

A	Eileen Agar Josef Albers Karel Appel Arman Kenneth Armitage Jean Arp Bernard Aubertin	Georges Hugnet Vilmos Huszár Robert Indiana Alain Jacquet Allen Jones Asger Jorn David Kakabadze	Jesús Rafael Soto Pierre Soulages Amadeo de Souza-Cardoso Daniel Spoerri Nicolas de Staël Henryk Stazewski Takis Yves Tanguy Joe Tilson Jean Tinguely Joaquín Torres-García Mark Tobey William Turnbull Léon Tutundjian Cy Twombly Günther Uecker Georges Vantongerloo Victor Vasarely Emilio Vedova Bram van Velde Aleksandr Vesnin Jacques Villeglé Friedrich Vordemberge-Gildewart Andy Warhol Tom Wesselmann
B	Francis Bacon Balthus William Baziotes Hans Bellmer Étienne Béothy René Bertholo Max Bill Roger Bissière Peter Blake Agostino Bonalumi Derek Boshier René Braem Victor Brauner André Breton Carl Buchheister Pol Bury	Lajos Kassák Alex Katz R. B. Kitaj Yves Klein Gustav Klucis Willem de Kooning Lee Krasner Wilfredo Lam Fernand Léger Eugène Leroy Roy Lichtenstein El Lissitzky Morris Louis Heinz Mack Alfred Manessier Piero Manzoni André Masson Roberto Matta Fausto Melotti Henri Michaux Joan Mitchell Joan Miró Amedeo Modigliani Lászlo Moholy-Nagy Piet Mondrian Henry Moore Giorgio Morandi	
C	Marcelle Cahn Alexander Calder Enrico Castellani Lourdes Castro Patrick Caulfield César Lynn Chadwick John Chamberlain Giorgio de Chirico Christo Clément-Serveau Joseph Cornell Salvador Dalí Alan Davie Robert Delaunay Paul Delvaux Walter Dexel Jim Dine César Domela Óscar Domínguez Anthony Donaldson Jean Dubuffet Marcel Duchamp François Dufrêne	M L	
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E	Max Ernst José Escada	M L	
F	Öyvind Fahlström Jean Fautrier Lucio Fontana Sam Francis Otto Freundlich	M L	
G	Albert Gleizes Julio González Jean Gorin Arshile Gorky Adolph Gottlieb Emilio Greco Francis Gruber Philip Guston Renato Guttuso Raymond Hains Richard Hamilton Hans Hartung Al Held Jean Hélion Florence Henri Auguste Herbin Jacques Hérold	M L	
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# Colecção Berardo

Permanent  
Exhibition

Floor 2



The Museu Coleção Berardo presents the most significant artistic movements from the twentieth century to the present day. In this museum, it is possible to find works by artists from the most diverse cultural contexts and with the most varied forms of expression, all of whom would come to make up the art history of the last century. Names such as Pablo Picasso, Marcel Duchamp, Piet Mondrian, Joan Miró, Max Ernst, Vieira da Silva, Francis Bacon, Andy Warhol, Donald Judd and Bruce Nauman, among many others, are presented within the framework of the artistic movements which their works allowed to define through a chronological succession that enables the spectator to take a trip through the period in question.

On floor 2, the visitor can find an initial section devoted to historic avant-garde movements such as Cubist Space, Dadaism, Constructivism, Surrealism, Informalism and Pop Art. In 2012, in the floor -1, the continuation of the route through the second half of the twentieth century through to the present day will be marked out, presenting Minimalism, Conceptualism, Arte Po-vera, as well as a range of approaches that have come to construct the present.

In this broad historical panorama, it will also be possible to discover the small stories that have not been confined to the unity of an axiom but have actualised other possibilities, constituting in themselves an ongoing creation of other expressions and other times within history itself.

Pedro Lapa  
Artistic Director



Pablo Picasso  
*Tête de femme*, c. 1909  
© Sucession Picasso, 2011

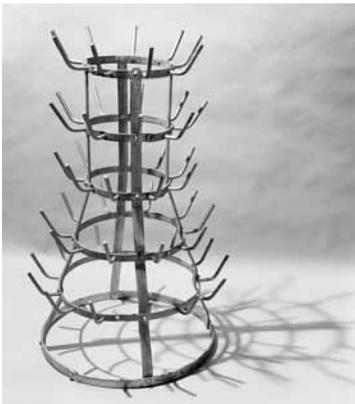
**The Cubist Spaces** The work *Les Femmes d'Alger* (1911-1914) by Pablo Picasso unites all of the main characteristics of Cubism. Faced with the painting in question, the spectator encounters the geometrized and simplified figuration that recalls the influence of Cézanne and alludes to African art, with the abandonment of the illusion of depth and the reversion of three-dimensional perception in a two-dimensional space, resulting in a highly fragmented composition. Although he was the founder of Cubism, Picasso was not the only artist to explore the new visual possibilities that the movement offered: he was joined by Georges Braque and, shortly afterwards, Juan Gris, Jean Metzinger, Fernand Léger, Francis Picabia and Marcel Duchamp, among others. Although the movement began with the pre-cubist phase (1907-1909), it gained greater expression in the “analytical” phase (1910-1912), which was characterised by a sharp loss of legibility owing to the decomposition of the planes, the fusion between figure and background, and the reduction of the colour.

In 1912, the first works to feature collages appeared, marking the start of the “synthetic” phase, which would last until 1914. These more colourful representations sought greater figurative

clarity and began to introduce heterogeneous materials.

The period between 1911 and 1914 also saw the development of orphic cubism, which was practised by artists including Frank Kupka and Robert Delaunay (with whom the Portuguese artist Amadeo de Souza-Cardoso established contact). Starting out from cubist principles, they moved in the direction of abstraction.

After 1914, the movement faded, tending towards a certain academicism which would come to be expressed in the works of the French artists Albert Gleizes and Clément-Serveau. Although its stature faded, the importance of Cubism turned out to be irrevocable since it had a decisive influence both on the School of Paris and on Purism, which was founded in 1915 by Amédée Ozenfant and Le Corbusier, who published the manifesto *After Cubism* (1918), lending continuity to the movement by reformulating its visual language. AMB



Marcel Duchamp  
*Le Porte-bouteilles*, 1914–1964

**Dadaism** Attempting to desacralize the established aesthetic order, Dadaism, which began in Zurich (1916), rapidly spread to cities such as Paris, Berlin, Cologne and New York, adopting a subversive and libertarian stance that aimed to change the definitions of art and the existing systems of validation. Overturning the legitimacy of imposed codes, it made a drastic break with the notion of the work of art,

the traditional roles of artist and spectator, and intermediary institutions such as museums, galleries and the press. It was within this setting that Marcel Duchamp, with works like *Le Porte-bouteilles* (1914–1964), conceived the ready-made, raising the everyday object to the status of a work of art and thereby demonstrating that it acquires value only in accordance with the judgement of a subject and an instance that legitimises it.

Following a different path, but responding to the same premises, works emerged such as Francis Picabia's anti-mechanisms, Man Ray's *Rayographs*, Friedrich Vordemberge-Gildewart's photomontages and Kurt Schwitters's *Merzbilder*. Ultimately, although different from each other, all of these dadaist manifestations converged on the same goal, that of provoking different reactions in the spectator, causing them to rethink the artistic and aesthetic value inherent in the works and, in this way, enabling them to move closer to them. AMB

**The Constructivisms** Appearing for the first time in Russia with Vladimir Tatlin's *Counter-Reliefs* (1913–1914), Constructivism developed in that country and, in response to the 1917 revolution, acquired a subversive ideology with specific characteristics. Valuing the industrial technology and dynamism that had been made available, the movement declared the end of art for art's sake and, placing itself at the service of the revolution, affirmed the functional character of the new forms and materials used in the construction of a new society. From this point onwards, the works, which the artists Aleksandr Rodchenko, Tatlin, and Varvara Stepanova began to call "thing" (*vesc*), were established as constructions in which the search for the "cliché" (*Vertov*) and intrinsic freedom was reflected.

The appetite for a new art proclaimed by, among others, Sergei Eisenstein and Vladimir Mayakovsky in the journal *LEF* (Left Front of the Arts), would allow the Russian dream of a socially committed art to prevail, a desire that perished in 1930 with the start of the Stalinist dictatorship. At the time, however, the ambition for a Constructivist International was spreading across various countries such as Germany, with the Bauhaus (house of construction) school, the

Netherlands, with the De Stijl movement, and Uruguay, with the artist Joaquín Torres-García, among others. The strong political tendency associated with Russian constructivism was not to be found in its respective manifestations, although they would all continue to promote lively cultural debate and aspire to reassess aesthetic principles. **AMB**

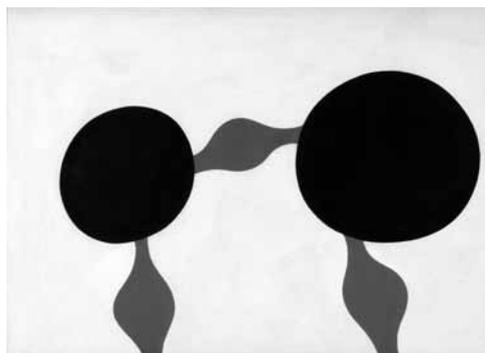
**De Stijl** Holland kept to the sidelines during World War I, which provided the ideal conditions for artistic development. It was in this context that Piet Mondrian gave rise to a new aesthetic expression known as Neoplasticism, or De Stijl, the name of the magazine he edited in October 1917 with painter and writer Theo van Doesburg, and which served as a theoretic support to the group's visual concepts. This movement brought together artists such as Vilmos Huszár and Georges Vantongerloo. Eschewing subjectivity, dynamism, depth and volume, neoplasticist works aim to achieve the "balance of equivalence".

Consequently, and as can be noted in Mondrian's painting *Tableau with yellow, black, blue, red and grey* (1923), they take on flat geometric shapes, filled in with primary colours (yellow, red and blue) compensated by neutral colours (white, black and grey), and strict structural lines are called for. These lines, both horizontal and vertical, represent nature (landscape and man, respectively) and, when they cross, they form square or rectangular areas that accentuate the right angle and promote the intended balance. The progressive simplification and homogenisation of the compositions eventually eliminated superficial conventions and favoured irreducible elements, and, as such, enhanced the contrast between the colours, highlighting two-dimensionality and achieving the greatest purification. **AMB**

**Abstraction Between The Wars** In a period of great unrest and political imposition, Abstractionism reacted, in an attempt to guarantee the autonomy of the work of art. It was in this context that the Abstraction-Création group emerged in Paris. Established in 1931 by Auguste Herbin and Georges Vantongerloo, the group, strongly influenced by the *Cercle et*

*Carré* movement, started in 1929 by the painter Joaquín Torres-García and critic Michel Seuphor, demonstrated its importance in consolidating the preceding visual investigations. Eschewing figuration and defending the aesthetic principles of abstraction, the resulting works became more colourful and diverse in their geometric shapes, and were, as such, less austere than Suprematist and Neoplasticist compositions, for example. Until it ended, in 1936, the group was represented by numerous European and American artists, which reflects its heterogeneity.

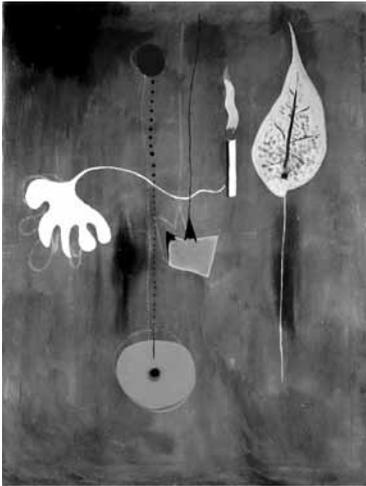
The group's importance was also key in the exhibitions it organised, the monographic publications and the printing, from 1932, of the annual magazine called *Abstraction-Création: Art Non-Figuratif*. All these activities contributed to the spread of abstract art throughout the world. The result of the activities of this group, which remained active between the two World Wars, was the emergence of small abstractionist poles, such as Unit One in London (1933) and American Abstract Artists in the United States (1936), which paved the way for its future role in the proliferation of non-figurative manifestations in the art of the second half of the 20th century. **AMB**



Jean (Hans) Arp  
*Sem título, c. 1926*

**Surrealism** Maintaining a link with Dadaist ideals, but moving beyond them, Surrealism marked out its own path based on psychoanalytical and Marxist thought.

However, in view of the fact that its Marxist aspirations imposed a radical cultural orthodoxy,



Joan Miró  
*Figure à la bougie*, 1925

the influences of psychoanalytical inquiries, particularly Freudian ones, eventually gained greater consensus within the group, which argued that only through the unconscious can man attain absolute freedom, independently of the will, reason, taboos and sexual impositions. This point in the movement's history saw the emergence of artists such as Salvador Dalí and Yves Tanguy, with their representations of dreams. To a certain extent, however, these works rejected the revolutionary fervour that had been in the air since the start of the century. It was from within this sphere that figures emerged such as André Breton, Max Ernst, Man Ray, Hans Bellmer, André Masson, Óscar Domínguez, or even Pablo Picasso (with his half-machine half-monster figures, which he began creating in 1925), aimed to bring a new poetics to the surrealist domain.

By re-examining the arts of non-European cultures and promoting psychic automatism, a working method that aimed to establish an immediate correspondence between the unconscious and the creative act, the artists freed themselves from imposed bonds and plunged into an undogmatic world of infinite possibilities and lyrical resonances. These manifestations would help to bring about Surrealism's geographical expansion,

resulting in a second generation of artists who, by reformulating some of the movement's suppositions, would grant it continuity. AMB

**Post-war Figuration** Favouring figuration, in a trend that abandoned the experimentalism that had been underway since the start of the 20th century, the period around 1920 saw the appearance of contributions in the form of pictures and essays by various artists, including Giorgio de Chirico, Carlo Carrà, Arturo Martini and Giorgio Morandi. The latter, as we can see in *Natura Morta* (1943), paid particular attention to the geometry of forms, and captured the elements of reality with the aim of developing an essentially pictorial discourse. However, while his works also revealed a significant Cezannian influence, which in a certain way reaffirmed the return to earlier aesthetic values, the corresponding revival of realism in works by artists of the next generation acquired a more autonomous character.

Alongside Surrealism and Abstraction, which were gradually beginning to dominate European and American artistic contexts, Figuration resisted and reclaimed its place. It was within this context that a new wave of artists emerged that included the painters Jean Hélion, Francis Gruber, Balthus and the sculptor Germaine Richier. These artists countered the experiments carried out by the avant-gardes with figurative language, although they shared the avant-garde aim of reflecting on the context in which they lived. As Balthus stated, "When I paint, I'm trying to express the world rather than who I am". After the Second World War, persistently overlapping with abstractionism and already stigmatised by a marked academic tendency, figurative art would acquire a new vigour which would be reflected in the range of stylistic categories found in *Nouvelle Figuration*. AMB

**Informalism** In 1945, Jean Fautrier exhibited *Otages* (Hostages), a series of around forty works which referred to the executions carried out by the Nazis in Occupied France. The work *Tête* (*Partisan*) (1957) recalls this series which, during the period of the persecution of collaborators (*épuration*) served not only to reactivate memory but also to reiterate the wound.

The following year, Jean Dubuffet provoked a stream of impassioned reaction with his series *Mirobolus, Macadam & Cie, Hautes pâtes*. One of his detractors, the French critic Henri Jeanson, proclaimed: "After Dadaism, here is Cacaism." Beyond its scathing and scatological tone, this phrase signals, on one hand, that there is a dadaist quality to Dubuffet's professed non-provocative stance and, on the other, that belongs to an artistic tradition of the incorporation of the object.

In 1947, Dubuffet exhibited his collection of artifacts produced by children, naive or untrained "primitive" artists and psychotics, the result of a "methodological investigation" begun in 1945 which he referred to as *art brut*. By art brut, Dubuffet meant an art which, in preference to another "cultural" art, was executed by those who were untainted by an artistic culture which was rife with mimicry.

Michel Tapié christens the term *art autre* and Jean Paulhan publishes the book *L'Art informel*. As well as Dubuffet, Fautrier and Wols, a number of abstract artists are mentioned, such as the *tachistes* (from *tache*, stain) with whom Henri Michaux is frequently linked. AD

**CoBra** CoBra – a juxtaposition of the initials of Copenhagen, Brussels and Amsterdam – was the acronym used by a group of artists based in those three European capitals, contributing to a dilution of the role of Paris as a centre of artistic activity, though not replacing it as a focal point. Active during the period from 1948 to 1951, the group's members were Christian Dotremont, Pierre Alechinsky, Corneille, Constant, Karel Appel Asger Jorn, among others.

Indebted to Surrealism and Marxism, CoBra sought, however, to challenge and reconfigure. The revolutionary character of the texts published in the homonymous journal served as catalyst for searching formal differentiation from the ornamental emptiness attributed to abstraction and a strain of post-war surrealist conservatism. In *Les Formes conçues comme langage* (1949), Asger Jorn calls for a materialist art that would restore the senses to a fundamental position, since the origin of art was instinctive and, thus, materialist.

Neither figurative nor abstract, CoBra elements work (in) a transitional space, in which

forms undergo metamorphosis. They draw on a referential system derived from "primitive" imagery, from children's drawings and the visual output of individuals with mental disorders, seen as the source of ingenuity, authenticity, intensity and, consequently, resistance.

After three years the group disbanded. Experimentation and political commitment continued to characterise the work of Asger Jorn and Constant, founders of another group – Imaginist Bauhaus (1954). AD

**Abstract Expressionism** Lending continuity to the movement that had been gaining ground since the start of the century, several European artists emigrated to the United States during the Second World War. In this context, New York became one of the most important centres of art in the world. Arshile Gorky, a native of Armenia, was one of the artists who, in 1920, made the trip to America. His works, which were much appreciated by André Breton, turned out to be enormously important in their recurrent use of organic non-figurative forms and their strength of gesture, laying the foundations for American Abstract Expressionism, which flourished after 1940, and becoming a decisive influence on the work of artists such as William Baziotes and Jackson Pollock. As the heir of Cubism (a fact made clear by the artist Lee Krasner) and surrealist automatism, this movement, which brought together the main artists of the New York School, moved its representatives closer to an autonomous and subjective stance. This autographic trend brought with it a marked gestural tendency, so well exemplified by the works of Willem de Kooning, and led to what Harold Rosenberg called action painting.

As a result of this attitude, painting, which was extended to the entire surface of the canvas, came to refer to itself as centrifugal, giving rise to the "all-over" idea coined by the critic Clement Greenberg. In the wake of Abstract Expressionism a new generation of artists would emerge that would include Sam Francis and Joan Mitchell, among others. AMB

**New School of Paris** In the post-war period, the School of Paris reformulated its aesthetic suppositions. This transformation would make

itself felt throughout the decade, driving the emergence of the New School of Paris, which came to reflect two aspects of Abstractionism, one that was geometric in nature and another that was characterised by a marked lyrical-informal tendency. During a period of extreme tension (the consequence not only of the tragic events that had gone beforehand but also of uncertainty over the future), figuration collapsed and gave way to abstraction. Sensing the climate of instability, artists such as Bram van Velde took the first steps, reacting by implementing new aesthetic values guided by force of expression.

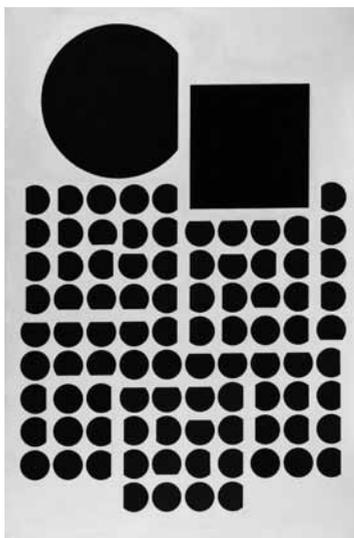
The heirs of Cubism, surrealist investigations and the force of German expressionism, the new generation followed a non-figurative path in order to rediscover the expressive force contained in gestural forms and colours. On the one hand, the period witnessed the development of geometric abstractionism, giving rise to the works of Richard Mortensen, for instance, while on the other hand, Tachisme, a creative process that favoured the colour field and the instinctive brushstroke, was asserting itself. It was within this context that artists such as Hans Hartung and Pierre Soulages expressed in their morphemes their desire to conquer a new space, inspired by Jacques Lassaing's idea that "sight is anterior to what it captures". As a result of her contact with the painter Roger Bissière, Maria Helena Vieira da Silva also freed herself from figuration, starting out on a path that would mark her visual language for the rest of her life. Despite the constant threat of dissolution, this abstract tendency came to recognize the undeniable importance of the School of Paris in its proven ability to keep up with the ideological changes that took place throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. AMB

**Kinetic and Op Art** On 6 April 1955, in Paris, the Galerie Denise René opened the exhibition *Le Mouvement*, the launching platform for an art concerned with movement. The day was marked by an incident which signalled, from the outset, an intrinsic rift within the group assembled by René. Jesus Rafael Soto, Yaacov Agam, Pol Bury and Jean Tinguely objected to the actions of Víctor Vasarely, the only artist to publish a text for the occasion, the "Manifeste Jaune", which

conferred him with a kind of self-proclaimed leadership. The same pamphlet contained a short chronology which placed the movement's roots within Italian futurism, also referencing Alexander Calder, Marcel Duchamp, Naum Gabo and Lazlo Moholy-Nagy.

The idea of creating movement within painting (also attributable to Calder, with his mobiles) led to the "op" tendency within kinetic art which, by deceiving the eye and producing optical illusions, creates a sensation of virtual movement. This is the tendency which links Vasarely and Bridget Riley. Bury, Agam and Tinguely relate to the Duchampian quest to involve the spectator.

Takis was the artist chosen for the first exhibition at David Medalla's Signals Gallery, where he showed works with the same title: *Signals*. The closing of the Signals and Denise René galleries marked a dispersal provoked by Vasarely's assumed prominence, confirmed by the retrospective exhibition which celebrated the previous ten years. Soto can be seen as paradigmatic of this trajectory which, from initially encompassing both virtual and actual movement, decided on the first: from the heterogeneity of "*Le Mouvement*" to the homogeneity of "*Mouvement 2*". AD



Victor Vasarely  
*Bellatrix II*, 1957

**Fernand Léger and Josef Albers** In his work and writings, Fernand Léger manifests an intense ideological and aesthetic awareness with respect to the challenges of his time. Forging a new concept of colour, which he considered a “raw material, indispensable to life”, Léger illustrated the potential for steering a course which, drawing on the legacy of Cézanne, Cubism and Abstraction, countered the tendencies of archaic realism through a new artistic approach designed to reflect man’s relationship with the world that he had constructed. Formally and chromatically, his compositions were informed by mechanised urban life, whilst their psychological force testified to contemporary conditions. It is for this reason that Léger’s significance outweighs that suggested by his role in the development of the School of Paris. As Roger Garaudy stated, Léger’s work was not so much an end as a starting point.

Josef Albers’ legacy should also be understood in this way. A professor at the Bauhaus for nearly ten years, this German painter initiated the optical study of colour and geometric form. When the school was shut down in 1933, Albers emigrated to the United States, where he taught at Black Mountain College and, later, at the Yale School of Art. His classes were enormously influential for post-war artists, as were his visual investigations aimed at achieving, via the aesthetic experience of colour interaction, what Albers referred to as the “psychic effect”. His *Homage to the Square* series, which uses optical illusion to undermine all sense of certainty about our visual perception, is an example of this approach.

The series also illustrates the relativity and instability of colour, as well as demonstrating that visual perception itself involves a discrepancy between physical fact and psychic effect. AMB

**Group Zero** In 1958, a group of artists was formed in Dusseldorf which, with a small exclusively German nucleus consisting of Otto Piene, Heinz Mack and, from 1961, Günther Uecker, grew to exert an international influence.

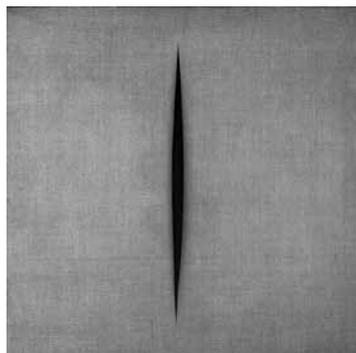
In the wake of the Second World War, they chose the name Zero, since “zero” lacked any nationalist connotation and, in the words of

founding member Otto Piene, it announced “a zone of silence and of pure possibilities for a new beginning like that which accompanies the launching of rockets”. Piene also states that this is an “incommensurable zone in which the old state turns into the new”.

One of the starting points for the group, shared with other groups such as the neoconcretists and the members of Madí, was the idea of concrete art promoted by Max Bill, even though they maintained a somewhat critical stance. This distancing would eventually become rejection, as was made explicit in 1964, when Piene outlined the historical development of the group.

Monochromatism, optical illusion, the manipulation of light and the actual movement of motorised kinetic constructions were strategies adopted by these artists in their search for a resonance that would involve the spectator in the realisation of the work. One of the most noteworthy of the numerous connections established with other artists and groups was the collaboration with Yves Klein, Jean Tinguely, Enrico Castellani and Piero Manzoni.

The group dispersed in 1966, though not without a legacy of significant contribution to artistic experimentation, both within Germany and beyond. AD



Lucio Fontana  
*Concetto Spaziale, Attesa, 1960*

**Fontana, Manzoni and Klein** “To suggest, to express, to represent: these are not problems today.” This phrase appears in a text published by Piero Manzoni, in the second and last edition of *Azimuth*, a journal that was part of the Galleria

Azimuth project and served as a catalogue for the exhibition *La nuova concezione artistica* (1960). Founded by Manzoni and Enrico Castellani in Milan (1959), this gallery was one of several platforms used by an international network of artists in order to promote a “new artistic conception” that, intended by Manzoni, worked as a response to the “new conditions and problems” by employing “different methods and standards” and striving to find “original solutions”.

Manzoni’s meeting with Fontana, who became his mentor, took place in 1957, around Manzoni’s official affiliation with the Movimento Nucleare, which was signaled by his signing of the “Manifesto contro lo stile”.

Eleven years before, with a group of students, Lucio Fontana had composed the “Manifesto Blanco” (1946), anticipating the concept of “spazialismo”, later developed in further manifestos.

In 1959, the first retrospective of Fontana’s work took place. The artist intensified his spatial investigation by embarking on the series *Tagli* (cuts). The cut made on the canvas, a trace resulting from an action, forestalled Manzoni’s move from the object as a receptacle to the indexical object, exemplified by the works *Merda d’artista*, *Fiato d’artista* and *Line*.

Both Manzoni and Fontana were influenced by Yves Klein, one of the authors present at the 1960’s exhibition mentioned above. The year 1946 marks the beginning of a path towards immateriality that has, as one of the results, a series of monochromatic surfaces displayed by the first time in 1955, antedating the attempt of “liberation of the surface” entailed by Fontana’s monochromes and Manzoni’s “achromes” (denoting absence of color).

Klein’s and Manzoni’s latter works acquired further dimensions, as part of the 1950s and 1960s avant-garde current which drew on tendencies first explored by the avant-garde of the beginning of the century (namely Futurism and Dadaism), such as the reconsideration of the body as a potential support and medium, the questioning of the mechanisms of the art world, the expansion of what is circumscribed as art, and the blurring between art and life.

“There is nothing to explain: just be, and live.” concluded Manzoni. AD

**Existential Figuration** After centuries during which figuration dominated art history, the convulsions, revolutions and schisms of the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought about a shift in parameters from “What to represent?” to “Representation or non-representation?” or even “What is representation?”. The inherent “How?” remained a constant. Once the issue had shifted from the choice of subject to a radical questioning, figuration lost its dominant position yet it emerged, to a greater or lesser degree, in the work of individual artists, in formal groups of artists – movements –, or in clusters of disparate artists who shared, nonetheless, some geographical or temporal connection.

The scars left by the two wars called for a reconsideration of the notion of humanity, shaken by the possibility, now demonstrated, of the extinction of the human race. Human propensity for the absurd which, at its most extreme, led to the unimaginable (made imaginable) – the Holocaust –, was a mark of the crisis. Sartre’s maxim “hell is other people” signalled a surge of individualism and the ascendancy of emotional states such as isolation, impotence and abandonment.

The painter Francis Bacon equated the concerns of the post-war period with potentially universal reflections on the human condition. In his opinion, if art could result from a series of accidents, then man himself was an accident and a completely futile being, obliged to participate in a “game without reason” (life). And art was also, and entirely, a game.

The game continues. AD

**“Presentness is Grace”** Distancing themselves from the subjectivity of action painting, Morris Louis’ abstract works, which included *Beta Tau* (1961), developed a new aesthetic language. His compositions, whose expressive colour fields give the illusion of expanding beyond our field of vision, reflected what was called Colour Field Painting. Working from an equally autonomous position, Anthony Caro produced sculptures by making use of industrial materials, giving form to abstract compositions of great formal simplicity. It was also within this context that Ad Reinhardt stood out, establishing a trend that has no equivalent at any other point in



Morris Louis  
*Beta Tau*, 1961

history. Affirming a belief in art for art's sake, he put forward a decidedly tautological vision. In his black canvases, which he called *Ultimate Paintings*, he tried to reflect what he understood to be the unique universal painting: irreducible, unreproducible and imperceptible. In them, the spectator's first glance takes in only the black surface. However, through more careful observation, the presence of a geometric structure becomes apparent. Consequently, the corresponding formless and monochrome compositions, sustained by a modular network, highlight the transcendent element and encapsulate the link that the painter maintained with the abstract expressionists Barnett Newman and Mark Rothko. The corresponding dematerialisation and the gradual search for the idea of the absolute dictated the path followed by Ad Reinhardt, whose works, lying outside time and space, offered a transcendent and immediate experience that would transport the spectator to a mystical plane of existence and foster an eternal involvement. As Michael Fried stated in his essay "Art and Objecthood" (1967), "Presentness is grace". AMB

**Décollage - Nouveau Réalisme** In the late 1950s and early 1960s, an aesthetic reformulation took place in France that sought to counter the abstract experiments that characterised the School of Paris. Contributions to this aim were made by, among other events, Yves Klein's exhibition *Le Vide* (The Void), staged in April 1958, and the first Paris Biennale, which included Raymond Hains's ripped posters and Jean Tinguely's machines. These events heralded what would take place on 26 October 1960, the day on which Pierre Restany,

noting a profound urban culture in all of these manifestations, founded the group *Nouveaux Réalistes*, made up of Arman, Klein, Tinguely, César and Christo, among others, and launched the first of four manifestoes, evoking a new realism of sensibility.

From then on, the artists returned to the ready-made and *assemblages* in order to reflect on the quotidian and its celerity. Abstractionism was thereby countered by a direct approach to the *Kulturindustrie* (Theodor W. Adorno). Appropriating the real, artists such as Hains, Jacques Villeglé and Mimmo Rotella, known as *décollagistes*, denounced the triumphant consumer society. Also within the context of these appropriations are César's compressions, Gérard Deschamps's fetishistic accumulations of female clothing, Daniel Spoerri's compositions (with their allusions to the consumption of food) and Christo's wrappings. Such attitudes would decisively influence the paths taken by Portuguese artists such as Lourdes Castro and René Bertholo. AMB



Jim Dine  
*Black Child's Room*, 1962

**Neo-Dadaism** 1916, New York, Café des Artistes: Marcel Duchamp signs a mural painted by another artist. 1961, Stockholm, Moderna Museet: at the opening of the exhibition *Movement in Art*, Rauschenberg overhears a young woman protesting that one of his works might just as well have been painted by the boxer Ingemar Johansson. Rauschenberg immediately wrote "This is Johansson's painting" across the surface of the work.

Forty-five years separate these episodes whose protagonists were the two key figures of, respectively, Dadaism and a strain of Neo-Dadaism. Whilst different in form and implication, both acts ascribe a new lineage to a work, problematizing notions such as authorship, authority, originality and authenticity.

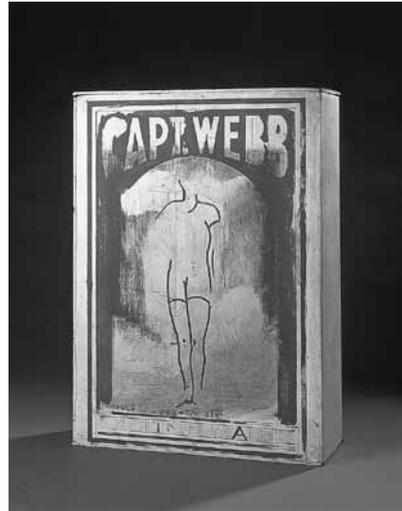
Contemporary artists have taken Dadaism's subversive tendency, its provocative tactics, reflexivity, the importance of reception and/or its critical stance with respect to the commercial commodification and musealization of art. With respect to dadaist devices, strategies and methods of artistic production, they have inherited the use and, consequently, recontextualisation, of everyday objects subjected to varying degrees of intervention, in the form of ready-mades and *assemblages*.

In his text "Reflections on the state of criticism" (1972), Leo Steinberg identifies a reorientation of the compositional plane within the work of certain artists during the 1950s and 60s, making particular reference to Rauschenberg. This reorientation involves a transposition of the vertical to the horizontal, expressed as a shift of focus from nature to culture. What he refers to as the "flatbed picture plane" introduces a profound change in the relationship between the image and the viewer, is a symptom of merging categories and contributes to a reciprocal flow between art and non-art. AD

**British Pop Art** Pop Art appeared in England, where it developed independently of movements in other European countries, where its affirmation met with great resistance to the reality of American trash and the idea of the work of art as a crude commercial image in which the artist has not intervened. However, British Pop Art, which in a certain sense was immersed in Marcel Duchamp's dadaism, albeit with a different attitude, adopted the popular American culture that was then being imposed through the exportation of its products to Europe. That denomination "pop", coined in 1954 by the British critic Lawrence Alloway, emerged in this context to denote works that reflected their involvement in the corresponding popular culture. However, it was not until 1955 that a new awareness emerged under the signs of cosmopolitan life restructured by the effects

of globalisation.

In this context, a group of intellectuals stood out who shared the same aesthetic ideas and embodied a new visual language that was based on elements of consumer society. Centring their discourses on collages, artists such as Richard Hamilton and Eduardo Paolozzi gave form to an initial phase of British pop, using their compositions to mark out a constant evocation of the quotidian and its more technological aspects. In the second phase, in which Peter Blake emerged as a key figure, analogies with the symbols of mass society predominated, with the works tending to incorporate a slight loss of legibility that granted them an illusory character. In turn, Patrick Caulfield, David Hockney and Allen Jones, among others, reprised elements of figuration in a third phase. Contributing to the questioning and subverting of cultural hierarchies, all of these periods reflect the heterogeneous character of British Pop Art, which rejected abstraction and acclaimed realism in its literalness. AMB



Peter Blake  
*Captain Webb Matchbox*, 1961–1962

**American Pop Art** In the early 1960s, New York was home to artists such as Larry Rivers, Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg, whose works, based on a neo-Dadaist trend, established the

transition between Abstractionism and Pop Art. Discrediting the emancipating spirit that had dominated action painting, Pop Art imposed an aesthetic that countered the earlier idea of the autonomy of the creative act. Adopting the cosmopolitan rhythm of the city, which re-emerged in the wake of Fordism and the technological development that followed it, works of art came to seek inspiration in mass society and its iconic elements, promoting the convergence between different spaces of events. The appropriation of the symbols and techniques of advertising culture evident in Claes Oldenburg's pieces and Roy Lichtenstein's cartoons, among other works, were proof of a visual complicity with new American practices.

The city, the stage of life, came to be the centre of inspiration for artists such as Andy Warhol and Tom Wesselman.

Consumer objects, *Campbell* soup tins, *Coca-Cola* bottles or *Brillo* packets, the fruit of mass production and the pillars of the dream of the good life, were repeated in Warhol's works, as were silk-screened portraits of celebrities such as Marilyn Monroe and Liz Taylor, developing and establishing the Factory, his production machine. In Pop Art's awareness of a stereotyped mode of behaviour driven by the whims and desires of a community that lacked discernment in the face of the multiplicity of goods on offer, the movement proposed adopting a position on consumer ideology, reflecting the affirmation of the new capitalism in its references to the excessive repetition of the motifs of "everyday life". AMB

Texts by AnaMary Bilbao [AMB] and Ana Dinger [AD]



Andy Warhol  
*Ten Foot Flowers*, 1967  
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