

**Press release
Zurich, 20 May 2016**

Kunsthau Zürich presents 'New and Surprising Items from the Collection: Supplément Dada'

From 20 May to 24 July 2016, the Kunsthau Zürich is showing some new and surprising items from its extensive Dada collection.

It was fifty years ago that the Kunsthau Zürich began to collect Dada works. The last major exhibition on the movement was 1994's 'Dada global'. Since then, numerous works have been added – impressive confirmation that just as Dada never rests, so the collection reproduces itself. Some of these new acquisitions are now receiving their first public showing; they include a screen print by Marcel Janco from the 1970s – his recreation of the oil painting 'Cabaret Voltaire', which has been lost since 1924. The current special presentation is a carefully chosen selection of around 100 exhibits from a collection numbering well over 700 works and documents.

THE ORIGIN OF MODERNISM

The cabinet gallery chosen as the location for 'New and Surprising Items from the Collection: Supplément Dada' offers an intimate setting for a dialogue with Dada similar to the premises of the 'Galerie Corray' (1917) in Zurich's Sprünglihaus which hosted the 'I. Dada-Ausstellung' ('1st Dada exhibition'); or the Berlin art dealership of Dr. Otto Burchard, the venue for the ground-breaking 'Erste Internationale Dada-Messe' ('First International Dada Fair') in 1920. Art is no longer forced to beg for scraps as it was back then in Zurich, and the celebrated 'Hindenburg Jelly' has long since melted into thin air. The 'Dada products' on display are entirely in keeping with the Dadaists' irreverent and provocative approach to the traditional language of art: they aim to look beyond our familiar, pampered conceptions of what constitutes Dada and enable us to view the origin of modernism with fresh eyes.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE DADAISTS

Along with photomontages and collages, objects and assemblages are among the key achievements of the Dadaists. Far from the centres of Dada, artists such as the Belgian Paul Joostens were making their own seminal contributions to its development. The collages of Hannah Höch, with their subtle feeling for materials, discreetly escape the chronological framework of Dada. Her 'Dompteuse' ('Tamer') is surrounded by a profusion of portraits, including that of Tristan Tzara, the 'dompteur des acrobates' ('tamer of acrobats'). Man Ray and Hans Richter appear as true portraitists: their likenesses, produced with camera, brush and pen, make up an illustrious gallery of Dada's leading lights.

Contesting his space, too, is the dilettante Théodore Fraenkel, a doctor and friend of Breton. These archaic and provocative works, of a kind also known from the 'Oberdada' Johannes Baader and the autodidact Erwin Blumenfeld, are the incisive, unvarnished aspect of a Dada universe that is often artistically polished. Hans Arp is one of its luminaries. His cover designs for journals and artists' books document Dada 'de luxe'. Conversely, Pauperism brought forth new blossoms, with Dada's cast-offs being put to fresh use. Raoul Hausmann's 'Dessin mécanique', like Schwitters' 'Anna', is beautiful both front and back. Other exhibits hold their own surprises in store, inviting discovery from both front and reverse.

The only figure missing will be 'funny guy' Francis Picabia, who is being exhibited in his full glory via a retrospective in the large exhibition gallery of the Kunsthaus from 3 June to 25 September.

PAPERWORK: ORIGINAL AND DIGITAL

The papers and journals that were so important to the Dada movement are being presented in domesticated form. The booklets, letters and tracts on show in the display cases speak in unambiguous tones. The typographical design of publications and posters is innovative even by today's standards. If words can kill and titles speak, then what better examples than the Dada publications that spread across Europe: 'Die Pleite', 'Der blutige Ernst', 'Die freie Strasse', 'Stupid', 'Ça ira', 'Jedermann sein eigener Fussball', 'Broom', 'Z', 'Neue Jugend'. As colourful as the presentation itself is the journal 'Mécano', published by Théo van Doesburg under the pseudonym I. K. Bonset (his Dada alter ego). As with the Dadaist 'Société pour l'exploitation du vocabulaire dadaïste', the collection presentation designed by guest curator Raimund Meyer offers a freewheeling and playful take on the treasures in our care.

Over the last few months, the world of Dada collated by the Kunsthaus has been secured, protected and disseminated internationally as part of a digitization project, true to the maxim 'en avant dada'. The latest results and findings as well as information on the accompanying restoration process can be found on the microsite www.kunsthhaus.ch/dadadig/en. The digitization and conservation have been made possible thanks to the support of the Ernst Göhner Foundation, Helvetia Insurance and the Federal Office of Culture FOC. The digitized works, which can already be used for research in the Kunsthaus library, will be made available online from this autumn using viewer software.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Kunsthaus Zürich, Heimplatz 1, CH-8001 Zurich, tel. +41 (0)44 253 84 84, www.kunsthhaus.ch.

Tues/Fri-Sun 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., Wed/Thurs 10 a.m. – 8 p.m. Closed on Mondays. Public holiday opening see www.kunsthhaus.ch.

KUNSTHAUS ZÜRICH

Admission: CHF 15 / CHF 10 (concessions and groups), including the collection. Children and young people up to the age of 16 free; Wednesdays free. Combined ticket for 'New and Surprising Items from the Collection: Supplément Dada', exhibitions such as 'Picabia' and the collection: CHF 25 / CHF 18.

Advance sales: SBB RailAway combination ticket, with discount on travel and admission: at stations and by phoning Rail Service 0900 300 300 (CHF 1.19/min. by land line), www.sbb.ch/kunsthhaus-zuerich. Zurich Tourism: hotel room reservations and ticket sales, Tourist Service at Zurich Main Railway Station, tel. +41 44 215 40 00, information@zuerich.com, www.zuerich.com.

NOTE FOR THE MEDIA

Visual material is available for download at www.kunsthhaus.ch > Information > Press.

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