

Duchamp with Cage, Cunningham, Rauschenberg and Johns in the Barbican in London

## THE BRIDE AND THE BACHELORS

Since September, numerous cultural institutions have found novel ways to celebrate the centenary of John Cage's birth. Only the Philadelphia Museum of Art, whose Marcel Duchamp collection dwarfs that of every other museum, figured out how to link Cage and friends to Duchamp in a manner that proves no less contemporary than the last Whitney Biennial, whose emphasis on dance seemed to surprise critics.

Sue SPAID

For the exhibition in London's Barbican, the Philadelphia Museum of Art has let numerous key works slip from their routine posts, giving spectators on this side of the pond even more reasons to visit this fascinating exhibition. To give viewers access to the referent around which nearly every work here swings, Moderna Museet has lent its second life-size replica of 'The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even' (1915-1923/1991-1992). This seems a bit odd, not because the Philadelphia Museum of Art's cracked original remains forever cemented to its floor, but because this seems an opportune moment to collaborate with Tate Modern, whose copy seems less fake. Not only did Duchamp's 'Large Glass' inspire 'The Bride and the Bachelors', Calvin Tompkins' seminal biography of these artists (save Jasper Johns), but it occasioned 'The Green Box' (1934), a

perfectly simulated collection of every little handwritten scrawl and torn note that has anything to do with his enigmatic masterpiece. Not only did Johns review this boxed set's 1960 version, but he has apparently spent a lifetime tracing and re-tracing its photograph of Duchamp's 1912 'Bride', which even Duchamp acknowledged resembled a wasp far more than a woman.

### DANCE AND CHESS

The more museums present live action (Marina Abramovic at MoMA, Orlan at M KHA, Tino Seghal at DOCUMENTA (13), or the Barbican revisiting Laurie Anderson, Trisha Brown, and Gordon Matta-Clark), the more we circle back one-hundred years to Duchamp's comparatively mute happenings, all of which are on view here. For 'Erratum Musical' (1913), Duchamp and his two youngest sisters randomly drew musical notes from a hat to compose a score, while 'Bicycle Wheel' (1913) promises to let spectators spin wheels. For '3 Standard Stoppages' (1913-1914), he dropped one meter-long cords onto the floor. With 'Sounding Sculpture' (1914), he imagined stretching fabric until it snapped. For the poem 'The' (1915), hand-drawn stars replace the word 'the', altering its sound when read. Apparently, 'Á Bruit Secret' (Easter, 1916) still rattles when shook. For 'Unhappy Ready Made' (1918), his sister Suzanne let a geometry book flap in the wind until its pages blew away. With the 'Box of 1932', one recognizes hundreds of phantom chess moves. Most significant for his burgeoning influence on Cage was his co-curating the 'Imagery of Chess' (1944) at Julien Levy Gallery. During its opening, a blindfolded master chess player beat everybody save Frederic Kiesler, and Cage exhibited his score 'Chess Pieces' alongside Duchamp's peripatetic 'Pocket Chess'. Even though Robert Rauschenberg and Johns supposedly didn't know Duchamp's work until after 1957, this exhibition suggests that they sub-



Marcel Duchamp, 'Bride', 1912, © Succession Marcel Duchamp, 2012, ADAGP\_Paris, DACS\_London

consciously drew inspiration via Cage's awareness of Duchamp, whose 'assisted readymades' inspired his first prepared-piano piece 'Music for Marcel Duchamp' (1947) and led him and Merce Cunningham to experiment with found sound, ordinary movement, and conceptual compositional techniques. Although this exhibition highlights numerous direct references to actual Duchamp works, such as Rauschenberg's 'Bride's Folly' (1959) and 'Express' (1963), Johns' 'No' (1961) and 'Memory Piece (Frank O'Hara)' (1961-1970), plus Cage's 'Strings 1-20' (1980), it primarily teases out recurring affinities regarding their artistic vision, such as their strategies for negating authorship, focus on movement and sensorial engagement, stressing of emptiness and silence, preference for 3-D paintings that celebrate the quotidian (not so Duchamp who strategically defamiliarized everyday things), and remarkable collaborative spirit, such as the Duchamp dinner that prompted Johns to construct transparent dance props based on the 'Large Glass', which led Cunningham to choreograph 'Walkaround Time' (1968).

Absent this exhibition, which happily floats amidst music emanating from regular and 'prepared' self-playing grand pianos, it would be difficult to explain these particular connections, since so much of what we consider to unite Cage, Cunningham, and Rauschenberg stems from their earlier 'total experiences', presented in 1948 and 1952 at Black Mountain College. Moreover, Rauschenberg served as Merce Cunningham Dance Company's costume and set designer from 1954 to 1967, the job Johns inherited in 1967 and held until 1980. For some reason, the complex and intricate ideas underlying 'The Bride and the Bachelors' seem clearer here in the Barbican than they did at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Perhaps I am merely benefiting from a repeat visit. For good, the flickering panels (exhibition orchestrator Philippe Parreno's 'fireflies') that prompt bystanders to identify piano works heard in the distance seem far more conspicuously placed. Gone, however, are Parreno's muscular contributions such as self-opening window shades that beckon viewers to focus on traffic sounds, as well as his movie-house marquee luring spectators to partake of this spectacle. On particular Thursdays and weekend days, visitors can experience live performances, opportunities that lend an even greater air of authenticity to this exhibition's thoughtful and lively presentation.

'The Bride and the Bachelors: Duchamp with Cage, Cunningham, Rauschenberg and Johns' till June 9th in The Barbican Art Gallery, Barbican Centre, Silk Street (tube: Barbican / Moorgate) London. [www.barbican.org.uk/](http://www.barbican.org.uk/)

## Ronny Delrue in China

De Belgische kunstenaar Ronny Delrue heeft een solotentoonstelling met tekeningen in het TKKMOA ofte Tan Kah Kee Museum of Art in de Chinese stad Xiamen. Deze expo loopt tot en met 3 mei.

In dezelfde stad loopt nog een andere tentoonstelling van tekenkunst met verschillende Europese én Chinese kunstenaars: 'Drawings/ drawing is thinking, thinking is moving' loopt van 20 april tot en met 4 mei in het CEAC of Chinese European Art Center. Deelnemers aan deze expo zijn Ante Timmermans, Tatjana Gerhard, Lore Vanelslande, Ronny Delrue, Roger Raveel, Sigidur Gudmundsson, Qin Jian, Zhifei Yang, Xiaqin Huang, Jia Zhixing en Pan Feifei.

## 47th Art Cologne

The 47th edition of Art Cologne, that runs from Friday April 19th till Monday April 22th, boasts a line-up of more than 200 galleries and dealers. It is also playing host to a programme of special exhibitions. Inside the exhibition hall, Düsseldorf-based collector Julia Stoschek will be showing works from her very large private collection of moving image art. On Art Cologne's forecourt at the south entrance to the Koelnmesse complex, visitors will be greeted by a large-scale, visually spectacular sculpture by Katharina Grosse.

A major contributor is the Fair's 'New Contemporaries' section, launched over ten years ago. This year, the section features thirty-eight young international galleries. The section gives young galleries a top platform to present their programmes to an international public. Each young gallery selected by the advisory board will be allocated a 30 square metre exhibition stand.

Art Cologne's sponsorship programme titled 'New Positions' was launched in 1980 by the Bundesverband Deutscher Galerien und Kunsthändler. The programme gives young artists free exhibition spaces. These spaces are specially set up next to the stands of the galleries representing the young artists. This year's selection panel has singled out twenty-two young artists.

Four Belgian galleries participate at the 47th Art Cologne: Catherine Bastide, Deweer, Guy Pieters and Axel Vervoordt. Dutch participants are Akinci, Paul Andriessse, Jaski Art, Onrust, Slewe and Fons Welters.

Stroom