail the true Artist!

We want none of this art,

for it is putrid. We want none of it for it fails to fuse in a great rapture the masses of humankind, to teach them the new meaning of life and to lead them towards the stages of a truer culture. We want none of this art, for it does not belong to the masses – nor should it. It is the polluted ecstasy and fancy mouldy fig of art salons. But it is too stupid even for that, for it keeps regurgitating itself thousands of times over and over, with slightly different frills, whereas even an ox prefers to have some variety in its diet.

Away with the artist

if he has putrefied and sold out. His successor will not be an idol and will not dwell in ivory towers; will not be a moonstruck troubadour singing about his beloved's beauty spot.

The new artist will step out into the marketplace and

proclaim the new phase of culture for the masses. [...]

There will be no more delicate sonnets, crudely contrived ballads and musty novels. No more idiotic portraits and still-lifes, no more fancy dabs that had long evaporated the last trace of rapture. No more inane statues promising eternal life to gentleman riders, for the new rapture will call for new words on the billboards, new visions on the walls, new myths for the arenas, new Choirs for the marketplaces. The new artist will be a prophet without a name. The name of the new artist is rapture. The new art will dictate, for the rapture of the masses, the meaning of a new and pure life, in order to direct the shared rapture of the masses toward newer and fuller stages of culture.

THE POSTER, THE NEWSVENDOR AND THE WHITE MOVIE SCREEN will be the excellent means that will, with their live energies, accomplish the splendid work of propaganda that alone deserves to be called art.

Ödön Pałasovszky and Iván Hevesy, *Manifesztum* [Budapest, 1922; reprinted in Timothy O. Benson and Éva Forgács, eds., *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-gardes, 1910-1930*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2002] 332, 333, 334.

Dragan ALEKSIĆ

Dadaism [1921]

Art used to be tedious, boring. A moment's growth, a part, a detail of a shock, and revolt. Art is what the *nerves* express. Nerves are primitive. Feeling comes when a body is receptive and about to think. Feelings are not nerves. Nerves are primeval, unspoiled, unselfconscious strength. Primitivism has a *basis*.

The realism of truth is always circulating. Truth is my idea (2 x 2 = 5), as is its contrast *illusion*. Therefore, to call truth objective is not correct. Morality is a sunken kind of truth, and all kinds of truths today are sunken. Morality (hither, come hither, salvation lies this way!) fetters, and truth has begun. Let us take the world and examine it like a cow on sale. (Comet-fear threatens!) That is why DADA strives for as-you-like-it-ness. Joy is both an allusion and truth, joy, the basis of all. It needs longevity [...]

- = DADA is a revolutionary communist.
- = DADA is looking for 300,000 circuses to popularize art – (why work?)
- = DADA wants to turn churches into cabarets bars colosseums bruit variété.
- = DADA wants to solve the sexual – (jump jump jump)

DADA is a term for getting happy. A great abstraction that would turn two-arm-leggeds from money bricks combat of reality so cruel and introduce them into the never-ending

beauty of moments of primitive happiness. The joy of politics (Cacadou supérieur!) Since 1916 or 1917 Dada has been Geneva. Cabaret Voltaire. Tristan Tzara, Ball, Janco, Arp, Huelsenbeck. – DADA sensation and exhilaration. War, the stupid calf, has made people think of the common good. (Geneva is a nice town!) Hanover accepts DADAists and 400,000 copies of DADA rush to the world on 'Silver nags'. DADA is developing everywhere. DADA has representatives in Prague and their success spreads as fast as drum fire. (Cucucucucu) 500,000 coutons make an extraordinary beautiful noise and music. Success. Russia is ultra DADA. Advertisement (St. Portion prays for us!) is the most satisfactory meaning of art. DADA = a great

name: Krollookroollookroooooo – ririririririluluheehheee tactactactactactactac (zoo garden!) – to destroy culture because it is a boring, bourgeois silliness, nicely made up and wrapped in cellophane. Let us go to extremes, to the borderline of great freedoms. (Hahahaha yeeee haa!) Primeval times. The world seems strange now because it's all made up. (Civilization, you old strumpet!) Let's tear it down tear it down all the way. Let language explode and a great DADA remain. (Vischer, you beautiful man!)

Tutumble, stumble – culture and shameless civilization will fall, croak in the sea of the desert plain. Arms into high air, stick out, sleep tight, seconds sight shout wild loud strong: WE ARE YOUNG AGAIN. DADA screams for YOUTH. DADA primitivism and desire. Future. Life is Earth. Life is an abstraction of the globe. Forward is backward. We will reach the START again. Second through the forehead. (Metaphysics!) Revolver forty-story fall. Everything is DADA.

Dragan Aleksić, 'Dadaizam', *Zenit*, 3 [April 1921; trans. Maja Starčević in *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-gardes, 1910-1930*, ed. Timothy O. Benson and Éva Forgács, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2002] 348, 350-51.

Branko VE POLJANSKI

from Dada-Jok [1922]

[...] Oh, life must be maddeningly boring for people who don't know the pleasures of life outside concrete forms, outside sausages and marmalade. A mill grinds all palpable forms. Down to their etheric rebirth. And then everything appears in its true form: *It is not* That *not* is really the shortest path for Mr Donkey to get to his hay. Not = Is. Is = Not. (Do not be ashamed of confusion, dear reader!) In your eyes, my dear, there is a strangely magical glimmer of divinities whose faithful have been lost to values. No one believes in anything anymore!

The sinners of the new age believe only in *Negation* *Negation is the source of all good* Amen! [...]

DADA ANTI-DADA Dada is the final consequence of the Europeanization of cabaret intellectualism. Dada is an activity of all armed minuses that have found themselves on the borders of a new age. I am a Dadaist, because I am not! If you buy your afternoon papers in Berlin, you've bought a Dada world view. You'll see Dadaists all around you walking along Moscow's streets. Every coolie in Peking is a Dadaist. And just because all these people are Dadaists, they are also anti-Dadaists. (Don't be confused, Citizens!) Why aren't Dadaists Dadaist? Just keep driving. I became a Dadaist and I stopped being a Dada in the same second. Keep going straight. Dada! Pan-Dada! Ultra-Dada! Hyper-Dada! People who don't know you can't imagine your quarrelsome nonchalance, Dada Europe hereditary syphilis! Who's the real dada! Tristan Tzara! A Romanian! A degenerate intellectual Suckling Piglet. And that is why I adore Dada: I just love fresh roast piglets! I am a Dadaist! Anti-Dada is winning. I am an anti-Dada, because I deflowered Anna Blume in a Prague city park. To think. Not to think. To think up. To think through. To think of. DADA ANTIDADA ZENITH

Mankind cried its eyes out and became Dadaist. The whole world is a *dadaworld* And so, one bright morning the grand master of all Dadaists drove his motor car across the border of the land of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, chock full of hot air, gunpowder, and booming spirits Anti-Dada in person Ljubomir Micić. All fingers pointed at him. All eyes stared at him. All curses fell on him. All flappers made faces at him. All the Begovićs were shocked All the Krlježs blushed a fiery red All the Vinavers dropped to their knees. All the journalists' skulls were hermetically sealed. All the citizens vociferated All the café tables petrified The whole city of Zagreb sank into an ocean of laughter

And the grand Dadaist master
The first great Anti-Dada
Counter-Dada
Zenithist
Counter-pseudo-zenithist
GOD OF THE DADAISTS
LJUBOMIR MICIĆ
collected all this laughter in a copper jug and preserved
hurricanes
of laughter for the time when
the anti-Dada barometer
starts pointing to
a hurricane
Crocodiles had made good friends with kings of all
literatures and were put on contract to devour all the
issues of *Zenit* so not a single idea could see the light of
day from the crocodiles’ insides.
And then the European advertising agency, a.k.a.

DADA
arrived and offered its marketing services to Zenithism. It
printed brochures in all
languages, living and dead:
What is Zenithism?
Zenithism is still the best remedy for getting rid of
intellectual blight!
Zenithism is a tried and true remedy for treating
rheumatism of the skull.
Zenithism in powder form is still the best means of
purging your stomach, especially if you’ve been eating
glass.
Swallow an entire sausage factory and take some
zenithism drops and you will recover.
Zenithism is the best remedy for neck pain if you can’t
think zenithistically.
What is Dada?
What is Anti-Dada?
How can you become ‘ein echter Dadaist’?
You must become
an anti-Dadaist.

Sit in a wheelbarrow, embrace an airplane, swim through a
sewer, enter Eugen Demetrović’s belly and disembark in
New Zealand. It’s the best path to Dadaism.

Branko Ve Poljanski, from *Dada-Jok*, insert in *Zenit*, 2, 7
[1922; trans. Maja Starčević in *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-gardes, 1910–1930*, ed. Timothy O. Benson and Éva Forgács, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2002] 345, 346–48.

Ilarie VORONCA

Aviogramă [1924]

READER,
DEBUG
YOUR BRAIN!
AVIOGRAMĂ-AIRPLANEGRAM
(Instead of a Manifesto)
HERMETIC SLEEP OF THE TRAIN ENGINE OVER
BALCONIES

EQUATOR
PULSE VAST ANNOUNCEMENT must DYNAMIC
MARITIME
SERVICE
THE ARTIST DOESN'T IMITATE THE ARTIST CREATES
THE LINE OF THE WORD COLOUR YOU CAN'T FIND IN
DICTIONARY
VIBRATES CENTURY-TUNING FORK
HORSE RACES ELEVATOR TYPING-CINEMA
INVENT INVENT

SURPRISE ART
GRAMMAR LOGIC EMOTIONALISM
AS LINEN PINS
ON ROPES THE KINGDOM OF LUMINOUS
POSTERS CALLS
CHERRY-BRANDY TRANSURBAN WINE RAILWAYS
THE MOST
BEAUTIFUL POEM: THE DOLLAR FLUCTUATION
THE TELEGRAPH HAS WOVEN WIRE RAINBOWS
IRRADIATOR STARTS OFF STIGMA acd DENTAL
ALPHABET
ASTRAL SHORTHAND
BLEEDING WORD TO COME
METALLIC THE DENIAL OF PURG-ING
FORMULAS AND WHEN
WHAT WE'RE DOING
BECOMES FORMULA
WE'LL DENY OURSELVES, TOO,
IN THE ANESTHETIZED AIR

CABLEGRAMS SINGING DIASTOLE OF STARS
THOUGHT
UNPACKED
THE MECHANICAL PIANO IS SERVING COFFEE WITH
ELEGANT
MILK
OH! RECITALS OH! CHARITY BALLS A
LICENSE FOR SUICIDE
3 DINARS THE SIDEWALK HAS FILLED ITS TEETH IN A
SPIRAL
MILK DIET THE CRANK IN THE DRUM
BOULEVARD READ ORIENT EXPRESS ANTHRACITE
EMBRYO BUS
HYDROCHLORIC MIRAGE IMPOSSIBLY ACHIEVED
WHAT
LITTLE EYES
LIKE POUNDED SUGAR INCEST PROCESSION
ABSTRACT TRANSATLANTIC EXCHANGE AGENCIES
NEWS BUMP

PARIS
LONDON
TSF
NEW YORK
BERLIN

LIKE BILLIARD AIRPLANES
THEY GO DOWN LIKE BAROMETERS THE EUROPE
LIGHTHOUSE NECKLACE IS BURNING

HAS CRAMPS SWALLOWS DISTRICT PILLARS USELESS
COMFORTABLE
AS MUCH AS YOU CAN
THE INFINITE IN SLIPPERS MAKES AN
ANNOUNCEMENT
BISEXUALITY ATHLETE FOLLOW THE
MUTUAL SPEECH NEWSPAPERS OPEN
LIKE WINDOWS THE CONCERT OF THE CENTURY
BEGINS
ELEVATOR RINGS INTER-BANK CLOWN-LIKE JAZZ
HORN
F FLAT
D
F FLAT
IN
PAJAMAS
FOOTBALL

Ilarie Voronca, ‘Aviogramă’, 75HP [October, 1924; trans. Monica Volescu in in *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-gardes, 1910–1930*, ed. Timothy O. Benson and Éva Forgács, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2002] 535–37.

Roman JAKOBSON

from Dada [1921]

[...] It would seem that the scientific, historically minded Futurists, who rejected the past point-blank precisely because of their historicity, are the first who cannot create a new canon. On the other hand, Western Futurism in all of its variants endeavours to become an artistic movement (the thousand and first). ‘Classics of Futurism’ is an oxymoron if you take as your starting point the original conception of Futurism; nevertheless, it has come to ‘classics’, or to a need for them. ‘One of the innumerable -isms,’ said the critics, and found Futurism’s Achilles’ heel. The demand arose for a new differentiation, ‘a manifestation parallel to the relativistic philosophies of the current moment – a “nonaxiom”,’ as one of the literary pioneers, Huelsenbeck, announced. ‘I’m against systems; the most acceptable system is to have absolutely no system at all,’ added another pioneer, the Romanian Tristan Tzara. There follow battle cries repeating Marinetti: ‘Down with all that is like a mummy and sits solidly!’ Hence ‘anticultural propaganda’, ‘Bolshevism in art’. ‘The gilding is crumbling off, off the French, like any other. If you tremble, gentlemen, for the morals of your wives, for the tranquility of your cooks and the faithfulness of your mistresses, for the solidity of your rocking chairs and your nightpots, for the security of your government, you are right. But what will you do about it? You are rotting, and the fire has already begun’ (Ribemont-Dessaignes). ‘I smash’, exclaims Tzara somewhat in the tone of Leonard Andreev, ‘skull cases and the social organization: all must be demoralized.’

There was a need to christen this ‘systemless’ aesthetic rebellion, ‘this Fronde of great international artistic currents’ as Huelsenbeck put it. In 1916 ‘Dada’ was named. The name, along with the commentaries that

followed, at once knocked out of the hands of critics their main weapon – the accusation of charlatanism and trickery. ‘Futurism sings of ...’ Marinetti used to write – and then came columns of objects celebrated by Futurism. The critic would pick up a Futurist almanac, leaf through its pages, and conclude: ‘I don’t see it.’ ‘Futurism concludes,’ ‘Futurism bears with it,’ ‘Futurism conceals,’ wrote the ideologists who had become infected with the exoterica of Symbolism. ‘I don’t see it! Ah, the frauds!’ answered the critic. “‘Futurism is the art of the future,” they say,’ he would reflect, ‘why, it’s a lie!’ “‘Expressionism is expressive art’ – they lie!’ But ‘Dada’, what does ‘Dada’ mean? ‘Dada means nothing,’ the Dadaists hastened to reply, running interference as it were.’ ‘It doesn’t smell of anything, it doesn’t mean anything,’ says the Dada artist Picabia, bending the old Armenian riddle. A Dada manifesto invites the bourgeoisie to create myths about the essence of Dada. ‘Dada – now there’s a word that sets off ideas; each bourgeois is a little playwright, inventing different dialogues.’ The manifesto informs lovers of etymology that certain blacks call the tail of a holy cow ‘dada’; in one part of Italy ‘dada’ means mother; in Russian ‘da’ is an affirmation. But ‘Dada’ is connected neither with the one nor the other nor the third. It is simply a meaningless little word thrown into circulation in Europe, a little word with which one can juggle *à l’aise*, thinking up meanings, adjoining suffixes, coining complex words which create the illusion that they refer to objects; dadaspher, dadapit.

‘The word *dada* expresses the internationality of the movement,’ Huelsenbeck writes. The very question ‘What is Dada?’ is itself un-dadaistic and sophomoric, he also notes. ‘What does Dada want?’ – Dada doesn’t want anything. ‘I am writing a manifesto and I don’t want anything ... and I am on principle against manifestos, as I am also against principles,’ Tzara declares.

No matter what you accuse Dada of, you can’t accuse it of being dishonest, of concealment, of hedging its bets. Dada honourably perceives the ‘limitedness of its existence in time’; it relativizes itself historically, in its own words. Meanwhile, the first result of establishing a scientific view of artistic expression, that is, the laying bare of the device, is the cry: ‘The old art is dead’ or ‘Art is dead,’ depending on the temperament of the person doing the yelling. The first call was issued by the Futurists, hence ‘Vive le futur!’ The second, not without some stipulations, was issued by Dada – what business of theirs, of artists, is the future? – ‘A bas le futur!’ So the improviser from Odoevsky’s story, having received the gift of a clarity of vision which laid everything bare, ends his life as a fool in a cap scrawling transrational verses. The laying bare of the device is sharp; it is precisely a laying bare; the already laid-bare device – no longer sharp confrontation with the code (*à la langue*) – is vapid, it lacks flavour. The initially laid-bare device is usually justified and regulated by so-called constructive laws, but, for example, the path from rhyme to assonance to a set towards any relationship between sounds leads to the announcement that a laundry list is a poetic work. Then letters in arbitrary order, randomly struck on a typewriter, are considered verses; dabs on a canvas made by a donkey’s tail dipped in paint are

considered a painting. With Dada’s appeal, ‘Dilettantes, rise up against art’, we have gone from yesterday’s cult of ‘made things’ (say, refined assonance) to the poetics of the first word let slip (a laundry list). What is Dada by profession? To use an expression from Moscow artistic jargon, the Dadaists are ‘painters of the word’. They have more declarations than poems and pictures. And actually in their poems and pictures there is nothing new, even if only in comparison to Italian and Russian Futurism. Tatlin’s *Maschinenkunst*, universal poems made up of vowels, round verses (Simultaneism), the music of noise (Bruitism), Primitivism – a sort of poetic Berlitz: *Meine Mutter sagte mir verjage die Hühner ich aber kann nicht fortjagen die Hühner.* (Tzara)

Finally, paroxysms of naive realism: ‘Dada has common sense and in a chair sees a chair, in a plum – a plum.’ But the crux of the matter lies elsewhere, and the Dadaists understand this. ‘Dada is not an artistic movement,’ they say. ‘In Switzerland Dada is for abstract (nonobjective) art, in Berlin – against.’ What is important is that, having finished once and for all with the principle of the legendary coalition of form and content, through a realization of the violence of artistic form, the toning down of pictorial and poetic semantics, through the colour and texture *as such* of the nonobjective picture, through the fanatic word of transrational verses *as such*, we come in Russia to the blue grass of the first celebrations of October and in the West to the unambiguous Dadaist formula: ‘Nous voulons nous voulons nous voulons pisser en couleurs diverses.’ Colouring as such! Only the canvas is removed, like an act in a sideshow one has grown tired of. Poetry and painting became for Dada one of the acts of the sideshow. Let us be frank: poetry and painting occupy in our consciousness an excessively high position only because of tradition. ‘The English are so sure of the genius of Shakespeare that they don’t consider it necessary even to read him,’ as Aubrey Beardsley puts it. We are prepared to respect the classics but for reading prefer literature written for train rides: detective stories, novels about adultery, that whole area of ‘belles-lettres’ in which the *word* makes itself least heard. Dostoevsky, if one reads him inattentively, quickly becomes a cheap bestseller, and it is hardly by chance that in the West they prefer to see his works in the movies. If the theatres are full, then it is more a matter of tradition than of interest on the part of the public. The theatre is dying; the movies are blossoming. The screen ceases bit by bit to be the equivalent of the stage; it frees itself of the theatrical unities, of the theatrical *mise en scène*. The aphorism of the Dadaist Mehring is timely: ‘The popularity of an idea springs from the possibility of transferring on to film its anecdotal content.’ For variety’s sake the Western reader is willing to accept a peppering of self-valuable words. The Parisian newspaper *Le Siècle* states: ‘We need a literature which the mind can savour like a cocktail.’ During the last decade, no one has brought to the artistic market so much varied junk of all times and places as the very people who reject the past. It should be understood that the Dadaists are also eclectics, though theirs is not the museum-bound eclecticism of respectful veneration, but a motley café *chantant* programme (not by chance was Dada born in a

cabaret in Zurich). A little song of the Maoris takes turns with a Parisian music hall number, a sentimental lyric – with the above-mentioned colour effect. ‘I like an old work for its novelty. Only contrast links us to the past,’ Tzara explains.

One should take into account the background against which Dada is frolicking in order to understand certain of its manifestations. For example, the infantile anti-French attacks of the French Dadaists and the anti-German attacks of the Germans ten years ago might sound naïve and purposeless. But today, in the countries of the Entente there rages an almost zoological nationalism, while in response to it in Germany there grows the hypertrophied national pride of an oppressed people. The Royal British Society contemplates refusing Einstein a medal so as not to export gold to Germany, while the French newspapers are outraged by the fact that Hamsun, who according to rumour was a Germanophile during the war, was given a Nobel Prize. The politically innocent Dada arouses terrible suspicion on the part of those same papers that it is some sort of German machination, while those papers print advertisements for ‘nationalistic double beds’. Against this background, the Dadaist Fronde is quite understandable. At the present moment, when even scientific ties have been severed, Dada is one of the few truly international societies of the bourgeois intelligentsia. By the way, it is a unique Internationale; the Dadaist Bauman lays his cards on the table when he says that ‘Dada is the product of international hotels.’ The environment in which Dada was reared was that of the adventuristic bourgeoisie of the war – the profiteers, the nouveaux riches, the Schieberen, the black marketeers, or whatever else they were called. Dada’s sociopsychological twins in old Spain gave birth to the so-called picaresque novel. They know no traditions (*‘je ne veux même pas savoir s’il y a eu des hommes avant moi’*); their future is doubtful (*‘à bas le futur’*); they are in a hurry to take what is theirs (*‘give and take, live and die’*). They are exceptionally supple and adaptable (*‘one can perform contrary actions at the same time, in a single, fresh breath’*); they are artists at what they do (*‘advertising and business are also poetic elements’*). They do not object to the war (*‘still today for war’*); yet they are the first to proclaim the cause of erasing the boundaries between yesterday’s warring powers (*‘me, I’m of many nationalities’*). When it comes right down to it, they are satisfied and therefore prefer bars (*‘he holds war and peace in his toga, but decides in favour of a cherry brandy flip’*). Here, amid the ‘cosmopolitan mixture of god and the bordello’, in Tzara’s testimonial, Dada is born.

‘The time is Dada-ripe,’ Huelsenbeck assures us. ‘With Dada it will ascend, and with Dada it will vanish.’

Roman Jakobson, ‘Dada’, *Vestnik teatra*, 82 [8 February 1921; trans. Stephen Rudy in *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-gardes, 1910–1930*, ed. Timothy O. Benson and Éva Forgács, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2002] 359, 360–363.

Look at me well.

I'm an idiot, a hoaxer, a smoker.

Look at me well.

I'm ugly, short, dull.

I'm like all of you.

This is how Tristan Tzara would begin his lecture and this is how every lecture should begin. Flowers are murdered by Latin names and the colourful kakadu called Dada must be plucked clean, so that apart from the merry adventures and surprises he has in store for us, we can find the essential thing that makes him screech, laugh and engage in that entire circus of words, insults and lyrical expressions he boasts. You will forgive me for speaking seriously about something so droll and playful, and for briefly following its family tree.

Dada = eternal. It has been, it is, it will be. Not art, rather an intellectual epidemic; it has been in Memphis, it is in New York. It exists in the whole world, in every place, in every era. If you want its definition, I can give you several for you to choose from.

D = eternal intellectual youth.

D = beginning and end of the world.

D = indifferent state of mind.

D = humbug and bluff.

D = restoration of idiocy.

D = wooden horse, the tail of a holy cow, double Russian affirmation, the whimper of a baby.

D = reaction against the humbug of art and intellect, against the self-adoration of literary types.

D = cocktail mixer in a Manhattan bar, mixing curaçao with one hand and catching his gonorrhea with the other. (Serner)

I could go on and on *ad infinitum*. Each of these definitions is true and so is the next one. Everything is true and everything is a lie. This is what we have to realize, if we want to understand dadaism. For many people, it was discovered only after it had been given its label. People in this way discover many things and Dada was baptized in 1916 in Zurich. The muses do not fall silent in war, but if they do, it is the authorized, official muses, and this is lucky for the proscribed ones, those Cinderellas who are thus allowed to show what they can do.

Armies cut off each other's heads with bayonets. A Dadaist would say that this could be possibly the most sensible operation that can be carried out on man. Those not lucky enough to assist with these surgeries, amused themselves in other ways, dealing on the black market, singing the right patriotic songs, seducing abandoned wives, to make them feel less bored, inventing ways in which you can turn furniture into food, discovering new philosophical systems of national activism and energy, and praying for the victory of 'our arms'; many amused themselves by starving. Let us then not be surprised that

there were several people who remembered that, apart from all that, they could start making some art. They were Tzara, Hans Arp, Marcel Janco, Rich, Huelsenbeck, Hugo Ball. They knew the latest directives of artistic possibilities by heart and wanted to make use of them. Their cosmopolitanism, temperament and boredom were an asset. They were united in their hatred of the bourgeois. What they wanted to achieve was not Dada as we understand it today, it was abstract art, containing Expressionism, Cubism, and Futurism, and it is certain that in its beginnings, Dadaism didn't know exactly what it wanted. But people who can play golf just as well as they can discuss Mallarmé do not ever find themselves in a tight spot. Dada was here and it owns its spreading and popularity to Tristan Tzara's promotional efforts. And to the intensity of the word, this rotating nothing that had attracted attention and interest on two continents. This then is a brief history of the beginnings of Dada as a literary movement. Art was a framework from which it was soon to break out. Civilizational chaos and the flames of the world war were a fertile soil for that. A new way of phrasing certain old experiences is shocking for educated people. They feel some sort of horror, and to regain their sense of security, they resort to negation, to ridicule. The times had brought several: the absurdity of war, the short-lived nature of the so far reliable certainties, the idiocy of nationalism, etc. Delightful doubt and scepticism was a luxury that did not fit in. It was necessary to elevate this scepticism, double it. Discrediting all acts and notions, laughing, was more appropriate than pacifist leaflets, laments and curses. The 'sorrow of reason' typical for the end of an era, was the wind driving this wreck with a madly merry and merrily mad crew along a sea of blood. The soldier in the trenches and the worker in the rear were both forced to think about how grotesque this entire bloody theatre was, just as the dadaists did, and whenever we can sense the end is near, we are better off raving rather than waiting in tranquil contemplation until it hits us. Let's remember all those stories from the trenches, all those folksy jokes: the world was waiting for Dada and the Dadaists admit that they gave something to people, and it turned out that the people had been waiting for it. Dada was an idea that had touched the most vital nerve of the masses, frightening them, humbling them, but also teaching them something. At a historical moment, when the bourgeois order is collapsing, the time also came to liquidate art, morals and philosophy of this world, since this was where the bourgeois felt most secure; these were the holy fires he guarded. Dada, in its absurdity, naïveté and indifference, became part of modernity and has remained so. The unadulterated negativity of Dadaism unwittingly brought with it some positives, this was where the geysers of the crazy poetry we love gushed from, this is where modern man learned something and began smiling at what frightened him only yesterday. Dada stood at the beginning of that process of relativization in our thought, placing doubt under everything. The fanaticism of destruction, the celebration of a slap in the face, the destruction of art that had looked after the made-up, stupid, fat faces of the capitalist system with such great care, seeing through the hollowness of philosophy and the business called

morals, all that was part of the healthy contribution of Dada. It didn't want to put things right, it just wanted to destroy. Dada = people's letters, jokes, those most of all. Dada is everywhere and it's good that a label was found for things that had been so difficult to categorize. Howdy! Hi-de-hil! How's tricks? The Dada of greetings.

Gouge out your eye and put a gramophone inside – this is the Dada of congratulation. Etc. etc. You will surely find enough examples yourselves, and I hope you are going to tell us after the lecture.

DADA + PHILOSOPHY

The perennial indifference of Dada towards philosophy, that is, towards the search for truths, and towards truths themselves, is its basic characteristic. [...]

A Dadaist rejects all that, considering the shape of his shoes and clothes more important. To him, worldview is just a jumble of words.

Dadaist = instinctive atheist. There is no difference between him and Saint Thomas.

He claims that the need for philosophy arises from boredom.

His self-confidence is based on having none.

He may know that there are days or nights when even the silliest of things appear serious, but he knows how ephemeral they are and overcomes them.

Addressing the philosophical ruminants, he might say: Be as empty as you are.

Today, in an era sadly lacking in enthusiasm, we must forgive him for saying this: In our present time and from any point of view, it is most advisable to die.

The tragedy of modern man is that instincts have survived. And vitality. In the past, man ate, drank, hunted, fucked, ate, fucked, drank, hunted, ate, and fucked, while today, out of his daily twenty-four hours, he is left with no more than ten that he can use for these wonderfully good things.

Dadaists have understood that thinking processes are crossroads through which we can wonder in all directions *ad infinitum*. They have discovered a great secret: Thoughts are made in the gob. Dada cynicism – well, any decent human being is a cynic, if he's not stupid. Cynicism is the most extreme shortcoming of one-sidedness. It is just one step from cynicism to eccentricism. Laughing, he will consistently end up laughing over everything.

A metaphysic keeps looking behind the mirror, searching for himself, while a human being looks into the mirror and recognizes the world in himself.

The absolute absurdity of truth has been proven. The truth is ice and death. Tendency: stuff the infinite into a trunk (Klíma). Spit at humanity, at Christ, at everything.

Dada = man surprised by modernity. Dada is not an abnormality, it is merely a realization that if it is possible to play with the sun and the stars, the same can be done with philosophy. [...]

To laugh like a dog barks, like a wolf howls. Learning to laugh is the same as becoming natural. Let's understand: life is a game. Laughter is its accompaniment. It is a sign of excess. The world is what the player wants it to be at any time.

Attribute heavy seriousness to human obtuseness.

A tiger doesn't need Nietzsche to be Dionysian. Let's try to be like that too. He who laughs must have one prerequisite: to be able to laugh also at himself.

Hence the Dadaist's honesty: I'm an idiot, etc. I remember a sentence by V.: Our scepticism begins by confessing our faith. Herein perhaps lies the entire illness of modern man, it is an ailment, but a charming one. It prevents him from becoming ossified, from sitting down. Sometimes, it is even pain. But there are days when we spit on our worn head. Serner.

Mobilization of wits is the only mobilization mankind should obey. It's not important whether a joke is searched for, the main thing is that it is found.

Man unable to laugh is not just capable of betrayal, guile and deception, but his entire life amounts to betrayal and guile. Carlyle.

Dadaists have seen the world as it is. Like the children in Andersen's story shouting: He has no clothes! They have pure instincts. The only divine thing left in us.

Their joke went on *ad absurdum*, they turned everything upside down, throwing petards of jokes under the feet of fat matrons of art and philosophy. What a hilarious spectacle, clouds of skirts and fat arses screaming in flight.

Philosophical marathons in pursuit of truths are won by the most witty ones. The quality of a Dada-joke is in its nonsensical nature. It's not a joke told by a beer-drinking party, that in Germany, a visit to the brothel turns into Tannhäuser's visit to the hillock of Venus; it is an unexpected joke, so idiotic it surprises us. See Hašek's jokes. Free of the weight of thought, it is a ball, a racket, one of the joys necessary for modern man. [...]

DADA AND ART

Dada has assaulted fine arts. It has declared art to be magical hard stools. It gives the Venus de Milo an enema and lets Laocoön and Sons have a break after their thousand-year struggle with the snake and use the toilet. Dada has taken affirmation and negation to the point of nonsense. To achieve – [...]

Art has become a fetish. A matter for the salons, entertainment for tea-drinking ladies. Ninety-nine per cent of people think it's something special. Everyone who speaks too much about art should be treated with the utmost distrust. Art is as natural as walking, but the moment someone starts talking about art in a ceremonious tone, we can safely conclude there's a problem. Chesterton. The bourgeois all resemble each other, they are all the same. They are kept busy by their brain, which contains five possessions: money, morals, state, family, art. For the bourgeois, literature = something that represents the depth of this thinking. We then cannot be surprised that they keep talking about it; intelligent people no longer speak about art. That would be kleptomania. Art, furnished with restaurants of emotion and convents of prostitution were demolished by Dada. They have declared: art = arrogance.

DADA + LOVE AND MORALS

This is the last chapter on Dadaism.

Love is merely a miserable product of our animality. Klíma's definition shall probably frighten all misty-eyed lovers, although mankind would benefit mightily from realizing that this is the case. Dying of love today is an anachronism today. Making geese into swans should be stopped. That fairy we keep looking back at is probably just a clothes-horse, and a very skinny one at that. Serner says: the only certainty is sexuality. The best case of contact between man and woman is coitus, slightly worse is something akin to intercourse, and the worst is erotic humbug, quoth Serner. Dying in a lady's stocking à la Don Juan and collecting virgins' scalps?

Lovers turn periodically into automatic tear-fountains and this is called holy love. [...]

To conclude:

I agree with Grosz: our only mistake was that we concerned ourselves with art at all. Dadaism was a breakout from a narrow, inflated, and overrated environment, greeted with disparaging laughter, from an environment suspended in air between classes, which knew no responsibility towards the life of society. We didn't see immediately that this lunacy was based on a system. Some of us Dadaists were lost in that nothing we found ourselves in having overcome the cliché of art, and especially those in Switzerland and France, who have experienced the turmoil of the last decade mostly through newspapers. The rest of us, however, saw a great new task before us: service to the revolutionary cause.

We acknowledge this wisdom of Dadaism.

It is possible to be a Dadaist and Communist at the same time.

In hell, they laugh at a murderer because he had gone into all the trouble of killing a human being for so long that in the end he joins in and starts laughing himself, writes Grabbe. Let us realize this; if we are to demolish art, let us not take it so seriously and let us be wise enough and laugh in advance.

František Halas, Text originally delivered as a lecture in Brno [10 December 1925; trans. Alexandra Büchler in *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-gardes, 1910–1930*, ed. Timothy O. Benson and Éva Forgács, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2002] 369–73, 375

Bedřich VÁCLAVEK Creative Dada [1925]

There is one thing we can envy post-war Germany: Dadaism. We missed out on a strong dose of Dada after the war. Having immediately moved on to a revolution for the benefit of man, we were ethical and pedagogical, and now we want to be constructive. But there was no decay, no cleansing. That is why we make up for it today by grabbing a bit of Dada here and there, but somehow, there is no more time for that with today's impure, hybrid forms – and so we have stayed without it. We failed to carry out its destructive work that would leave behind virginal land

ready for the real work of new builders. Aren't we going to remain a bit idyllic in the usual Czech way?

Dada. We say yes to the destructive fanaticism with which it has thrown itself against the superficial, commercial humbug made of 'spirituality' and 'art'. Set upon destruction of the products of bourgeois culture, it has given up the principle of remedy – and this is what we miss in it, as much as we understand its focus on destruction. It was nihilistic, but we would say with Huelsenbeck that this was the kind of nihilism that is part and parcel of life, or, using Mahen's term, we would call it creative nihilism. It wanted it to be nothing more than an expression of the times, absorbing its abrupt rhythm, its scepticism and relativism, but also its weariness and doubt about the possibility of some sense and truth. We love it and we fight along its side.

It was naive. It wanted a self-evident, undifferentiated, unintellectual life. It taught art to use new material. Rich with intensified modern sensibility, it heralded the simultaneity of modern art.

Later, it gave art up, drawing the last conclusion of the new reality, and its members became the con artists of art.

Bedřich Václavěk, 'Dada tvorivé', *Host*, 4 [1925; trans. Alexandra Büchler in *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-gardes, 1910–1930*, ed. Timothy O. Benson and Éva Forgács, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2002] 369.

Karel TEIGE Dada [1926]

'Total ignorance, total indifference, total indulgence.'
Rémy de Gourmont, *The Horses of Diomedes*

Tristan Tzara declares:

Read my books they will cure you. You shall see that the world is insane why logic needs to be suppressed all secrets revealed nothing is important there is no good or evil everything is allowed indifference is the only appropriate and effective remedy indifference without effort and without consequences truth does not exist speech is child's play no need to take art politics religion morals law seriously.

This handful of incoherent sentences outlines the character of Dadaism, containing the essence of its entire programme, aesthetics and philosophy – although the Dadaists would surely protest that they have no programme, aesthetics, philosophy, or even character. The Futurists considered the word 'madness', which the old-fashioned public used to throw in their face, almost a term of appreciation. The Dadaists consider their idiocy to be a privilege. They take nothing seriously, since there is no truth and no need for it; yet they know – and this is where we can all agree with them – that they are not right either. They consider no human view or principle serious, binding, or credible. They do not believe in truth, no matter what kind of truth, which also frees them of the

compulsory respect for science, philosophy and art. They respect nothing, whether false or true. And perhaps only respect for personal freedom, liberty, and spontaneity of inspiration teaches them that it may be better not to be taken seriously by the public, in the same sense that the word serious is understood by earnest people. They feel that what cannot be taken seriously by earnest people is precisely what is serious to them. Dadaist manifestos are confessions of the spirit, which take into consideration objections against itself. Taking a stand of such extreme philosophical relativism and probabilism, or even absolute nihilism, is characterized by incredible instability, malleability, and flexibility. The Dadaists — philosophically probably quite experienced in order to be able to do without certainties about anything and about any outcomes — understood that any whatsoever thesis can be, under the same circumstances, equally defended or attacked, that by definition, any argument contains a contradiction, that every argument for is automatically followed by an argument against, and so it is possible to be bored *ad infinitum* by these games that do not always help us pass the time. With the caution of a highly developed spirit of paradox and contradiction, so dear to Rémy de Gourmont, they admit to contradictions in their thoughts and actions and they are appropriately tolerant. Those who have declared the freedom of inspiration, and, by stating that there are no ideas, also freedom of thought as the spontaneous evolution of our conscious and subconscious thinking, could not curb or destroy this freedom within themselves: they are indeed receptive to all ideas, impressions, intuitions and thoughts, none of which is better or more truthful. They even know that the opposite of what they might be saying could be true. After all, philosophical relativism has expressed the essential qualities of the modern spirit long before Dadaism: scepticism in relation to any dogma or generally applicable truth, which flexes its energy not to be bound by prescriptions, and along with every single thing to see all its other possibilities and alternatives. This scepticism gave modern life strength in the same way as medieval life was given strength by religious faith, making it even stronger than faith ever could. The relativist Simmel has shown that not even relativist truth is absolute, that almost everything is relative and that relativism must limit itself if it doesn't want to contradict itself. The Dadaists have understood relativist half-truths. And when Bergson demonstrated that it is not advisable to trust reason to be always reasonable, the Dadaists declared *reason bankrupt* and gave *all power to free inspiration*. Of all the philosophies that have appeared to them as a naïve misunderstanding, they have selected nihilism as the most acceptable misunderstanding. And in the name of nihilism they attack all those sacred principles that had congealed like a skin of morals, aesthetics, and science on the authoritarian bourgeois establishment. [...] Dada will not be fooled by philosophy and metaphysics. The Dadaists are therefore not in the least determined to say the truth or defend untruth, fight, live or die for the truth. Jan Hus could afford such luxury, but he was a saint of fifteenth-century Dark Ages. The Dadaists know that the quest for truth does not suit the modern man, and that the

only possible constructive activity may be the search for untruths. If they could say, however, together with Jiří of Poděbrady — to continue using patriotic examples — that 'truth triumphs', it would be only because Gourmont has shown them that, conversely, what wins is always the truth. The Dadaists do not abandon the tactic of paradox and contradiction, without it they would hardly maintain their precarious balance and would fall into a mania, and, as maniacs are most often monomaniacs, they would fall into the mania of conviction, which they consider to be the last stage of cretinism. And so they prefer to be essentially in contradiction with themselves, because man himself is an inveterate contradiction, an eternal inconsistency: his very shape is irrational. Dada, free of ideas, is also free of fixed ideas. The Dadaists, those chameleons of abrupt, surprising changes, have at hand a rich selection of interesting thoughts and occasional truths suitable for all events, all circumstances, all colours of time and sensibility. They even helpfully attach instructions for use. Their occasional truths, like all truths, are comical, they are a joke. Having witnessed the end of art, philosophy, aesthetics and morals, the Dadaists were not shaken by the emptiness of life: rather, they danced an extravagant foxtrot on the ruins. They are not frightened by absurdity, knowing that everything is absurd in life. At a time when, according to over-wise philosophers, intellect is in death throes, they are the elite of ever-growing frivolity. The positive enthusiasm fired by life's energy and humour triumphs by means of wit, laughter and noise over the ballast of negative traditions, moribund art and philosophy. The Dadaists wanted, above all, to discredit today's philosophy with its vacuous thinking, as well as today's art world, for which they deserve a word of thanks.

Because they fought wit by means of wit, art by art, philosophy by philosophy, ultimately they found themselves in a dangerous situation where the winner could only again be wit, art, and philosophy. Whether they like it or not, Dada has its philosophical and aesthetic side. It is against philosophy, yet in its fantasist nihilism it brings us philosophy. It is against art, yet it brings us playful, amusing, capricious, cheerful art. What does art matter, after all? And what is art? *Art is probably what not everyone can do; if anyone could do it, it would no longer be art. An artist can do it, and this is why it's no art for him. Art is art for those who can't do it.* Luckily, the Dadaists do not have to lose any sleep over this contradiction. Their thing is negation, and whatever positive emerges along with it doesn't concern them. But what if their magnificent 'nichevo' is not the alpha and omega of all wisdom? 'Laughing at philosophy really means philosophizing. Nothing responds to Reason as well as refutation of Reason. The latest progress of Reason lies in the acceptance of the fact that there are numerous matters that are beyond Reason and that it is weak indeed if it itself does not arrive at this realization.' Here, we are quoting Pascal, and that is why we spell Reason with a capital R. That there are more things between heaven and earth than our philosophy can ever dream about was understood by all Hamlets and all thinkers who started from the Socratic admission: 'I know that I know nothing.' This is a pronouncement of philosophers who have suffered in

body and spirit by disappointments and all proofs of the insufficiency of reason. And this is also the pronouncement of Dadaist mischief, which twists famous formulas, giving them a new, strange meaning: *Cogito, ergo sum*. The Dadaists say: 'I think that I am not what I think I am.' *Nihil in intellectu quod non fuerit in sensu*. The Dadaists say: '*Nihil in intellectu fuit in sensu.*'

Do not consider taking Dada seriously a joke. Yet, it is a joke, an old one at that, and not entirely successful. At the same time, it is a historical fact and a developmental symptom. It is consequently a kind of poetic Bergsonism, Dadaistically tinged, of course, with the spirit of negation and destruction, with a systematic scepticism, that in the end destroys itself. It is the new disease of the century, the 'nouveau mal de siècle', about which Marcel Arland wrote an essay for the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, which was published in 1924, attracting wide attention. There is a terrible sense of the realization of absolute nothingness in Dada, a chilly terror of the utter futility of any effort, any faith or hope, a dread of the infinite emptiness of life. And this new, deeply philosophical *weltschmerz* masks its anxiety with gallows humour, with the grimaces of a clown: the realization of the impotence of intelligence is personified in the figure of a dumb buffoon. Dadaism shouts and hollers and laughs in its own somewhat hysterical way. It sings idiotic, drunken songs perhaps just in order to muster the courage to live on the ruins of the world it has rejected. [...]

Dada does not build. Dada demolishes. It does not bring new truths. It tries to repudiate old doctrines. It is a broadly established '*entreprise de démolitions*', as Cide called it. [...]

Yet, it is impossible to deny anything without the necessity of laughter. Every negative is turned into a terrible laughter; humour is everywhere where life is the issue. And the Dadaist self-doubt leads to noetic questions about art, subsequently declaring the liquidation of art. The life of art is at stake: hence the laughter! The Dadaists, as Chesterton would say, are, philosophically speaking, too modest a breed to believe in multiplication tables. They have taken the Wellsian 'doubt about the tool', the brain, to the most terrible consequences. And so Ribemont-Dessaignes asks: 'What is beauty? What is ugliness? What is greatness, power, weakness? What is Carpentier, Renan, Foch? I don't know. What am I? I don't know, don't know, don't know.' Since the fantasists had shown the Dadaists that there is no place for ideas in poems, and when they realized from autopsy that ideas have little value in life, they elevated jokes above ideas. They could agree with Suarès that madness is one man's dream, but that reason is without doubt everybody's madness. They know that in our life, we lose our head at the most beautiful moments of love, otherwise they would not be as beautiful. Denying the wisdom of intellect they engage in the misdemeanour of sensibility. They have decided to abandon the great achievements of science, art and thought that had taken human idiocy to such a high level of civilization. [...]

Dada however does not renounce only the art of the past.

It is more consistent, it renounces all art of the past, present and doubtlessly also of the future, it resolutely denies itself, pronouncing paradoxically that there are Dadaists only in the French Academy, but true Dadaists are against Dada; Dada is simply a world war, a wild intellectual deluge that will sweep through the world of art, turning it into wreckage, so as to open the way for the birth of the new. An uncompromising war has been declared on all snobbism, all hollow fetishes of literature and culture. [...]

Dadaist negations were powerful enough to renew positive creative energy. Such a period of negation is, after all, always a sign of a great metamorphosis and rebirth in history. To clear up the terrain for building anew, there was a need for a thorough denial of art and fervent destructive work. Constructivism and Poetism have to thank Dadaism for this negative work of destruction. And the Dadaists’ ‘nichevo’ (psychologically akin to what we call, after Nietzsche, Dionysian pessimism) is also encouraging: it shows that everything, everywhere can be laughed at, that the halls of nirvana and the cellars of hell reverberate with laughter. Where there is nothing, there is still laughter.

Dadaism, a blossom opening on ruins, is the reaction of vitality against annihilation and destruction. Redeeming laughter, devouring everything that threatens life’s freedom and flourishing. It is a manifestation of life’s spontaneity. It is also undemandingly pacifist, unimpressed by lofty metaphors and those great, hollow, decorative words, which often conceal bellicose, aggressive inclinations. At the moment when you decided to start arguing about words (and what else could you argue about?) by its practice, Dadaism made those very words into a laughing stock, rendering them useless.

The Dadaists’ anti-philosophical stance is the beginning of wisdom. Dadaist anti-aestheticism and anti-artism marks the beginning of a new era of art and aesthetic creation, which has, since the time of the Cubist coup, set out along new paths, leading to forms, unprecedented in history, which cease being ‘art’. Dadaist scepticism about the very material of literature, the word, brings a renewal of vocabulary, testing the material without which verbal art would not be possible. Reading Dadaist manifestos and magazines, you hold in your hands faithful photographs of the situation, but only its negative plates. Add sensitive paper and you obtain a positive picture. Yet the role of Dadaism was to act negatively and in opposition. Dada halted its destructive action at the very moment when it would have to become constructive – and gives in its notice.

The school of fantasy bled to death during the anxious nights and days on the Marne, at Verdun, in Moscow, and on the pavements of St. Petersburg. ‘When saber cut the flow of eloquent verse, guns boomed instead of words of love; that was revolution. That’s all.’ (Seifert.) Now the world is changing. In the Comintern’s laboratory, strict and precise plans are being developed for a new social structure, a new blueprint for life, in which there is no place for old art. Gone are images and poems, out of date as soon as they were conceived, destroyed as soon as they became out of date, forgotten as soon as they were destroyed. ‘A new red star is rising heralding a new era.

New beauty, new poetry of a new life, to which the art of the past has nothing to say.’ Even the Dadaists had to understand this. And they proceeded to liquidate the Dadaist movement. Its obituary was a special issue of *Ça ira* magazine, published in 1922, with a historical account of the birth, life and death of the Dada movement by Pierre Massot. Dada was loud and made a lot of noise, and later it was perhaps deafened by this very noise and in the end drowned in it. ‘Dada makes you think of a cigarette that leaves behind a pleasant smell,’ said Picabia. And so its promising story ends and the memory of Dada mingles at dawn with the ashes of our perfumed cigarettes. The adventure of Dada ends in the way of all adventures: banal and grotesque ... It ends Dadaistically.

Karel Teige, ‘Dada’, *Host*, 6, 2 [November 1926; trans. Alexandra Büchler in *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-gardes, 1910-1930*, ed. Timothy O. Benson and Éva Forgács, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2002] 376-79, 382-83.

JAPAN

The major promoters of Dada in Japan were the writers Tsuji Jun and

Takahashi Shinkichi, whose *Poems of Dada Shinkichi* immediately ran to several editions. Tsuji considered himself totally Dada. Although inspired by Dada, Murayama Tomoyoshi wanted *Mavo* to be independent, 'conscious constructionism' (a combination of Dada and Constructivism). In his 'Mavo Manifesto' Murayama declares 'We are not bound. We are radical. We revolutionize / make revolution.' The third issue of *Mavo* announces 'bombs that rain down on all the intellectual criminals (including the bourgeois clique)'. Tsuji, Takahashi and Mavo artists formed a 'Neo-Dada' group in 1925, and a sudden proliferation of dada magazines formed 'a flowering as if it were a flooding period of the dada deluge'.

TAKAHASHI Shinkichi

Dada 'Assertion' Manifesto

[1922]

DADA asserts and negates all.

Infinity, naught – only reecho the sound 'cigarette', or 'waistband', or 'word'.

What gushes in imagination is reality.

The whole past is contained in the soybean's future.

Each man and his brother imagine that fantasies beyond reach of man can be thought of by a stone or a sardine's head.

DADA finds the self in all.

In the air's vibration, in the hatred of a gem, and in the stink of the word 'self', there too it finds the self.

All is not two. A saying from the Buddha's clear vision emerges: all is all.

All is seen in all.

Assertion is all.

The universe is a cake of soap; soap is a pair of trousers.

All is possibility.

To Christ stuck on a fan, jelly wrote a love letter.

Everything is true.

Is it possible for the nonsmoker *Mr God* to imagine anything which cannot be asserted?

Christ said that God is almighty.

DADA asserts that everything is almighty.

Therefore, DADA asserts that the Almighty is something like a light bulb which, even when tossed into the Okhotsk

Sea, lights up from time to time at the bottom.

DADA negates everything.

It pierces and rips up the no-self.

In explosion, it pisses inexplicably into the place of Nothing, from where the Buddha can exit less easily than an ant.

DADA knows no place to stay.

DADA embraces all.

DADA rises high. Nobody can love DADA.

DADA cares about everything, for it avoids nothing.

A melon which grew insensitive to the contradiction and harmony of things did not fail to become a Dadaist. No, that is not so. Contradiction and harmony are also Dadaists.

Existence is Dadaistic.

Everything can be skewered and turned over.

Change equals value, and value is a Dadaist.

Who can say a Dadaist is not edible? Is he then a thing that cannot be licked?

All is food, and food is an anarchist.

A certain Dadaist died. It happened a century before he was miscarried, while he was an embryo.

There is a Dadaist who foresaw that the earth would shrink to the size of a tadpole or a man's eye socket on October 9, 1922, at 12:34 am. It's clear. He is invulnerable life. Each of predictions is accurate.

Another Dadaist has invented a medicine which, when taken, gives him power to work with ease – without food for a half a millennium. He is now ready to distribute it to each proletarian when the class war reaches its peak.

A young woman visited me from the North Pole on a single-wheeled vehicle, taking only 1.22 seconds.

She said she hated the bourgeoisie.

The mere word capital made her tremble.

She said she had brought a magnet which converts gold, silver, nickel, and platinum to saliva in seconds. And she taught me an incantation and how to chant it.

Any time you think you need it – she said.

A Dadaist said she was a phosphoric pronunciation.

He was strolling about the streetcar tracks in the heat, with an empty matchbox and some secrets placed in the right pocket.

The Dadaist was the subject of gossip for his friends for he had recently ceased frequenting the red light district in the outskirts all night, no longer buying whores, and had become a puritan.

He threw out his wooden sandals and stripped stark naked. Then he bound up his clothes in a lump to strike at the trolley tracks.

His pockets were smoking – that's why.

A police station was nearby, but the cops were too timid to take action.

He mentioned the other day that he could boil up the Pacific with a lit match with great ease.

A man practices pistol daily from dawn to dusk, even in bed.

This Dadaist says he won't loosen his grip on the pistol until he has killed seventy million people in a street fight.

A Dadaist wrote his will that no matter how trivial and hard life might be, he hated to die, wanted to live even a second longer.

He hanged himself with a lamp string in a library on the

third floor of an association office.

In his lifetime he was very gentle, always faithful to the organization's rules, totally trusted by everybody. Another Dadaist received a Ph.D. for his chemical analysis of a variety of tears.

DADA gives birth to all, splits and synthesizes all.

All is encamped behind DADA.

Nobody can be on DADA's side.

DADA is female, but has no sexual cravings.

That is why DADA is equipped with sex organs and all kinds of weapons.

DADA is the most cowardly creature. Since it keeps a furious fighting spirit at its waist, it is in constant explosion, smashing and destroying.

All is enemy to DADA.

DADA curses everything to death, swallows everything up, and yet its tongue, still dissatisfied, flicks in and out like an eternal have-not.

Takahashi Shinkichi, 'Dangen wa dadaisuto', *Dadaisuto Shinkichi no shi* (Poems of Dadaist Shinkichi) [Tokyo: Chūō Bijutshusha, 1923; reprinted in Ko Won, *Buddhist Elements in Dada: A Comparison of Tristan Tzara, Takahashi Shinkichi, and Their Fellow Poets*, New York University Press, N.Y., 1977] 31–34.

TAKAHASHI Shinkichi

A Blind Man [1922]

snow

jet-black

radish dark

filthy hand a burdock which gives birth to lechery
death poetry useless for garnishings on sliced raw fish
shijin ('tongue-dust') a sleeping man

the wings of activity

rusty nails on a stake woman's thighs

panting flames of lust gloves with holes

dropped one side

burial burial burial burial burial burial

burial burial the outskirt streetcar streetcar

the outskirt streetcar streetcar streetcar

the icelike bottom of fire

white white white

it's white

white is that thing only

and it's alone white

wet eyes like sardines

Let's stab and

burn up

the sky

Takahashi Shinkichi, 'Mekura', *Dadaisuto Shinkichi no shi* (Poems of Dadaist Shinkichi) [Tokyo: Chūō Bijutshusha, 1923; reprinted in Ko Won, *Buddhist Elements in Dada: A Comparison of Tristan Tzara, Takahashi Shinkichi, and Their Fellow Poets*, New York University Press, N.Y., 1977] 43–44.

MIRAIHA BIJUTSU

KYŌKAI

Friends! Wake Up! [1922]

Friends! Wake up! Come, new young, healthy artists!

Come to the new epoch of creation!

Friends! Wake up!

Escape from all copying! Take your penetrating mind, your sensitive psyche, and your centripetal nerves; seize the connection between nature and complicated, real daily life. Make large numbers of new works! All at once break and extinguish the subject you are using in order to express the passion and the speed of life in flux. Nature never shows you falsehood. It's all the truth. While you feel this love, paint! ... Restriction is bad. We must be free in all situations. Restrictions (rules) are one of the greatest annoyances ... Progress and freshness cannot be expressed in the traditional background which is full of rules ... Flash! Scream! Leap! Sorrow! Wild Joy! We have and observe the same amount of love for mechanical movement and sensual excitement ... We are not cripples ... All the stagnation, shame, jealousy, hesitation – foster mould on the human spirit. Futurism is constantly changing – fresh – dashing forward – collision – destruction ... Energy conquers the cold. Energy melts steel. Futurism has the passion to melt steel.

Miraiha Bijutsu Kyōkai, 'Tomo yo same yo', *Mizue*, 210 [December 1922; reprinted in Jennifer Weisenfeld, *Mavo: Japanese Artists and the Avant-Garde, 1905–1931*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002] 68.

KAMBARA Tai

Action Coterie Manifesto

[1923]

We are young men who lead with a clear conscience and a rigorous conviction, who want to walk on the front line of art with free and sure steps – with audacity and gaiety ... We are not slaves of the history of art ... We are young men who do not hesitate to take the cross and follow the way of difficulty according to our own opinions and the freedom of our lives ... We know we are but beginners. But if we do not stand up here and now, the birth of the new era will be even more painful ... up until now artists have sat in silence, suffering from a false humility where they say that it is enough to just move forward along their own paths. They have hesitated for much too long. But now the time has come for us to arise. We bravely stand up according to our own beliefs.

Kambara Tai, 'Akushon dōjin sengensho' [1923; reprinted in Jennifer Weisenfeld, *Mavo: Japanese Artists and the Avant-Garde, 1905–1931*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002] 99.

MURAYAMA Tomoyoshi

Mavo Manifesto [1923]

1. We are forming a group which is (mainly) concerned with constructivist art [*keisei geijutsu*].

We call our group Mavo. We are Mavoists. The principles or inclinations expressed in our works and this manifesto is Mavoism. Therefore, we have chosen the mark MV. We have gathered together because we share the same inclination as constructivist artists.

However, we definitely did not gather because we have identical principles and beliefs about art.

Thus, we do not aggressively try to regulate our artistic convictions.

We recognize, however, that when looking out over the general world of constructivist art, we are bound to each other by a very concrete inclination.

Because our group is formed thus, it is a matter of timing, a thing of the moment.

We, each one of us, of course, possess assertions, convictions, and passions that we feel we must elevate to the level of objectivity and appropriateness. However, as long as we are going to form a group, we respect one another. Furthermore, while recognizing what we inherently possess may be exclusive at times, we acknowledge the fact that we could not form a group without it.

In short, in terms of organization our group is a negative entity.

2. Next we would like to look at the nature of our Mavoist inclination.

We do not subscribe to the convictions or 'outward signs' of any existing groups. (It is not necessary to interpret this strictly. You can think of it as the 'colour of a group'.)

We stand at the vanguard, and will eternally stand there. We are not bound. We are radical. We revolutionize/ make revolution. We advance. We create. We ceaselessly affirm and negate. We live in all the meanings of words. Nothing can be compared to us.

We cannot help but acknowledge that what ties us together is the approximation of the forms of constructivist art. However, we do not think it is necessary to explain the 'what' or 'how' of this. That is something you will understand by looking at our work.

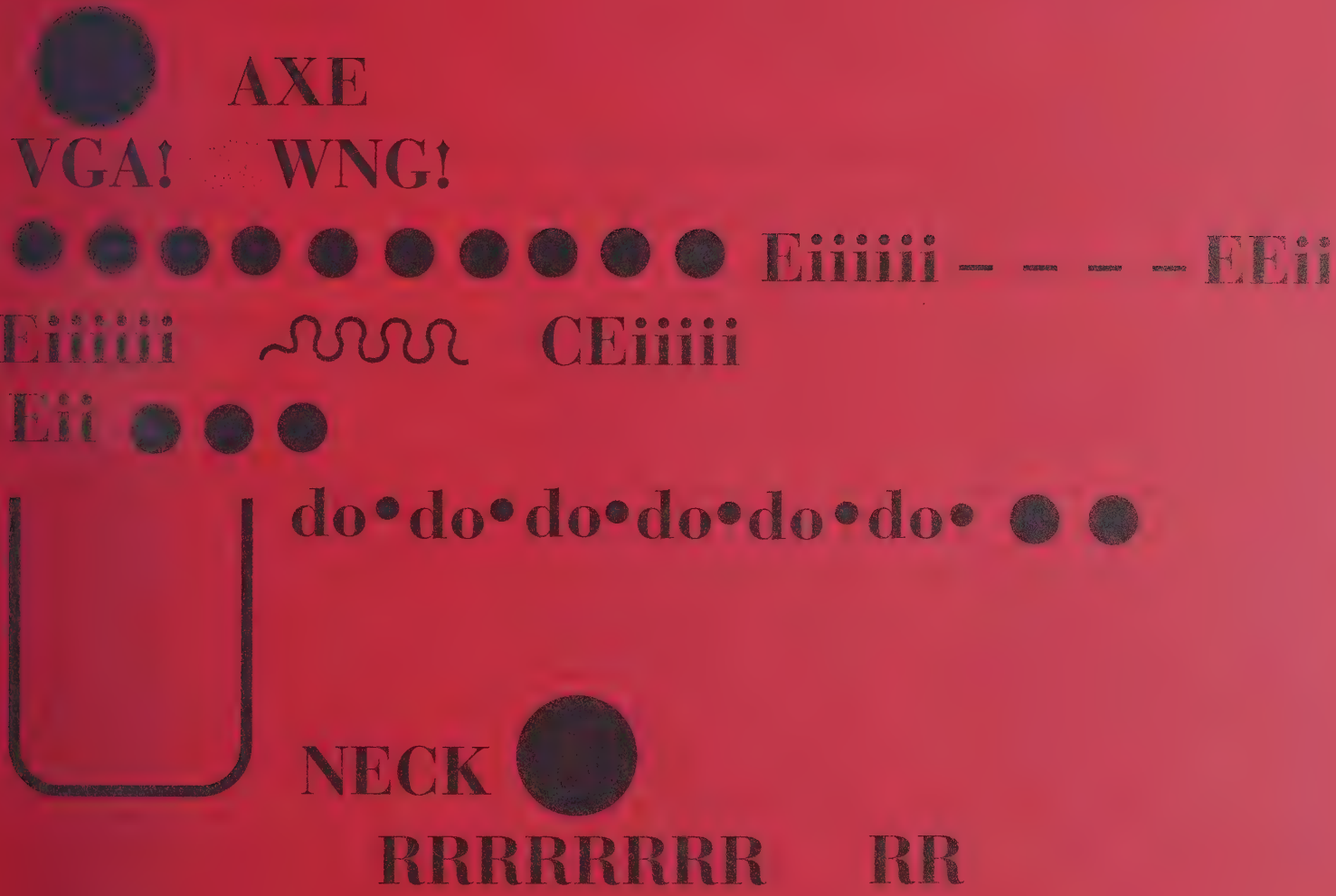
3. We have exhibitions from one to four times a year. We also call for works from the general public.

Works from the general public must be judged by a variety of conditions.

Ideally speaking, there is no restriction on our judging method. However, we must be forgiven for accepting our own work at the present time.

As for judging standards, we are concerned with the two points of scope and merit.

To restrict the scope of works to those with the character and power of the formation of our group. However, this should be understood as being extremely broad.



In regard to the matter of merit, there is nothing left to do but trust the value judgement represented in our work. We also experiment with lectures, theatre, musical concerts, magazine publishing, etc. We also accept posters, window displays, book designs, stage designs, various kinds of ornaments, architectural plans ...

Murayama Tomoyoshi, 'Mavo no sengen', exhibition pamphlet for the first Mavo Exhibition [Asakusa: Denpōin Temple, July 1923; reprinted in Gennifer Weisenfeld, *Mavo: Japanese Artists and the Avant-Garde, 1905-1931*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002] 66-67.

MURAYAMA Tomoyoshi

Concerning the Mavo Exhibition [1923]

What I am trying to make and am asking for is not something that can fit into the narrow category of art ... criticizing my, or our, work from this point of view is terribly misguided. In regard to Mr Asaeda's assertion that he would like art to directly stimulate his emotions, this is exactly the position which I am opposing, since when you are stimulating the emotions and having the emotions stimulated, you have not departed from Impressionism and early Expressionism. If I were after that kind of thing, why would I be suffering and what need would there be for me to be a Mavoist? Because I disapprove of pure art, in its positive and negative effects ... I would cry if our, or at the very least my, work were viewed with pleasure or became a mediator for directly aesthetically stimulating the emotions. For me ... constructive art [*keisei geijutsu*] knocks down and destroys the interior boundaries between the other arts and between other areas of life ... Along with Mr Asaeda, the vegetative art of the majority of the world and the crippled pale beings who advocate it, the slaving aesthetics, and sleepy art criticism are all completely putrefied! ... My work is not an after-dinner tea. I have no time to get involved with the trivial matter of 'taste'. My works do not demand appreciation; they demand understanding.

Murayama Tomoyoshi, 'Mavo tenrankai ni saishite: Asaedakun ni kotaeru', *Tōkyō asahi shinbun* [5 Aug 1923, morning edition, 6; reprinted in Gennifer Weisenfeld, *Mavo: Japanese Artists and the Avant-Garde, 1905-1931*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002] 74-75.

Anonymous

Statement [1924]

Our work is not something that can be simply summed up by the term 'barrack decoration'. Until now, architecture has been treated as craft art [*kogei bijutsu*], but in our 'Conscious Constructivism' it is seen as pure art [*jūn geijutsu*]. Therefore, we are not limited to barracks, but design permanent architecture as well. We started this work because we think that this is the time to get out of the

studio and into the city. While we were left rather powerless in getting to work in conventional (regular) architecture, this earthquake has created an opportunity for us actually to show our work ... Until now, in painting it was fine if you expressed colour and forms and rays of light, and people created works with just art materials. In 'Conscious Constructivism', the sphere of expression has been expanded to include colour, form, force, time, sound, thought, and so forth. Thus art materials alone are no longer sufficient to express this. So we also use real things [*jitsubutsu*], like metal wire, cloth, pieces of wood, newspaper. We believe it is not an overstatement to say that no matter what 'isms' appear next, there is nothing newer than this.

Anonymous statement [probably Murayama Tomoyoshi] quoted in 'Shinsaigo', *Chūō shinbun* [6 March 1924, morning edition, 3; reprinted in Gennifer Weisenfeld, *Mavo: Japanese Artists and the Avant-Garde, 1905-1931*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002] 84.

Announcement Flyer for Mavo Magazine [1924]

Mavo is a group of completely blue *criminals* [*hannin*] who wear completely black glasses on their completely red faces. Lazily, like pigs, like weeds, like the trembling emotions of sexual desire, we are the last bombs that rain down on all the intellectual criminals (including the bourgeois cliques) who swim in this world.

With its left eye, Mavo stares at XX; with its right eye, it charges into the eternal XX and XX. But bottom half of our body is a vehicle of fire, a locomotive that runs off the tracks. Because of this, we defy any value judgements, wade through all class divisions, and praise all kinds of universal techniques for rationally marching according to the union of the complete contents of life and clamorous sounds [...]

Used in a collage in *Mavo*, 3 [September 1924; reprinted in Gennifer Weisenfeld, *Mavo: Japanese Artists and the Avant-Garde, 1905-1931*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002] 95-96.

HAGIWARA Kyōjirō

An Artistic Consideration of the Barrack Towns 2 [1924]

It is obvious that our art must come out of the very depths of our lives. There is no question that life and art should be intimate. But it is more than just that. The stages of art and life are so close together, that it is impossible to draw a line of separation between them. If there is anyone who says that life and art can be [separately] categorized all the time, he is an idiot who should be scorned. Art is life ... [as] when we have to ride on desperately crowded, noisy trains, scattered with yellow dust, full of germs, feeling afraid of the conductor who is screaming hysterically, approaching

this dear capital Tokyo that is like a bride who is having a miscarriage. The ride will tell us about so many things.

Gentlemen, try to visualize a canvas, where you see a whole lot of people with innocent rosy cheeks moving around without knowing when they will get a shower of dust, in a place where there are some military policemen with guns on their shoulders standing at the corners of town, where there are no roadside trees, no policemen for traffic, no women with jobs, no bicycles, no children, no carts to carry lumber, no shabby looking cabs, no state-owned cars looking like trucks, no omnibuses like a woman in the month of childbirth. The unhappily unburned towns like Koishikawa, or Hongo ward, these are like places where slugs live compared to the lively barrack towns. A new art must at least survive in such a: confused place [like the barracks], right?

Hagiwara Kyōjirō, 'Barakku machi ni taisura geijutsuteki kōsatsu 2', *Chūō shinbun* [13 April 1924, morning edition, 7; reprinted in Gennifer Weisenfeld, *Mavo: Japanese Artists and the Avant-Garde, 1905-1931*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002] 144.

NAKADA Sadanosuke

Throwing Away the Glass: Sanka Members Exhibition Review [1925]

When viewing the 'Sanka Members Plastic Arts Exhibition' one must take off one's glasses. Whether it's the gold-rimmed glasses transmitted from the olden times of the Renaissance or the celluloid-framed glasses now popular from France, looking through the lenses of these periods you can find many people's yearning for 'beauty' derived from artistic colour and form. However, when we contemplate Sanka's work we must not forget to remove these glasses of ancestral transmission. This is because the vision [of Sanka's members] is already not conforming to the angle of that lens, and they are not searching for 'art'. ... Sanka is honest. Sanka does not apply the title of 'art' to its work. [Sanka artists] do not fake and deceive by making a gold sign of 'art'. They do not go so far as daring to profane the 'sacred art' of the solemn and severe classical imperial palace and the brilliant palace academy by treating it as something commonplace and dragging it into this mundane, earthly realm. [Instead,] they decline the beautiful name of 'art' as it is and do not receive [its associated canon] ... [Sanka's] work cannot be judged by the aesthetics of yesterday. These constructive works, a departure from the art of former times, should be called 'anti-art' (*han geijutsu*).

Nakada Sadanosuke, 'Megane o suteru (Sanka kaimen tenpyō)', *Chūō bijutsu*, 116 [July 1925, 52; reprinted in Gennifer Weisenfeld, *Mavo: Japanese Artists and the Avant-Garde, 1905-1931*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002] 107-108.

NEO-DADA

Artists inspired by Dada after 1945 did not eagerly embrace the 'Neo-Dada' label that critics imposed on them. It suggested facile repetition, 'reheated coffee', to Daniel Spoerri, which he considered an insult. Allan Kaprow tried to clarify the difference between his Happenings and Dada by insisting that his generation's art was directed against Abstract Expressionism and theories of modernism; it was not a protest against society and its values. Pop artists fetishized and aestheticized ordinary manufactured objects; Fluxus, an international movement inspired in part by John Cage's mediation of Dada, attempted to devalue the exceptional and commercial value of art by declaring that 'anything can be art and anyone can do it'. Japanese artists showed similar developments, admired and encouraged by the Americans and French. Yoshihara Jirō, leader of Gutai, insisted on taking the object as object, without the intervention of the artist, and New York Fluxist Nam June Paik lauded Hi Red Center's four-hour performance in a Japanese courtroom as the greatest Happening.

Michel TAPIÉ from *An Other Art* [1952]

The direction of art now presents itself as the mystery appeared to St John of the Cross; sheer and without solace. Since Nietzsche and Dada art has seemed the most inhuman of adventures, from beginning to end. Only work which would justify such a description justifies the current pioneers. And what it earns has little to do with pleasure, but rather with the most vertiginous test which it is given to man to confront, which is to lean over the depths of himself without the protection of a railing. With this much at stake, ideas which seem unchangeable are questioned, if not swept away, once and for all.

Since Impressionism these notions of beauty, form, space, aesthetics, have all been to greater or lesser extents subject to question. However, until now, even the most aggressive works mishandled these ideas, turned their backs on them, attacked them, denied them; but in any case went *against* them (which is still a way of recognizing them). Current works operate totally *outside* these ideas, totally indifferent to them, as if ignorant of them, as if they had never existed. Dada was the great break. Until then, Cubism included, all the classical criteria were still in play

despite the anarchic appearances; order, composition, balance, rhythm. These all directly descended from a humanism which was en route to exhaustion, but which had a continuing existence thanks to established routines, prevalent among both artists and collectors. Until Dada (and with the exception of the great German Expressionist movement, whose capital importance is only just being recognized) all the various 'isms' were only outwardly revolutionary, in a sort of Romanticism according to which adventure involved devaluing accepted laws in some spectacular act of sacrilegious negation. But there was no real difference of approach, no recognition that these worn-out laws were a matter of total indifference, offering no real possibilities for the future.

When one visits collections of contemporary paintings, one does not have the impression that the lesson of Dada contributed much. One asks oneself how, after Dada, it is possible to continue such mediocre, useless production; how, above all, it is possible that people should waste their lives in such stimulating activities without knowing themselves to be impostors of the first water. However, I believe that there is something radically new, namely, people's awareness that it is impossible to create some new 'ism'; there is also a certain prudishness amongst artists in the handling of form, this stupid form whose

name justifies so many pursuits to the detriment of intoxication with life and the development of mystery. Even those of us with the worst conscience now know that there is only adventure by the individual, and that form can only take its seat at the banquet which is contemporary art if it contents itself with a place just like the others, and is even prepared to give up its place to another. It thus gives itself a good alibi, which a habitual offender always needs. To the extent that our art is different, a new etiquette is worked out which does not improve old criteria, but rather is totally different in both its values and assumptions.

Our interest is not in movements, but in something much rarer, authentic Individuals. Movements have only ever existed because the majority of people follow the group in which they find security from their own cowardice. The only free person is the leader, if there really is a group, not just the little lifeless coteries so dear to the hearts of our modern intellectual milieux.

The individual only remains himself in collective experiences in so far as he takes these experiences in hand, by using them to develop his personal potential. This supposes a total confidence in oneself, as well as faith in something incommensurable and undiscussable, something precise and endless; on a scale as humanly superhuman as the NADA of St John of the Cross. In the

face of this, the swarm of little movements with their history-making theological/critical quarrels about art are of negligible importance.

The individual worthy of this title is not a prisoner of his past, but rather of his future. He is not afraid that one can draw these apparent contradictions from him, since these are only the facile games of immature individuals; of weaklings who have never developed for fear of making some terrible mistake. On the contrary, such mistakes are a springboard for those whose works flourish in the generous spirit of the great adventure. The key to the work, then, is its ultimate or complete nature; no alchemist is worthy of this name until he has completed the great work and he does not deserve it during the necessary preliminary stages, during which the fools don't hesitate to pour out their hostility. These fools maliciously believe they can drag this individual back into their ranks, as his very existence is a challenge both to their presence and to the inevitable fact of their numerousness. Art is at the opposite extreme to universal suffrage.

But another confession: form has for too long lost all hope of becoming an incarnation of the god of formalism. Life has become totally estranged from form; expressiveness is no longer compatible with it. The sculptors of form, those who want all the beliefs of the great adventure to live in the sculpture, seek every means to express themselves *differently* than actually through form. Painters, with the apparent freedom of an infinitely multiple technique deliberately act without it. They behave with casual indifference to the conventional wisdom, and act without form, in a profound anarchy. The Occidental world is finally discovering the Sign; it explodes it in the vehemence of a transcendental calligraphy, of a hyper-significance intoxicated with the cruel vertigo of a pure future.

Michel Tapié, *Un Art Autre: où il s'agit de nouveaux dévidages du reel* [Paris: Gabriel-Giraud, 1952; reprinted in Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, eds, *Art in Theory 1900-2000: an Anthology of Changing Ideas*, Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 2003] 629-31.

Merce CUNNINGHAM

The Impermanent Art [1955]

There has been a shift of emphasis in the practice of the arts of painting, music and dancing during the last few years. There are no labels yet but there are ideas. These ideas seem primarily concerned with something being exactly what it is in its time and place, and not in its having actual or symbolic reference to other things. A thing is just that thing. It is good that each thing be accorded this recognition and this love. Of course, the world being what it is – or the way we are coming to understand it now – we know that each thing is also every other thing, either actually or potentially. So we don't, it seems to me, have to worry ourselves about providing relationships and continuities and orders and structures – they cannot be avoided. They are the nature of things. They are ourselves and our materials and our environment. If a dancer dances

– which is not the same as having theories about dancing or wishing to dance or trying to dance or remembering in his body someone else's dance – but if a dancer *dances*, everything is there. The meaning is there, if that's what you want. It's like this apartment where I live – I look around in the morning and ask myself, what does it all mean? It means: this is where I live. When I dance, it means: this is what I am doing. A thing is just that thing. In painting, now, we are beginning to see the painting and not the painter nor the painted. We are beginning to see how a painted space is. In music, we are beginning to hear free of our well-tempered ears.

In dance, it is the simple fact of a jump being a jump, and the further fact of what shape the jump takes. This attention given the jump eliminates the necessity to feel that the meaning of dancing lies in everything but the dancing, and further eliminates cause-and-effect worry as to what movement should follow what movement, frees one's feelings about continuity, and makes it clear that each act of life can be its own history: past, present and future, and can be so regarded, which helps to break the chains that too often follow dancers' feet around.

There doesn't seem to be the need to expound any longer on the idea that dance is as much a part of life as anything else. Since it takes place in one form or another almost constantly, that is evidence enough. The play of bodies in space – and time. When I choreograph a piece by tossing pennies – by chance, that is – I am finding my resources in that play, which is not the product of *my* will, but which is an energy and a law that I too obey. Some people seem to think that it is inhuman and mechanistic to toss pennies in creating a dance instead of chewing the nails or beating the head against a wall or thumbing through old notebooks for ideas. But the feeling I have when I compose in this way is that I am in touch with a natural resource far greater than my own personal inventiveness could ever be, much more universally human than the particular habits of my own practice, and organically rising out of common pools of motor impulses. [...]

Our ecstasy in dance comes from the possible gift of freedom, the exhilarating moment that this exposing of the bare energy can give us. What is meant is not licence, but freedom, that is, a complete awareness of the world and at the same time a detachment from it.

In the thinking about contemporary dance, I am concerned here with the concert dance, I find that it is the connection with the immediacy of the action, the single instant, that gives the feeling of man's freedom. The body shooting into space is not an idea of man's freedom, but is the body shooting into space. And that very action is all other actions, and is man's freedom, and at the same instant his nonfreedom. You see how it is no trouble at all to get profound about dance. It seems to be a natural double for metaphysical paradox. [...]

My use of chance methods in finding continuity for dances is not a position that I wish to establish and die defending. It is a present mode of freeing my imagination from its own clichés and it is a marvellous adventure in attention.

Our attention is, normally, highly selective and highly editorial. But try looking at events another way and the whole world of gesture, the whole physical world in fact, is as if jabbed by an electric current.

It has been a growing interest in 'each thing-ness' that has led me to the use of chance methods in finding dance continuity. In my case, and for one particular work, this involved an elaborate use of charts from which came the particular movements, the rhythm (that is, the division and the duration of the time they were done in), and the space they appear in and how they divide it. There were separate charts for each of the three elements – movement, time, and space. Then I tossed pennies to select a movement from the movement chart, and this was followed by tossing pennies to find the duration of that particular movement, and following that the space and direction of the movement were tossed for. This method might lead one to suspect the result as being possibly geometric and 'abstract', unreal and non-human. On the contrary, it is no more geometric than the lines of a mountain are, seen from an airplane; it is no more abstract than any human being is, and as for reality, it is just that, it is not abstracted from something else, but is the thing itself, and moreover allows each dancer to be just as human as he is ...

Merce Cunningham, 'The Impermanent Art', *Seven Arts* [Indian Hills, Colorado, 1955; reprinted in Richard Kostelanetz, ed., *Esthetics Contemporary*, Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1978] 310-11.

George BRECHT

from Chance-Imagery [1957]

Art is not the most precious manifestation of life. Art has not the celestial and universal value that people like to attribute to it. Life is far more interesting.

– Tristan Tzara'

The purpose of this article is to encourage insight regarding chance-imagery, especially certain less intuitively obvious formal aspects. Every statement of opinion is as wrong in one sense as it is right in some other, for every distinction is an artificial one, an arbitrary subdivision of what is actually a unified whole. This is one of the reasons that words about art are so infinitely inferior to the art itself. Art unites us with the whole; words only permit us to handle a unified reality by manoeuvring arbitrarily excised chunks.

With this apology for juggling words at all, let us indicate how we intend to approach an infinitely broad and complex subject, chance and its relation to the arts. (*Arts* here is taken in a broadly historical, but actually no longer appropriate, sense.)

First, a working definition (*Chance*).

Some background (*Dada and Surrealism*).

A focal point in development (*Jackson Pollock*).

Randomness.

Coda.

CHANCE

The word *chance* (with a Latin root relating to the falling of dice) can conveniently be taken to mean that the cause, or system of causes, responsible for a given effect is unknown or unlooked-for or, at least, that we are unable to completely specify it. Of course, in the real world, causes are also effects, and effects causes. The fall of a die, for example, is the effect of an infinite number of (largely unknown) causes (among which we can imagine resilience of the die, hardness of the table, angle of contact to be included), and this effect, in turn, may be the cause of my winning a certain amount of money.

It is sometimes possible to specify only the universe of possible characteristics that a chance event may have. For example, a toss of a normal die will be expected to give a number from one to six. Any particular face will be expected to turn up in about one-sixth of a great many throws. But the outcome of any one toss remains unknown until the throw has been made. It is often useful to keep in mind this ‘universe of possible results’, even when that universe is hypothetical, for this clarifies for us the nature of our chance event as a selection from a limited universe. We should note here that events are defined as due to chance in a relative way. There is no absolute chance or random event, for chance and randomness are aspects of the way in which we structure our universe. These are elementary considerations with many ramifications, but I hope they will serve as a conceptual baseline for the discussion to follow, which should clarify the nature of chance. We shall later discuss the random event, as a special type of bias-free chance event.

In connection with art, and the affective image, we shall indicate two aspects of chance, one where the origin of images is unknown because it lies in deeper-than-conscious levels of the mind, and the second where images derive from mechanical processes not under the artist’s control. Both of these processes have in common a lack of conscious design.

DADA AND SURREALISM

In the sense that there is a certain lack of conscious control in everything we do, the use of chance in art could be traced (academically) to the cave drawings of prehistoric man; but the first explicit use of chance in painting seems to have come shortly before World War I. If we admit automatism as chance, then the improvisations of Kandinsky (1911), painted ‘rather subconsciously in a state of strong inner tension’, would take precedence over the first *papiers collés* of Picasso (1912), in which were incorporated fortuitous scraps of newspaper and cardboard.

(The question of the chance nature of automatism might be endlessly debated. It seems to me that the answer lies in the distinction between our seeking immediate causes or ultimate causes or automatic actions. It takes little reflection to see that ultimate causes might readily and reasonably be ascribed to chance, but psychoanalytic theory has taught us to expect ‘conscious ignorance and unconscious knowledge of the motivation of psychic accidentalness’², and it does not always take very deep or lengthy probing to reveal immediate causes

for the psychically accidental. At any rate, it is practical to consider chance as being defined by *consciously* unknown causes, and by this definition, at least, automatism is a chance process.)

Since we are restricting ourselves to the generation of chance-images, and not to their appreciation, we shall indicate only the place of the unconscious (including the subconscious, or fore-conscious) as a source of significant images. The importance of chance to the unconscious has manifold facets, not only in modern psychology, but also (and particularly) in Oriental thought (such as that manifested in the *I-Ching* or in Zen).

The Dadaists considered the unconscious to be a source of images free from the biases ingrained in us by parents, social customs and all the other artificial restrictions on intellectual freedom:

We are now in a position to formulate the problem of art, more accurately the problem of expression, as it appeared to the writers of [the] Literature group (Aragon, Breton, Soupault): only the unconscious does not lie, it alone is worth bringing to light. All deliberate and conscious efforts, composition, logic are futile. The celebrated French lucidity is nothing but a cheap lantern. At best the ‘poet’ can prepare traps (as a physician might do in treating a patient), with which to catch the unconscious by surprise and to prevent it from cheating ... — Marcel Raymond³

The unconscious is inexhaustible and uncontrollable. Its force surpasses us. It is as mysterious as the last particle of a brain cell. Even if we knew it, we could not reconstruct it. — Tristan Tzara⁴

As far as affective form is concerned, chance is an aspect of the universe made significant by unconscious interactions, but it is not the only aspect. When the largely iconoclastic displays of Dada were superseded by the more systematic researches of the Surrealists, Breton, for one, in the *First Surrealist Manifesto* (1924), made this general interest in the unconscious explicit:

During the course of Surrealist development, outside all forms of idealism, outside the opiates of religion, the marvellous comes to light within *reality*. It comes to light in dreams, obsessions, preoccupations, in sleep, fear, love, chance; in hallucinations, pretended disorders, follies, ghostly apparitions, escape mechanisms and evasions; in fancies, idle wanderings, poetry, the supernatural and the unusual; in empiricism, in *super-reality*.⁴

(This statement, written in 1924, followed *The Interpretation of Dreams* by twenty-four years, and *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* by twenty.)

It is useful practically to include automatism in a consideration of chance in art, and it is only our viewpoint which makes it a chance process but there is actually no reason why the others of Breton’s categories could not also be included. We exclude them arbitrarily from this discussion only to preserve a certain tightness in our

consideration of the methodological resources of the contemporary research ‘artist’, which we will take up further on. Automatism is also an aspect of chance in the sense that we accept its product as something which it really is not. In all of Breton’s manifestations of the marvellous (a handy summary) we read into phenomena characteristics which they do not possess in an absolute way. Duchamp called this *irony* (‘a playful way of accepting something’), and the concept is a critical one in understanding the vector through Dada, Pollock, the present-day chance-imagists, and the future. The idea will appear again in the section on Pollock, and shows up particularly as a method I’ve called the *irrelevant process* (also discussed later).

We are more interested, though, in the mechanically chance process, and here Duchamp did the pioneer work. In 1913 he undertook what seems to be the first explicit use of chance for the creation of an affective image, in the 3 *stoppages étalon*. He made these images by holding a thread one metre long, ‘straight and horizontal’, one metre above a blank canvas. After letting it fall on to the canvas, it was fixed with a trickle of varnish into the chance convolution in which it fell. This process was repeated to give three such canvases.

Duchamp seems to consider three phenomena basic to his exploitation of chance: wind, gravity and aim. (This discussion is based largely on an article about Duchamp by Harriet and Sidney Janis; see reference 5.) The 3 *stoppages étalon* illustrate gravity; wind was used to create the cloud formations for *La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même* (1915–23): ‘Air currents blowing a piece of mesh gauze against a screen, imprinted a limp rectangle upon it. The experiment repeated three times gave three chance images, variations on the square. ... The third device in allowing shapes to create themselves and thus void the responsibility of the hand, is termed by Duchamp *adresse*, that is, skill in aiming. Nine marks were made upon the glass by the impact of shots of matches dipped in paint, from a toy cannon ... Aiming nine shots at a given point, these formed a polygram as a result of variation in the aim-control and accompanying conditions. He then converted the flat polygram or floor plan into an elevation plan. Here the nine points became the locations for the nine malleable forms in perspective.’⁵

Duchamp’s theories on the use of chance seem highly developed, but not exhaustive. Other Dadaists, especially Arp, Ernst, and Tzara, later developed other important applications of chance:

Arp composed collages by picking up chance scraps of paper, shuffling them, and gluing them down just as they fell (example: the ‘Squares arranged according to the laws of chance’, a collage of 1916).

Ernst developed the ‘decalcomania of chance’ wherein, for example, ink was spread between two sheets of paper, which were then pulled apart (example: ‘Decalcomania, 1936’ by Oscar Dominguez).

Tzara composed poems by drawing words from a hat. (‘To make a dadaist poem / Take a newspaper. / Take a

pair of scissors. / Choose an article as long as you are planning to make your poem. / Cut out the article. / Then cut out each of the words that make up this article and put them in a bag. / Shake it gently. / Then take out the scraps conscientiously. / The poem will be like you. / And here you are a writer, infinitely original and endowed with a sensibility that is charming though beyond the understanding of the vulgar.’)⁶

Frottage was a ‘semi-automatic’ process for obtaining patterns or designs by rubbing canvas or paper that has been placed over a rough surface such as planking, embossing, a brick wall, etc. (example: Ernst, ‘The Horde’, c. 1927). This is an example of a technique for which we shall later have a more general term – *the irrelevant process*.⁷

A very interesting technique of the Surrealists, which permitted the cause of an event to be lost, so to speak, in multiplicity, was that of the *cadavre exquis*, wherein several persons each made part of a picture, folding the paper to cover his addition, before passing the drawing to the next participant. (An example is the ‘Figure’, 1926–27, by Yves Tanguy, Joan Miró, Max Morise and Man Ray).

The ability of the unconscious to reconcile opposites is nowhere so evident as in Dada, for within a periphery of nonsense the ridiculous and the profound were made to evince each other: ‘Dada wished to destroy the reasonable frauds of men and recover the natural, unreasonable order. Dada wished to replace the logical nonsense of the men of today with an illogical nonsense. That is why we beat the Dadaist bass drum with all our might and trumpeted the praises of unreason ... Dada like nature is without meaning. Dada is for infinite meaning and finite means.’ (Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia, 1949.⁸) Within such a (frameless) framework, chance played a major part, as testified by Arp himself: ‘Chance opened up perceptions to me, immediate spiritual insights. Intuition led me to revere the law of chance as the highest and deepest of laws, the law that rises from the fundament. An insignificant word might become a deadly thunderbolt. One little sound might destroy the earth. One little sound might create a new universe.’ The almost incredibly incisive mind of Tristan Tzara, as early as 1922, even recognized the relationship of all this to Oriental philosophy (in one of the most convincing of Dada documents, the ‘Lecture on Dada’): ‘Dada is not at all modern. It is more in the nature of a return to an almost Buddhist religion of indifference.’¹⁰ Such aspects of reality as Oriental thought – scientific thought – Dada – chance become somewhat clearer in such a light. Perhaps chance is the most allusive of the phenomena studied by the Dadaists and Surrealists because it is capable of being most widely generalized. We shall see.

The Second World War helped to disperse the European Dadaists and Surrealists, and many of the most original artists – Breton, Ernst, Tanguy, Masson – regrouped in New York, particularly around two New York galleries, the Julien Lévy Gallery and Peggy Guggenheim’s

Art of This Century.

JACKSON POLLOCK

Jackson Pollock’s first show was held at Peggy Guggenheim’s gallery in 1943. Here he was able to associate with the proponents of that ‘sacred disorder’ which was later to become the key to his own original style. ‘To them Pollock owed his radical new sense of freedom, and he spoke more than once of his debt to their unpremeditated and automatic methods. By elevating the appeal to chance and accident into a first principle of creation, the Surrealists had circumvented the more rigid formalisms of modern art.’¹¹ It is not difficult to find their influence in Pollock’s paintings of the war years (for example, *Guardians of the Secret*, 1943). Pollock achieved a profound, sustained and irrational synthesis of all the principles that had preceded him in Dada, and in a way consistent with his contemporary world. His paintings seem much less manifestations of one of a group of techniques for releasing the unconscious (as the Dada experiments seemed), than they do of a single, integrated use of chance as a means of unlocking the deepest possible grasp of nature in its broadest sense.

Not to get lost in conjecture, let us briefly give evidence for two points, first that Pollock’s calligraphy was truly automatic and second that there is a considerable element of chance in the ultimate arrangement of pigment in the chance-paintings of roughly 1947–51.

First, part of a statement by Pollock, ‘made in 1947:

When I am *in* my painting, I’m not aware of what I’m doing. It is only after a sort of ‘get acquainted’ period that I see what I have been about.’¹³

Again, from an earlier statement:

... The fact that good European moderns are now here is very important, for they bring with them an understanding of the problems of modern painting. I am particularly impressed with their concept of the source of art being the unconscious. This idea interests me more than these specific painters do ...

Aside from the lack of conscious control of paint application in these paintings, there are technical reasons for looking at this complex of interdependent forms as predominantly chance events. For one thing, the infinite number of variables involved in determining the flow of fluid paint from a source not in contact with the canvas cannot possibly be simultaneously taken into account with sufficient omniscience that the exact configuration of the paint when it hits the canvas can be predicted. Some of these variables, for example, are the paint viscosity, density, rate of flow at any instant; and direction, speed and configuration of the applicator, to say nothing of non-uniformity in the paint. Even if we deny automatism, and claim omniscience for an unconscious moulded by a long learning period, it is obvious that in some of Pollock’s paintings of this period (in *One*, 1950, for example) differently coloured streams of paint have flowed into each other after application, resulting in a commingling

completely out of the artist’s hands. Never before Pollock were chance processes used with such primacy, consistency and integrity, as valuable sources of affective imagery.

Paintings get to be what they are physically through an interaction of method and material, and they have their effect in an interaction between painting and observer. As far as the observer is concerned, Pollock has demonstrated that the ability of humans to appreciate complex chance-images is almost unlimited. Here I would like to introduce the general term *chance-imagery* to apply to our formation of images resulting from chance, wherever these occur in nature. (The word *imagery* is intentionally ambiguous enough, I think, to apply either to the physical act of creating an image out of real materials, or to the formation of an image in the mind, say by abstraction from a more complex system.) One reason for doing this is to place the painter’s, musician’s, poet’s, dancer’s chance images in the same conceptual category as natural chance-images (the configuration of meadow grasses, the arrangement of stones on a brook bottom), and to get away from the idea that an artist makes something ‘special’ and beyond the world of ordinary things. An Alpine peak or an iris petal can move us at times with all the subtle power of a *Night Watch* or one of the profound themes of Opus 131. There is no a priori reason why moving images should originate only with artists.

This leaves *art* to mean something *constructed*, from a starting point of preconceived notions, with the corollary that as art approaches chance-imagery, the artist enters a oneness with all of nature. This idea has in essence been well expressed by Suzuki:

There is something divine in being spontaneous and not being hampered by human conventionalities and their artificial hypocrisies. There is something direct and fresh in this lack of restraint by anything human, which suggests a divine freedom and creativity. Nature never deliberates; it acts directly out of its own heart, whatever this may mean. In this respect Nature is divine. Its ‘irrationality’ transcends human doubts or ambiguities, and in our submitting to it or rather accepting it, we transcend ourselves.¹⁴

Our inner life is complete when it merges into Nature and becomes one with it.¹⁵

When an artist achieves this essential oneness with all of nature, everything he creates illuminates nature, as well as himself.

Reason has cut man off from nature. – Hans Arp¹⁶

RANDOMNESS

Chance images are characterized by a lack of conscious design. When these images are ‘hand-made’, and conscious thought is evaded, so that the images have their source in deeper-than-conscious areas of the mind, we will prefer the Surrealists’ term *automatic* to the word *random*, though *random*, in the way it is used in everyday speech, might seem appropriate (as meaning, for

example, ‘without definite aim, direction, rule, or method’”). We will prefer this usage in order to restrict *random* to a technical meaning which it has more commonly in statistics, where it applies to special techniques for eliminating bias in sampling. The term *strict randomness* is useful for ensuring that the word *random* is understood in this technical sense, but, in general, we shall merely say *random*, and it should always be understood here that the technical meaning is implied. Chance is sometimes used in painting in such a way that the images are neither clearly automatic nor random, and here we can refer to chance-images or chance-processes.

It remains to indicate, then, what this technical meaning comprises, recognizing that, in general, the reason for the importance of randomness for purposes of scientific inference will be the same as the reason for its importance in the arts, that is, the elimination of bias. It is not intuitively obvious that strict randomness is difficult to achieve; therefore let us indicate the general presence of bias where human choice or ordinary mechanical systems are involved. This will give us an intuitive insight into approaches capable of eliminating bias, and will lead finally to a working definition of randomness itself.

Concerning a general bias in human choice, Kendall and Smith⁸ have made the following interesting statement:

It is becoming increasingly evident that sampling left to the discretion of a human individual is not random, although he may be completely unconscious of the existence of bias, or indeed actively endeavouring to avoid it. House-to-house sampling, the sampling of crop yields, even ticket-drawing have all been found to give results widely divergent from expectation.

Yule and Kendall⁹ have given an example of human bias that was detected in the course of agricultural experiments carried out in England. The heights of wheat plants were to be measured at two stages in their growth. Of the sets of eight plants sampled for measurement at each of the two stages, two were selected ‘at random’ by eye, and the other six were selected by strictly random methods. Analysis of the measurements showed clearly that, in the samples selected by the eye, there was a clear bias toward selecting taller shoots in May, before the ears of wheat had formed, while in June, after further maturation, another bias toward selecting plants of more like average height, and avoiding the extremely tall or short plants, was evidenced.

I have attempted some one-hand typing of series of random digits, and found not only a bias toward a greater frequency of higher digits (regardless of the hand used for the typing), but also peculiar patterns in the series; digits being followed unusually often by certain other digits, for example. (For an interesting discussion of chance numbers, and further references on this subject, see section twelve of Freud’s *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* in *The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud*.)

One might expect to avoid human bias by using mechanical systems, but experience has shown that it is now easy to find simple unbiased mechanical systems.

Perfectly balanced coins and roulette wheels, like perfectly cubical and homogeneous dice, seem to occur rarely in nature, if at all. Weldon²⁰ for example, threw twelve dice 4,096 times. For unbiased dice the probability of a four, five, or six is $\frac{1}{6}$, so that he should have obtained one of these faces 24,576 times. These three faces actually occurred 25,145 times, which is a statistically significant bias. Even an electronic analogue of a roulette wheel, built by the Rand Corporation for the generation of random digits, after careful engineering and re-engineering to eliminate bias, was found again to have statistically significant biases, after running continuously for a month, in spite of the fact that tests showed the electronic equipment itself to be in good order.²¹

How can bias be avoided? First, it can be reduced by resorting to compound chance events. And, formally it can be eliminated by the use of random numbers.

By making the chance-event a compound of two or more independent events, elements in the compound event can be made more nearly independent of each other, and thus biases can be avoided. For example, in the Surrealist *cadavre exquis*, it was made impossible for any one person to foresee the overall result of combining the independently contributed parts of the drawing, so that bias in the relationship of elements in the compound chance-event (drawing) was avoided. John Cage has also used this technique in his *Music for Four Pianos*, wherein four pianists play independently of each other, the resulting rhythmic and melodic pattern being thus freed of personal bias. In fact, this technique has been used, in a much-refined way, to generate a table of strictly random numbers (those published by the Interstate Commerce Commission²²). Independent columns of digits from way-bills received by the commission deriving from numerical data such as shipment weight, revenue, car serial number, and so forth, were used as a basic set from which the final set was derived.

Tables of random numbers provide a convenient and reliable means of avoiding bias in selection; convenient because they allow random selection of anything that can be numbered, reliable because they can be verified to be statistically random. (Tests for randomness in random number tables are described in references [18 and 22].)

Randomness, then, implies an independence of each individual choice, plus an aggregate impartiality toward the characteristic being sampled. In tables of random digits, for example, a state of randomness implies both that the occurrence of any particular digit at a particular point in the table is independent of the occurrence of all the other digits, and that the proportional occurrence of that digit in the long run is arbitrarily close to some preestablished value. Practically speaking, this means that in a table such as the Rand table, the digit five in a certain place is just as likely to be followed by a six, seven, eight or nine as it is to be followed by a zero, one, two, three, or four, and also that in the table as a whole, the proportion of digits five should be reasonably close to one tenth.

CODA

Chance in the arts provides a means for escaping the biases engrained in our personality by our culture and

personal past history, that is, it is a means of attaining greater generality. The result is a method of approach with wide application. The methods of chance and randomness can be applied to the selection and arrangement of sounds by the composer, to movement and pace by the dancer, to three-dimensional form by the sculptor, to surface form and colour by the painter, to linguistic elements by the poet. Science tells us that the universe is what we conceive it to be, and chance enables us to determine what we conceive it to be (for the conception is only partly conscious). The receptacle of forms available to the artist thus becomes open-ended, and eventually embraces all of nature, for the recognition of significant form becomes limited only by the observer’s self. It must be obvious too that the infinite range of application of these methods is compounded when the matter of materials is also considered, and this is a subject we have only incidentally touched on here. One hopes that so-called avant-garde painters will some day look beyond the classical oil medium with the same open-minded receptivity that, say, Pierre Schaeffer did in his field, in 1948. (*‘Quand on s’entête contre toute logique, c’est qu’on attend quelque chose d’un hasard, que cette logique n’aurait pas su prévoir. Mon mérite est d’avoir aperçu entre cent expériences, celle, apparemment aussi décevante que les autres, qui créait l’évasion. Encore fallait-il avoir l’audace de généraliser.’*)²³

I doubt that an increase in our ability to recognize significance in the chance-images that nature presents all about us will mean an end of the personal activities that we have been calling art. The artist will probably continue to make significant images, both because some such images rarely occur in nature, and because of a personal release that comes about from such activity:

The painter makes paintings in the urgent need to discharge his own emotions and visions.

— Pablo Picasso²⁴

Pictures are vehicles of passion, of all kinds and orders, not pretty luxuries like sports cars. In our society, the capacity to give and to receive passion is limited. For this reason, the act of painting is a deep human necessity, not the production of a hand-made commodity.

— Robert Motherwell²⁵

But it seems to me that we fall short of the infinite expansion of the human spirit for which we are searching, when we recognize only images that are artifacts. We are capable of more than that.

AN AFTER-NOTE

In 1957, when this article was written, I had only recently met John Cage and had not yet seen clearly that the most important implications of chance lay in his work rather than in Pollock’s. Nor could I have foreseen the resolution of the distinction between choice and chance which was to occur in my own work.

We are eight years farther on the spiral, and I prefer work to re-work. ‘Chance-Imagery’ is presented in the form in which it was originally written.

1 Tristan Tzara, 'Lecture on Dada' (1922). *The Dada Painters and Poets: An Anthology*. Edited by Robert Motherwell. The Documents of Modern Art series (Wittenborn, Schultz, Inc., 1951) 248. We will hereafter abbreviate this anthology to 'Motherwell'.

2 Sigmund Freud, *Psychopathology of Everyday Life. The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud*. English translation by A.A. Brill. (New York: Random House, The Modern Library, 1938), 164.

3 Marcel Raymond, *From Baudelaire to Surrealism*. Quoted in Motherwell, xxix of the Introduction.

4 André Breton, 'First Surrealist Manifesto'. Quoted by Georges Hugnet in one of his two introductory essays for *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism*. Edited by Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Third edition (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1947). Hereafter this book is referred to as 'Barr'.

5 Harriet and Sidney Janis, 'Marcel Duchamp: Anti Artist' (1945). Motherwell, Appendix C, 306.

6 Tristan Tzara, 'manifesto on feeble love and bitter love'. Motherwell, 92.

7 A.H. Barr, Jr., 'A list of devices, techniques, media'. Barr, 65.

8 Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia, 'Some Memories of Pre-Dada: Picabia and Duchamp' (1949), Motherwell, 266.

9 Jean [Hans] Arp, 'Dada Was Not a Farce' (1949), Motherwell, 294.

10 Tristan Tzara, 'Lecture on Dada' (1922). Motherwell, 294.

11 Sam Hunter, Catalogue of the 1956 Pollock retrospective show. *Bulletin*, vol. xxiv, no.2 of The Museum of Modern Art.

12 Jackson Pollock, 'My Painting', *Possibilities* (N.Y.), no. 1:79, Winter 1947-48, 78-83.

13 Jackson Pollock, 'Jackson Pollock' (a questionnaire), *Arts and Architecture*, vol. 61, no. 2, February 1944, 14.

14 D.T. Suzuki, 'Zen Buddhism', *Selected Writings of D.T. Suzuki*. Edited by William Barrett (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., Anchor edition, 1956), 234. Used by permission of Hutchinson & Co., Ltd., London.

15 Ibid., 256.

16 Jean [Hans] Arp, 'Notes from a Dada Diary', Motherwell, 222.

17 *Webster's New International Dictionary*. Second edition, copyright 1959 by G. & C. Merriam Co., publishers of the Merriam-Webster Dictionaries. Used by permission.

18 M.G. Kendall and B. Babington Smith, 'Randomness and Random Sampling Numbers', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, London, vol. CI, pt. 1, 1938, 147-166.

19 G. Udny Yule and M.G. Kendall, *An Introduction to the Theory of Statistics*. Fourteenth edition (New York: Hafner Publishing Co., 1950).

20 Cited in M.G. Kendall, *The Advanced Theory of Statistics*. Fifth edition (New York: Hafner Publishing Co., vol. 1, 199).

21 The Rand Corporation, *A Million Random Digits with 100,000 Normal Deviates* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1955). A description of the method used for production of the random digits is contained in the introduction.

22 Interstate Commerce Commission, Bureau of Transport Economics and Statistics, *Table of 105,000 Random Decimal Digits* (Washington, D.C., May 1949). Copies are available free from the Commission. Refer to Statement No. 4914, File No. 261-A-1.

23 Pierre Schaeffer, *A la recherche d'une musique concrete* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1952) 16.

24 Quoted by Frank Elgar; in Elgar and Maillard. *Picasso*. Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., New York, 1956.

25 Statement by Robert Motherwell in 'The New Decade' exhibition catalogue. Edited by John I.H. Baur (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1955).

George Brecht, *Chance-Imagery* [New York: Something Else Press, 1966; reprinted in Richard Kostelanetz, ed., *Esthetics Contemporary*, Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1978] 116-27.

Richard HAMILTON For the Finest Art, Try Pop [1961]

In much the way that the invention of photography cut away for itself a chunk of art's prerogative—the pictorial recording of visual facts—trimming the scope of messages which Fine Art felt to lie within its true competence, so has popular culture abstracted from Fine Art its role of mythmaker. The restriction of this area of relevance has been confirmed by the artist with smug enthusiasm so that decoration, one of art's few remaining functions, has assumed a ridiculously inflated importance.

It isn't surprising, therefore, to find that some painters are now agog at the ability of the mass entertainment machine to project, perhaps more pervasively than has ever before been possible, the classic themes of artistic vision and to express them in a poetic language which marks them with a precise cultural date-stamp.

It is the *Playboy* 'Playmate of the month' pull-out pin-up which provides us with the closest contemporary equivalent of the odalisque in painting. Automobile body stylists have absorbed the symbolism of the space age more successfully than any artist. Social comment is left to TV and comic strip. Epic has become synonymous with a certain kind of film and the heroic archetype is now buried deep in movie lore. If the artist is not to lose much of his ancient purpose he may have to plunder the popular arts to recover the imagery which is his rightful inheritance.

Two art movements of the early part of this century insisted on their commitment to manifest the image of a society in flux: Dada, which denied the then current social attitudes and pressed its own negative propositions, and Futurism with its positive assertion of involvement. Both were fiercely, aggressively propagandist. Both were rebellious, or at least radical, movements. Dada anarchically seditious and Futurism admitting to a core of authoritarian dogma—each was vigorous and historically apposite.

A new generation of Dadaists has emerged today, as violent and ingenious as their forebears, but Son of Dada is

accepted, lionized by public and dealers, certified by state museums—the act of mythmaking has been transferred from the subject-matter of the work to the artist himself as the content of his art.

Futurism has ebbed and has no successor, yet to me the philosophy of affirmation seems susceptible to fruition. The long tradition of bohemianism which the Futurists made their bid to defeat is anachronic in the atmosphere of conspicuous consumption generated by the art rackets.

Affirmation propounded as an avant-garde aesthetic is rare. The history of art is that of a long series of attacks upon social and aesthetic values held to be dead and moribund, although the avant-garde position is frequently nostalgic and absolute. The Pop-Fine-Art standpoint, on the other hand—the expression of popular culture in fine art terms—is, like Futurism, fundamentally a statement of belief in the changing values of society. Pop-Fine-Art is a profession of approbation of mass culture, therefore also antiartistic. It is positive Dada, creative where Dada was destructive. Perhaps it is Mama—a cross-fertilization of Futurism and Dada which upholds a respect for the culture of the masses and a conviction that the artist in twentieth century urban life is inevitably a consumer of mass culture and potentially a contributor to it.

Richard Hamilton, 'For the Finest Art, Try Pop', *Gazette*, 1 [London, 1961; reprinted in Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, eds, *Art in Theory, 1900-2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 2003] 742-43.

Pierre RESTANY Forty Degrees Above Dada [1961]

Dada is a farce, a legend, a state of mind, a myth. An ill-bred myth whose underground survival and capricious demonstrations upset everyone. André Breton had thought at first to dispose of Dada by attaching it to Surrealism. But the anti-art explosive was short-lived. The myth of the entire *no* lived clandestinely between the wars in order to become, as of 1945, with Michel Tapié the guarantee of an 'art autre'. Thanks to the change of absolute aesthetic negativity into a methodological doubt, it was finally possible to incarnate new signs. A necessary and sufficient blank state, the dada *zero* constituted the phenomenological reference of abstract lyricism: it was the big break with tradition, whereby broke the muddy wave of formulas and styles, from the 'informel' to 'nuagisme'. Contrary to general expectations, the dada myth survived Tachism's excesses very well; easel painting marked the occasion, causing the last remaining illusions regarding the monopoly of traditional means of expression to disappear, in painting as in sculpture ...

We are witnessing today a general phenomenon of depletion and sclerosis of all established vocabularies: uselessly repeated stylistics and redhibitory [i.e. latent academisms (Fr. *redhibitories*)] with increasingly rare exceptions. Certain individual approaches confront—

fortunately – this vital deficiency of classical methods and tend, regardless of their scope, to define the normative bases of a new expressivity ...

The Neo-Realists consider the world a painting, the large, fundamental work from which they appropriate fragments of universal significance. They allow us to see the real in diverse aspects of its expressive totality. And through these specific images the entire sociological reality, the common good of human activity, the large republic of our social exchanges, of our commerce in society is summoned to appear.

In the current context, Marcel Duchamp's ready-made (and also Camille Bryen's functioning objects) take on new meaning. They translate the right of direct expression belonging to an entire organic sector of modern activity, that of the city, the street, the factory, mass production. This artistic baptism of the ordinary object nevertheless constitutes par excellence the 'dada act'. After the *no* and the *zero*, here is a third position of the myth: Marcel Duchamp's anti-art gesture assumes positivity. The dada mind identifies with a mode of appropriation of the modern world's exterior reality. The ready-made is no longer the climax of negativity or of polemics, but the basic element of a new expressive repertory.

Such is Neo-Realism: a rather direct fashion of getting our feet back on the ground, but at forty degrees above the *dada zero*, and on the very level where man, if he succeeds in reintegrating himself with the real, identifies the real with his own transcendence which is emotion, sentiment, and finally, poetry.

Pierre Restany, 'À quarante degrés au-dessus de dada', *Le Nouveau Réalisme* [Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1978, 281-85; trans. Martha Nichols in *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: a Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*, Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, eds., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996] 307-308.

George MACIUNAS Neo-Dada in Music, Theater, Poetry, Art [1962]

Neo-Dada, its equivalent, or what appears to be neo-dada, manifests itself in very wide fields of creativity. It ranges from 'time' arts to 'space' arts; or more specifically from literary arts (time-art), through graphic-literature (time-space-art) to graphics (space-arts) through graphic-music (space-time-arts) to graphless or scoreless music (time-art), through theatrical music (space-time-art) to environments (space-arts). There exist no borderlines between one and the other extreme. Many works belong to several categories and also many artists create separate works in each category. Almost each category and each artist however, is bound with the concept of Concretism ranging in intensity from pseudo-concretism, surface concretism, structural concretism, method concretism (indeterminacy systems), to the extreme of concretism which is beyond the limits of art, and therefore sometimes referred to as anti-art, or art nihilism. The new activities of

the artists therefore could be charted by reference to two coordinates: the horizontal coordinate defining transition from 'time' arts to 'space' arts and back to 'time' and 'space' etc., and the vertical coordinate defining transition from extremely artificial art, illusionistic art, then abstract art (not within the subject of this essay), to mild concretism, which becomes more and more concrete, or rather nonartificial till it becomes non-art, anti-art, nature, reality.

Concretists in contrast to illusionists prefer unity of form and content, rather than their separation. They prefer the world of concrete reality rather than the artificial abstraction of illusionism. Thus in plastic arts for instance, a concretist perceives and expresses a rotten tomato without changing its reality or form. In the end, the form and expression remain [the] same as the content and perception – the reality of rotten tomato, rather than an illusionistic image or symbol of it. In music a concretist perceives and expresses the material sound with all its inherent polychromy and pitchlessness and 'incidentalness', rather than the immaterial abstracted and artificial sound of pure pitch or rather controlled tones denuded of its pitch obliterating overtones. A material or concrete sound is considered one that has close affinity to the sound producing material – thus a sound whose overtone pattern and the resultant polychromy clearly indicates the nature of material or concrete reality producing it. Thus a note sounded on a piano keyboard or a bel-canto voice is largely immaterial, abstract and artificial since the sound does not clearly indicate its true source or material reality – common action of string, wood, metal, felt, voice, lips, tongue, mouth etc. A sound, for instance, produced by striking the same piano itself with a hammer or kicking its underside is more material and concrete since it indicates in a much clearer manner the hardness of hammer, hollowness of piano sound box and resonance of string. A human speech or eating sounds are likewise more concrete for the same reason of source recognizability. These concrete sounds are commonly, although inaccurately, referred to as noises. They may be pitchless to a large extent, but their pitchlessness makes them polychromatic, since the intensity of acoustic colour depends directly on pitch obliterating inharmonic overtones.

Further departure from artificial world of abstraction is affected by the concept of indeterminacy and improvisation. Since artificiality implies human pre-determination, contrivance, a truer concretist rejects pre-determination of final form in order to perceive the reality of nature, the course of which, like that of man himself is largely indeterminate and unpredictable. Thus an indeterminate composition approaches greater concretism by allowing nature [to] complete its form in its own course. This requires the composition to provide a kind of framework, an 'automatic machine' within which or by which, nature (either in the form of an independent performer or indeterminate-chance compositional methods) can complete the art-form, effectively and independently of the artist-composer. Thus the primary contribution of a truly concrete artist consists in creating a concept or a method by which form can be created independently of him, rather than the form or structure.

Like a mathematical solution such a composition contains a beauty in the method alone.

The furthest step towards concretism is of course a kind of art-nihilism. This concept opposes and rejects art itself, since the very meaning of it implies artificiality whether in creation of form or method. To approach closer affinity with concrete reality and its closer understanding, the Art-nihilist or anti-artists (they usually deny those definitions) either creates 'anti-art' or exercises nothingness. The 'anti-art' form are directed primarily against art as a profession, against the artificial separation of a performer from audience, or creator and spectator, or life and art; it is against the artificial forms or patterns or methods of art itself; it is against the purposefulness, formfulness and meaningfulness of art; Anti-art is life, is nature, is true reality – it is one and all. Rainfall is anti-art, a babble of a crowd is anti-art, a sneeze is anti-art, a flight of a butterfly, or movements of microbes are anti-art. They are as beautiful and as worth to be aware of as art itself. If man could experience the world, the concrete world surrounding him (from mathematical ideas to physical matter) in the same way he experiences art, there would be no need for art, artists and similar 'nonproductive' elements.

George Maciunas, 'Neo-Dada in Music, Theater, Poetry, Art', *Happenings, Fluxus, Pop Art, Nouveau Réalisme*, ed. Wolf Vostell [Hamburg, 1965, 192-95; reprinted in Clive Phillpot and Jon Hendricks, eds., *Fluxus: Selections from the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection*, New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1988] 25-27.

Andy WARHOL Interview with Gene Swenson [1963]

GW: Is 'Pop' a bad name?

AW: The name sounds so awful. Dada must have something to do with Pop – it's so funny, the names are really synonyms. Does anyone know what they're supposed to mean or have to do with, those names? Johns and Rauschenberg – Neo-Dada for all these years, and everyone calling them derivative and unable to transform the things they use – are now called progenitors of Pop. It's funny the way things change. I think John Cage has been very influential, and Merce Cunningham, too, maybe. Did you see that article in the *Hudson Review* ['The End of the Renaissance?', Summer, 1963]? It was about Cage and that whole crowd, but with a lot of big words like radical empiricism and teleology. Who knows? Maybe Jap and Bob were Neo-Dada and aren't any more. History books are being rewritten all the time. It doesn't matter what you do. Everybody just goes on thinking the same thing, and every year it gets more and more alike. Those who talk about individuality the most are the ones who most object to deviation, and in a few years it may be the other way around. Some day everybody will think just what they want to think, and then everybody will probably be thinking alike; that seems to be what is happening.

Andy Warhol, interview by Gene Swenson, excerpt from 'What

is Pop Art? Answers from 8 Painters, Part I', *ARTnews*, 62:7 [New York, November 1963].

Raoul HAUSMANN

Dadaism and Today's Avant-Garde [1964]

Dada, more than Futurism, was a movement which incorporated the artist into his period; and it showed both the artist and the public that, under the onslaught of social changes, the eternal values of 'beautiful truth' or 'true beauty' decomposed into poor academical nothings.

But Dada was not only an over-compensation of protest. 'Dada was more than Dada': it was the negation of Cartesian logic, it was sensitive to hazard, it was based on 'creative indifference'.

Dada did not found a school, and Dada refused to continue when it saw its limits.

Therefore someone who has been Dada cannot be opposed to renovation, but he cannot approve of any imitation.

The new unconventional forms which Dada created were: *écriture automatique*, phonetic poetry, articulation, abstract painting and sculpture, photomontage, new typography, readymades (assemblages).

The plastic art of Dadaism had two aspects: one took the direction of non-objectivity and abstraction (corresponding to phonetic poetry), and the other was a return to the concrete object, e.g. in the readymades of Duchamp and Man Ray, in Hausmann's collages and photomontages and Schwitters's material pictures. Yet vulgar materialism was avoided, by irony and absurdity.

Let us look at Neodadaism: first of all it takes sides with the object as a 'thing in itself' – which Dada denied. The Neodadaists believe that they are substituting 'nature' for art. Since the great exhibition of assemblages in the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1961, and the book by Seitz, 'concretism' has been declared the 'new anti-art': with natural objects replacing artistic work.

Restany, spokesman of Neorealism, declares: 'The artistic consecration of the vulgar object forms now the "dadaistic act". After the "Nothing" and the "Zero" comes the third position of the myth: the gesture of anti-art becomes the functional behaviour, a kind of appropriation of the modern world's exterior reality, as a fundamental element of new expression.'

But the collages of the Dadaists, the sculptures of Arp, the waste-paper pictures of Schwitters, always show a constructive idea; in spite of their anti-art tendency, they remain art.

George Maciunas, of the Neodadaistic 'Fluxus' group of American students in Germany, claims to prefer the real rotten tomato to the painted one; or he finds the flight of a bird or of a butterfly 'concrete and beautiful'. He declares that there is no intention, no programme, in the Neo-dadaistic 'happenings'. But all these happenings are calculated very intentionally and are not at all spontaneous, as the literary productions of Higgins and

others prove. The 'happenings' of the Neodadaists are empty repetitions of Dada acts. Walter Serner, in Zurich in 1917, had an empty armchair brought on the stage, he approached it, bowed deeply and put a bunch of flowers on the seat. The title of this 'happening' was POEM. If Nam June Paik lifts a violin slowly as if it was a heavy load, with both hands, and crashes it down on the floor, that is only an act of destruction. It is the same thing with the broken 'cello which Arman calls 'Access of Fury', nailed and 'colled' to a plank, which he intends to be sold as a work of art.

It has become fashionable to say that the Parisian lettrists invented a new art of painting: the letter-picture. But remember the gigantic book called HADO, which the Oberdada Baader fabricated with torn posters, or my poster-poems which I exhibited at the first great Dada Fair in 1920, or some of Schwitters's letter-pictures. If Vostell now shows similar works as something 'new', their kind of newness has been known a long time.

These letter-pictures lead to another question: the poster-poems of Franz Mon and others. The phonetic poem as a new kind of art was invented by Hugo Ball in 1916 (as poetry of unknown words – mine have been *lettriste*); it is not an invention of Isidore Isou, as he still claims, nor of Mon, Claus Bremer and others.

Before they became acquainted with Schwitters's and my records in 1955 in Basel, the younger generation in Germany was ignorant of phonetic poetry. It was only thanks to the creations of Dadaism that it could be taken up again (e.g., in the book *movens* by Mon and Hollerer, 1961).

The great part which Surrealism could play in art was only made possible by its dadaistic predecessors. The literary innovation of 'écriture automatique', even before Breton and Soupault, had been introduced by Arp and Serner, and to some extent Tzara. The magic-irrational tendency was shown by some of Dada's founders, as Ball and Huelsenbeck. Even surrealist painting received its real inspiration from photomontage, especially that of Max Ernst.

Now to photomontage: it was in 1918 that I saw in a fishing-village on the Baltic postcard souvenirs of military service, where the portrait of the recruit was 'colled' into the lithograph of the military establishment. That gave me the idea of making pictures out of nothing but parts of photographs. A year later, George Grosz, John Heartfield and Hannah Höch, and later still Max Ernst, made innumerable montages.

At the first international exhibition of photomontage in Berlin in 1931 there were montages by Dutch and Russian artists, too. The Russians raised photomontage almost to the status of a national art; at least it became an important medium for publicity and propaganda.

One of the first to renew typography was Marinetti, in his 'Words in Liberty'. Under Tzara and Picabia in Zurich and Hausmann in Berlin, the Dadaists independently created another kind of expression through printing, one which aimed to transform the whole printed composition into optophonetic form. The great exhibition at Amsterdam and Baden-Baden last year showed clearly the enormous influence which Dadaistic typography has had throughout the world, to the extent that one may speak now of 'visual

poetry' and consequently of a new art of 'letter pictures'.
Inventions are made when they become necessary. It needs a certain climate. Intellectual climate is to be compared with atmospheric pressure, perhaps it is a simple meteorological affair which suggests through whole countries and continents the same pressure on the brains of artists.
After war and revolution, Dada had to be unheroic, unpathetic and inclined to relativity and phenomenology. It was 'creative indifference' and at the same time it advanced to the absurd-banal. Thus it is not to be compared with any other art-period. The intellectual climate of the world demanded it.
The Dadaists knew this spontaneously. But a general climatic situation cannot be repeated; the exigencies of the world-pressure are certainly different now and earlier ones cannot be restored.
'Renaissances' are, for the most part, sad and without issue.
Raoul Hausmann, 'Dadaism and Today's Avant-Garde', *Times Literary Supplement*, 3262 [3 September 1964, 800-801; reprinted in Jeff Berner, ed., *Astronauts of Inner-Space: An International Collection of Avant-garde Activity*, San Francisco: Stolen Paper Review, 1966] 2-3.

John CAGE

26 Statements Re Duchamp [1964]

History
The danger remains that he'll get out of the valise we put him in. So long as he remains locked up –

The rest of them were artists. Duchamp collects dust.

The check. The string he dropped. The Mona Lisa. The musical notes taken out of a hat. The glass. The toy shotgun painting. The things he found. Therefore, everything seen – every object, that is, plus the process of looking at it – is a Duchamp.

Duchamp Mallarmé
There are two versions of the ox-herding pictures. One concludes with the image of nothingness, the other with the image of a fat man, smiling, returning to the village bearing gifts. Nowadays we have only the second version. They call it neo-Dada. When I talked with M.D. two years ago he said he had been fifty years ahead of his time.

Duchamp showed the usefulness of addition (moustache). Rauschenberg showed the function of subtraction (De Kooning). Well, we look forward to multiplication and division. It is safe to assume that someone will learn trigonometry. Johns

Ichiyonagi Wolff
We have no further use for the functional, the beautiful, or for whether or not something is true. We have only time for

conversation. The Lord help us to say something in reply that doesn't simply echo what our ears took in. Of course we can go off as we do in our corners and talk to ourselves.

There he is rocking away in that chair, smoking his pipe, waiting for me to stop weeping. I still can't hear what he said then. Years later I saw him on MacDougal Street in the Village. He made a gesture I took to mean O.K.

'Tools that are no good require more skill.'

A Duchamp

Seems Pollock tried to do it – paint on glass. It was in a movie. There was an admission of failure. That wasn't the way to proceed. It's not a question of doing again what Duchamp already did. We must nowadays nevertheless be able to look through to what's beyond – as though we were in it looking out. What's more boring than Marcel Duchamp? I ask you. (I've books about his work but never bother to read them.) Busy as bees with nothing to do.

He requires that we know that being an artist isn't child's play: equivalent in difficulty – surely – to playing chess. Furthermore a work of our art is not ours alone but belongs also to the opponent who's there to the end.

Anarchy?

He simply found that object, gave it his name. What then did he do? He found that object, gave it his name. Identification. What then shall we do? Shall we call it by his name or by its name? It's not a question of names.

The Air

We hesitate to ask the question because we do not want to hear the answer. Going about in silence.

One way to write music: study Duchamp.

Say it's not a Duchamp. Turn it over and it is. Now that there's nothing to do, he does whatever anyone requires him to do: a magazine cover, an exhibition, a movie sequence, etc., ad infinitum. What did she tell me about him? That he gave himself except for two days a week (always the same days, Thursdays, Sundays)? That he's emotional? That he formed three important art collections. The phonograph.

Theatre

John Cage, '26 Statements Re Duchamp', *Art and Literature*, 3 [autumn/winter 1964, 9–10; reprinted in Susan Hapgood, *Neo-Dada: Redefining Art, 1958–60*, New York: Universe Publications, 1994] 137.

Jasper JOHNS Marcel Duchamp [1887–1968]. An Appreciation [1968]

The self attempts balance, descends. Perfume – the air was to stink of artists' egos. Himself, quickly torn to pieces. His tongue in his cheek.

Marcel Duchamp, one of this century's pioneer artists, moved his work through the retinal boundaries which had been established with Impressionism into a field where language, thought and vision act upon one another. There it changed form through a complex interplay of new mental and physical materials, heralding many of the technical, mental and visual details to be found in more recent art.

He said that he was ahead of his time. One guesses at a certain loneliness there. Wittgenstein said that "time has only one direction" must be a piece of nonsense.'

In the 1920s Duchamp gave up, quit painting. He allowed, perhaps encouraged, the attendant mythology. One thought of his decision, his willing this stopping. Yet on one occasion, he said it was not like that. He spoke of breaking a leg. 'You don't meant to do it,' he said.

The Large Glass. A greenhouse for his intuition. Erotic machinery, the Bride, held in a see-through cage – 'a Hilarious picture'. Its cross-references of sight and thought, the changing focus of the eyes and mind, give fresh sense to the time and space we occupy, negate any concern with art as transportation. No end is in view in this fragment of a new perspective. 'In the end you lose interest, so I didn't feel the necessity to finish it.'

He declared that he wanted to kill art ('for myself') but his persistent attempts to destroy frames of reference altered our thinking, established new units of thought, 'a new thought for that object'.

The art community feels Duchamp's presence and his absence. He has changed the condition of being here.

Jasper Johns, 'Marcel Duchamp [1887–1968], An Appreciation', *Artforum*, 7 [November 1968; reprinted in Susan Hapgood, *Neo-Dada: Redefining Art, 1958–60*, New York: Universe Publications, 1994] 139.

Dick HIGGINS Dada Almanach [1966]

Dada is like the weather. Everybody talks about it, but nobody does anything about it. Even worse, in fact, because while two people might well agree on what a thunderstorm is, they would probably not agree on what dada is. The main reason for this is obvious. The more that is written about dada, the more far-fetched one must become in order to be original, and the more obfuscated scholarship in the field, in its turn, becomes, until we reach the present situation, where literally nobody knows what

he has been talking about all these years.

The issuing of an authorized facsimile of the *Dada Almanach* is an attempt to remedy this. The *Dada Almanach* is not a collection of reminiscences written long after the fact, but *the* document, par excellence, to which many dadaists contributed at the height of the movement. The original typography and design shriek with the excitement of the times. This is something that cannot be duplicated today, which is why we have issued a facsimile, in spite of the language problems, rather than merely a translation – which will, however, be published at a later date.

The *Dada Almanach* is, then, the statement of the various dada positions on the basis of which our present misconceptions must be re-formed. The dada attitude, it will be seen herein, is profoundly contemporary. Without understanding it, it is simply not possible to evaluate accurately a great deal of the art and philosophy which is most current today.

Dick Higgins 'Dada Almanach' [jacket copy], *Dada Almanach* [New York: Something Else Press, 1966].

Dick HIGGINS from *Intermedia* [1969]

[...] Part of the reason that Duchamp's objects are fascinating while Picasso's voice is fading is that the Duchamp pieces are truly between media, between sculpture and something else, while a Picasso is readily classifiable as a painted ornament. Similarly, by invading the land between collage and photography, the German John Heartfield produced what are probably the greatest graphics of our century, surely the most powerful political art that has been done to date.

The readymade or found object, in a sense an intermedium since it was not intended to conform to the pure medium, usually suggests this, and therefore suggests a location in the field between the general area of art media and those of life media. However, at this time, the locations of this sort are relatively unexplored, as compared with media between the arts. I cannot, for example, name work which has consciously been placed in the intermedium between painting and shoes. The closest thing would seem to be the sculpture of Claes Oldenburg, which falls between sculpture and hamburgers or Eskimo Pies, yet it is not the sources of these images themselves. An Oldenburg Eskimo Pie may look something like an Eskimo Pie, yet it is neither edible nor cold. There is still a great deal to be done in this direction in the way of opening up aesthetically rewarding possibilities.

In the middle 1950s many painters began to realize the fundamental irrelevance of Abstract Expressionism, which was the dominant mode at the time. Such painters as Allan Kaprow and Robert Rauschenberg in the United States and Wolf Vostell in Germany turned to collage or, in the latter's case, dé-collage in the sense of making work by adding or removing, replacing and substituting or altering components of a visual work. They began to include

increasingly incongruous objects in their work. Rauschenberg called his constructions ‘combines’ and went so far as to place a stuffed goat – spattered with paint and with a rubber tyre around its neck – on to one. Kaprow, more philosophical and restless, meditated on the relationship of the spectator and the work. He put mirrors into his things so the spectator could feel included in them. That wasn’t physical enough, so he made enveloping collages which surrounded the spectator. These he called ‘environments’. Finally, in the Spring of 1958, he began to include live people as part of the collage, and this he called a ‘happening’.

Dick Higgins, ‘Intermedia’, *Foew&ombwhnw: a Grammar of the Mind and a Phenomenology of Love and a Science of the Arts as Seen by a Stalker of the Wild Mushroom* [New York: Something Else Press, 1969] 17, 19.

Daniel SPOERRI

Interview with Susan Hapgood [1992]

Spoerri We – the Nouveaux Réalistes – were not terribly pleased to be called Neo-Dada, which is understandable. There was a very deep difference between our work and the Dadaists. For one thing, provocation was very important to Dada. I would see it as a senseless network, working very precisely but with no final goal.

Hapgood Do you think that Dada inspired a lot of artists in the late 1950s?

Spoerri It certainly did in my case, and I can speak also for others like Tinguely, whom I knew very well. It certainly was the only movement that we really liked, that we were very much attracted to. I even translated Tzara’s *Le Coeur à gaz* into German with the help of Claus Bremer. I produced it for the stage. *Le Coeur à gaz* is incredible, fantastic. From this whole period, it’s probably the best piece that exists, the only truly valuable piece of automatic writing. I am very proud to know what it is about, because it is really very difficult.

Dada was the loss of trust in the senses that was also at the beginning of our century, when we lost it, when we knew that what we were seeing was no longer what we were seeing. Before, only sculpture and painting were copying reality, so to speak – false, artificial. That’s why the sculptors and the artists were compared with God, because they could create artificial humans, like him. Even Shakespeare, when Hermione in *The Winter’s Tale* says she was as beautiful as if she were alive, and then she is alive. That was what art should have been. Art, until the twentieth century, had to be as true as possible to reality. It had to create, like God. But in the twentieth century, everything could be something else. [Knocking on a piece of formica] That’s not wood, it’s plastic. You can be sure of nothing. You can no longer trust existence.

I’m sure that Tzara would have loved our performance if he’d seen it. I knew him. I visited him in Paris when I was in my twenties, between 1950 and 1960. He was at rue de Lille. He gave me a little Dada manifesto. He said, ‘Here,

you can have this.’

Hapgood Did you know about Duchamp then?

Spoerri Naturally. When I was twenty-two, in ’52, I learned about Duchamp. My neighbour in the house was a young man named Serge Stauffer, whom I met because we were in the couloir, and he already knew about Duchamp. But I remember that we didn’t know if Duchamp was still alive.

Hapgood Do you remember discussing Duchamp with Tinguely?

Spoerri Tinguely was typing in my room in Zurich. He was typing a piece that was Dada-influenced, ‘Der Brasilianische Brataptelschlauch’. That must have been around 1952. Then, Dada was just a word. I knew that Duchamp was the one who put the moustache on the Mona Lisa, and who put a toilet on a pedestal. Like everybody today. (We didn’t even know that it was a urinal. In my mind, it was a toilet.) And that was Duchamp. These were the things that I knew. But already, that was so fantastic.

Then I saw my first Dada show in Frankfurt, in 1958, I think. [*Dada: Dokumente einer Bewegung* began in September 1958 in Düsseldorf and travelled to Frankfurt and Amsterdam.] It must have been the first one, it was in a museum. By then I already knew much more about it.

When I was a dancer, there was a Schwitters exhibition in Bern, probably the first Schwitters exhibition. By that time, I had already met Schwitters’s son, who came from Norway to Bern, and Hans Bolliger, an archivist who made catalogues and knew everything about Dada Zurich. He had every piece of Dada paper that existed. One day I was going down the street and I ran into Bolliger and he said, ‘I invite you for dinner. Now.’ I asked why, and it was because he had just found the last number of *Cabaret Voltaire*, which was missing in his archives, and he bought it for one franc. That was great for him. He is now eighty, still living in Zurich. I had access to his collection.

Hapgood Do you remember anyone talking about Schwitters and his *Merzbau*?

Spoerri Naturally we knew about Schwitters. I had heard of all these things through Bolliger. He knew everything about Dada, and Surrealism, too. And he lent me whatever I wanted. I had access to his entire library, and it was huge. So I knew a great deal about Schwitters. I knew his *Merz* theatre and his manifestos. I read everything of his. I really knew a lot about the art of the twentieth century. Remember, this was after the war and many things were still hidden, not yet worked on or not accessible. So, for that time, I knew a lot.

Hapgood So you were really an expert on Dada.

Spoerri Yes! I knew quite a lot about it. I even had original books of theirs. I had a little collection of books of Dada and Surrealist theatre pieces. Here in Paris, I met all these people. I met Dr Frankel, for instance. I met Max Ernst and I asked him about Tzara’s *Monsieur Antipyrine*. And Breton, naturally, who didn’t believe any more in Dada theatre. I knew a lot about Dada; it was the thing I loved most, not Surrealism. We – I can say ‘we’ because we agreed on that – we preferred the aggressivity and anarchistic revolutionary spirit of Dada more than the gooley-gooley of the Surrealists, who tried to find

something deep underneath through Freud and Marx. But it is absolutely absurd; Freud and Marx, you can’t marry them.

Duchamp I didn’t meet until 1959, in Paris. I had already made my concrete poetry, and I had my newspaper, but I wanted to make multiples so I came to Paris. The word ‘multiple’ was actually in my *Multiplication d’Art Transformable*, that was the Edition MAT. And I came for that, in the summer, in August ’59. And Tinguely said to me, ‘I saw Duchamp yesterday, he is in town. And he’s at Max Ernst’s apartment, call him there. Rue Mathurin Regnier.’ So I called him there, and he said, ‘Okay, you can come and see me.’ I asked him to participate in my MAT edition and he said, ‘Naturally. You can have my rotoreliefs.’ He was very generous, and he liked me. Even in interviews he said that Tinguely, Arman, and Spoerri were the three young artists he was most interested in. He really liked us. So I met him every year.

Well, I agree that you can call certain things Neo-Dada. But then you also have Zero and Fluxus. Fluxus doesn’t even exist. Maciunas was not an artist; he was an organizer, of something strange that he wanted to call Fluxus. He was a sick and a strange person, eating pills all the time; he wanted to make his own dictatorial division of art. He made all these diagrams of how things went. He included me, by chance – he liked me. He also made the first book about me, *L’Optique moderne*. That was the only real book published by Fluxus. Outside of this, Fluxus didn’t exist. Today, people think it was a movement. New Realism was a movement: people did work together and exhibit together, and have a gallery. But Fluxus was always only Maciunas, who decided who was in and who was not.

Hapgood Do you remember the term ‘Neo-Dada’ being used much?

Spoerri Yes, I remember the term ‘Neo-Dada’ because Restany, when he made his first catalogue about us, the Nouveaux Réalistes, in 1960, he called it *Forty Degrees Above Dada*. That means forty years after Dada, that’s what he wanted to say. But we were very much against this title because we said we had nothing to do with Dada. Well, this wasn’t actually true. We knew about Dada but we didn’t want to be called Neo-Dada.

Hapgood Did European critics pick up on the word ‘Neo-Dada’?

Spoerri Yes, absolutely. Especially in a negative sense. Saying that Dada was originally a strong movement, and we were just a remake, reheated coffee. That’s what they said. Neo-Dada was more or less an insult. I always thought that Dada was one of the best names because it meant nothing.

Susan Hapgood, ‘Daniel Spoerri Interview’, *Neo-Dada: Redefining Art, 1958–62* [New York: American Federation of Arts and Universe Publications, 1994] 131–35

Allan KAPROW

Interview with Susan

Hapgood [1992]

[...] *Hapgood* You said in your essay for the *New Forms – New Media* catalogue that critics made erroneous references to Neo-Dada to describe objects, environments and Happenings. Can you elaborate?

Kaprow Dada was a common reference point. To the extent that people would comment on what we were doing in that particular show or elsewhere, they would speak about Dada. It was mainly in conversation. Frequently, I thought, we were wrongly associated with Dada. Anti-art isn't something the Dadas invented. There's a whole thread of 'life is better than art' dating at least to the time of Wordsworth, right through Emerson and Whitman, to John Dewey and beyond, emphasizing art as experience, trying to blend art back into life – this tradition influenced me very much. But anti-art is an old Western theme.

Hapgood What about the cynical side of Dada?

Kaprow The cynical side was not present. If you talk about freedoms – for example, the freedom to employ open processes or the freedom to use a variety of objects and materials from the everyday world – these were derived from the prototypes of Dada. But to ascribe to me protest and cynicism – not at all.

Hapgood How else was the term 'Neo-Dada' used?

Kaprow Well, it was generally thrown around as a criticism. No one said, 'Oh, isn't it wonderful that you're a Neo-Dadaist.' It was a criticism, not a joyous utterance.

Hapgood Did the active role of the audience as participants in Happenings bear any comparison to Duchamp's insistence that the viewer creates the meaning of a work?

Kaprow Well, Duchamp gave that speech in Texas in 1957, I think. That's where he made the famous statement that the work of art is essentially a composite of meanings added to by posterity, whatever the artist may have put down first. I didn't read it until somewhat later. Then he gave a talk at the Museum of Modern Art where he also spoke more on the same lines, if I remember rightly. I did not attend, but it was recorded and published. But he also said something else about the rash of neo-Duchampian shows. He said, 'When I selected my first objects, I did not have in mind whole shows of shovels and bottle racks, because that would have killed the point.' And he implied that younger artists who were just buying out hardware stores were doing the wrong thing; they would overdo it. I think we all learned from those little hints from Duchamp. A key feature was discreetness, a timing and restraint that many of us didn't learn well enough.

Duchamp was personally very helpful to us, no question. He came to our Happenings, most of them. He certainly came to mine, and he brought his friends, Ernst and Richter and Huelsenbeck. And, in my case, Duchamp later acted as a referee in my getting a number of grants. So he was very helpful, both practically and intellectually.

Hapgood In a 1967 interview, you said that Schwitters

conceived Happenings but never did them. Were you referring to his descriptions of Merz theatre?

Kaprow What I learned about Schwitters was simply what was available to me through books: about his plans for theatre, about his performances, about his wordplay. But I never heard or saw any of them. So, as far as I knew, most of them were cabaret-style performances, not Happenings. As much as they may have been capable of being Happenings, they never evolved to that point. [...]

Hapgood Do you remember when you first read Motherwell's Dada anthology?

Kaprow Yes. I was at Columbia in 1951 and '52, taking classes with Meyer Schapiro. I was most interested in Mondrian at the time; and we were just getting used to Abstract Expressionism, which had peaked by then. Dada wasn't particularly interesting to most artists. Motherwell's anthology, *The Dada Painters and Poets*, came out in 1951, but I didn't read it immediately. It was a little later before I was really very immersed in it. Probably within the year. And once I read it, of course, I found Dada, as presented by Motherwell, to be much more interesting than Surrealism. Then there followed a whole lot of publications and artists' revived interest in Dada.

I didn't meet Rauschenberg until 1952, but he was another important link to Dada. As was George Brecht, who was my neighbour in the early 1950s. I was teaching at Rutgers at that time, and George Brecht was working for the Personal Products Division of Johnson & Johnson, in New Brunswick [New Jersey]. And Bob Watts was part of the Art Department at Douglass College, the Women's College of Rutgers. George Segal was also a neighbour. All of us lived in the New Brunswick area.

Hapgood Did you talk to Brecht about Motherwell's anthology?

Kaprow Well, he had an earlier interest in Dada. He was doing work at that time – which I remember very vividly – that encouraged chance operations. For example, he once brought an eight-by-four-foot masonite panel and several boxes of wooden matches over to the farm where I was living. He laid out this panel on the driveway and casually threw matches over the surface. Then he tossed a lit match among them and they all burst into flame in some kind of random pattern. Then we lifted up the panel and the matchsticks fell off, leaving burn marks. This was his way, one of many, of trying to produce paintings that dealt concretely with what he felt Pollock was all about. He even wrote an essay on chance, which dealt with his interpretation of Pollock, essentially saying that Pollock was interested in giving up organizational techniques. But Brecht was more interested in a kind of randomized dispersion principle. I remember him showing me tables of random numbers. For him, Dada was a celebration of chance, or the appearance of chance.

Hapgood This is before John Cage's class.

Kaprow Right. He joined Cage's class just a bit before I did. In fact, we used to drive into New York City together. But I had known Cage earlier. Not well, but over the years I'd met him here and there and was part of the periphery of his circle, because I was familiar with Jasper [Johns] and Bob [Rauschenberg] and a lot of the musicians that Cage knew, like composer Morton Feldman. It was a very small

group of people in those days. I attended Cage concerts as early as 1948, when he was diddling around with the prepared piano, and all kinds of toys and gadgets to make noise. I made a decision then to concretize my work by having a real action or activity take place. For example, hammering a nail or blowing your nose would be self-evident. It wouldn't just be the isolated feature of one sense being recorded.

Cage's teaching was sophisticated philosophically. From his own sensibility and from Zen Buddhist readings, he learned that the experience of the present is a combination of receptivity and action. For Cage, concreteness wasn't the isolation of one feature of a situation, framed out of context; it was actually an experience, like that [hits table]. That sense of the experiential moment was a clarifier for me. Once I realized how simple the whole thing was, it was only a matter of taking off as fast as I could in the direction of Happenings. (I did my earliest ones in his classes in 1957–58.)

Hapgood Did Cage talk directly about Dada in the class?

Kaprow He mentioned it now and again. I know that he was familiar with all of those people and certainly he knew Duchamp.

Hapgood Is it fair to say that by the latter half of the 1950s there was a major shift of interest among artists from Surrealism to Dada?

Kaprow Surrealism was interesting to the previous generation of New York School painters, and we sort of 'got it' through over-saturation. But it was their thing, and very European. When Dada came along, there were few objects to see, it all seemed really very far-out, although we didn't necessarily understand its sociopolitical programmes. We did not think, as the Dadaists did in 1916, that the world had gone crazy and there was no redemption in sight – its current of cynicism. Rather, we felt that here was freedom to put the real world together in weird ways. It was a discovery, a heady kind of appetite for debris, for cheap throwaways, for a new kind of involvement in everyday life without the judgements about it, either social or personal. [...]

Hapgood Your own article, 'The Legacy of Jackson Pollock' [Art News, October 1958], was published the following year and also created something of a stir, didn't it?

Kaprow Well, I got some feedback from people in my circle, like my editor, Tom Hess, who took a rather dim view of my very eccentric interpretation of Jackson Pollock as someone whose work led to conventional repetition or to what many felt was a kind of Dada junk. [...]

Hapgood I think the part about art employing any materials necessary is very impressive considering that it was written in 1956. Were you familiar with Schwitters's work by this point?

Kaprow Yes. What was unusual was the jump that I made from quasi-painting work, like Schwitters's, in which the common metaphor of art and the world was closure, to a kind of environmental phenomenon, open to everything because it was so big. That was a really extreme leap. Painting seemed unnecessary to anyone who wanted to experiment. I didn't, of course, say that it was over; it certainly wasn't. So in the Pollock article, I proposed that artists could go in one of two directions: to further develop

action painting, or to work environmentally in lifelike situations.

Hapgood Oldenburg was supposedly especially struck by that article.

Kaprow Yes, he told me that later, but I didn't know him then.

Susan Hapgood, 'Allan Kaprow Interview', *Neo-Dada: Redefining Art, 1958-62* [New York: American Federation of Arts and Universe Publications, 1994] 115-17, 119-21.

ARMAN

Interview with Susan Hapgood [1992]

[...] *Hapgood* Did you know about Rauschenberg and his Combines at that time?

Arman Well, maybe as early as 1959 we had seen some of them. I met Rauschenberg in Paris in 1960.

Hapgood Do you remember seeing Rauschenberg's *Bed* in the 'Exposition internationale du Surréalisme'?

Arman Yes. I remember seeing it very well. We were walking on the sand, it was very special. I was very impressed by that work. But you know something about the Combine paintings? You remember I was influenced in 1953 or '54 by Schwitters. Someone else was, too. Rauschenberg had his white painting show at Betty Parsons on the same day of the opening at Sidney Janis of the first big Kurt Schwitters show. He told me that; he had that. It changed his life, too. The change is very clear. You see the dates of his work, the first Combine paintings are all '55. I really think it changed his life.

Hapgood In your accumulations, were you intentionally commenting on waste in our consumer society?

Arman Well, it was just a sign of the times. I started that in Europe before coming to America. It was both pleasurable – as I've always been an accumulator myself – and a criticism. The first pieces I made with household garbage were in 1959. And I did some in 1960 and '61. Then I made some special ones in '62, like the garbage of the Gallery Dwan. But I didn't make many pieces. Only thirteen still exist. At the time I was making them in small glass containers, and I would say the quantity of garbage of a French household for two days was enough to make a piece that was two feet by one-and-a-half feet by four inches, with dust, little pieces of glass, little bits of thread, a box from Camembert cheese, things like that. The quantity of garbage was very small. It took two days to fill up a case like that, from a normal three-person household. Ten years later, in 1969, when I was living in California, somebody showed me some mass-cast plastic. You could make a solid piece, that is, curing in mass. So I didn't have to do it in layers like before. In 1959, '60 and '61 when I was doing garbage, I had to remove the organic material because it would begin to rot and smell. By 1969, the garbage was totally different. It was about three or four times larger, and the colours, the contents, the containers, the plastic, and the packaging, and everything was so drastically different. What is more amazing, when I made similar pieces in Italy and France,

they began to look exactly the same as the American garbage. Same colour, same quantity, same material. Even the same products. That means that in those ten years the Americanization of consumption by supermarkets took place. It was quite incredible.

You know, a lot of people came to the opening of my first show in New York [at the Cordier and Warren Gallery, 1961]. I didn't even know Warhol, but he came to the opening. I saw him there, though I didn't meet him until a few months later. Everybody was there. Rauschenberg attacked me verbally, very violently stating – and I didn't understand, I had to have it translated – that random accumulation is not art. It's too random and too automatic to be art. He was really offended by my show.

Susan Hapgood, 'Arman Interview', *Neo-Dada: Redefining Art, 1958-62* [New York: American Federation of Arts and Universe Publications, 1994] 107-10, 112-13.

YAMASAKI Tsuruko

Gutai Artists in Tokyo [1956]

[...] During the exhibition [in Tokyo], critics frequently remarked that Gutai's works had 'no content'. 'There is nothing' and 'It is empty' – how delightful these words sounded to my ear! Art critics seem to have the habit of discussing the content of art works, and thus declare that content is lacking when they cannot find anything to say. In other words, they do not concern themselves with the *content of emptiness*. It is in 'emptiness', however, that we find new possibilities and new issues which entirely disregard the status quo. Can't they see the myriad suggestions and revelations arising from 'emptiness'? ...

Yamasaki Tsuruko, 'Tokyo no Gutai-jin', *Gutai*, 4 [11 July 1956, 32; trans. Reiko Tomii in Alexandra Munroe, ed., *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, New York: Abrams, 1994] 373.

YOSHIHARA Jirō

Gutai Art Manifesto [1956]

To today's consciousness, the art of the past, which on the whole displays an alluring appearance, seems fraudulent. Let's bid farewell to the hoaxes piled up on the altars and in the palaces, the drawing rooms and the antique shops.

They are made of the matter called paint, of cloth, metals, earth, and marble, which through the casting of the magic spell of 'raw material', through a meaningless act of signification by a human, were made to assume a deceptive appearance. The materials, all slaughtered under the pretence of production of the mind, can now say nothing. Lock up these corpses in the graveyard.

Gutai Art does not alter the material. Gutai Art imparts life to the material. Gutai Art does not distort the material.

In Gutai Art, the human spirit and the material shake hands with each other, but keep their distance. The material never compromises itself with the spirit; the spirit

never dominates the material. When the material remains intact and exposes its characteristics, it starts telling a story, and even cries out. To make the fullest use of the material is to make use of the spirit. By enhancing the spirit, the material is brought to the height of the spirit.

Art is a place in which creation occurs; however, the spirit has never created the material before. The spirit has only created the spirit. Throughout history, the spirit has given birth to life in art. However the life thus born always changes and perishes. To us today, the great figures of the Renaissance are nothing more than archaeological relics. [...]

When the individual's quality and the selected material melt together in the furnace of automatism, we are surprised to see an emergence of a space unknown, unseen and unexperienced. Automatism inevitably transcends the artist's own image. We endeavour to achieve our own method of creating space rather than relying on our own image.

Yoshihara Jirō, 'Gutai bijutsu sengen', *Geijutsu Shinchō*, 7, 12 [December 1956, 202-204; trans. Reiko Tomii in Alexandra Munroe, ed., *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, New York: Abrams, 1994] 370.

NAKAHARA Yūsuke

Room as Alibi: Gentle Criminals [1963]

Walking around the exhibition site of this year's Yomiuri Indépendant, the disquieting word 'criminals' popped into my mind at the sight of certain works. Of course, there were no weapons in sight. The artists of these works are all so sincere and gentle that they must have been playing tricks on us.

Some took ready-made objects and tried, it seems to me, to conceal them. In the course of real life, we imprint traces of ourselves onto the everyday objects we use. Yet, these 'gentle criminals' had given the name of 'art' to such objects as a bed, a desk, and a chair by concealing these traces as much as possible. In other words, the ready-made objects became their alibi.

I proposed to show the alibi of the gentle criminals at the inaugural exhibition of the newly founded Naiqua Gallery. But the gentle criminals, simulating the confined quarter of the crime scene à la Poe, took the familiar contents of a room and used them to construct the scene of an imaginary crime. As a result, the viewer was cast into the role of the forensic inspector.

In the room, the viewer would find: Shimizu Akira's bed with a stuffed hawk; Akasegawa Genpei's wrapped chair, electric fan, radio, and carpet; Takamatsu Jirō's desk, chair, trash can, notebook, book, and ashtray, bound with black vinyl string; Suga Keisuke's urinal and bathtub 'dressed up' with multi-coloured bottles, hair pins, lipstick tubes, mirrors, pencil covers, hair ornaments [*kanzashi*], electric bulbs, and other things; Ochi Osamu's lantern covered with tar; Tanaka Shintarō's record-player – an antique phonograph, not a modern kind – which played non-

records of glass and tin; Yoshinaka Taizō's collage of newspaper clippings of stock listings; Nakanishi Natsuyuki's clock, mirror and fake teeth, encased in plastic eggs; and Fukuoka Michio's single point drawn on white paper.

The room was as bizarre as the Mad Hatter's tea party: the viewer, unable to sit on the chair, had to stand in front of a windless fan and listen to odd noise coming out of the phonograph.

Nakahara Yūsuke, 'Fuzai no heya: Onkō na hanzaisha-tachi', *Nihon dokusho shimbun* [Japan Readers Newspaper, 5 August 1963; trans. Reiko Tomii in Alexandra Munroe, ed., *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, New York: Abrams, 1994] 384.

Ushio SHINOHARA

The Avant-Garde Road [1968]

Looking back in anger: Tonō Yoshiaki, an art critic who returned to our country with the term 'Anti-Art', slapped the 'anti-painting/anti-sculpture' label on the 'beat' works raging at the '12th Yomiuri Indépendant Exhibition'. We were not pleased. How dare Tonō limit himself to the idea that avant-garde art only serves as an antithesis to established art? We are not rebelling against authority or old ways of thinking. If we want to direct our anger at somebody, it will be towards our contemporaries, our competitors, and our lovers. What we want is a name – a name that expresses our dissatisfaction with the way art operates, frees us from the deadlock we cannot break, and embodies art that cannot be contained by the walls of the exhibition hall.

What about the word 'action', for example? Three years ago, in 1957, Georges Mathieu executed a magnificent 'action', painting in the window of the Shirakiya Department Store [in Tokyo], which stuck in our minds as if a wild beast bit our throat. I didn't care for his too-delicate *tableau* paintings but rather for his painting method which, by means of action, unequivocally and instantaneously demolished accepted painting methods. It was like a blessed rain after a dry spell. Few artists who are active at the forefront of the art world today have escaped the baptism of action. To Kudō Tetsumi, for example, whose credo is 'a brush is like a sword', each brushstroke is a matter of life and death ... [At a group action exhibition at the Mimatsu Gallery in Tokyo in 1958], while I was pouring ink à la Mathieu, Kudō started throwing raw eggs and tomatoes against a cloth spread on the gallery floor. He slipped on the egg white, but kept on throwing as he repeatedly fell down. When he ran out of eggs and tomatoes, he took down his own work from the wall, karate-chopped it full of holes, and eventually destroyed it. Later, after moving to Paris, Kudō became famous for his *harakiri* Happenings. But he failed to surprise me, because I had known him and his credo – 'a brush is like a sword' – for ten years.

Going beyond 'frying-pan painting' [second-rate Abstract Expressionism]: ... The only art that cannot be found elsewhere in the world, that is truly unique to Japan,

and that we can export with pride is, in my opinion, the Katsura Detached Palace, *Kabuki* and *Bunraku* [traditional puppet theatre]. However, a culture with just a millennium-old history can be found in Mexico, too. I prefer bronze ware from the ancient Yin dynasty [c.1500–1050 BC] when King Zhou drank as he watched human sacrifices roast and jump in the heat. Yet I also dislike those cultural elitists who shun Neo-Dada art born out of the *pachinko* parlour (a useful product of civilization) and the neon lights of Ginza, in favour of what they call respectable cultural heritage.

Powerful rock 'n' roll music in place of art talk: A foreigner once said that the Japanese stomach is bottomless. The Japanese devour anything, swallow it, digest it, and immediately void it. That's true. A crowd formed a long line to see *La Vénus de Milo* [at The National Museum of Western Art] in the Ueno Park, while the Neo-Dadaists plotted a destruction of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum there. The latter event, I don't deny, was modelled on the Dadaist scheme to demolish the Eiffel Tower in the 1920s.

When we Neo-Dadaists first gathered at Yoshimura Masunobu's house, a.k.a. the 'White House of Art', we undeniably had a few literary-minded aspirations similar to the [Dadaist artists] of the twenties. But the spiritual freedom that arises from the thankless task of making art was a thing of the past. So I have always tried to push the group forcefully into the spotlight of twentieth-century mass media. No point in having a serious talk about art in front of a microphone. Better to attract attention with loud, shocking words. Or maybe even start dancing naked in front of a camera ...

Jshio Shinohara, *Zen 'ei no michi* [Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppan-sha, 1968, 61–62, 78–79; trans. Reiko Tomii in Alexandra Munroe, ed., *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, New York: Abrams, 1994] 373.

Nam June PAIK

To Catch Up or Not to Catch Up with the West: Hijikata and Hi Red Center [1994]

[...] At that time (1964), the Japanese police had been trying for many months to catch a counterfeiter of a 1,000-yen-note, in vain. The serial number became famous and the police had become the laughingstock of the press. Akasegawa decided to make a forgery of the forgery, and took the same serial number and printed the money in the same size in full colour – but printed only on one side. The backside was white. He sent these bills as invitations to his gallery show and pasted them in the gallery and on the walls of his one room in a boarding house – all with the same one-sided money. But to his chagrin, one night a stranger used this one-side only money, and it came to the attention of the police. The excited Japanese police traced its origin to Akasegawa and raided the boarding house, only to find that this crazy man had pasted his forged

money all over his walls ... What kind of counterfeiter would decorate his living room with forged money?

But, desperate for results, the police decided to trumpet this case and went into a highly publicized trial, in which the artist was defended by respected art critics and art historians. It came to the stage of high drama. It was maybe the third day of the trial:

Judge: 'What is your profession?'
Akasegawa: 'I am an artist.'
'What kind of art do you do?'
'I am a Happening artist.'
'What is a Happening?'
'I will show you, Your Honour.'

Three guys calmly stood up and staged four hours of a Happening with their own *unheimlich* quietness, painted seriousness, and intellectual mockery.

It was duly recorded by the newspapermen and publicized in the next morning's paper. It became a *cause célèbre*. People had used Grand Central Station, the armory, and airports for their Happening scenes and backdrops. But in the entire history of Happenings, I have never heard of any better scenery than this one – a real courtroom. I bet Ionesco would have been jealous of them.

Nam June Paik, 'To Catch up or Not to Catch up with the West: Hijikata and Hi Red Center', *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, ed. Alexandra Munroe, New York: Abrams, 1994] 80–81.

ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES

The following dada group exhibitions are indicated by their place and date only: 'The First International Dada Fair', Kunsthandlung Dr Otto Burchard, Berlin [1920]; 'Dada Global', Kunsthaus, Zurich [1994]; 'Making Mischief: Dada invades New York', Whitney Museum of American Art, New York [1996]; 'Dada', Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris [2005] touring to the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, [2006].

ARMAN [Armand Fernandez, b. 1928, Nice, d.2005, New York] with Yves Klein, Daniel Spoerri and others, signed Pierre Restany's 1960 manifesto *Les Nouveaux Réalistes*, and sought to incorporate the 'real' into his works. Arman was influenced by Dadas Kurt Schwitters, who incorporated detritus and found objects into his assemblages, and Marcel Duchamp, who formulated the notion of the readymade. Arman's objects include vitrines filled with rubbish (*Poubelles*) and multiple everyday items (*Accumulations*). Hewas included in 'The Art of Assemblage', The Museum of Modern Art, New York [1961] and 'The New Realists', Sidney Janis Gallery, New York [1962]. Solo exhibitions include theGalerie Iris Clert, Paris [1958 and 1960] and the Sidney Janis Gallery, New York [1962, 1963 and 1964]. Retrospectives include Kunstmuseum, Hanover [1982] and Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris [1998].

Hans (Jean) **ARP** [b. 1887, Strasbourg, d. 1966, Solduno] was an Alsatian painter, sculptor and poet who co-founded the Dada movement. His works, organic or geometric, grew out of his interest in the utopian possibilities of a simple visual language. He studied art in Strasburg, Weimar, Paris and Berlin. He was first drawn to Expressionism, especially Wassily Kandinsky's Blue Rider group. In 1915 he went to Zurich, where he met Sophie Taeuber, whom he married in 1922. They collaborated on abstract images and in 1916 established the Cabaret Voltaire. Arp also worked with Dadas in Cologne, especially Max Ernst, with whom he and Tristan Tzara produced *Dada Au Grand Air* [1921] while in Tyrol. Rejected for Swiss citizenship, Arp moved to Paris in 1925 and exhibited with the Surrealists. Both he and Taeuber-Arp also collaborated with Theo van Doesburg, El Lissitzky and other Constructivists during the 1920s and 1930s. He was included in Berlin

[1920]; 'Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism', The Museum of Modern Art, New York [1937]; Zurich [1994]; Paris [2005]; Washington/New York [2006]. Retrospectives include Kunsthaus Zurich [1986].

Johannes **BAADER** [b. 1875, Stuttgart, d. 1956, Adelsdorf, Bavaria] engaged in projects that reflected a Dada spirit even before 1916. During an early career as an architect he met Raoul Hausmann, in 1905. In 1906 he designed a World Temple that would unite all people in an ecumenical, international monument. In 1914 he published *The Fourteen Letters of Christ*. Between 1917 and 1919 Baader made a number of legendary interventions. He ran for a seat in the Reichstag; nominated himself for a Nobel Prize; interrupted the Weimar National Assembly and services at Berlin Cathedral; and announced his own death and resurrection. Baader escaped prosecution, having been declared legally insane in 1917. After participating in dada tours with Hausmann and Richard Huelsenbeck in 1920, Baader ceased public performances. He worked in Hamburg as a journalist before returning to architecture. Group shows include Berlin [1920]; 'The Twenties in Berlin', Annely Juda Fine Art, London [1978]; Zurich [1994]; Paris [2005]; Washington/New York [2006].

Johannes **BAARGELD** [Alfred Gruenwald, b. 1892, Szczecin, Poland, d. 1927, Chamonix, France] studied law and political science at Oxford University and the University of Bonn. During the war he served as an officer, although he later became a pacifist. Around 1919 Baargeld met Max Ernst and, together with Willy Fick, the Hoerles and others, they established Dada in Cologne. Baargeld financed the publication of *Der Ventilator* [1919] and *Die Schammade* [1920]. Most of his works-collages, assemblages, poetry and drawings-are known from reproductions. He remained politically active but stopped his dada activities after 1920, and gained a doctorate from Cologne University. He took the name 'Jesajas' and became a mountain-climber and photographer, dying in a snowstorm in the Alps. He was included in 'Dada Early Spring Exhibition', Brauhaus Winter, Cologne [1920]; Berlin [1920]; Zurich [1994]; Paris [2005]; Washington/New York [2006].

BEN [Ben Vautier, b. 1935, Naples] is an artist whose varied activities fall within his concept of 'Total Art' (all actions and

objects are works of art). He moved to Nice in 1949, after growing up in Turkey, Egypt and Greece. In 1958 he established a gallery space called Laboratoire 32 (and later Galerie Ben Doute de Tout) where he staged performances and exhibitions. That same year he began making paintings in his signature style: black canvases with text painted in white. During the 1960s and 1970s he was a leading member of the Fluxus group. His actions included street sweeping or hitting his head against a wall. His gallery closed in 1973 but was reconstructed at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris. He was included in 'Documenta 5', Kassel, Germany [1972] and 'What's Fluxus? What's not! Why.', Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, Brasília [2002]. Solo exhibitions include Galerie René Block, Berlin [1971] and Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris [1991]. Retrospectives include MAC, Musée de Marseille, Marseille [1995] and Ludwig Museum, Koblenz [2002].

Joseph **BEUYS** [b. 1921, Krefeld, d. 1986, Düsseldorf] maintained that life is itself a creative process, an idea that informed his artworks, performances and political and pedagogical activities. Beuys was a pilot during the Second World War; felt and fat nomadic Tartars used to keep him warm when he crashed in the Crimea became symbols of energy and transformation in his artistic work. In the early 1960s he began composing performances and took part in the *Festum Fluxorum Fluxus* in Düsseldorf in 1963. Beuys's sculptures were often the props or by-products of his actions. From 1961 to 1972 Beuys taught art in Düsseldorf, but he was eventually fired for his unorthodox teaching methods. He founded various political parties, including the Organization for Direct Democracy (founded 1970). He was included in 'Documenta 5', Kassel, Germany [1972]. Solo exhibitions include Museum of Modern Art, Oxford [1974] and The Museum of Modern Art, New York [1993]. Retrospectives include Kunstverein, Düsseldorf [1986] and Tate Modern, London [2005].

Erwin **BLUMENFELD** [b. 1897, Berlin, d. 1969, Rome], with artist Paul Citroën, became an auxiliary wing of Berlin Dada in 1918. They called themselves the Dada Head Office in Holland, despite their dada works appearing only outside the Netherlands. Blumenfeld had fled to Holland as a deserter during the First World War. As Jan Blomfield (or Bloomfield),

Erwin Bloomfield (or Bloomfeld) and 'President-Dada-Chaplinist' Blumenfeld produced collages and photomontages embellished with pen and ink. In 1921 he severed his ties with the Berlin Dadas; during the 1930s he was a photographer in Paris, in contact with Man Ray and the Surrealists; later he moved to America and worked for *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*. He was included in 'Paul Citroën and Erwin Blumenfeld, 1919-1939', The Photographers' Gallery, London [1993] and 'Fotograffia pública: Photography in Print, 1919-1939', Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid [1999]. Retrospectives include Museum Folkwang, Essen [1988].

Richard **BOIX** [Ricardo] Boix was a Spanish graphic artist and caricaturist associated with *The Dial* magazine (1880-1929). He produced seven works in a highly stylized black and white manner for this journal, in September 1920 and July 1921. His published images include ironic depictions of society life and works influenced by Cubism and Futurism. Boix was in contact with members of the *Société Anonyme* and the Arensberg circle in New York (Katherine Dreier bought his depiction of them for \$10). He was included in 'Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings Showing the Later Tendencies in Art', Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts [1921]; New York [1996]; Washington/New York [2006].

Sándor **BORTNYIK** [b. 1893, Tingu Mures, Romania (formerly Marosvasarhely, Hungary), d. 1976, Budapest] was a member of the Activists, a progressive Hungarian group. Trained at the Budapest Academy of Fine Arts, he worked as a graphic artist. He met Lajos Kassák in 1915 and emigrated with him, Sándor Barta, László Moholy-Nagy and others to Vienna in 1919. There, he designed covers for Kassák's journal *Ma*, painted, and helped to develop *Bildarchitektur* (Picture Architecture). Bortnyik knew many of the artists at the Bauhaus from visits to Weimar between 1922 and 1925. Returning to Hungary in 1924 he established the Green Donkey Theatre, taught at the School of Applied Arts (1949-56) and was Dean of the Budapest Academy of Fine Arts. He was included in 'Lajos Kassák y la vanguardia húngara', IVAM Centre Julio González, Valencia, Spain [1999] and 'Central European Avant-gardes: Exchange and Transformation, 1910-1930', Los Angeles County Museum of Art [2002]. Solo exhibitions

include Sturm-Galerie, Berlin [1922].

Retrospectives include Magyar Nemzeti Galéria, Budapest [1977].

Victor **BRAUNER** [b. 1903, Piatra Neamt, Romania, d. 1966, Paris] briefly attended the School of Fine Arts in Bucharest during the early 1920s. Soon after, he co-founded the avant-garde journal *75HP* with poet Ilarie Voronca and formulated 'picto-poetry', a combination of graphic forms and text. In 1930 he moved to Paris, where he fell in with the Surrealists. In 1935 briefly he went to Romania and joined the Communist Party; he spent the Second World War in the Alps, making collages and developing techniques for painting with wax. After the war, he returned to Paris and in 1966 he represented France at the Venice Biennale. He was included in 'Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme', Galerie Maeght, Paris [1947] and 'Central European Avant-gardes: Exchange and Transformation, 1910-1930', Los Angeles County Museum of Art [2002]. Solo exhibitions include Galerie Pierre, Paris [1934]. Retrospectives include Galleria Credito Valtellinese, Milan [1995] and Menil Collection, Houston [2001].

John **COVERT** [b. 1882, Pittsburgh, d. 1960, Pittsburgh] was a painter. Trained at the Pittsburgh School of Design in a realistic style, and after study in 1909 at the Munich Art Academy, Covert went to Paris from 1912 until the outbreak of the war. However, it was not until his cousin Walter Arensberg introduced him to his friends upon Covert's move to New York City in 1915 that Covert turned to modernist concerns. His paintings and assemblages from that time often contain verbal and visual puns of the kind employed by Duchamp and other Dadas. When the group disbanded, Covert moved back to Pittsburgh, in 1923, and joined the family business, never returning to painting. He was included in 'American Genius in Review', Dallas Museum for Contemporary Art [1960]; New York [1996]; Paris [2005]; Washington/New York [2006]. Retrospectives include Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C. [1976].

Jean **CROTTI** [b. 1878, Bulle, Switzerland, [d. 1958, Paris] studied in Munich at the School for Decorative Art and later at the Académie Julian in Paris, where he settled. His early style was influenced by Impressionism, Fauvism and Cubism, but his work changed radically when he moved to New York in 1915. As part of the Arensberg circle, and Marcel Duchamp's studio-mate, he made abstract paintings and drawings and constructed assemblages of found

objects, glass and wire. In 1916 he returned to Paris and married Duchamp's sister Suzanne. His later paintings are expressionistic and informed by his interest in the spiritual mysteries of the cosmos, a concept he called 'Tabu'. He was included in 'Exposition Suzanne Duchamp, Jean Crotti', Galerie Paul Guillaume, Paris [1923] and 'Tabu Dada: Jean Crotti & Suzanne Duchamp, 1915-1922', Kunsthalle Bern [1983]; Paris [2005]; Washington/New York [2006]. Retrospectives include Palais Galliera, Paris [1959-60] and Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts [1965].

Theo **VAN DOESBURG** [Christian E.M. Küpper, b. 1883, Utrecht, d. 1931, Davos] took the name of his stepfather, Theodorus Doesburg, who he believed was his natural father. Doesburg also signed his work 'I.K. Bonset' (his dada pseudonym) or 'Aldo Comini' (his futurist persona). Around 1914 he started to make abstract paintings and during the war he began to collaborate with architects. In 1917, Van Doesburg, artist Piet Mondrian and architect J.J.P. Oud established the Constructivist movement De Stijl. Van Doesburg edited the group's journal of the same name from 1917 until 1928. In 1920 he met Hans Richter and Viking Eggeling in Berlin and thereafter collaborated with various Dadas. He and wife Nelly participated in the dada tour of the Netherlands with Kurt Schwitters in 1923 and he published the dada journal *Mecano* from 1922 to 1923. Until his sudden death in 1931, he continued to work as an architect and is well known for his collaboration with Sophie Taeuber and Hans Arp on the Café de l'Aubette in Strasbourg (1927-28) and his lectures at the Bauhaus. He was included in 'De Stijl, 1917-1931: Visions of Utopia', Walker Art Center, Minneapolis [1982] and 'Affinités & particularités: l'art en Belgique et aux Pays-Bas, 1890-1945', Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Ghent [2002]; Paris [2005]; Washington/New York [2006]. Retrospectives include Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven [1968] and Museum Villa Stuck, Munich [2000].

Marcel **DUCHAMP** [b. 1887, Blainville, France, d. 1968, Neuilly-sur-Seine] was an artist and chess-player. He moved to Paris with his brothers Jacques Villon and Raymond Duchamp-Villon, both Cubists, attended the Académie Julian and drew cartoons for various journals. By 1909 he was exhibiting with the Salon des Indépendants and the Salon d'Automne. His painting *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2*, became infamous at the New York Armory Show in 1913, the same year he

conceived his first readymade. When the war began, Duchamp, excused from service for medical reasons, sailed to America, where he fell in with the Arensbergs. He helped establish the *Société Anonyme* and caused a scandal by submitting a urinal to the Exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists. In 1919 Duchamp returned to France and worked with the Paris Dadas. In the early 1920s he again visited New York and he retreated to America during the Second World War. His post-war work culminated in his installation *Etant Donnée* (1946-66), created for the Philadelphia Museum of Art. He was included in New York [1996]; 'Debating American Modernism: Stieglitz, Duchamp, and the New York Avant-garde', Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Santa Fe, New Mexico [2003]; Paris [2005]; Washington/New York [2006]. Retrospectives include Philadelphia Museum of Art [1973].

Viking **EGGELING** [b. 1880, Lund, Sweden, d. 1925, Berlin] was an artist and film maker. He travelled throughout Europe, and made a living as an accountant, but in 1907 he began studying at the Art Academy in Milan. In 1911 he moved to Paris where he met avant-gardists including Hans Arp. He became intrigued by Kandinsky's theory of spirituality and art. Eggeling, who moved to an artists' colony in Ascona, Switzerland, was a founder of Dada in nearby Zurich in 1916. In 1919, he and Richter went to Berlin where they worked on scroll paintings and experimental films that explored abstract and organic forms changing in time. In 1921 they ended their collaboration, but Eggeling continued to produce avant-garde films. He was included in 'Dada Constructivism: The Janus Face of the Twenties', Annely Juda Fine Art, London [1984] and 'Expressionist Utopias: Paradise, Metropolis, Architectural Fantasy', Los Angeles County Museum of Art [2001]; Paris [2005]; Washington/New York [2006]. Retrospectives include National Museum, Stockholm [1950].

Max **ERNST** [b. 1891, Brühl, Germany, d. 1976, Paris] was associated with the Rhineland Expressionist artists in Cologne, led by August Macke, before 1914. After active service during the war, he married Luise Strauss, a student of art history from the University of Bonn. He collaborated with Johannes Baargeld in Cologne, but was also in contact with Hans Arp, whom he had met in 1914, and the Paris Dadas, who organized an exhibition of his collage work in 1921. In 1922 he left his wife and son and moved to Paris, where he lived with Paul Éluard and his

wife Gala (later the wife of Salvador Dalí). Ernst's paintings reflect the Freudian themes of later Surrealism. In 1929 and 1930 Ernst produced three collage novels, illustrated surrealist books. His work was denounced by the Nazis and in 1941 he escaped to New York, where he married art collector Peggy Guggenheim. Later, Ernst moved to Sedona, Arizona; with the painter Dorothea Tanning. The pair returned to France in 1953. He was included in 'Max Ernst in Köln: die rheinische Kunstszene bis 1922', Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne [1980]; Zurich [1994]; Paris [2005]; Washington/New York [2006]. Retrospectives include Tate Gallery, London [1991] and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York [2005].

Julius **EVOLA** [b. 1898, Rome, d. 1974, Rome] was a poet and painter. Enrico Prampolini introduced him in 1918 to the third issue of the Zurich periodical *Dada* which included Tzara's 'Dada Manifesto 1918'. Evola sent poems to Tzara, one of which was published in *Dada* in March 1920. The two corresponded until 1921 and Evola's paintings were included in the Dada Salon in Paris that same year. After 1921 Evola rejected Futurism and Dada in favour of a philosophy embracing order, stability, reason and a belief in the primacy of the individual ego. In later years, Evola moved to Fascism. Some of his books influenced various neo-fascist youth groups of the 1970s and 1980s. His best-known is *Revolt Against the Modern World* [1934]. He was included in 'Una storia dell'arte in Italia nel XX secolo', Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo [2002] and '... auch wir Maschinen, auch wir mechanisiert!: die zweite Phase des italienischen Futurismus 1915-1945', Museum am Ostwall, Dortmund, Germany [2002]. Retrospectives include Palazzo Bagatti-Valsecchi, Milan [1998].

Elsa **VON FREYTAG-LORINGHOVEN** [Else Ploetz, b. 1874, Swinemünde, Germany, d. 1927, Paris], the eccentric writer and artist known as 'the Baroness', was born to a middle-class family. As a teenager she ran away to live with an aunt in Berlin, where she met the artist Melchior Lechter who introduced her to the visual arts. After an apprenticeship in applied art and an unsatisfying marriage, in 1910 she moved to Kentucky to join Felix Paul Greve (Canadian writer Frederick Philip Grove), who left her a year later. In 1913 she went to New York and married Baron Leopold von Freytag-Loringhoven; in 1914, the Baron enlisted, leaving the Baroness unsupported. To survive, she shoplifted and worked as a nude artists' model for painters including

Robert Henri and George Bellows. She joined the New York Dada group and published poems in *The Little Review* alongside William Carlos Williams's poems and James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Her assemblages of found objects echo the readymades of Marcel Duchamp, of whom she was a devoted fan. In 1923 she returned to Europe. She was included in 'L'altra metà dell'avanguardia, 1910-1940: pittrici e scultrici nei movimenti delle avanguardie storiche'; Ripartizione cultura e spettacolo, Milan [1980]; New York [1996]; Paris [2005]; Washington/New York [2006].

George **GROSZ** [b. 1893, Berlin, d. 1959, Berlin] depicted the ugly side of politics, the ruling class and the military in his drawings, paintings and collages. He studied art in Dresden, Berlin and Paris. At the outbreak of the war, he served only briefly and was released after a psychological breakdown in 1917, deeply disillusioned with German society. Many of his works were published in portfolios or journals by Malik Verlag (John Heartfield and Wieland Herzfelde's publishing house). Grosz joined the Communist Party and was an important member of the Berlin Dada group, exhibiting at the First International Dada Fair in 1920. His images from the 1920s continue to critique Weimar-era culture, but also reflect the realistic style of Neue Sachlichkeit [New Objectivity]. In 1932 Grosz accepted a visiting professorship at the Art Students League in New York, where he taught until 1955, publishing *A Little Yes and a Big No* that same year. Four years later he moved back to Berlin. He was included in Berlin [1920]; 'The Malik-Verlag, 1916-1947: Berlin, Prague, New York', Goethe House, New York [1984]; Paris [2005]; Washington/New York [2006]. Solo exhibitions include Galerie Flechtheim, Berlin [1923 and 1926] and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York [1954]. Retrospectives include Akademie der Kunstverein Hamburg [1975].

Raoul **HAUSMANN** [b. 1886, Vienna, d. 1971, Limoges] was an artist trained in a traditional style by his father. But after moving to Berlin in 1900 he worked as an Expressionist. Five years later Hausmann met Johannes Baader with whom he would later collaborate on various Dada interventions. In 1915 he met Franz Jung and Hans Richter, as well as Hannah Höch with whom he had a relationship until 1922. His aesthetic expanded to include photomontage, assemblage and text imagery. He later worked with various Constructivists including Kurt Schwitters, László Moholy-Nagy, Viking Eggeling, Theo van Doesburg and Lajos Kassák.

Hausmann communicated radical ideas through manifestos, articles and books. He later developed a sound machine called an optophone, patented in 1935. At the beginning of the Second World War Hausmann moved to Spain, Zurich and Prague before settling in Limoges in 1944. He was included in Berlin [1920]; 'The Twenties in Berlin: Johannes Baader, George Grosz, Raoul Hausmann, Hannah Höch', Annelly Juda Fine Art, London [1978]; Zurich [1994]; Paris [2005]; Washington/New York [2006]. Solo exhibitions include Moderna Museet, Stockholm [1967] and Musée national d'art moderne, Paris [1974]. Retrospectives include Berlinische Galerie, Berlin [1994].

John **HEARTFIELD** [Helmut Herzfelde, b. 1891, Berlin, d. 1968, Berlin] studied poster design in Munich between 1907 and 1911. In 1912 he moved to Berlin. He fought in the war until receiving a discharge by convincing his superiors he was insane. He anglicized his name to show his disdain for German nationalism and, with studio-mate George Grosz, joined the Communist Party. In Berlin, the two artists were important innovators of photomontage, designing periodicals such as *Neue Jugend* (1916-17). In 1917 Heartfield and brother Wieland Herzfelde founded the Malik-Verlag. Heartfield also worked in the film industry creating special effects, and after 1920 designed posters, magazines and book covers. His best-known works are photomontages from the 1930s that appeared in the magazine *AIZ* [Workers Illustrated Newspaper]. After periods in Prague and London, Heartfield returned to East Germany in 1950. He was included in Berlin [1920]; 'The Malik-Verlag, 1916-1947: Berlin, Prague, New York', Goethe House, New York [1984]; 'Exiles + Emigrés: The Flight of European Artists from Hitler', Los Angeles County Museum of Art [1997]; Paris [2005]; Washington/New York [2006]. Solo exhibitions include Moderna Museet, Stockholm [1967]. Retrospectives include Akademie der Künste, Berlin [1969] and The Museum of Modern Art, New York [1992].

George **HERMS** [b. 1935, Woodside, California, lives in Los Angeles] was involved with California Pop and Beat culture during the 1950s and 1960s, developing junk sculpture and assemblage art. He spent one semester at the University of California, Berkeley, studying science and engineering before dropping out to work in data processing with early computers. In the early 1960s he established the Love Press, which published volumes of poetry. After receiving a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1968, he devoted himself entirely

to sculpture, writing, film, theatre and teaching. He recently served as a Visiting Scholar at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles. He was included in 'The Art of Assemblage', The Museum of Modern Art, New York [1961] and 'Beat Culture and the New America, 1950-1965', Whitney Museum of American Art, New York [1995]. Retrospectives include Newport Harbor Art Museum, Newport Beach, California [1979] and Santa Monica Museum of Art, Santa Monica, California [2005].

HI RED CENTER [artists Takamatsu Jirō, b. 1936, Akasegawa Genpei, b. 1937 and Nakanishi Natsuyuki, b. 1935] combined the first parts of their names (Taka Aka Naka) to arrive at Hi Red Center, established for the exhibition 'Fifth Mixer Plan' at the Dai-ichi Gallery in Tokyo. Their direct interventions into public life Tokyo included Happenings at the Ueno train station and Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. On War Defeat Day, the anniversary of the end of the Second World War, they sold tickets to a expensive dinner at which guests found they could only watch the three artists enjoying a meal. During 'Shelter Plan Event' at the Imperial Hotel they invited the audience, including fluxus artists Nam June Paik and Yoko Ono, to perform menial tasks. The apex of their notoriety was the trial in 1966 of Akasegawa, found guilty of counterfeiting a 1,000-Yen note, which he had used as an invitation to a gallery opening. They were included in 'Japon des Avant Gardes: 1910-1970', Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris [1986], 'In the Spirit of Fluxus', Walker Art Center, Minneapolis [1993] and 'Japanese Art after 1945: Scream Against the Sky', Yokohama Museum of Art [1994].

Dick **HIGGINS** [b. 1938, Cambridge, England, d. 1998, Quebec City, Canada] attended John Cage's composition classes at the New School for Social Research in New York in the 1950s. There, he met Allan Kaprow, George Brecht, Yoko Ono and others. Higgins participated in their early performances and Happenings and in 1959 he and Al Hansen established the New York Audiovisual Group. In the early 1960s he participated in the birth of Fluxus. Higgins, who had studied English at Columbia University, was also a writer. In 1964 he started the Something Else Press, publishing Fluxus artists and his own reproduction of Richard Huelsenbeck's *Dada Almanach*. In 1966 Higgins formulated his influential theory of 'intermedia': activities that fall between poetry, visual art, music, dance, theatre and science. Higgins received a Masters Degree in English from New York University, where he

studied visual poetry. He was included in 'The Spirit of Fluxus', Walker Art Center, Minneapolis [1993].

Hannah **HÖCH** [b. 1889, Gotha, Germany, d. 1978, Berlin] studied craft, 'applied art and painting in Berlin. In 1915 she met Raoul Hausmann (with whom she had a relationship until 1922) and helped to form Club Dada. She constructed photomontages about modern women in Germany, while working part-time designing patterns for women's clothing. Höch met the Futurists in Rome in 1920 and the following year participated in the Dada Tour to Prague with Hausmann and Kurt Schwitters. She worked with Constructivist and De Stijl artists including Hans Arp, Theo van Doesburg and László Moholy-Nagy. In the late 1920s she moved to The Hague with Dutch author Til Brugman; the two women then lived together in Berlin from 1929 to 1935. During the war, Höch moved to the outskirts of the city and fell from notice. She was included in Berlin [1920]; 'The Twenties in Berlin: Johannes Baader, George Grosz, Raoul Hausmann, Hannah Höch', Annelly Juda Fine Art, London [1978]; 'Aspekte der Collage in Deutschland: von Schwitters bis zur Gegenwart', Städtisches Kunstmuseum Spendhaus, Reutlingen, Germany [1996]; Paris [2005]; Washington/New York [2006]. Solo exhibitions include Kunstzaal de Bron, The Hague [1929] and Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris [1976]. Retrospectives include Berlinische Galerie, Berlin [1989] and Walker Art Center, New York [1996].

ILIAZD [Ilia Zdanevich, b. 1894, Tbilisi (formerly Tiflis), Georgia, d. 1975, Paris] moved to St Petersburg in 1911 to study law and quickly became associated with avant-garde poets and artists including Mikhail Larionov and Natalia Goncharova, proponents of Russian Cubo-Futurism. Iliazd was particularly interested in the use of typographic elements in visual art. In 1917 he returned to Tbilisi and established, with poets Alexei Kruchenykh and Igor Terentiev, the press 41°, which published Iliazd's *dras* [dramas]. When he moved to Paris in 1921, Iliazd started the 'University of the 41°', presented events and lectures, and published artists' books. He collaborated with the Paris Dadas, but found their activities less than radical. In later years Iliazd maintained a friendship with Pablo Picasso. He was included in 'Les livres futuristes russes: zaoum', Centre Georges Pompidou, Bibliothèque publique d'information, Paris [1995] and 'Russische und ungarische Avantgarde, 1913-1925', Kunstmuseum Basel

[1996]; Washington/New York [2006].

Retrospectives include Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris [1978].

Marcel **JANCO** [b. 1895, Bucharest, Romania, d. 1984, Ein Hod, Israel] studied painting in Bucharest and architecture in Zurich before joining the Cabaret Voltaire in 1916, at the encouragement of fellow Romanian Tristan Tzara. Along with dada performances, he produced abstract costumes and masks for the Cabaret's soirées and printed posters and invitations for other dada events. He returned to Bucharest in 1920 and in 1922 broke with Dada, co-founding with writer Ion Vinea the journal *Contimporanul* (1922–32, subtitled *The Organ of the Romanian Constructivist Movement*). Janco moved to Israel in 1941 and established an artists' colony in Ein Hod in 1953. He was included in 'Central European Avant-Gardes: Exchange and Transformation, 1910–1930', Los Angeles County Museum of Art [2002]; Paris [2005]; Washington/New York [2006]. Retrospectives include Museum of Modern Art, Haifa, Israel [1968], Tel Aviv Museum of Art [1972] and National Museum of Art, Bucharest [1996].

Jasper **JOHNS** [b. 1930, Augusta, Georgia, lives in New York] is usually considered a self-taught artist. In 1952 he moved to New York. Two years later he met Robert Rauschenberg; the two lived in the same building and shared an interest in the readymade. Johns's early work was characterized by a junk aesthetic not unlike that of Kurt Schwitters, but in 1954 he made his first flag painting. Such 'readymade imagery' – flags, targets and cast body parts – was a central element in Johns's work. After his first solo exhibition in 1958, he met Marcel Duchamp and began working with John Cage and the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, designing costumes and sets. His more recent work reflects a shift toward autobiography. He was included in 'Dancers on a Plane: John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Jasper Johns', Tate Gallery, London [1990] and 'Neo-Dada: Redefining Art, 1958–62', Scottsdale Center for the Arts, Scottsdale, Arizona [1994]. Solo exhibitions include Leo Castelli Gallery, New York [1958]. Retrospectives include The Museum of Modern Art, New York [1986–1996].

Lajos **KASSÁK** [b. 1887, Ersekújvár, Hungary, d. 1967, Budapest] was a writer and painter. Trained as a locksmith, from 1908 he travelled around Europe writing poetry and painting. His interest in progressive art styles and politics is evident in *A Tett* [The

Deed] which he published in 1915. The magazine was banned by the authorities; he established *Ma* [Today] the following year. Produced by Kassák and his brother-in-law Béla Uitz, *Ma* published work by László Moholy-Nagy, Kurt Schwitters, Hans Richter, Viking Eggeling, Hans Arp and El Lissitzky. It was also an important vehicle for the Hungarian Activists, such as Sándor Bortnyik. When *Ma* was censored in 1919 Kassák moved publication to Vienna and he and Bortnyik developed the theory of *Bildarchitektur* (Picture Architecture). In 1926 he returned to Hungary where he edited periodicals *2X2*, *Dokumentum* and *Munka*. In the 1950s, Kassák focused on Constructivism. He was included in 'Lajos Kassák y la vanguardia húngara', IVAM Centre Julio González, Valencia, Spain [1999] and 'Central European Avant-gardes: Exchange and Transformation, 1910–1930', Los Angeles County Museum of Art [2002]; Paris [2005]. Retrospectives include Matignon Gallery, New York [1984] and Akademie der Künste der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, Berlin [1987].

El **LISSITZKY** [Eliezer Marcovich Lissitzky, b. 1890, Pochinok, Russia, d. 1941, Moscow] was an artist, designer, photographer and architect. After study in Darmstadt and sketching tours in Europe, he returned home at the outbreak of the First World War. After the Revolution, he addressed art's function in the new society, searching for a utilitarian visual language. In 1919 Lissitzky served as Professor of Graphic Art and Architecture in Vitebsk, working with Kazimir Malevich, whose suprematist forms fed into his idea of *Proun*, introducing three-dimensional elements to a system of geometric forms and text. During the 1920s Lissitzky was associated with Hans Arp, Kurt Schwitters and Theo van Doesburg. He was included in 'The Avant-Grade in Russia, 1910–1930: New Perspectives', Los Angeles County Museum of Art [1980] and 'Central European Avant-gardes: Exchange and Transformation, 1910–1930', Los Angeles County Museum of Art [2002]; Paris [2005]; Washington/New York [2006]. Retrospectives include Harvard Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts [1987] and Sprengel Museum, Hanover [1988].

MAKI Hisao was an architect associated with the Mavo group around 1925. 'Two theatre proposals as commonsense processes for the play and theatre extermination movement' was published in *Mavo*, no. 7, in August 1925. In 1926 he, along with Murayama Tomoyoshi and Yoshida Kenkichi, established the Kyoto Union of Woven and Dyed Art which developed and

exhibited abstract and constructivist textile design. He was included in 'Second Sanka Exhibition', Gallery Kudan, Tokyo [1925] and 'First Exhibition of the Union of Woven and Dyed Art', Takashimaya Department Store, Kyoto [1926].

Kazimir **MALEVICH** [b. 1878, Kiev, d. 1935, St Petersburg] was initially drawn to Impressionist and Post-Impressionist styles but in 1907 met painter Mikhail Larionov and his circle and took up Cubo-Futurism. Malevich joined the progressive Jack of Diamonds and Donkey's Tail groups. In 1913 he contributed sets to Alexei Kruchenykh's futurist opera *Victory Over the Sun*. His curtain design, a black square on a white ground, was a revolutionary visual motif and the basis of his abstract language Suprematism, introduced at the 1915 exhibition '0,10'. In 1919 he moved to Vitebsk where he met El Lissitzky and established the *Unovis* group [Affirmers of New Art]. In later years his abstract vocabulary, once considered universally legible, was seen by the authorities as elitist and abstruse. Malevich designed his own coffin, marked with a black circle and square. He was included in 'The Avant-Garde in Russia, 1910–1930: New Perspectives', Los Angeles County Museum of Art [1980] and 'Sluzhenie russkomu avangardu', State Russian Museum, St Petersburg [1998]. Solo exhibitions include Whitechapel Gallery, London [1959] and Galerie Gmurzynska, Cologne [1978]. Retrospectives include Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris [1980] and National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. [1990].

MAN RAY [Emmanuel Radnitzky, b. 1890, Philadelphia, d. 1976, Paris] was a central figure of New York Dada. After early artistic training from Robert Henri and George Bellows, he exhibited abstract paintings at the 1911 Armory Show and was influenced by Alfred Stieglitz's 291 Gallery. Living in an artists' colony in Ridgefield, New Jersey, he published the journal *The Ridgefield Gazook* in 1915; that year the Daniel Gallery, New York, presented his first solo exhibition and he was introduced to the Arensberg circle and Marcel Duchamp, with whom he collaborated on a number of projects and co-founded the Société Anonyme. He contributed to *The Blind Man* (1917), *Rongwrong* (1917) and *New York Dada* (1920). In 1920 he made the first Rayograph, a camera-less photograph. In Paris Man Ray became a close associate of the Surrealists. He also contributed photographs to *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*. During the Second World War he lived in Los Angeles, but in 1951 he

returned to Paris, where he remained. He was included in Zurich [1994]; 'Paris – Capital of the Arts', Royal Academy of Art, London [2002]; Paris [2005]; Washington/New York [2006]. Retrospectives include National Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C. [1988] and Serpentine Gallery, London [1994].

MURAYAMA Tomoyoshi [b. 1901, Tokyo, d. 1977, Tokyo] was a figurehead of the Mavo group. Exposed both to art and to Western culture as a young man, he studied philosophy at Tokyo Imperial University and in 1922 spent a year in Berlin. While there, he was exposed to the work of expatriate Japanese artists, such as his childhood friend Wadachi Tomoo (1900–25) and to European Expressionists, Dadas, Futurists and Constructivists. Murayama exhibited work at Berlin's 'Great Futurist Exhibition' in March 1922 and at the constructivist exhibition in Düsseldorf that same year. He returned to Tokyo in 1923 where, with four other artists, he founded the Mavo group and defined his theory of Conscious Constructivism. Mavo, and its journal, represented radical Japanese art and design in the period following the great earthquake of Tokyo, but disbanded in 1925. Murayama turned to stage design that was highly influenced by Russian theatre. He was included in 'Japon des Avant-Gardes, 1910–1970', Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris [1986] and 'Modern Boy, Modern Girl: Modernity in Japanese Art, 1910–1930', Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney [1998]. Solo exhibitions include Denpoin Temple, Asakusa [1923].

OKADA Tatsuo [b. probably in Kyusuu, d. after 1937, probably in Manchuria] was perhaps the most radical member of Mavo. A printmaker, performer, playwright, political radical and critic, he led the Mavo artists to question their own activities, even as they critiqued the institutions of the Tokyo art world. He met the group as an art student and wrote a scathing essay about Murayama in 1923. He, along with Murayama and writer Hagiwara Kyōjirō, edited the second, more politically-oriented run of the group's journal in 1925. Okada was a founder of the Mavo faction, the Japan Nihilist Association, also called Neo-Dada or Neo-Mavoist, which was interested in utilitarian art, especially architecture. He designed the cover, typography and layout of Hagiwara's poetry anthology *Death Sentence* [1925]. After Mavo disintegrated, Okada, Takamizawa and Maki Hisao attempted to revive the movement. Okada moved to Manchuria in the 1930s and most of his known works are now lost. He was included in the 'Sanka Independent', Ueno Park, Tokyo [1922],

AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHIES

Dragan **ALEKSIĆ** [b. 1901, Bunic, Serbia, d. 1958, Belgrade] led the Dada movement that flourished from 1920 to 1923 in Prague and Zagreb. In 1920 he hosted a series of Dada performances in Prague, with a group of young poets that included Branko Ve Poljanski, brother of Ljubomir Micić. The two formed contacts not only with Western European Dadas Kurt Schwitters, Walter Mehring, Tristan Tzara and Raoul Hausmann but also with Karel Teige and Lajos Kassák. Aleksić contributed to *Zenit* [edited by Micić in Zagreb] published two one-issue journals, *Dada-Tank* and *Dada-Jazz*, and organized public dada evenings. Micić and Poljanski broke with Aleksić and his internationalism, publishing *Dada-Jok* [*Dada-No*] as a response. When Aleksić heard in 1922 that Hausmann had announced the end of dada activities he moved to Belgrade and ceased his dada publications. His significant collection of papers from this period was destroyed when he died. Works include 'Dadaizam' [1921] and 'Kurt Schwitters Dada' [1921].

Walter Conrad **ARENSBERG** [b. 1878, Pittsburgh, d. 1954, Los Angeles] and his wife Louise are best known as hosts to the group of artists and writers who met at their apartment on 33 West 67th Street in New York, and as art collectors. The 'Arensberg circle' included Louise Norton, William Carlos Williams, Marcel Duchamp, Francis Picabia, Man Ray, Jean Crotti, Beatrice Wood, John Covert, Mina Loy, and the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven. Walter Arensberg wrote poems and art criticism for *Burlington Magazine* and 391 and served as the President of the Society of Independent Artists. His writings include *Poems* [1914] and *Idols* [1916].

Hugo **BALL** [b. 1886, Pirmasens, Germany, d. 1927, San Abbondio, Switzerland] co-founded the Dada movement at the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich in 1916. He studied philosophy in Munich, worked in the theatre and wrote plays and poetry influenced by Wassily Kandinsky's concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk* [a work that unifies the arts]. In 1913, with Hans Leybold, Ball founded the magazine *Revolution*. At the beginning of the First World War, he and his companion Emmy Hennings moved to Switzerland. In 1917 Ball helped establish the Galerie Dada, where he wrote and performed sound poetry. In 1917 he split from the Dadas and moved to Bern, where he continued writing. He married Hennings in 1920 and finished his

memoir *Flight Out of Time: A Dada Diary in 1927*. Other important books include *Flametti, oder, Vom Dandysmus der Armen: Roman* [1918], *Zur Kritik der deutschen Intelligenz* [1919] and *Hermann Hesse: Sein Leben und Werk* [1927]. He was included in 'Dada Global', Kunsthau Zürich [1994].

Sándor **BARTA** [b. 1897, Budapest, d. 1938, Soviet Union] was associated with the Hungarian Activists, Lajos Kassák and the journal *Ma* during the Hungarian exile in Vienna. He was married to Kassák's sister, the poet Erzsí Ujvári (1899-1940). His manifesto 'The Green-Headed Man' ['*A zöldfejű ember*'] was published in the March 1921 edition of *Ma*. But as Kassák moved towards Constructivism, Barta moved towards Communism. He and Erzsí broke from *Ma* and established the periodical *Hanged Man* [*Akaszott ember*] [1922-3], which presented translations of Vladimir Mayakovsky, Theo van Doesburg (as I.K. Bonset) and Ivan Goll and drawings by George Grosz. The journal also published 'The First Gathering of the Mad in a Garbage Bin' ['*Azörültek első összejövetele a szemetesládában*'] [1922], mocking Kassák and his wife. Other works include *Igen* [1920].

George **BRECHT** [b. 1926, New York, lives in Cologne] attended John Cages's composition classes at the New School for Social Research in New York, where the concept of chance began to inform his work. Like Dick Higgins, he was interested in blurring boundaries between media and conceived the 'event' as a means by which to do so. His first exhibition was a multi-sensory experience called *Towards Events* [1959] at the Reuben Gallery in New York. In addition to his work in assemblage and Conceptual Art, he performed with the Fluxus group during the 1960s and 1970s. Writings include *Chance Imagery* [1966] and *Games at the Cedilla, or the Cedilla Takes Off* [1967, with Robert Filliou].

André **BRETON** [b. 1896 Tinchebray; d. 1966 Paris] was a poet and essayist and the leading theoretician and organizer of the surrealist movement. In 1917, while working in a psychiatric ward with traumatized soldiers, he met Louis Aragon and Philippe Soupault. Together they founded the review *Littérature* in 1919. After meeting Tristan Tzara in 1920 he abandoned medicine and joined the Dada movement. His many writings include key texts of Surrealism such as *Manifeste du*

suréalisme [1924] and *L'Amour fou* [1937]. Together with Phillipe Soupault he produced the first automatic writing, *Les Champs magnétiques* [*The Magnetic Fields*] [1920]. In 1939 he fled France for New York, returning to Paris in 1946. Before he died in 1966 a major celebration of his work was held at the international conference at Cerlsy-la-Salle.

Kenneth **BURKE** [b. 1897, Pittsburgh, d. 1993, Andover, New Jersey] was a novelist, essayist, poet, philosopher and translator, but he is best-known as a critic. Although he never completed a university degree, he attended Ohio State University and Columbia University where he studied French, German, Greek, Latin and philosophy. During the early 1920s he was introduced to Dada by a childhood friend, writer Malcolm Cowley. Burke also knew William Carlos Williams and contributed to journals *Aesthete* [1925] and *Broom*. He was music critic for *The Dial Magazine* and entertained writers and artists at his home. In the 1930s he turned entirely to literary criticism, employing ideas from anthropology and psychology: *The White Oxen and Other Stories* [1924], *Counter-Statement* [1931] and *Towards a Better Life* [1932].

David **BURLIUK** [Davidovich Burluk, b. 1882, Kharkiv, Ukraine, d. 1967, Southampton, Long Island, New York] studied in Odessa, Moscow, Paris and Munich, where he exhibited with Kandinsky's Blue Rider group in 1911. In Moscow, he promoted progressive art and organized exhibitions, with Vladimir Mayakovsky, Mikhail Larionov, Natalia Goncharova and others; after 1917 he moved to Siberia, and Japan, where he influenced Toyko artists. He contributed futurist writings to many anthologies and journals. One of his most important essays is '*Die "Wilden" Russlands*', written for Kandinsky's *Blue Rider Almanach* [1912]. Other writings include *Poshchechina obshchestvennomu vkusu* [1912] and *Futuristy: rykaiushchii Parnas* [1914] and the journal *Color and Rhyme* [1930-6].

John **CAGE** [b. 1912, Los Angeles, d. 1992, New York], a pioneering composer, was highly influential in the post-war period. His interest in chance and an inclusive concept of music led to his 'prepared pianos' of the 1930s, in which he attached objects to the strings of a piano before the instrument was played. During the 1940s he collaborated with Merce Cunningham, later serving as artistic

director of Cunningham's Dance Company until the 1960s. In 1952 he composed 4'33", in which the performer remains silent and only random, ambient noises are heard. Cage also promoted electronica and multi-media performances. He knew Marcel Duchamp and influenced Robert Rauschenberg, whom he met at Black Mountain College in the early 1950s. His composition classes at the New School for Social Research in New York were attended by many future Fluxus members. His writings include *Silence: Selected Lectures and Writings* [1961] and *John Cage: An Anthology* [1991].

Merce **CUNNINGHAM** [b. 1919, Centrala, Washington, lives in New York] employs chance and aspects of everyday life in dance and choreography. He met composer John Cage in the 1930s and they began collaboration during the 1940s, in New York. Cunningham also worked at Black Mountain College in the 1950s where he, Cage and Robert Rauschenberg produced the first Happening. In 1953 he established the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. He has consistently worked with visual artists, including Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, and Andy Warhol - helping to define Neo-Dada's breakdown of barriers between artistic genres. His writings include *Le danseur et la danse* [interviews with Jacqueline Lesschaeve] [1980] and *Changes: Notes on Choreography* [1968].

Jefim **GOLYSCHOFF** [b. 1897, Kherson, Ukraine, d. 1970, Paris] was a violin prodigy touring with the Odessa Symphony Orchestra at age fourteen. He moved to Berlin in 1909 where he created his own system of musical notation and is said to have written twelve-tone compositions six years before Arnold Schoenberg. In 1919 he was moving in Berlin's avant-garde art circles where he participated in dada exhibitions and activities and performed works such as his *Anti-Symphony*. In 1922 he returned exclusively to musical composition; in later years his interest in visual arts was revived. Writings include 'Was ist der Dadaismus und was will er in Deutschland?' [with Raoul Hausmann and Richard Huelsenbeck] [1919] and 'A-ismus' [a manifesto] [1920].

Otto **GROSS** [b. 1877, Gniebing, near Graz, d. 1920, Berlin] outlined influential theories of psychology that dealt with freedom and revolution. He graduated with a degree in medicine but in 1900 turned to psycho-

analysis. From 1905 he joined intermittently a community of radical artists and thinkers committed to anarchism and a return to nature, in Ascona, Switzerland. In 1911 Gross's mistress Sophie Benz committed suicide; Gross was blamed and in 1913 imprisoned in an Austrian asylum, only to be released after a public outcry. His writings include 'Protest und Moral im Unbewussten' ['Protest and Morality in the Unconscious'] [1919] and *Collected Works, 1901-1907: the Graz Years* [2000].

HAGIWARA Kyōjirō [b. 1899, Maebashi, Gunma prefecture, d. 1938] moved to Tokyo in 1923 and was a significant contributor to *Aka to Kura* [Red and Black], an anarchist literary magazine. A 1925 he began collaborating with the Mavo group. With Okada Tatsuo and Takamizawa Michinao he formed the more radical, anarchist faction of the group, writing poems that critiqued modernization and progress. Hagiwara described his work and ideas as 'Neo-Dada', a reference to the nihilistic potential he saw in the movement. His most important book of poems, *Shikei Senkoku* [Death Sentence] [1925], was designed and illustrated by Okada Tatsuo.

František **HALAS** [b. 1901, Brno, d. 1949, Prague] was a poet and critic. Having received a limited formal education, he worked in bookshops in Brno where he became acquainted with the literary figures of the day. In 1923 he and critic Bedřich Václavek started the Brno wing of the Devětsil group, taking up Dada in the mid 1920s out of an interest in its 'creative nihilism'. Halas wrote extensively and held lectures to disseminate these ideas. During the 1920s and 1930s Halas also edited left-wing journals and wrote art criticism. He published his first volume of poetry in 1927. After the war he served as the President of the Czech Syndicate of Writers. His writings include *Sépie* [Sepia] [1927] and *Staré zeny* [Old Women] [1935].

Richard **HAMILTON** [b. 1922, London, lives in New York and Oxfordshire] worked in the corporate and art worlds before, in 1952, becoming part of the Independent Group at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, often considered the starting point of British Pop Art. These artists, architects and historians discussed the relationships between mass media, advertising, popular culture and art, which Hamilton, already interested in the work of Marcel Duchamp, translated into exhibitions and works. His collage *Just what is it that makes today's homes so different,*

so appealing? [1956] was used as the poster for 'This is Tomorrow' exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery in London. In addition to making collages, assemblages and conceptual pieces, Hamilton also writes about art and culture: *Collected Words, 1953-1982* [1982].

Jane **HEAP** [b. 1883, Topeka, Kansas, d. 1964, London] was co-editor, with Margaret Anderson, and later sole editor, of *The Little Review*, publishing the work and writings of Dadas, Constructivists and Surrealists. She studied at the Art Institute of Chicago from 1901 to 1905. In 1916 she met Anderson, who convinced her to contribute criticism to the magazine. She wrote in a terse, direct style. A trial on obscenity charges (for publishing James Joyce's *Ulysses*) ended their professional and personal relationship. In 1924 she opened the Little Review Gallery. Five years later she moved to London to study and teach the philosophy of Russian mystic George Gurdjieff. Writings include 'On Joyce's Exiles' [correspondence between A.C. Barnes and Jane Heap] [1919] and *Dear Tiny Heart: The Letters of Jane Heap and Florence Reynolds* [2000].

Ben **HECHT** [b. 1894, New York, d. 1964, New York], a journalist in Chicago, wrote about urban crime and contributed to *The Little Review*. In 1923 he started his own journal, *Chicago Literary Times*. During the First World War he worked in Berlin and got to know the Dadas. In the 1920s and 1930s he lived in both New York and Hollywood, where he became a successful screenwriter, winning an Academy Award in 1927. During the Second World War he became involved with the Zionist movement and in later years wrote for television. Writings include *Erik Dorn* [1921], *Fantazius Mallare* [1922], *1001 Afternoons in Chicago* [1922] and *The Collected Stories of Ben Hecht* [1945].

Emmy **HENNINGS** [Emma Maria Cordsen, b. 1885, Flensburg, d. 1948, Lugano] was an influential presence at the Dadas' Cabaret Voltaire and contributed expressionist poetry to dada journals. In 1904 she left her marriage to become a performer. She danced, sang and recited poetry in cabarets, touring through Germany to Moscow, Budapest, Vienna and Zurich with theatre groups. In Munich she performed at the bar Simplicissimus. Around 1913 she met writer Hugo Ball and in 1915 they moved to Zurich. In 1917 she and Ball left Dada and she began writing semi-autobiographical novels; later they rejected their previous bohemian lifestyle. Her writings include *Gefängnis* [Prison]

[1919] and *Brandmal: Ein Tagebuch* [Stigma: A Diary] [1922].

Iván **HEVESY** [b. 1893, d. 1966] was an art critic, art historian and writer in Budapest who contributed to Lajos Kassák's journal *Ma*. While he saw some value in Dada, he criticized the movement for its lack of positive goals and for its individualism. As a Marxist, Hevesy was interested in the use of new visual culture, like advertising and the cinema, to help create a revolutionary mass culture. He often worked with playwright Ödön Palasovszky as part of their Manifesto Group. They wrote a manifesto in 1922 calling for action, a new form of art and artist, and ultimately for a new Hungarian mass culture. His writings include *Futurista, expresszionista és kubista festészet* [1919] and *A modern fotoművészet* [1934].

Richard **HUELSENBECK** [b. 1892, Frankenau, Germany, d. 1974, Muralto, Switzerland], a writer and poet, joined the Cabaret Voltaire in 1916, established Dada in Berlin and documented the movement in his *Dada Almanach* [1920]. In 1912 he met writer Hugo Ball who encouraged him to move to Zurich. In 1917 he returned to Berlin and helped found Berlin Dada. He wrote for dada publications, took part in the 1920 Dada Fair and toured with Raoul Hausmann and Johannes Baader. After falling out with Hausmann, he worked as a doctor and journalist. In 1937 he moved to New York, as Charles Hulbeck, and practised existentialist and Jungian psychiatry. He retired to Switzerland in 1969. His writings include *Dada Almanach* [1920], *Phantastische Gebete* [Phantastic Prayers] [1920], *En Avant Dada: eine Geschichte des Dadaismus* [1920] and *Memoirs of a Dada Drummer* [1974].

Roman **JAKOBSON** [b. 1896, Moscow, d. 1982, Boston] was a linguist who taught at universities in Russia, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and in America at Columbia and Harvard Universities. He published poetry and essays with the Russian Futurists from the 1910s, including *Novejszaja russkaja poëzija* [The Newest Russian Poetry] [1921]. He wrote about Dada and attended exhibitions of Mikhail Larinov, David Burluk and Kazimir Malevich. Jakobson also knew Karel Teige and artists of the Czech avant-garde. In 1923 he published *O cheshskom stixe* [On Czech Verse], the first work on phonology [science of the structure and function of sound]; he later explored non-verbal communication and his ideas influenced anthropologists and cultural critics, including his student Noam Chomsky.

KAMBARA Tai [b. 1898, Sendai, d. 1997, Tokyo] was a poet and painter. He grew up in Tokyo and attended Chūō University, studying English, French and Italian. His interest in Italian Futurism led to correspondences with Filippo Tommaso Marinetti and it was probably Kambara who introduced these ideas to avant-garde artists in Tokyo. Kambara exhibited his abstract paintings with the Sanka group, leaving them in 1925 because the expressive quality of his works clashed with the anarchist ideals of other Sanka members. In 1927 he gave up painting in favour of art criticism and poetry. Writings include 'First Manifesto of Kambara Tai' [1920] and *Miraiha no kenkyu* [1925].

Vasilii **KAMENSKY** [b. 1884, Borovskoe, Russia, d. 1961, Moscow] moved to St Petersburg in 1905 and his interest in poetry and painting flourished when he met Velimir Khlebnikov and David Burluk (in whose studio he worked). He contributed to an exhibition of Russian Impressionism, and wrote a novel, *The Mud Hut* [1910], which received terrible reviews. He became a stunt pilot until a crash sent him back to literary work. Between 1912 and 1918, in Moscow, Kamensky developed ferroconcrete poetry [poem pictures] and became a well-known futurist poet. He published collections *Tango with Cows* [1914], the *First Journal of the Russian Futurists* [1914], a novel, *Stenka razin* [1916], and *Ego* [1918], an autobiography in two voices.

Allan **KAPROW** [b. 1927, Atlantic City, New Jersey, d. 2006, Encinitas, California] studied art, philosophy and musical composition, and is known as the founder and theorist of Happenings. Kaprow's early work includes collages, gestural paintings, and combinations of the two: 'action-collages'. Kaprow developed the Happening concept after studying with John Cage at the New School for Social Research. His most well-known is the 1959 piece *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* which took place at the Rueben Gallery in New York. More recently he created 'Activities'. Writings include *Assemblage, Environments, and Happenings* [1966] and *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life* [1993].

Velimir **KHLEBNIKOV** [b. 1885, Tundutovo, Russia, d. 1922, Santalovo, Novgorod, Russia] was interested in the use of chance in poetry and the creation of new words. In 1910 he became associated with the Russian Futurists, although he preferred the concept 'budetliane' [stemming from the Russian 'will be']. Khlebnikov signed major Russian Futurist manifestos and contributed to

anthologies *A Trap for Judges and Slap in the Face of Public Taste*. He helped develop *zaoum*, a transrational language to unite all peoples. His writings include *Snake Train: Poetry and Prose* [1976], *The King of Time: Selected Writings of the Russian Futurian* [1985] and *Collected Works of Velimir Khlebnikov*, 3 volumes [1987-97].

Alexey **KRUCHENYKH** [b. 1886, Olivskoe, Russia, d. 1968, Moscow] moved to Moscow in 1907. In 1912 he met the Futurists and contributed *zaoum* poems to anthologies, but also self-published his own books, illustrated by Mikhail Larionov, Natalia Goncharova, Kazimir Malevich and Vladimir Tatlin. In 1913 Kruchenykh wrote *Pobeda nad solntsem (Victory over the Sun)* [1913], for Malevich's stage designs were early examples of Suprematism. After the Revolution, Kruchenykh helped establish the group 41° in Tbilisi. Works include *Apokalipsis v russkoi literature* [The Apocalypse in Russian Literature] [1922] and *Suicide Circus: Selected Poems* [2001].

Mikhail **LARIONOV** [b. 1881, Tiraspol, Moldova, d. 1964, Fontenay-aux-Roses, near Paris] was a poet, painter and curator in Russia. He and his life-long companion Natalia Goncharova favoured avant-garde styles including Rayonism [a type of Futurism]. Larionov founded the progressive groups Jack of Diamonds and Donkey's Tail. He was closely associated with Iliazd, Alexey Kruchenykh and Velimir Khlebnikov. During the 1920s Larionov was artistic director of Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. Writings include *Luchizm [Rayism]* [1913] and '*Pochemu my raskrashivaemya: Manifest Futuristov*' ['Why We Paint Ourselves: Futurists' Manifesto'] [with Iliazd] [1913].

Mina **LOY** [Mina Lowry, b. 1882, London, d. 1966, Aspen, Colorado], a poet and painter, met Carl Van Vechten, a member of the Arensberg circle, while living in Italy in the 1910s. He and Walter Arensberg helped publish her innovative poetry in avant-garde journals *The Others* and *Rogue*. She moved to New York in 1916, joined the Dadas and was published in *The Blind Man* and *The Little Review*. In 1917 she met Dada-boxer Arthur Cravan, whom she married the following year. After Cravan disappeared in 1918, Loy moved to Paris where she was associated with Gertrude Stein and Marcel Duchamp. Writings include *Lunar Baedeker* and *Time Tables: Selected Poems* [1958].

George **MACIUNAS** [b. 1931, Kaunas, Lithuania, d. 1978, Boston] established the Fluxus

movement, which expressed the unity of art and life through actions and performances. He took classes at the New School for Social Research in New York where he met George Brecht and Allan Kaprow. In 1961 he moved to Germany and it was there that Fluxus began. Maciunas organized a series of events in Europe and America, including the important Festum Fluxorum Fluxus in 1962. The following year he wrote his 'Fluxus Manifesto' [1963].

János **MÁCZA** [b. 1893, Alsogyertyan, Slovakia, d. 1974, Moscow] moved to Budapest in 1915, where he became the theatre critic for Lajos Kassák's journals *A Tett* and *Ma*. He organized a free acting school and developed a theory of avant-garde theatre that promoted a synthesis of the arts and cultural revolution for the masses. He was exiled in Vienna in the early 1920s and in 1923 he moved to Moscow. Works include *Teljes Színpad [Complete Theatre]* [1921] and 'A fekete kandúr' ['The Black Tomcat'] [1921].

Vladimir **MAYAKOVSKY** [b. 1893, Mayakovsky, Georgia (formerly Bagdadi, Russia), d. Moscow, 1930] was a painter and writer of radical political poetry and plays. As a young man, he was imprisoned for opposing the Tzar. He began studying at the Moscow Institute of Art in 1911. He met David Burliuk who introduced him to Cubism and the Russian Futurists. After the Revolution he wrote Bolshevik slogans and songs, but later satirized the Communist regime. Publications include *Complete Collected Works* [1955-61], *Complete Plays* [1968] and *Love is the Heart of Everything: Correspondence Between Vladimir Mayakovsky and Lili Brik, 1915-1930* [1986].

Walter **MEHRING** [b. 1896, Berlin, d. 1981, Zurich] was a founding member of Club Dada in Berlin, having met George Grosz in the late 1910s. He contributed songs, skits and poems to the cabarets and their performances, influenced by folk songs, jazz and the rhythms of industrial life. He contributed to dada publications and exhibitions. Returning to Zurich he wrote *Die verlorene Bibliothek* and a memoir of Berlin Dada. Writings include *Das politische Cabaret* [1919], *Das Ketzerbrevier: ein Kabarettprogramm* [1921] and *The Lost Library: The Autobiography of a Culture* [1951].

NAKADA Sadanosuke [b. 1888, Tokyo, d. 1970] was an artist and critic associated with the Mavo group. He was originally trained to work in an international trading house. From 1922 to 1924 he studied in Germany and visited the Bauhaus. He exhibited at the 1925 'Second

Sanka Exhibition' where he presented his well-publicized *Bubikopf Venus*, a metal and glass sculpture that suggested a type of German haircut, not unlike that worn in Japan by so-called 'modern girls'. He was published in journals *Mizue*, *Chuo bijutsu* and *Mavo*; writings include 'Megane o suteru' ['Throwing Away the Glasses'] [1925] and 'Sogo zasshi no shimei' ['The Mission of the General Interest Magazine'] [1925].

NAKAHARA Yūsuke [b. 1931, Kobe, lives in Japan] studied physics in Kyoto before becoming an interpreter and defender of progressive art in Japan during the 1960s. He is considered one of the three most important post-war Japanese art critics, along with Haryu Ichiro and Tono Yoshiaki. He has also organized exhibitions, including the 10th Tokyo Biennale in 1970. From 1979 to 1981 he served as the President of Seika University in Kyoto. He continues to write and lecture internationally. Writings include *Gendai chokoku [Contemporary Sculpture]* [1965] and *Ningen to busshitsu no aida [Between the Human and the Matter]* [1972].

Louise **NORTON** [b. Louise McCutcheon, 1890, death date unknown] is best-known for her essay about Duchamp's *Fountain*, 'Buddha of the Bathroom', published in *The Blind Man*. She studied at Smith College but withdrew in order to marry Allen Norton in 1911. The couple, along with Donald Evans, became the group of Greenwich Village poets called the Patagonians. Walter Arensberg financed the couple's innovative literary journal *Rogue* [1915-16]. In 1917 Norton, divorced from her husband, met the composer Edgar Varèse, whom she later married. Publications include *Little Wax Candle: A Farce in One Act* [1914] and *Varèse: A Looking-glass Diary* [1972].

Nam June **PAIK** [b. 1932, Seoul, d. 2006, New York] is known for his sculptures and installations that include television sets, video and music. He studied art and music history at the University of Tokyo. In 1958, while in Cologne, he met John Cage, beginning a life-long friendship. He began making 'action music' and including objects and video in his work. In 1961 he met George Maciunas and became part of the Fluxus movement. Three years later he moved to New York and embarked on a series of collaborative performances with cellist Charlotte Moorman, including the nude *Opéra sextronique* for which they were arrested for indecency. Writings include 'Random Access Information' [1980] and 'To Catch Up or Not to Catch Up with the West' [1994].

Ödön **PALASOVSKY** [b. 1899, Budapest, d. 1980, Budapest] was a poet, performance artist and playwright. A member of the Hungarian Socialist Democratic Party, he was interested in a Dada aesthetic, reflected at his Green Donkey Theatre, where artist Sándor Bortnyik was the stage designer. With Iván Hevesy he wrote manifestos and organized avant-garde performances. He wrote nonsense poetry, and in the 1920s he organized Zig-Zag evenings of performances and poetry readings. His works include *Új Művészetek! [New Art!]* [with Iván Hevesy] [1922] and *Punalua* [1926].

Branko **VE POLJANSKI** [Branko Micic, b. 1898, near Glina, d. 1947, Paris] was a writer and artist. In Ljubljana he published the journal *Svetokret [Turning World]* in 1921. Later in Zagreb he published *Kinofon* (1921-2) with Dragan Aleksic. He was also in Berlin and Prague where he made contact with the Devetsil group. He and brother Ljubomir, publisher of *Zenit*, produced *Dada-Jok* as a response to Aleksic's *Dada-Tank* and *Dada-Jazz*. In 1926 ve Poljanski moved to Paris where he painted in a surrealist style and worked with the De Stijl group. Writings include *Tumbe [Upside Down]* [c. 1926] and *Crveni Petao [Red Rooster]* [c. 1926].

Pierre **RESTANY** [b. 1930, Amélie-les-Bains, Morocco, d. 2003, Paris] was an influential art critic and curator. In 1960, taking into account the work of Yves Klein, Arman, Daniel Spoerri and artists using everyday contemporary culture as their focus, he defined the concept *Nouveau Réalisme*. Restany wrote for journals *Art International*, *Domus*, *Art Press*, *D'Ars*, *Flash Art* and *Studio International* and was associate editor of *Planète* [1961-72]. Books include *Les Nouveaux Réalistes* [1968], *Yves Klein: Le Monochrome* [1974] and *Une vie dans l'art* [1983].

Georges **RIBEMONT-DESSAIGNES** [b. 1884, Montpellier, France, d. 1974, Saint-Jeannet, France] was an important member of Paris Dada, writing poetry and plays and taking part in the group's soirées, exhibitions and excursions. He trained as a painter at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and Académie Julian in Paris; he met the Puteaux Cubists, including the brothers of Marcel Duchamp, and Francis Picabia. Ribemont-Dessaignes contributed to journals *291* and *391* while on active service during the First World War. He stayed with André Breton through the early development of Surrealism, but in 1929 broke with the group. In the early 1930s he wrote a history of Dada. Works include the dada play *Empereur de Chine* [1916] and satire *Céleste Ugo!in* [1926].

Walter **SERNER** [Walter Seligmann, b. 1889, Karlovy Vary, Czech Republic (formerly Karlsbad, Austria), d. probably after 1942 in a German concentration camp] invented Dada in Geneva. Serner studied law in Karlsbad and Vienna. In 1909 he converted to Christianity and changed his surname. He helped establish the expressionist journal *Sirius* in 1915. In Zürich he joined the Dadas in 1918 when he wrote his manifesto 'The Last Loosening'. In 1920 he moved to Paris and was friends with Francis Picabia. He lived in Berlin, Dresden and Munich, writing crime stories and poems. In 1927 Paul Steegeman published the seven-volume collection of his works; writings include *Letzte Lockerung* [1920] and *Zum blauen Affen* [1921].

Philippe **SOUPAULT** [b. 1897, Chaville, France, d. 1990, Paris] was a writer and critic, co-inventor of automatic poetry [writing without engaging the conscious mind] and co-editor of journal *Littérature*, both with André Breton. After the Sorbonne, Soupault served in the military during the First World War. He met Breton through poet Guillaume Apollinaire. In 1942 he was imprisoned for broadcasting antifascist propaganda in Tunisia. After the war, Soupault worked with the United Nations advocating peace and cultural literacy. Works include the first automatic writing, *Les Champs magnétiques* [*The Magnetic Fields*, with André Breton] [1920], written in 1919, and surrealist poems *Les dernières nuits de Paris* [*Last Nights of Paris*] [1928].

Daniel **SPOERRI** [Daniel Feinstein, b. 1930, Galati, Romania, lives in Tuscany] was a founding member of Nouveau Réalisme. Principal dancer for the Berne Opera from 1954 to 1957, he worked in avant-garde theatre before turning to art. Spoerri's work includes 'tableaux-pièges' ['snare-pictures'] arrangements of banal, used objects glued in place, and 'word-snares', images composed of words and sayings. In 1962 Spoerri wrote a book that may be a scholarly appreciation of such everyday objects: *Topographie anecdotée du hazard* [1962].

TAKAHASHI Shinkichi [b. 1901, Ehime Prefecture, Japan, d. 1987], considered the first Japanese Dada, compared Dada with Buddhist philosophy rather than with nihilism or anarchism. In 1920 he discovered the work of Tristan Tzara and embarked on a career as a writer. In 1921 he moved to Tokyo to write typographic poetry and the influential 'Dada "Assertion" Manifesto'. Tsuji Jun edited some of his works. In 1924 he began to draw away from Dada although he continued to write

about it into the 1960s. Works include *Dadaïsuto Shinkichi no shi* [*Poems of Dada Shinkichi*] [1923] and *Dada* [1924].

Ushio **SHINOHARA** [b. 1932, Tokyo, lives in New York] trained as an oil painter but turned to the idea of anti-art. Shinohara's best-known works as a founding member of the Neo-Dada Organizers, during the early 1960s, are his 'Boxing Paintings', in which he punched canvases with gloves dipped in a rice glue and ink mixture. His 'Imitation Art' recreated works of American Pop artists including Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns. In 1969 he moved to New York where he continues to work in a junk aesthetic. Shinohara's writings include a memoir, *Zen'ei no michi* [*The Avant-Garde Road*] [1968] and *Nyuyoku no Jirocho* [*Jirocho in New York*] [1985].

Michel **TAPIÉ** [b. 1909, near Albi, d. 1987, Paris] was a double-bass player and a member of Les Réverbères, who were influenced by Dada. In 1945 he met the artist Jean Dubuffet and became a writer and art critic. He theorized *Art Brut* [outsider art] and managed the *Foyer de l'art brut* in the Galerie Drouin, Paris. He believed that Dada had provided a 'clean slate', and championed contemporary artists working in gestural abstract painting. In 1952 he curated the first exhibition of Jackson Pollock's work in Paris, wrote *Un Art autre* and coined the term *art informel*. Tapié worked with the Gutai group and Yoshihara Jiro, with whom he wrote *L'Aventure informelle* [1957].

Tristan **TZARA** [Samuel Rosenstock, b. 1896, Moinesti, Romania, d. 1963, Paris] was a founder of the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich who promoted Dada internationally and brought Dada to André Breton's circle in Paris. He founded the avant-garde journal *Simbolul* and his unfinished anthology *Dadaglobe* was to have included dada art and literature from around the world. Tzara eventually participated in the Surrealist movement in Paris but in 1934 left to join the Communist party. Writings include *La Première aventure céleste de Monsieur Antipyrine* [1916], *Vingt-cinq poèmes* [1918], *Le Cœur à gaz* [*The Gas Heart*] [1920], *Sept manifestes Dada* [1924] and *L'Homme approximatif* [1931].

Bedřich **VÁCLAVEK** [b. 1897, Caslavice, d. 1943, Auschwitz] was a literary critic and writer in Brno, Czech Republic. He translated Dada works by Walter Serner, George Grosz and Richard Huelsenbeck and wrote essays including 'Creative Dada' [1925]. Later, he was an editor at *Fronta* and a critic of the

work of Karel Teige. He embraced Socialist Realism, believing that art should serve the Proletariat. Works include *Od umení k tvorbě* [1928] and *Poesie v rozpacích* [1930].

Ilarie **VORONCA** [Eduard Marcus, b. 1903, Braila, Romania d. 1946, Paris] was a law student who became a theorist of Constructivism, writing poems, picture-poems and essays for most of the Romanian avant-garde journals of the 1920s and 1930s. With Victor Brauner he edited the single issue of *75HP* and later, the journal *Punct*. He wrote for *Integral* and *Contemporanul* and was also published under the pseudonyms Alex, Cernat and Roneiro Valcia. In 1933 he moved to Paris and thereafter wrote in French. Writings include *Restrictii* [*Trials*] [1923] and *La clé des réalités* [*The Key to Reality*] [1945].

Andy **WARHOL** [Andrew Warhola, b. 1928, Pittsburg, d. 1987, New York] was an artist and filmmaker whose 'readymade' images taken directly from consumer culture are synonymous with Pop. His now-iconic *Campbell's Soup Cans* were introduced in 1962 at his first solo exhibition at the Ferus Gallery in Los Angeles. In 1994 a museum dedicated to Warhol's life and work opened in Pittsburgh. He was included in 'Pop Art', Royal Academy of Arts, London [1991] and 'Les années pop: 1956-1968', Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris [2001]. Retrospectives include The Museum of Modern Art, New York [1989].

William Carlos **WILLIAMS** [b. 1883, Rutherford, New Jersey, d. 1963, Rutherford, New Jersey]. was a writer and practising doctor. At the University of Pennsylvania Williams met poet Ezra Pound, who introduced him to avant-garde writers and dada artists. Williams became part of the Imagist movement. He contributed to *The Dial* and *The Little Review* and in 1929 translated Philippe Soupault's *Last Nights of Paris*. Virtually unknown outside artistic circles until the 1940s, in 1963 he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his last book *Pictures From Brueghel*. Other publications include *Kora in Hell: Improvisations* [1920] and *Spring and All* [1923].

Stanisław Ignacy **WITKIEWICZ** [b. 1885, Warsaw, d. 1939, Poland], known as Witkacy, was a painter and playwright. After witnessing the Bolshevik Revolution as a soldier in Russia in 1917, he returned to Zakopane, his childhood home, and wrote and painted. He subscribed to 'Formism', a theory of pure form expressed in his visual and literary work. He was briefly interested in Dada, because of its irony and refusal to take

itself seriously. Most of his plays were not produced until after his death. Writings include *Wariat I zakonnic* [*The Madman and the Nun*] [1924] and *Szewcy* [*The Shoemakers*] [early 1930s].

Beatrice **WOOD** [b. 1893, San Francisco, d. 1998, Ojai, California] co-published the journal *The Blind Man* [1917] with Marcel Duchamp and Henri Pierre-Roché. Raised in Paris, she studied art at the Académie Julian and performed as a dancer and actress. She met Duchamp and Pierre-Roché, who appreciated her ability to communicate in French, in New York in 1916. They introduced her to the Arensberg circle and encouraged her to paint and draw. Wood exhibited with the Society of Independent Artists and later became a ceramicist. Retrospectives include American Craft Museum, New York [1997].

YAMASAKI Tsuruko [b. 1927], a student of Yoshihara Jiro, was a founding member of the Gutai group. She was interested in children's art, which reflected the group's focus on freedom and originality. Her work uses industrial materials such as vinyl and metal, expressed in repeated or accumulated forms. She has also worked with film. She wrote 'Gutai Artists in Tokyo' [1956].

YOSHIHARA Jirō [b. 1905, Osaka, d. 1972, Ashiya] was co-founder, in 1954, of the Gutai group. He first exhibited in 1934, painting in the Surrealist manner common in Japan at the time. He soon looked to innovative forms, and turned to abstraction. During the 1950s he promoted originality and freedom in art. In 1951 Yoshihara founded Genbi [the Contemporary Art Discussion Group]. As the leader of Gutai, which published a journal from 1955 to 1965, Yoshihara admonished 'Never imitate!' Writings include 'Gutai Art Manifesto' [1956] and *L'Aventure informelle* [with Michel Tapié] [1957]

Sergei **YUTKEVICH** [b. 1904, St Petersburg, 1985, Moscow] was an experimental filmmaker. He studied painting and stage direction and was influenced by the Russian Futurist Vladimir Mayakovsky. Yutkeich was taught by avant-garde director Vsevolod Meyerhold and in 1922 formed the theatre group 'Factory of the Eccentric Actor', with Leonid Trauberg. They drew from expressionism and cabaret culture. Films include *Lace* (silent) [1928]; *Mountains of Gold* (with sound) [1931]. He produced the work of Chekhov and Mayakovsky and numerous documentaries. Writings include *Che lovek s ruzhyom* (script) [1938] and *Banya* (script) [1960].

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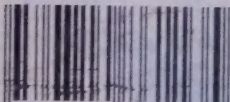
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