

Asgmt 1

Lecture VI, Take work as:

- close analysis; style; describe visual phenomena (+ analysis: translate them into words)
 - preparation, using the resources we are given (readings), how approach + ideas can be applied to a chosen work $\Rightarrow$ establish a dialogue between work and article)
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~~Relationship~~ (Benjamin on Dada)

$\rightarrow$ Arp's work is made through chance, an operation external to the self: the short-fuse process of absorption (no deliberate intention like Mondrian)

No aura in the painting (also see Schwitters)

Arts

$\rightarrow$ Dada must start in Zurich during WW1 (people escape to the neutral city)
Cabaret Voltaire, initially lead by poet Hugo Ball, is the reunion place of Dada
see: Flight Out of Time, Hugo Ball

Art Historian: T.J. Demos analyzes it as a reaction to nationalism: people leave their own countries, to this polyglot town Zurich (people speaks many languages)
He argues that they distance themselves from national identity (reading of sound poetry): departure from your mother's tongue

$\rightarrow$ Dada as a reaction to nationalism (distancing yourself from it)

$\rightarrow$ Willful act of deracination; but as a consequence they also include primitivism.
After Ball, Tristan Tzara takes the lead of Dada. Turns it into a journal distributed in Europe (& moves Dada to Paris)

$\rightarrow$ In Russia, Eisenstein's Battleship Potemkin. Benjamin connects Dada to him:

+ Gendharova inspired by Matisse; Malevich paints forests (inspired by Legér)
rationalism $\rightarrow$ cubo futurist; representing peasant life

(then in 1915) Suprematism, pure geometry but not perfect geometry (always some distance from platonic ideal & what has been produced)

murder of artists

last

Treats to painting's supremacy over reality

Dynamic energy (not schematized); just representing the energy

"O.10 the last futurist exhibition"

+ engagement is the revolution
(move into the nature of composition - production)
integrate *fabbrica* more intensely

... → Kazimir Malevich Black Square on

making plans the material feature of his work
white on white: intentional that geometry is not perfect. surface intensely
worked over: speaks to the material presence of paint: term "*fabbrica*"
(emphasize materiality of work)

Mondrian: god has relat. to the window (spiritual)

Malevich: materiality of the painting itself

→ Vladimir Tatlin sees the guitar; and emphasizes the materiality of the construction.

But not interested in turning the material back to the image

⇒ he wants material to stay visible / legible as material (idea of *fabbrica*)
compose with non-art material but not transforming material
(1914)

→ Popova tries to negotiate both goals in *Painterly Architecture*.

x suprematism

x relat. to spatial / architectural construct. (see Tatlin)

→ Alexander Rodchenko (1921) *Tricolor Monochrome Triptych*

(later on known for his photography / producing visual imagery of the revolution)
spatial construct. pieces with new material. Develop means of exhibit. which all but
eliminates his use for interpretation

⇒ arrives to the conclusion to arrive at the monochrome & declares this the end
of painting

... → Tzara brings Dada from Zurich to Paris; looking to topple the existing literary establishment in particular with André Breton.

Will promulgate Dada through performance (Tzara advertizes working with Chaplin)

⇒ Tzara keeps sneering at meaning, happy in antagonist position while Breton wants to keep adapting Dada, find logic in the world and looks at other resources (Psychoanalysis, Surrealism, even relativity)

Breton in 1921 organizes the Grand Salon Dada, involves mechanisms

ex: Mock trials (Aragon, Breton, Tzara, Borel, Taylor). Borel is a big figure in literature; individualist anarchist in his youth, embodies French nationalism and had a prominent role in the Dreyfus Affair

Breton really wanted to weigh Borel's merits; trial ends in bedlam because of Benjamin Paré in the costume of a German military soldier acting as the soldier inconnu (he is an object of national pride), people storm the stage and start chanting the hymne nationale.

→ Dada becomes seen as a foreign mvmt that is sketchy

He ends up proving how strong nationalism is at the time, & affects the split btwn Tzara and Breton: 1923 where B organizes a congress of artistic mvmts but T antagonizes; B attacks him in print as "strange mvmt that comes from Zurich" and efforts to organize implode

Before: Dada & Surrealism grouped together

After: Mvmts become separate

⑫ Automatic message: Manifesto of Surrealism, André Breton 1924

⇒ oriented to Freud's world of the unconscious (psychoanalysis)

He identifies Freud as a way of accessing this "lost territory" but he doesn't completely agree with Freud

ex: Dream (F: relationship with father & mother; B: associates with collective vision; more romantic)

Absolute reality → Surreality ("super realism")

meeting point btwn unconscious & conscious

Idea as a means of writing (more rapidly than you can think)

outpace the consent mind (product as alien to you as to other people)

⇒ automatic writing. ~~It~~ It has a correlate in the visual arts

strategy 1:

... automatic drawing: exceed current mind & access unconscious thoughts (the repressed, dreams & desires)

Automatism: André Masson \ look for the Comex article: precedent found in outsider art

strategy 2: corps exquis (paper made by multiple people)
composite of different forms @ nothing expected

=> romanticize the figure of the mentally ill: pre-natural understanding of psychic forces. "pure vision"

strategy 3:

Grattage: Max Ernst, The Forest

Add layers of paint then scrape paint off the canvas

quasi-mechanical, impersonal method of scraping away. He then adds to what he sees in the forms, lets the img create suggestions for him and just adds to the composition

BUT: img begins with something external to Ernst himself (but not like chance). They're related but they have different aims

(Amp: refusal of meaning, absolute separatⁿ btwn subject & intention)

(Ernst: access latent unconscious energies, awoken w/ external stimuli)

Ernst seems to have fewer allus^{ns} to romanticize the condition of mental illness (Foster)

=> Mentally ill is not "purer" / "existing outside modernity" but he feels individually fractured (schizophrenia)

=> you have to look at their art as attempts to restore rationality or order that has been lost

strategy 4: Frottage (rub ink btwn 2 pieces of paper)

strategy 5: Collage: Ernst, The Master's bedroom (paints over another painting)
Foster says "emphasizes procedures of surrealism"

Surrealism is not a style but a series of strategies. It is therefore like dada (overlap in the personnel); both emphasize strategies to complicate the place of subject in work. Dada vs Surrealism: use of rhetoric, set of concerns
Surrealism: access the unconscious.

surrealism

... engages in Poetry, Photography (v important), sculpture

Part IV: Surrealist visions

→ Dali: depicts the dreams in a naturalistic way

+ Tanning, Carrington: hallucinated imagery, attempts on level of form to break the naturalism

/ Children's Games: combine image-making with surrealism

+ De Chirico (1914-15): singular moment; anachronistic air; (in line of futurism)
(one of those who Breton retro-actively claims for surrealism)

The Duo: uses warped perspective; also unsettling juxtaposition
(objects out of context)

+ Ernst, The Elephant Calf

→ Max Ernst achieves a surrealist art by using a cubist vocabulary (Nanima Tower)
in Sybille, logic of automatism but here you also see color as an extra
step, which turns into biologic form

→ Juan Miró: degree of automatism at first, then ajunt to create a final
composition (see: stars in the sex of a snail)

→ Picasso claimed for surrealism (Three Dancers, Seated Bather)
return to the broken forms of cubism, but directed towards expressive
purposes.

→ Paul Klee: deliberately naïve style

Forty explains how Klee looks at art of mentally ill, inspired
by it he seems to be more romantic about their art (pure vision)
(Room perspective with inhabitant) speaks to a destabilized psychic order
(suggestion of one-point perspective BUT grid defects / collapses suggest depth)

... confuses background & foreground, interpret that the mentally ill can't situate space

Part IV Surrealist Politics

- ⇒ What is their relationship to Politics? (They asked the quest. to Honderd Louis Aragon leaves because not enjoyed enough)
- Benjamin says that surrealists develop a theory of freedom (liberation) that communists have not found.
Liberalism is not effective to address "the self" (unlike nationalism)
Surrealism as the "out motive": they use found imagery & objects from the just past (what would have been their childhood)
- Push towards novelty: objects that are the residue of history that bring anachronism in the present
⇒ Surrealism as "leftist theory of liberation"
- Anti-colonial engagement: exhibition "The truth of the colonies" as counter-exhibition to "art of the colonies"
argument: sculptures are sophisticated works of art (not fetiches); the fetiches are the colonial emblems
⇒ reverse the direct. of primitivism
"un peuple qui est opprimé d'autres ne saurait être libre" - Marx
- Political astuteness with Breton who engages more for anti-colonialism
He travels more, including Mexico