

Press release

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## Dada Africa

Non-Western Sources and Influences

Musée de l'Orangerie

18 October 2017 – 19 February 2018

Exhibition organised in Paris by the Rietberg Museum Zurich, the Berlinische Galerie Berlin and the Musée de l'Orangerie.



Sophie Taeuber-Arp (1889-1943), *Motifs abstraits (masques)*, 1917, gouache sur papier, 34 x 24 cm, Stiftung Arp e.V., Rolandswerth/Berlin © Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin / Rolandswerth, Wolfgang Morell

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The Dada artistic revolt that emerged in Zurich in 1916, in the middle of the upheaval of the Great War, expressed a rejection of the traditional values of civilisation that had led to the disaster of this period.

Against this backdrop, other systems of thought and creation were reassessed, leading many avant-garde artists to study and to take on radically different types of artistic productions. For the first time, and in cooperation with the Musée Rietberg in Zurich and the Berlinische Gallery, an exhibition is being dedicated to the confrontation between the Dadaists and the art and culture of non-European countries.

The stageplay of the *Soirées Nègres* at the Cabaret Voltaire, which appealed to all the senses and combined music, poetry and dance, attacked the very notion of art and challenged the artistic values that were previously upheld. The Coray Gallery in Zurich has been exhibiting African objects alongside Dadaist works since 1917. The same year, Tzara wrote his 'Note on Negro Art', published in the journal SIC, in which he affirmed: "from blackness, let us extract light." Marcel Janco's masks, Sophie Taeuber-Arp's costumes, Hannah Höch's collages and collective works rejecting the notion of the author reflect this search for a new formal language.

This multi-disciplinary exhibition compares non-Western works, both African and Amerindian as well as Asian, with Dadaist productions, emphasising the process of exchange and appropriation by these artists. Dada paintings, sculptures, photocollages and photographs are displayed alongside non-Western sculptures drawing parallels thanks to the scenographic staging of the exhibition. The exhibition in Paris also highlights the fertile ground that was already in place in the French capital for non-European art and the way in which this contributed to the movement.

The exhibition has therefore found its rightful place at the Musée de l'Orangerie, highlighting the connections between the Paul Guillaume Gallery and the actors that gravitated around Dadaism and African art at the time. The exhibition at the Orangerie also opens with the importance of this subject with regards to the origins of the ties between the Surrealist movement and non-Western arts.

### Curators:

**Ralf Burmeister**, Head of Artists' Archives at the Berlinische Galerie in Berlin

**Michaela Oberhofer**, Curator of African and Oceanic Arts at the Rietberg Museum in Zurich

**Esther Tisa Francini**, Head of Written Archives and Research from the Rietberg Museum in Zurich

**Cécile Debray**, Director of the Musée de l'Orangerie

**Cécile Girardeau**, curator at the Musée de l'Orangerie

**Scenography:** Martin Michel / Costanza Matteucci

fondation suisse pour la culture

With the generous support of: **prohelvetia**

**Media Partners:** Paris Première, France Culture, Libération and Les InRocks

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In counterpoint to the exhibition, the works of two contemporary artists will be presented:

- three works by Otobong Nkanga: *In Pursuit of Bling : the Transformation*, *In Pursuit of Bling : The Discovery et Shaping Memory*
- on photography by Athi-Patra Ruga.

With the support of Fabienne Leclerc - Galerie In Situ, Paris.

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## About the exhibition

### Publication

Exhibition catalogue, joint publication by the Musée de l'Orangerie / Hazan, 224 pages, 16,8 x 24 cm, 150 ill., €32

### Exhibition tour

25 October to 10 February on Wednesdays and Saturdays at 4pm

### Tour in sign language

4 November, 9 December et 6 January at 11am.

### Lecture programme

- Wednesday 18 October at 6.30pm, *General presentation of the exhibition*, by Cécile Girardeau, curator of the exhibition
- Wednesday 29 November at 7pm, *Dada and the Arts of Africa: a Radical Primitivism?*, by Maureen Murphy, lecturer in the history of contemporary art, Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne, member of the Institut Universitaire de France
- Wednesday 6 December at 7pm, *"Exhibiting Dada": the Pompidou Centre experience*, by Laurent Le Bon, President of the Musée Picasso-Paris
- Wednesday 13 December at 7pm, *Tristan Tzara et la poésie nègre*, by Henri Béhar, professor emeritus at the Sorbonne, specialist in French avant-garde literature, editor of Complete Works by Tristan Tzara
- Wednesday 3 January at 7pm, *Africa after Dada*, by Philippe Dagen, art historian, professor at the Université de la Sorbonne Paris I Panthéon Sorbonne

**Seminar, *Dada. Hybridation and non Western sources***, Tuesday 23 January from 10 am to 6 pm.

10am – 13pm : visit of the exhibition / 3pm – 6pm at auditorium of Centre allemande d'histoire de l'art

**An evening at the museum for 18-30-year-olds – Saturday 27 January, *A Night of Dada***

### Performance – *Dada Paradis*

8 and 15 December 2017 and 12 and 19 January at 7pm and 8.30pm (theatre/dance/music)

**Performance – *Zoom Dada*** - Tuesday 5 December at 7pm, for all audiences aged 5 and over (gesture theatre/hip-hop with the Théâtre Bascule company)

### Workshops for adults

- **Family: *To Your Masks!*** (25/30 oct., 15/25 nov., 6/20 dec., 4/13/27 jan. and 7 feb. at 3pm); ***To Dada on my Fetish*** (26 oct., 2/18/29 nov., 13/27 dec., 6/17/31 jan. and 3/17 feb. at 3pm) and ***DAD'Azard*** (28 oct., 8/22 nov., 2/16/28 dec., 10/24 jan. and 3/14 feb. at 3pm)
- **Adult: *DAD'Azard*** (Saturdays 4 nov., 9 dec. and 20 jan. at 3pm)

### Practical information

Opening times: open daily except Tuesday from 9 am to 6 pm

Admission: full rate €9 / concessions: €6,50

Access: Place de la Concorde, Jardin des Tuileries (Seine side) 75001 PARIS

Information and switchboard: [www.musee-orangerie.fr](http://www.musee-orangerie.fr) - +33 (0)1 40 49 48 14

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