

DADA SOUND ARCHIVE

May 30 – July 15 2006

opening reception: Tuesday, May 30, 6 – 8 pm

All the styles of the last twenty years came together yesterday. Huelsenbeck, Tzara and Janco took the floor with a “poème simultan” [‘L’Amiral cherche un maison à louer’]. 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.

– Hugo Ball, ‘Flight Out Of Time’, entry from 1916

The SWISS INSTITUTE – CONTEMPORARY ART (S I) is pleased to present a DADA SOUND ARCHIVE, coinciding with The Museum of Modern Art’s major Dada exhibition this summer (Jun 18 - Sept 11). Recognizing Zurich’s historical significance as the birthplace of the anti-art movement, the S I lounge will feature listening stations for recordings of Dada music, poetry and performance by Dadaists including Jean Arp, Hugo Ball, Richard Huelsenbeck, Raoul Hausmann, Kurt Schwitters, Tristan Tzara and others. The aim with the Dada Sound Archive is not to define, but to offer examples of the often under-exposed form of Dada: sound. The spoken word, recited manifesto and sound poem were central to the movement’s diverse history.

A large selection of reading material related to the movement will be available for visitors to explore Dada’s varied manifestations across Europe and New York and the wide spectrum of forms that Dada took. The archive pulls from different available sources of recordings and materials, both from the period between 1916-1922 and from later performances by the authors and artists. The project will inevitably result in showing the contradictions and unclassifiable nature of Dada, which Dada itself embraced.

What is available to us now, in archives and collections (collage, sculpture, writing, poetry, sound experiments, manifestos), ultimately does not flesh out the spirit of Dada. It is the space in between those forms where we find Dada: a movement beyond categorization.

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 nor against them, and I won’t explain myself because I hate common sense. – Tristan Tzara, ‘Dada Manifesto 1918’

>> Also On view at the S I : Philippe Decrauzat / Plate 28