

MARCEL DUCHAMP / JEAN DUPUY

28.04.2017 - 27.05.2017

Marcel and Jean. Duchamp and Dupuy. An encounter. One of those predictable encounters between artists of different periods that is not founded on an aesthetic debt. What do they stem from? What are they based on? Or, in other words: what legitimates these encounters of an nth kind? It is tempting to give a curt reply: nothing. Or rather, yes: the artists themselves. Yes: what justifies these encounters, what makes them irreplaceable, are the artists alone, the artists and nothing but the artists (as in Montaigne's famous remark about his friendship with La Boétie: "Because it was he, because it was I.").

Yet we might wonder how these mysterious magnetisations took place? The word "spirit", which derives from "breath" etymologically, should quite naturally impose itself. George Maciunas¹ spontaneously used it to define the intangibility of Fluxus and the mixing of those who made up its core ("individuals with something unnameable in common", said George Brecht), nevertheless adding a multitude of theoretical-ludic specificities to exclude himself from any connotations this term might have. And with good reason: spirit is a designation that is even more uncontrollable than Fluxus, embracing willy nilly nearly everything relating to thought. We thus sensibly prefer, as Galerie Loevenbruck invites us to do, the term "affinity" to describe one of these encounters, as remarkable as it was evident: that of the *Young Fluxus* Dupuy with the Dadaist Duchamp. We could even expressly talk of "elective affinity"² in their case.

The expression is well-known, having become part of everyday speech. It comes from afar. Medieval alchemy used the word affinity to designate the ability of bodies to combine with each other; to which, from the eighteenth century, scholars added the qualifier elective, which Goethe later seized on to designate by analogy the attraction between human beings. With this clarification: attraction does not boil down to natural inclination; it is coupled with the idea of choice. That is a fundamental point: no encounter is an accident. And that of Dupuy and Duchamp was a sought-after meeting. It was Dupuy who wanted to place some of his works opposite Duchamp's *Grand Verre* (*La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même*), with no other wish but to provoke a dialogue. About what? About an essential subject: eroticism.

Rouge à lèvres (1990 – 1973/2016)^A is particularly emblematic of the works presented at Galerie Loevenbruck, and condenses, both in the psychoanalytical sense of the term and in its practically metaphorical formulation, unconscious desire. Other pieces echo it, playing on language and colour, notably the now famous anagram *Trou/verge* (1977), of which there are three versions here: a sort of mini transportable peep show (1991); a wooden mechanism producing a back-and-forth motion (1991); and, with the title *Origine d'un genre* (1993)^B, a device whose motors activate two paper discs on which are inscribed, in green and red, the word *vert* and the word *rouge*. Another anagram, written in black paint on a large canvas (*La Paresse des voies ferrées*, 2009/2017)^C, produced for the occasion, makes

1. In 1976 Jean Dupuy met George Maciunas, the founder of Fluxus. He bought his loft for next to nothing when Maciunas left New York for the countryside, hoping to found a new artistic community there. A series of photographs taken in 1977 in Massachusetts – where Maciunas lived until his death in 1978 – "An Evening with Olga Adorno, René Block, Billie and George Maciunas", is presented in the exhibition. We see the participants pose, with Dupuy, wearing wigs.

2. The exact title of the cycle proposed by Galerie Loevenbruck, which opens with this encounter between Marcel Duchamp and Jean Dupuy, is "EN AFFINITÉ(S)", a more elaborate expression than the use of only the noun *affinité*. *En* underlines the idea of communion. The cycle will pair Tetsumi Kudo with Key Hiraga, then René Magritte with Philippe Mayaux.

a direct reference to Duchamp. It was based on one of his strange, but perfectly comprehensible, sentences: “*Faut-il réagir contre la paresse des voies ferrées entre deux passages de trains?*” (“Should one react against the laziness of railway tracks between the passage of two trains?”) Which Dupuy turns into *Le passage des tirs par la voie serrée de fesses en transe*. One could imagine, as he often confided, that the switches were only found by groping around, which, of course, pertains to the erotic operation.

Another reference: Jean-Jacques Rousseau. And, dare it be said, other gropings with *Les Confessions de Rousseau* (1981/2011)^D. In the configuration presented at Galerie Loevenbruck, this is an installation made up of an odd red chair, two photographs and an anagram on paper³. The function of the chair seems difficult to understand from only the title, which, anagrammatised and ending with a question mark, is not much more enlightening: “S. EROS CAUSE DE NOS LIENS FOUS?” Equipped with a single armrest and webbing with, on top of the back, a device to restrain the shoulders extended by two metal stems with wing nuts, the chair is a sort of barber’s chair and instrument of torture. If one wonders at first glance what Rousseau is doing here, the question is soon answered because Dupuy has taken pains to remove the mystery with the two attached photographs. The first represents him sitting on said chair, his left arm attached to the armrest, the right arm reading a book that we see is Rousseau’s *Confessions*; the second photograph reveals the page of the *Confessions* read by Dupuy and, circled with a black felt tip, these lines: “I was more than thirty before I laid eyes on any of those dangerous books that a beautiful lady of the world finds awkward, as she says, because they can only be read with one hand.”

Intended as the culmination of the encounter, the enigmatic *Grand Verre* rises amid Dupuy’s works like a guillotine, divided in two equal parts. It questions the visible and the invisible, instils desire and frustration, carrying, in the words of Duchamp, “the mind of the spectator towards other regions more verbal”. Dupuy joyfully welcomes it with a toast. Hence *Le P’tit Rouge* (1998)^E, a stemmed glass filled with wine placed on a plinth, stationed beside it, like a clownish appendage of the *Grand Verre*. No positive encounter is complete without a toast. To whom? To what? To Eros for life, of course! Eros? The winged cherub pointing his arrow is clearly not sexless. *Une ange* (1992)^F features an angel with red, red lips: a real figure of love.

Arnaud Labelle-Rojoux

3. During its first presentation at the Galerie Jean-Claude Riedel in 1981, the installation *Le Plaisir solitaire* brought together *Les Confessions de Rousseau* and *Le Plaisir solitaire* proper. This piece, which opened the exhibition, was made up of a pile of batteries, a projector lighting (or more precisely irisating) the expression “L’Éros” inscribed on a large canvas located several metres from the projector (“*La pile irisait l’éros*” is the anagram of “*Le plaisir solitaire*”). *Les Confessions de Rousseau*, which one discovered afterwards, presented the red chair in front of the anagram “S. EROS CAUSE DE NOS LIENS FOUS?”, also written on a large canvas, which was attached to a metal pipe. The two photographs together on the same support pierced with eyelet holes were also hung from a metal tube.

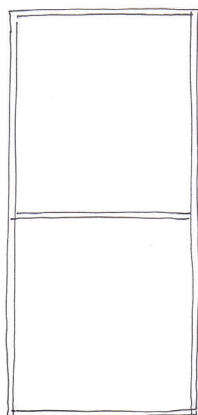
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ROUGE À LÈVRES → x 8
 VERS ROUGES
 VERS LÉGERS .
 ROUE ROUGE
 LA LÈVRE GOULUE
 S'OUVRE LARGE
 À LA VERGE ROUGE.
 ROULE À REVERS.
 RÊVE À .
 OSE,
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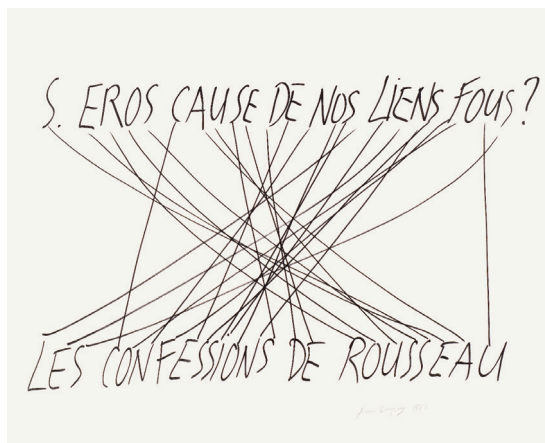
A.

B.



RÉGIONS DU GRAND VERTRE -
 DON DE MME DUKHANS
 AU COLLÈGE DE CHATELAINROUX

1998 - EXPOSITION DUPUY "LE PETIT ROUGE"



C.

D.

FAUT-IL RÉAGIR CONTRE

1. LA PARESSE DES VOIES FERRÉES ENTRE LE PASSAGE DES TRAINS



2. LE PASSAGE DES TIRIS PAR LA VOIE SERRÉE DE FESSES EN TRANSÉ

LA QUESTION 1 A ÉTÉ POSÉE PAR DUCHAMP
 J'AI POSÉ LA QUESTION 2 (47/12)
 Dupuy



E.

F.