

ARP

Stiftung Arp e.V. Papers

Hans Arp and the United States

Volume 1

Edited by Maike Steinkamp and Loretta Würtenberger



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Table of Contents

- 8 **Foreword**
Engelbert Büning
- 10 **Hans Arp and the United States – An Introduction**
Loretta Würtenberger
- 32 **Arp’s Reception and Impact in the New York
Art World between 1936 and 1966**
Catherine Craft
- 53 **One Man Laboratory: Hans Arp and the
Museum of Modern Art**
Cara Manes
- 69 **A Dada Among Pragmatists**
Brandon Taylor
- 88 **Across the Atlantic: The Correspondence and
Friendship between Hans Arp and Frederick Kiesler**
Stephanie Buhmann
- 107 **The Exile Connection: Walter Gropius’
Commission of the “Harvard Relief” from Hans Arp**
Maike Steinkamp

- 124 **Dreams and Projects: Hans Arp and
Curt Valentin in New York**
Eric Robertson
- 142 **The Loyal Underdog: Observations on
Hans Arp and Galerie Chalette**
Arie Hartog
- 162 **Arp and the Sidney Janis Gallery: Fifty Years**
Carroll Janis
- 173 **Hans Arp in American Collections**
David Nash
- 186 **Chronology: Hans Arp and the United States**
- 200 **Contributors**
- 204 **Photocredits**



Paul Weller: Richard Huelsenbeck, Hans Richter and Hans Arp in New York, 1949, Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth

Foreword

Engelbert Büning

After the Second World War the work of Hans Arp (1886–1966) achieved widespread renown. Above all, his works resonated with American collectors and were recognized by museums and galleries in the United States. The first major solo exhibition of Arp's career was at Curt Valentin's gallery in New York in 1949; it was also the artist's first solo show in the US. Many museum and gallery exhibitions and commissions were to follow.

Arp was in close contact with artists, collectors and other important figures in the American art world well before the Second World War. He was friends with both Hilla von Rebay as well as Peggy Guggenheim and was in touch with the American collector and painter Albert E. Gallatin, who promoted his work and that of his wife Sophie Taeuber in the United States. Arp's works were also showcased in the Museum of Modern Art's exhibitions *Cubism and Abstract Art* (1936) and *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* (1936/37), both of which played significant roles in disseminating European modernism in the US. Thus, by the beginning of the 1950s, the newest generation of American artists began responding to Arp's work. Jackson Pollock, Robert Rauschenberg, Donald Judd and Ellsworth Kelly engaged intensely with the artist's oeuvre, to name just a few.

The present volume, which is the first in the Stiftung Arp e.V.'s new series of scholarly publications, illuminates the wide-ranging aspects of Hans Arp's influence and reception in the US from multiple viewpoints. This publication is a pioneering effort, as Arp's influence on post-war American art, his contacts with collectors, patrons and artists have not yet been fully explored. Nor has enough attention been paid to the presence of his art in exhibitions, galleries and on the art market in the US, all of which have informed the reception of his work to this day. Most of the primary sources quoted in the subsequent essays are housed in the archive of the Stiftung Arp e.V.

A central aspect of our mission is to continue to make these valuable resources available for future research.

The following essays represent the findings of the conference *Hans Arp and the US*, which was initiated and organized by the Stiftung Arp e.V. and took place at the American Academy in Berlin in June 2015. My sincere thanks to our partners in collaboration, the Georg Kolbe Museum and its Director Dr. Julia Wallner and the American Academy and its former Director Gary Smith in particular, who from the very beginning was open to the idea of an Arp conference on the marvelous premises of the Academy on Berlin's Wannsee. In this regard, I would also like to thank Academy Trustee Dr. Christine I. Wallich and especially Simone Donecker, Program Manager at the American Academy, who ensured that the event ran smoothly. Special thanks goes to Dr. Maike Steinkamp, who has served as our curator since 2012, and who supervised the conceptual and organizational aspects of the conference and publication.

We are pleased to publish the findings of the conference, expanded into essays that enrich our multifaceted theme of Arp in the United States. I would like to thank Pierre Becker and his team at the Berlin agency Ta-Trung for designing and implementing the striking layout of this book. Copyediting lay in the hands of Dr. Sarah McGavran, who was also responsible for translating the German-language essays. Sincere thanks to her for her consistently meticulous work. Additional thanks are extended to Maja Stadler-Euler, the General Secretary of the Foundation as well as to Dr. Loretta Würtenberger and Daniel Tümpel of Fine Art Partners, who have advised the Stiftung Arp e.V. since 2010 and who have been significantly involved in the conception and realization of both the conference as well as the book.

Special thanks go to the authors of the book *Hans Arp and the United States*, who have contributed a host of new insights into the work and significance of Hans Arp in the US. The authors draw an impressive picture of an artist who was active worldwide, and whose works definitively shaped the history of art in the twentieth century. Highlighting Arp's significance, furthering the scholarly discourse on his work and opening up new avenues for exploration are the central concerns of the Stiftung Arp e.V. This book is the first step in that direction.

Hans Arp and the United States

An Introduction

Loretta Würtenberger

Born as an Alsatian I belong as well to the French as to the German Culture. As a Pioneer of Concrete Art I owe a great deal to America which for so many years has been sympathetic to my work.¹

Hans Arp's (1886–1966) relationship with America began during his early days in Dada and still thrives today. Ties were tentatively established in the mid 1920s, when Arp was initially recognized as a member of various European art movements and intensified after the war, when Arp was celebrated as an artist. At the same time, it was not a relationship that seemed destined from the start. Arp neither spoke English nor was he particularly interested in American culture or ways of life. He was European through and through; as a native Alsatian he spoke French and German and he lived, thought and worked within the European cultural sphere, first in Alsace and Switzerland and later in Paris and Locarno. Nevertheless, Arp's exposure to the American art world left a distinct impression on American art and on his oeuvre. After World War II, the enthusiasm of collectors and museums made America the most important sounding board for Arp's work.

Arp's Reception as a Member of the European Avant-Garde from 1926–1944

A group exhibition hosted by the Société Anonyme at the Brooklyn Museum of Art in New York in 1926 showed Arp for the first time in America. The artist was represented by two reliefs, including *Bird-Man* (1924–1925) (*fig. 1*)². Founded by Katherine S. Dreier, Man Ray and Marcel Duchamp as the “first experimental Museum for Modern Art”, the Société Anonyme organized countless exhibitions, readings, concerts and symposia in order to



Fig. 1 Hans Arp: *Bird-Man*, c. 1920, painted wood, 29 × 20,9 cm, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Gift of Katherine S. Dreier to the Collection Société Anonyme

promote the international Avant-Garde. Since the art world was centered in Europe before the war, American artists followed developments there closely. Group shows like this one exposed many other European artists to the American public, including Alexander Archipenko, Constantin Brâncusi, Heinrich Campendonk, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Fernand Léger and Piet Mondrian.

Arp had lived in Paris, the capital of the European art world, with his first wife Sophie Taeuber-Arp (1889–1943) since 1925. These were years of fruitful exchange, during which Arp oscillated between several artists' groups. Before making inroads into sculpture in 1930, he had developed his formal language in relief and on paper. It was also in Paris that he first came into contact with American artists such as Man Ray and Alexander Calder. When the latter lived in Paris from 1926 to 1927 and again from 1930 to 1933,

he joined the artists' group Abstraction-Création, to which Taeuber-Arp and Arp likewise belonged. Calder later remembered: "Arp said, 'What did you call those things you exhibited last year? Stables?'"³ This is how the term *stables*, the term used to denote Calder's stationary sculptures to this day, was born.⁴

Yet the most important encounter of Arp's Paris years for the present subject was with Albert E. Gallatin (1881–1952). Gallatin was the son of an affluent New York family and founder of the Gallery of Living Art in New York. Having made his early acquisitions in American art of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Gallatin joined the Société Anonyme in 1920. The group sparked his interest in the European Avant-Garde and thereafter he began collecting artists like Braque, Cézanne, Gris and Picasso as well as contemporary European art. Gallatin had a keen interest in transatlantic artistic exchange. Not only did he want to buy significant works of art in Europe to send back to the United States, but he also hoped to wield influence in Paris. With roots in French-speaking Switzerland, Gallatin felt a special affinity for the City of Light. His most important contact was the artist Jean Hélion, who as a member of Abstraction-Création had close ties to the Paris art scene. Significantly, Hélion also spoke English, which was unusual at the time.

In May of 1935 Gallatin traveled to Paris to visit artists' studios, as he so often did. Along with many other artists, including Piet Mondrian and Joaquín Torres-García, he finally wanted to meet Hans Arp.⁵ The visit appears to have been successful, as the two remained in contact and Gallatin purchased two works from Arp: the wood relief *Vase-Bust* and the gouache *Head-Nose*, both of 1930. These were the first works by Arp to enter into an American collection. At the same time, Gallatin, who disdained any form of "German" art, ignored the fact that Arp was also of German heritage. Since Arp had possessed a French passport since 1926, Gallatin categorized him as "French".⁶

Arp's professional relationship with Gallatin was of decisive importance for the recognition and reception of his oeuvre in America. Gallatin's private collection, which he put on display in his Gallery of Living Art, became *the* collection in New York over the course of the 1930s. It exposed interested members of the American public to biomorphic abstraction, thereby expanding the American vocabulary of abstraction beyond Cubism.

In 1938 Arp's first solo exhibition took place in Gallatin's newly renamed Museum of Living Arts. It consisted of 18 paper collages, watercolors and reliefs. In contrast, the sculptures Arp had been working on since the early 1930s held little interest for Gallatin; he appreciated Arp's contribution to abstract painting to a far greater extent. Jean Héliion later remembered:

This pair of Arp and Mondrian had a very good influence through me on Gallatin because they both represented a complete form of art. Both of them made a complete and very rich opposition [...]. I made [Gallatin] go frankly towards abstract art, where before [his collection] was a mixture of cubist, pre-cubist, and abstract art [...]. My influence upon him is that he did clarify his collection. With accent on Mondrian, and Léger and Arp.⁷

As Gail Stavitsky has demonstrated, the works by Arp that were shown at the Gallery of Living Art had a major influence on American art at that time: "Impressed by Arp's torn-paper collages, de Kooning eventually adapted this technique in his black and white paintings of the late 1940s and his *Woman* series of the early 1950s."⁸

As the business relationship between Gallatin and the Arps solidified, the dealer commissioned the couple to travel through Germany in order to purchase works by El Lissitzky, Lazló Moholy-Nagy, Piet Mondrian and Kurt Schwitters. In the late 1930s, Gallatin also financed the journal *plastique*, which Sophie Taeuber-Arp had founded in 1937. The bilingual publication had transatlantic appeal. Concerned with movements such as Suprematism, Constructivism and Surrealism, the third issue was dedicated to abstract art in America. However, due to the onset of the war, publication ceased after only five issues.

Arp's second important liaison in the United States developed in the mid-1930s with Alfred Barr (1902–1981), the legendary founding director of the Museum of Modern Art. Barr, too, first understood Hans Arp within the broader context of the European Avant-Garde: when he was preparing for his two major survey exhibitions *Cubism and Abstract Art and Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* in the spring of 1936, he visited Arp in Paris. Barr included 25 works by Arp in his exhibitions, which would travel to six further American museums. Later Barr bestowed upon Arp the honorary title of "one man laboratory for the discovery of new form".⁹

Arp was first exhibited in commercial galleries in the US in 1934, first at the John Becker Gallery, and then at the San Francisco gallery owned by Howard Putzel, who later became one of Peggy Guggenheim's most important advisors.¹⁰

Irrespective of Arp's institutional reception in America, which was growing at a similar rate to that in Europe, the artist turned his attention to the United States for entirely new reasons in the late 1930s. Fleeing the National Socialists' regime of intimidation, more and more European artists and intellectuals immigrated to the USA. Among them were several of Arp's close friends, including Max Ernst, Josef Albers, Frederick Kiesler, Hans Richter and Richard Huelsenbeck. Arp also wondered whether he should go. In 1936 he wrote to Josef Albers:

You're lucky. How I would like to have a faculty position in America. Living conditions for artists on the disgusting dung heap of Europe are becoming all but impossible. If you could find me a teaching position in America, I would be so grateful to you.¹¹

Albers responded positively and in 1936 arranged an invitation for Arp to teach at Black Mountain College, which he turned down for reasons unknown.

Political developments in the 1940s meant that the topic of immigration remained open. Between 1940 and 1942, Hans Arp and Sophie Taeuber-Arp applied for an immigration visa to the United States. The Museum of Modern Art had offered to pay for their passage, but that was not enough to secure a visa. Hoping for better chances of immigrating to the United States from Switzerland, they traveled to Zurich in November 1942. Sophie Taeuber-Arp died suddenly only eight weeks later on January 12, 1943. Arp was deeply affected by her death. Alongside many other factors, the tragic event also had an impact on his efforts to emigrate from Europe, which suddenly and painfully ceased.

The Interim Years: 1944–1949

For Hans Arp, the end of the Second World War coincided with the private catastrophe of Sophie Taeuber-Arp's death. Over the following five years, both Arp and the world had to rebuild. Around 1947, Arp slowly began to work on his sculpture again.¹² Little by little, he returned to life.

In the 1940s, Peggy Guggenheim (1898–1979) gave Arp further visibility in the United States. She and Arp had been friends for a long time, and she owned several of his pieces. After twenty years in Europe, Guggenheim returned to her hometown of New York in 1941 and opened the gallery Art of this Century the following year, in 1942. She exhibited Arp that first year and dedicated a solo show to his work in 1944.

In 1941 Peggy Guggenheim had also married Max Ernst (1891–1976), who was one of Arp's closest friends. For Hans Arp and Max Ernst, it was "friendship at first sight". In accordance with their personal bond, their art was featured in several group exhibitions in the 1930s, including the MoMA exhibition *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism*. Ernst was able to flee Europe with Peggy Guggenheim in 1941. Shortly after their arrival in the United States, they took a trip through what was for Max Ernst an unknown and fascinating country, making stops in California, New Mexico, Arizona and New Orleans. In 1942, Ernst met the American artist Dorothea Tanning, whom he moved in with a year later. The United States became Ernst's new homeland, while Arp remained in Europe hoping for a visa.

Perhaps that was also the reason that the artists' friendship dwindled during Ernst's years in America. Arp would travel to the United States twice in 1949 and 1950, but never met up with Ernst while he was there. It was not until the end of 1950 that the two saw each other again in Paris. In 1954, after Ernst had returned to Europe, both were awarded the Grand Prize at the twenty-seventh Venice Biennale – Arp for sculpture and Ernst for painting – and they joyfully celebrated together.

The course of this friendship with Max Ernst is exemplary for the present theme of "Hans Arp and the US". Many of Arp's old friends from Paris had taken the bold step of immigration. Arp maintained contact from afar, but these relationships should not be overestimated when it comes to the dissemination of his oeuvre. None of Arp's friends directly influenced the reception of his work in America. Arp was also unaffected by the fact that many of his friends now lived in America: in his letters he never inquired about their lives abroad or new artistic developments. In 1948 Josef Albers tried to lure Arp to America once more:

As I mentioned many years ago, I would like to know [when] you are in the States and then possibly see you here at Black Mountain. Although I don't know how long you plan to be in America, I would like to discuss whether you could take over a teaching position. [...] if you like it here, then we could probably arrange a long-term position.¹³

Whether and how Arp answered this letter remains unknown, but clearly he did not accept Albers' renewed invitation. It is possible that this had to do with the intensification of the relationship between Hans Arp and Marguerite Hagenbach (1902–1994). Arp and his first wife Sophie Taeuber-Arp had met the patron and collector in 1932. From 1935–1939, Hagenbach had supported the artist couple with a monthly stipend. In return, once a year she received a work of art from Sophie and another from Hans. She had developed a friendship with both artists, and remembered Hans during a period of intense isolation:

He was understandably lonely and called one morning at five in despair and told me that I had to come to France. Arp's niece told me later that he thought I would come the very next morning [...].¹⁴

After the war and the tragic loss of Sophie, Marguerite was able to provide Arp with both emotional as well as financial stability. Soon she would assume most of Arp's correspondence with galleries, museums, collectors and friends in the United States. Marguerite Hagenbach's fluent English certainly played a role. As the many preserved letters convey, she was an outstanding manager. She negotiated prices, coordinated exhibitions, ensured that insurance coverage was sufficient, addressed copyright issues and image reproductions and kept track of which works were where. When it came to technical and financial matters, Marguerite was clear and articulate, yet cordial and worldly in tone, demonstrating that she was fully prepared to administer Arp's successful career in the 1950s and 1960s. Moreover, it is admirable that she promoted also Sophie Taeuber-Arp's art without betraying any jealousy towards Arp's first marriage.

The division of labor – with Arp concentrating on his art and Hagenbach responsible for communicating with the outside world – also extended to Arp's personal correspondence. Eventually, Marguerite wrote almost

exclusively to his friends on his behalf. For example, she wrote to Max Ernst in June of 1960: “he’s in his studio after being away all week, it is his true work that takes precedence” and apologized that Arp could not respond himself to his friend’s well wishes. This arrangement was highly beneficial for Arp. He could concentrate on his work, which entered into a new and highly productive phase at the end of the 1940s.

Resounding Success: 1950 Onwards

At the end of World War II the art market in Europe was devastated. Its center shifted from Paris to New York. For European artists who aspired to international careers at this juncture, it was of crucial importance to gain access to the American art world. Arp was successful in this endeavor because his work had aroused the interest of New York’s most important art dealers.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Arp’s ties to the United States paid off. The artist’s dealers contributed to his success story over the course of the 1950s, making Arp one of the most sought after European artists of his generation.

After 1950, it was almost impossible to miss Arp in New York. Between 1950 and 1985 there were an astounding 16 exhibitions of his work. Moreover, between 1950 and 1977, there was an Arp exhibition every two years.¹⁶

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1949 | <i>Jean Arp</i> , Buchholz Gallery – Curt Valentin, New York |
| 1950 | <i>Arp – Taeuber-Arp</i> , Sidney Janis Gallery, New York |
| 1953 | <i>Dada 1916–1923</i> , Sidney Janis Gallery, New York |
| 1954 | <i>Jean Arp</i> , Curt Valentin Gallery, New York |
| 1958 | <i>Arp</i> , Museum of Modern Art, New York |
| 1960 | <i>Arp – Sophie Taeuber-Arp</i> , Galerie Chalette, New York,
The Arts Club of Chicago and Walker Art Center,
Minneapolis |
| | <i>Arp – Mondrian</i> , Sidney Janis Gallery, New York |
| 1962 | <i>Arp, Drawings and Collages</i> ,
Grace Borgenicht Gallery, New York |
| 1963 | <i>Arp 23–63</i> , Sidney Janis Gallery, New York |
| 1965 | <i>Jean Arp</i> , Galerie Chalette, New York |

- 1968 *Arp*, Sidney Janis Gallery, New York
Dada, Surrealism and their Heritage,
Museum of Modern Art, New York
Art Memorial Exhibition,
U.C.L.A. Art Galleries, Los Angeles,
Dallas Museum of Fine Arts and
Guggenheim Museum, New York
- 1970 *Arp*, Grace Borgenicht Gallery, New York
- 1971 *An Arp Garden of Marbles and Bronzes*,
Sidney Janis Gallery, New York
- 1972 *Jean Arp*, Metropolitan Museum, New York
- 1975/76 *Jean Arp*, Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh,
Seattle Art Museum and San Francisco Museum of Art
- 1976 *Jean Arp*, Guggenheim Museum, New York
- 1977 *Arp on Paper*, Museum of Modern Art, New York,
McNay Art Institute, San Antonio,
Texas and University Art Museum, Berkeley, California
- 1983 *Jean Arp, The Dada Reliefs*, National Gallery of Art,
Washington, D.C.

The architects of Arp's American success were the gallerists Curt Valentin and Sidney Janis, as well as Arthur and Madeleine Lejwa of the Galerie Chalette. It must however be noted that when it came to the American art world of that time, "America" was largely restricted to New York and the East Coast. New York as a microcosm comes into sharper focus when viewing a map: Arp's three dealers were scattered only a few hundred meters from each other in Manhattan, all on 57th street.

Gallery Sidney Janis 15 E 57th
Gallery Buchholz 32 E 57th
Galerie Chalette 54 W 57th

Thus, it comes as no surprise that today most of Arp's works are found in East Coast museums and private collections.¹⁷

Arp Dealers

Curt Valentin (1902–1954) was the first art dealer to represent Arp in New York. Born in Hamburg in 1901, Valentin learned his trade alongside Kahnweiler, Flechtheim and Buchholz before emigrating to the United States, where he opened his own gallery under the name of the Buchholz Gallery – Curt Valentin.

On January 18, 1949, the first Arp exhibition opened at the Buchholz Gallery. The opening provided Hans Arp and Marguerite Hagenbach with the opportunity to travel to the United States for the first time, as Curt Valentin had offered to cover their travel.¹⁸ Marguerite Hagenbach wrote a lively description of the trip (*fig. 2*):

We traveled by boat, in economy class of course, since our finances were tight. That was the reason that we ended up in separate cabins – I stayed with three other women, and Arp shared a room with three men. It was a rough crossing, but since we both had our sea legs, we snuck out of the cabins full of seasick passengers and spent time together on deck. One night Arp accidentally tore a tendon in his ring finger. We had hardly landed in New York before Valentin sent Arp to a surgeon. When Arp was brought back to his room after the operation, I was there of course, but so was his old Dada



Fig. 2 Hans Arp and Marguerite Hagenbach on the Queen Mary on their way from New York back to Europe, 1949, Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth

pal Richard Huelsenbeck, whom Arp had not seen for years. He found out that his old friend was coming to New York, and when Valentin told him that Arp was in the hospital, he got in his car right away and went to visit him. The ties of friendship between the Dadas were incredibly strong [...].¹⁹

Curt Valentin pulled out all the stops in order to market Arp in New York, writes Marguerite:

American morals dictated that as an unmarried couple, we had to sleep in separate rooms. One night we came back very late from a dinner party that had been held in our honor, and Arp wanted to turn on the light in his room. He flicked one of the room's many switches, but unfortunately not the one for the light. Instead, he saw his bed disappear into the wall. What could he do? He couldn't remember my room number. His English was not good enough to phone anyone for help, and the maid did not answer when he rung. [...] Poor Arp had to spend the night without his bed [...]. Valentine loved the story and it endeared Arp to all of his clients.²⁰

Traveling did not prevent Arp from working. During his New York sojourn, he made gouaches and wood reliefs, which he had produced in the workshop of a Japanese carpenter and which bear the title *New York*. His memories of the skyscrapers would also accompany him back to France, where he created a series of reliefs at the end of 1949 entitled *Chartres*. Named for the famous Gothic cathedral, the works draw inspiration both from its stained glass windows as well as the reflection of the evening sun in the windows of New York's famous skyscrapers. While in Tessin in late 1949, Arp also made the collages and drawings for *Hymnen an New York*, which would later be used to illustrate his friend Richard Huelsenbeck's poetry collection *New York Kantaten*.

Arp saw many of his friends again in New York, including Hans Richter, Marcel Breuer and Frederick Kiesler.²¹ In fact, they met regularly at the bookstore and publisher Wittenborn & Schulz, Inc., which in 1948 had published *Hans Arp: On My Way: Poetry and Essays 1912–1947*, Arp's first book in the United States. The volume was part of the Museum of Modern Art's series *Documents of Modern Art*, which was edited by Robert Motherwell.

In 1951, Motherwell published *The Dada Painters and Poets: An Anthology*. It included Arp's text *Dada was not a farce* and ushered in the rediscovery of Dada in the United States.²²

Curt Valentin was also interested in Arp's poetry. In 1952, he published a trilingual artists' book of poetry with 28 woodcuts entitled *Dreams and Projects*.²³ The woodblocks Arp carved to make the prints were a starting point for Valentin's final Arp exhibition in 1954. Covered in printing ink, the blocks were repurposed as reliefs and shown together with collages and reliefs that had been conceived as such. The exhibition was not a commercial success. The artist Piero Dorazio later remembered: "I visited the Arp exhibition at Curt Valentin's gallery in 1954. It was a really beautiful exhibition that did not sell one piece, although he was already 66."²⁴

Valentin died before the exhibition came down, just after his fifty-second birthday. Like Arp, he had suffered from heart problems. Thus, the fruitful business relationship between Arp and Valentin came to a natural end. The gallery closed in 1955.

Despite all of his efforts to woo Arp, the gallerist Sidney Janis (1896–1989) had never expected this moment to arrive. His commercial ties to Arp having begun in 1950, Sidney Janis would play a starring role in the story of Arp's success in the United States.²⁵ Janis' wife, the art historian Harriet Grossmann, had introduced the former textile merchant and professional ballroom dancer to the visual arts. Together they developed a passion for collecting, an endeavor whereby they were so successful that MoMA appointed Janis to its Advisory Board in 1934. In order to devote himself entirely to art, Sidney Janis sold his shirt factory in 1939. Almost a decade later, in 1948, he finally opened his own gallery dedicated to modern European art, including that of Mondrian, Léger, Albers and Giacometti. Naturally, he hoped to include Arp in his stable of artists.

Since Arp was represented by Valentin, Janis had to develop a careful strategy for entering into a business relationship with him. He achieved this in 1950 by exhibiting Arp's work in dialogue with that of Sophie Taeuber-Arp. Since Taeuber-Arp was not represented by Valentin, the exhibition did not threaten his interests. Thereafter, Janis was able to develop a close personal relationship with Arp and Hagenbach. It did not hurt that Arp and Janis shared a passion for dancing. Marguerite Hagenbach later recalled:

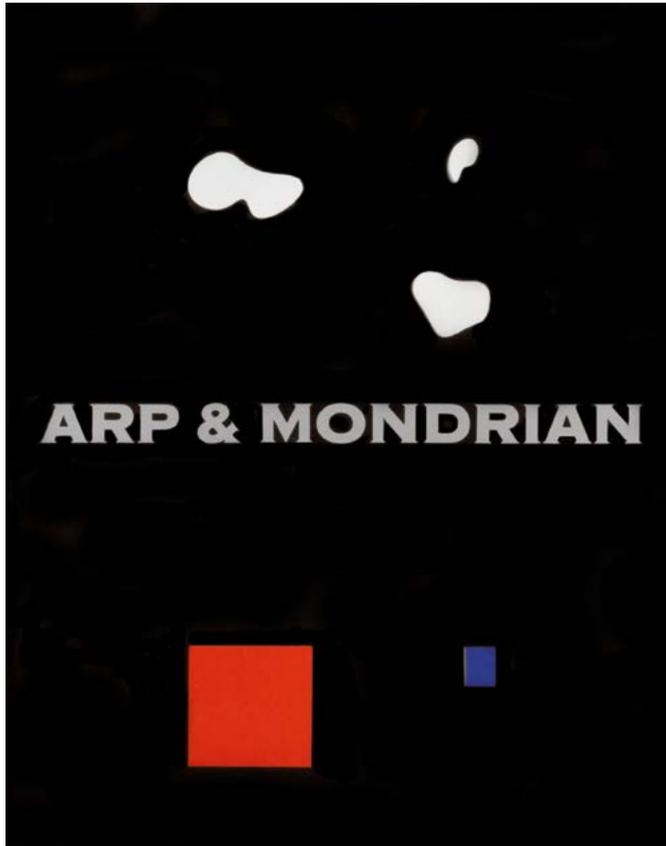


Fig. 3 Cover and title of the exhibition catalogue *Arp – Mondrian*, Sidney Janis Gallery, New York, 1960

[Arp] was an outstanding dancer. And I would hazard the guess that the New York gallerist won Arp over more so because he was a good dancer rather than his abilities as an art dealer. He always wanted Sidney to teach him the latest dances he had learned in New York.²⁶

But Sidney Janis must also be given his due as an art dealer. One of his greatest achievements was opening the eyes of the American public to the sculptural oeuvre of Hans Arp. From the very beginning, Janis exhibited Arp's sculpture alongside the reliefs, which were better known at the time, in order to assert their centrality to the artist's project, thereby drawing renewed interest in this aspect of his work in the United States. Moreover, Janis pioneered the two-artist exhibition, and placed Arp in dialogue with his contemporaries. For example, in the 1960 exhibition *Arp – Mondrian*, he elaborated upon the parallels Héliou had laid out between the two abstract artists before the war. These exhibitions were accompanied by formidable catalogues, for which Marcel Duchamp among others translated texts from the French (*fig. 3 and fig. p. 65*). Most of the sculptures Arp sold between 1950 and 1954 passed through Sidney Janis' hands.

Among the many Arp exhibitions at the Sidney Janis Gallery, one is especially noteworthy: in 1963, Janis devoted a third solo show to Arp. It comprised of 37 sculptures created between 1923 and 1963. In his then-capacity as an art critic, Donald Judd reviewed the exhibition for *Arts Magazine* in September 1963.²⁷ Taking into account Judd's general disdain towards the European art of his generation, the review is startlingly positive:

Arp's work is nearly always good, and so the exhibition is [...]. One of the interesting aspects of sculpture, and a relevant one currently, is that a good piece is a whole which has no parts. The protuberance can never clearly be considered other, smaller units; even partially disengaged sections are kept from being secondary units within or adding up a larger one. This lack of distinct parts forces you to see the piece as a whole.²⁸

Arp addressed themes that were also important for Judd's work during this period. "The big problem is to maintain the sense of the whole thing. [...] I just want it to exist as a whole thing."²⁹

At this time, Arp was also exhibiting with the Galerie Chalette, which was founded by Arthur (1895–1972) and Madeleine Lejwa (1915–1996), Polish Jews who had escaped Sachsenhausen.³⁰ The gallery exhibited Arp alongside artists such as Braque, Chagall, Gonzalez and Vasarely. Even the Galerie Chalette only held a single Arp exhibition in 1965 it continuously sold his sculpture to American collectors. In 1971 the Lejwas themselves bequeathed a series of Arp's works to American museums: Arp's *Threshold Configuration* (1959), which had previously stood before the entrance to the New York University Business School, was given to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In the late 1970s, they gave *Oriflamme Wheel* (1962), to the National Gallery in Washington, D.C.

The Galerie Chalette is also significant because Madeleine Lejwa became one of Marguerite Hagenbach-Arp's closest friends over the course of the 1970s, especially after Arthur Lejwa's death in 1972. Their correspondence reveals an increasing emphasis on personal matters.³¹ They wrote long letters to one another in French, eventually replacing the formal "vous" with the informal "tu". The two women bonded over their mutual dedication to the work of Hans Arp. At the same time, their professional interests did not interfere with their friendship. Both contributed significant loans from their respective collections to the major Arp retrospective of 1972 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Furthermore, Madeleine Lejwa would sell Arp's work consistently well into the 1980s.

By the 1970s, over two-hundred of Arp's sculptures had been sold in the United States. In contrast to today's commission-driven market, his dealers mostly purchased his work and sold it at their own risk. In order to offset the financial risk, the Galerie Chalette and Sidney Janis made agreements with Arp that they could trade sculptures they had purchased but could not sell. Marguerite Arp's correspondence with the two galleries demonstrates that this did indeed happen from time to time.

Arp's success in America had profound ramifications for his studio practice. His newfound financial freedom made it possible to have his sculptures cast more often in bronze or carved in marble. He explored this possibility not only for recent works, but also for early pieces that to that point had only existed as plaster casts. In 1958, the seventy-two-year-old Arp hired the plasterer Capelli, the stonemason Santelli and the sculptor Tarabella to help him fulfill his numerous commissions.



Fig. 4 Louise Bourgeois and Jean Arp in New Canaan, CT, c. 1958, The Easton Foundation

Institutional Recognition

After 1950, Arp also achieved widespread institutional recognition in the United States. In 1950 he received his first commission for a site-specific relief from Harvard University at Walter Gropius' behest. That project would lead to two more major commissions in Venezuela and France.³² In order to better understand the architectural space, he traveled back to the United States just a year after his first sojourn. It was important to him to establish a concrete relationship between his relief *Constellations* and Gropius' distinctive architecture. Nevertheless, it would take another eight years and multiple revisions before the final version of the relief was installed in 1958. Although Arp traveled to the United States for the third and last time that year, it is not known whether he took the opportunity to see the finished work in person.

A couple of years before his visit to Harvard in 1950, Arp received an offer to teach at the Chicago School of Design. Hugo Weber, with whom he had been collaborating on Sophie Tauber-Arp's catalogue raisonné since

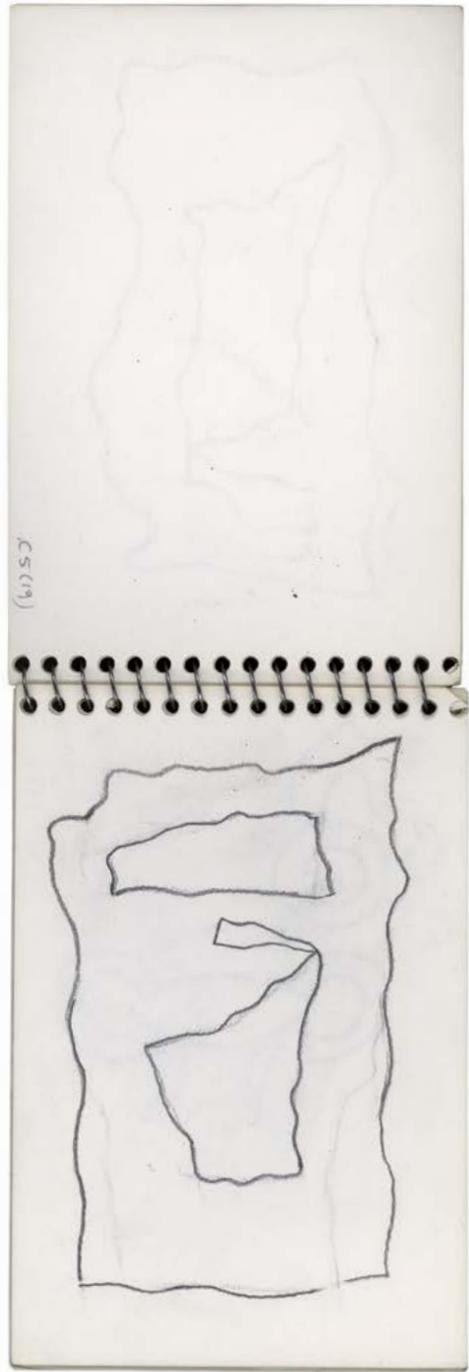


Fig. 5 and 6 Hans Arp: Sketchbook No. 5, 1958, Fondazione Marguerite Arp, Locarno

1945, taught there and proposed that Arp join him. Arp turned down the offer, but it was not because he did not like America:

On my second visit, New York made a deep impression on me. It is a vast, wild city, in which the high-rises shoot into the sky like abundant tropical vegetation. Artists' dealings also strike me as far more congenial here than in Europe.³³

In 1955 Marguerite Hagenbach observed:

High rise buildings are going up now in Basel, too, but Hans is excited because they remind him of New York. He really misses New York.³⁴

The high point of Arp's recognition by American institutions was *Arp*, his solo show at the Museum of Modern Art. Curated by James Thrall Soby, it opened on October 6, 1958. Over 110 works were on display. As Cara Manes notes in her essay, MoMA seemed to regret waiting so long to dedicate an exhibition to the artist. But the Museum made up for it by choosing Arp for an exhibition to mark its reopening after a six-month renovation, capitalizing on the success of this highly prominent artist during its own re-branding. According to Manes, "MoMA's press office relied heavily on Arp's reputation for its branding campaign."³⁶

The exhibition opening at the Museum of Modern Art provided the occasion for Hans Arp and Marguerite Hagenbach's last trip to the United States. Over a period of almost two months in New York, the couple met artists including Louise Bourgeois, who held a deep appreciation for Arp's work (*fig. 4*)³⁷. Afterwards, Arp and Hagenbach traveled through Mexico. Hans Arp returned to Locarno with multiple sketchbooks and aspects of some of the drawings he made there seem to reappear in his *Threshold* sculptures (*fig. 5*)³⁸.

In 1963, Marguerite and Hans hoped to return to the United States: "Traveling to the US again this year is not out of the question. Arp has wanted to return so much for a long time now."³⁹ Yet Arp's health prevented the fulfillment of his wish. The heart troubles that began with his heart attack in 1952 worsened. Hans Arp died on June 7, 1966 in Basel.

The American public's interest in Arp's oeuvre remained intense until the mid-1960s. With Marguerite Habebach's ongoing professional support for their commercial endeavors, Sidney Janis and Madeleine Lejwa witnessed a steady demand for Arp's work.

In the mid-1980s, interest in Hans Arp and his oeuvre declined rather suddenly, both in the United States and elsewhere. It is not possible to delve into all of the possible reasons for the downturn here. However, contributing factors were new approaches to viewing art and the decline in Marguerite Hagenbach's health that began in the mid 1970s. Hans Arp's greatest advocate Marguerite died in 1994. At the same time, the Arp estate was also partially responsible. Its administrator Johannes Wasmuth was not particularly interested in the United States and did Arp's work a disservice through his policies towards the artist's archive and the plaster reproductions. All of this was counterproductive to the legacy of Arp's work in America. Between 1987 and 2000 there was not a single Arp exhibition there. Since the beginning of the millennium, collectors and museums in the United States have expressed renewed interest in Hans Arp.

1 Jean Arp, unpublished catalogue preface, 1955, published in: *Sculptures by Jean Arp*, exhibition catalogue, Sidney Janis Gallery, New York 1968, p. 2.

2 *International Exhibition of Modern Art*, exhibition catalogue, Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn 1926, p. 21.

3 Alexander Calder and Katharine Kuh: *Alexander Calder*, in: *The Artist's Voice: Talks with Seventeen Artists*, New York and Evanston, Illinois 1962, <http://calder.org/life/system/downloads/1962-Artists-Voice.pdf>, last accessed:17.2.2016.

4 Further details about the artists' rapport, traces of which are evident in the formal aspects of both Arp's and Calder's works, have not been preserved.

5 Robert Delaunay had tried to introduce Gallatin to the Arps a few months prior. Unfortunately, neither artist was home at the time of the visit. See George L.K. Morris: *Dialogue with Delaunay*, in: *The Art News* 53/1955 (January), p. 17 f.

6 Gail Stavitsky: *Albert Eugene Gallatin and the Paris – New York Connection 1927–1942*, in: *A Transatlantic Avant-Garde. American Artists in Paris 1918–1939*, exhibition catalogue, Musée d'Art Américain, Giverny 2004, pp. 105–117, p. 110.

7 Jean Hélon interviewed by Gail Stavitsky, Paris, June 18/19, 1986, cited after Stavitsky 2004, p. 111.

8 Gail Stavitsky: *A. E. Gallatin's Gallery and Museum of Living Art (1927–43)*, in: *American Art*, Vol. 7, 2/1993 (spring), pp. 47–63, p. 62.

- 9 James Thrall Soby, in: *Arp*, exhibition catalogue, Museum of Modern Art, New York 1958, p. 7. For more on the exhibitions, refer to Cara Manes' essay, pp. 53–68.
- 10 Twelve gouaches were on display at the John Becker Gallery. There is no record of which works were shown at the Howard Putzel Gallery.
- 11 Letter from Hans Arp to Josef Albers, April 1, 1936, Yale University Library, Albers Papers, New Haven. Copy in the Archive of the Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth (hereafter Archive Stiftung Arp).
- 12 Three sculptures were created in 1947: *Dream Animal*, CR 84; *Bird Skeleton*, CR 85; *Tree of Bowls*, CR 87; 1948: *Human Concretion on oval Bowl*, CR 89.
- 13 Letter from Josef Albers to Hans Arp, Dezember 19, 1948 (in German), Archive Stiftung Arp.
- 14 Marguerite Arp: *Arp wie ich ihn kannte*, in: *Sammlung Marguerite Arp – Werke aus der Fondazione Marguerite Arp Locarno*, exhibition catalogue, Fondazione Marguerite Arp, Castelgrande 1991, pp. 21–28, p. 23.
- 15 Letter from Marguerite Hagenbach-Arp to Max Ernst, June 6, 1960 (in French), Archive Stiftung Arp.
- 16 For a complete overview of the exhibitions, see *Chronology: Hans Arp and the United States*, pp. 186–199.
- 17 Arp's first commercial solo show outside of New York took place at the Kovler Gallery in Chicago in 1967. Before that, there had been museum exhibitions in Milwaukee and San Francisco in 1957. The traveling exhibition *Construction and Geometry in Painting* of 1960, organized by Arp's Paris dealer Denise René and the Galerie Chalette, had stations in Chicago and Minneapolis.
- 18 Letter from Curt Valentin to Hans Arp, July 20, 1948, Archive Stiftung Arp.
- 19 Arp 1991, p. 23f.
- 20 Ibid., p. 24.
- 21 For more on Arp und Kiesler see Stephanie Buhmann's essay, pp. 88–105.
- 22 For this context see also the essay of Brandon Taylor, pp. 69–87.
- 23 On Valentin and Arp and their collaborative book project *Dreams and Projects*, see Eric Robertson's essay, pp. 124–141.
- 24 Piero Dorazio: *Für Marguerite und Hans Arp*, in: Castelgrande 1991, pp. 29–30, p. 30.
- 25 The following is based on my study of the archive at the Sidney Janis Gallery in New York, which Carroll Janis generously opened to me. On Arp and Sidney Janis, see the essay by his son Carroll, pp. 162–172.
- 26 Arp 1991, p. 21.
- 27 On Judd and Arp see Catherine Craft, pp. 45 ff.

- 28 Donald Judd: *In the Galleries*, in: *Arts Magazine*, September 1963, in: id: *Complete Writings 1959–1975*, Nova Scotia and New York 2006, pp. 91–102, p. 92.
- 29 Radio discussion between Donald Judd, Bruce Glaser and Frank Stella, February 1964, in: Gregory Battock (ed.): *Minimal Art. A Critical Anthology*, Berkeley 1995.
- 30 For more on the Galerie Chalette see Arie Hartog's essay, pp. 142–161.
- 31 Galerie Chalette Records 1916–1999, Smithsonian Archives of American Art, Washington.
- 32 1953/56 University of Caracas, 1958 UNESCO Paris, 1959/1960 Technische Hochschule Braunschweig. For an in-depth analysis of Arp's Harvard commission, see Maïke Steinkamp's essay, pp. 107–123.
- 33 Letter from Hans Arp to Maja Sacher, June 12, 1950 (in German), Archive Stiftung Arp.
- 34 Letter from Marguerite Hagenbach to Hans Richter, February 5, 1955, Archive Stiftung Arp.
- 35 Refer to the essay by Cara Manes, pp. 53–68.
- 36 *Ibid.*, p. 63.
- 37 Conversation between Loretta Würtenberger and Jerry Gorovoy, November 2015.
- 38 *Hans Arp: Skizzenbücher*, exhibition catalogue (ed. by Rainer Hüben and Roland Scotti), Kunstmuseum Appenzell, Göttingen 2015.
- 39 Letter from Marguerite Hagenbach-Arp to Anni Albers, January 15, 1963, Archive Stiftung Arp.

Arp's Reception and Impact in the New York Art World between 1936 and 1966

Catherine Craft

In March 1958, Museum of Modern Art curator James Thrall Soby, who was organizing a retrospective of Arp's work to open later that year, wrote to Marguerite Hagenbach, Arp's second wife. Among the sculptures slated for inclusion was the large bronze, *Human Lunar Spectral* (1950), which was just being completed in Switzerland and had recently been purchased by the American collectors Burton and Emily Tremaine. Almost as an aside, Soby noted:

And in this connection it might interest Arp to know that there is a small but extremely talented group of Neo-Dada artists working in New York. I had a letter from Mrs. Tremaine just yesterday thanking me for calling her attention to a very young painter in the group, Jasper Johns. She bought a picture by him, I myself bought another and the Museum has acquired three. I told Dr. Hulbeck [i.e., Richard Huelsenbeck] about Johns, too, but I haven't seen him since; Hans Richter was at the opening of Johns' show and greatly excited by the young man's paintings.¹

Soby was referring to Jasper Johns's first solo exhibition, which had recently closed at the Leo Castelli Gallery. As Soby's remarks suggest, the astonishing success of this show was the talk of New York's art world. Johns's debut landed him on the cover of *Art News*, and, as Soby's letter indicates, brought into public currency "Neo-Dada", a term used to identify young artists whose work appeared sharply at odds with the serious painterly concerns of Abstract Expressionism. First applied to Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, and a few others, Neo-Dada would soon come to encompass a diverse range of art, including assemblage, installation and performance, Pop, and early forms of Minimal and Conceptual Art – in short, the explosion of experimental art

forms ushering in the 1960s.² As Soby's letter suggests, "Neo-Dada" stirred much curiosity among Dada's original participants then living in New York. Richard Huelsenbeck not only visited Johns's exhibition, but he too bought a painting.³ Marcel Duchamp, relieved to find a more cerebral form of art emerging to displace Abstract Expressionism, visited Johns's and Rauschenberg's studios and attended early Happenings.

It would seem, then, that Arp's 1958 retrospective was coming at a perfect moment to enter into a renewed conversation with contemporary art. Yet Arp's Neo-Dada moment never arrived. His exhibition, while well-reviewed, passed with little apparent impact. He visited New York for the opening and saw old friends, but seems to have met few young artists. As curators, gallerists, and other observers adopted the term "Neo-Dada" to understand a radically changing art world, they did so primarily by dividing artists associated with the label into two different camps, one influenced by the conceptual concerns of Duchamp and his readymades, and the other by the collage aesthetic of Kurt Schwitters. In contrast, Arp's impact on American art remains difficult to pin down, in part because of its seeming ubiquity. Observing that "no pear is safe from an association with [Arp's] work", one reviewer concluded that "the nonspecific influence of his oeuvre has been so pervasive that it is hard to imagine our culture without him."⁴

Arp on Display I

To inquire after the elusiveness of Arp's impact on American art requires attention to what viewers in New York were actually seeing, and how they were responding to it. A consideration of the reception of Arp's work in the New York art world foremost reveals the inadequacy of terms like "influence" to define what are properly encounters, responses, aversions, and even arguments, with him and his work. Despite the critical and popular recognition afforded to Arp, his approach to art challenged American artists and their supporters and made his work difficult to assimilate to prevailing interpretations of modernism and artistic identity.

Arp's work began to be widely shown in New York in the 1930s, and almost from the beginning viewers were able to see a range of works dating back to the Dada period, as well as evidence of the artist's activities in the present. Like many modern artists, Arp had worked in a diverse array of

styles and media over the course of his career. In the years of the Dada movement, he made completely abstract works, often in collaboration with Sophie Taeuber-Arp; collages created “according to the laws of chance”; loosely improvisational ink drawings later deemed “automatic”; and painted wood reliefs. He wrote poetry, an activity that intensified during the 1920s in association with Surrealism, when he focused largely on reliefs, drawing on the vocabulary of his poetic “object language”. Around 1930, he began making *papiers déchirés*, collages of torn paper, as well as sculpture in the round. As Arp’s career progressed into the 1940s and 1950s, and until his death in 1966, he continued to make *papiers déchirés*, reliefs, and sculptures, all of which were regularly seen in the US. Apart from the severely geometric works of the 1910s, Arp’s work was instantly recognizable for its flowing contours and organic forms, and indeed he was commonly recognized as a source of the biomorphic imagery favored by artists from the 1920s through the 1950s. At the same time, there were crucial differences between his works in various media; despite its seeming consistency, Arp’s art prompted diverse reactions, and artists were drawn – or had aversions – to distinctly different aspects of his oeuvre.

Inseparable from Arp’s embrace of varied media was his rejection of what others held as a position of philosophical, even ethical purity. In the 1920s and 1930s, as distinctions between abstraction and representation became more and more polarized, Arp’s refusal to choose one over the other and his ability to migrate effortlessly between the Surrealists and members of such groups as Abstraction-Création were almost unique. Presentations of Arp’s work in New York in these decades followed his lead, abstaining from definitively assigning him to one camp or the other.⁵ In 1936, the Museum of Modern Art included him in both their landmark exhibitions, *Cubism and Abstract Art*, as well as *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism*. When in 1942 Peggy Guggenheim opened her New York gallery Art of This Century, Frederick Kiesler designed two different spaces, one for abstraction and one for Surrealism – with Arp’s *Head and Shell* (ca. 1933) being one of the only works shown in both.

Museums and galleries ensured the accessibility of Arp’s work to New York audiences. *Cubism and Abstract Art* included a collage, two reliefs and a sculpture, and *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* featured more than two dozen works in a range of media. In 1938, A. E. Gallatin presented a show of recent works by Arp, including reliefs, collages and watercolors, and in

1944, *Art of This Century* mounted a retrospective, with 26 reliefs and collages on the checklist. After World War II, Arp's work was shown consistently, first by Curt Valentin and, after Valentin's death in 1954, by Sidney Janis, who had previously included Arp in his gallery's landmark 1953 Dada exhibition organized by Marcel Duchamp, as well as a 1950 exhibition that paired Arp with Sophie Taueber-Arp.

Arp's biomorphic forms influenced untold numbers of artists in the US, and the Abstract Expressionists were no exception.⁶ Although the influence of Miró has more frequently been recognized as a factor in their development, Arp too was sometimes acknowledged, particularly in their early works. But this impact is usually described quite vaguely, as a general tendency to use curving lines to enclose shapes suggestive of organic forms.

Arp and Abstract Expressionism

Rather than attributing to Arp a diffuse, overall influence, what would happen if we seek more specific connections? The works by Arp that such artists as Arshile Gorky and Jackson Pollock were seeing during the 1930s and 1940s were largely reliefs – from some fifteen of them in *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* to thirteen in the 1944 retrospective.

Arp's reliefs were especially important for artists who were interested in the limits and possibilities of painting, such as the Abstract Expressionists. His sawed, screwed together, smoothly painted chunks of board interacted through sometimes ambiguous interplays of positive and negative forms, arranged in compositions that could appear provocatively, even awkwardly, provisional. Their orientation could be open to question, and in places, the contours of their painted surfaces contradicted the actual contours of individual components.

In Gorky's *Garden in Sochi* (1941), for example, the curvilinear forms reminded Gorky's friend, the artist and critic Elaine de Kooning, of Miró, but she was perplexed that the treatment of the painting's surface wasn't like Miró at all. Instead, she saw "a reverse method of drawing", with a smooth, opaque layer of green covering an underlying composition, parts of which were visible through cleanly silhouetted shapes "cut" into the green, generating a perception of layered depth.⁷ Gorky's treatment of these forms – the build-up of the surface, the interpenetration of cut forms and the thick

sleekness of the paint – suggests not the washy grace of Miró but rather the emphatic physicality of Arp’s hybrid medium.

As Gorky’s *Garden in Sochi*, with its play of concealment and “cut” forms, suggests, Arp’s reliefs encompassed absence as well as presence. Prominent among Arps in New York, the Museum of Modern Art’s *Mountain, Navel, Anchors, Table* (1925) includes actual cut-out forms (fig. 1). Such combinations of positive and negative space were then identified so strongly with Arp that it defined the brochure for his Art of This Century retrospective, which featured a cutout silhouette of the shoe form in Guggenheim’s relief *Overtured Blue Shoe with Two Heels Under a Black Vault* (c. 1925).

Likewise, in the late 1940s Jackson Pollock created a small group of works in which positive and negative shapes formed figurative elements.



Fig. 1 Hans Arp: *Mountain, Navel, Anchors, Table*, 1925, Gouache on board with cutouts, 75,20 × 59,70 cm, purchase (77.1936), The Museum of Modern Art, New York

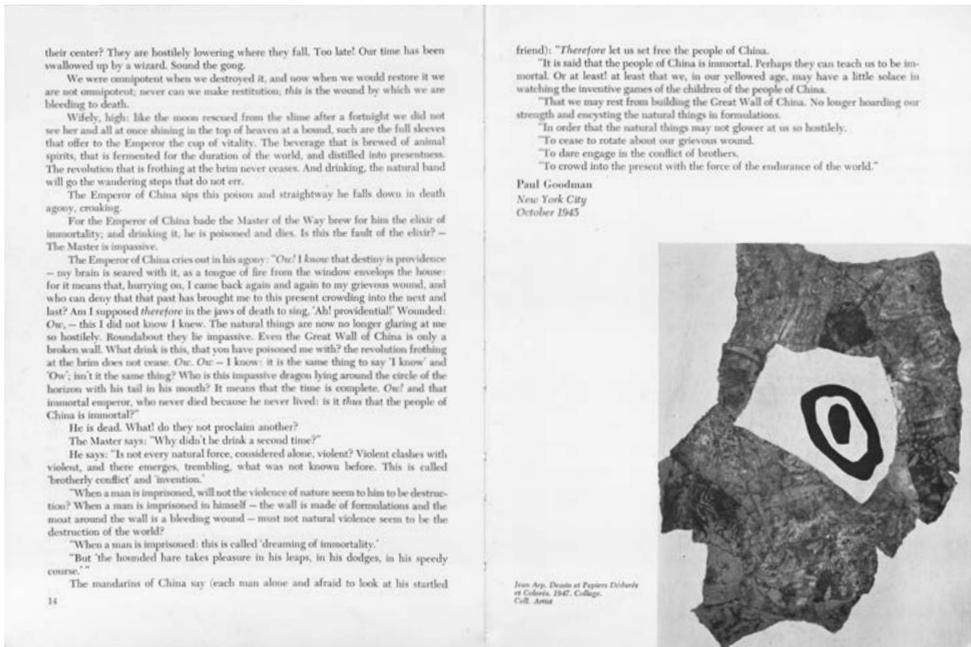


Fig. 2 Hans Arp: *Drawing and Torn and Colored Papers*, 1947, Collage, illustrated in Robert Motherwell et al. (eds.): *Possibilities 1: An Occasional Review (1947–48)*, p. 15, Archive of the author

In most cases, he cut these shapes from painted pieces of paper and attached them to another surface or backed the leftover paper with another support. The figures' contours and their tenuous position between positive and negative space and between figuration and abstraction recall Arp's reliefs, which shuttled between these modes without strenuously insisting upon either. In *The Wooden Horse: Number 10A, 1948* (1948) the addition of a found object, the wooden head of a child's toy horse, is a more decisive echo of Arp's reliefs.⁸

At about the same time as Pollock's experiments, Robert Motherwell engaged a different mode of physicality in Arp's work. As editor of the series *Documents of Modern Art*, Motherwell became deeply involved with Arp's art and writings during work for *On My Way*, a 1948 collection of the artist's writings and for the 1951 anthology *The Dada Painters and Poets*.⁹ Motherwell had begun making collages in the early 1940s, which later in the decade gained a new expressiveness and directness closely related to his growing engagement with Arp's work through these editorial projects. He became acquainted with the full range of Arp's art, from the abstract



Fig. 3 Robert Motherwell: *In Gray and Tan*, 1948, Casein and collage on masonite, 96,50 × 76,20 cm, Krannert Art Museum and Kinkead Pavilion, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Gift of Albert List, 1955-17-1.

collages he had made as a participant in Dada, to more recent activities. In his Dada collages, Arp had aimed at an ideal of anonymous perfection, but around 1930, after retrieving from storage a group of such collages, he was shocked to discover that they had been ravaged by time: papers had buckled, faded and cracked, glue had darkened and shrunk. In a new text written for *On My Way*, Arp described his reaction: “What arrogance is concealed in perfection. Why struggle for precision, purity, when they can never be attained. The decay that begins immediately on completion of the work was now welcome to me.”¹⁰

Arp’s impassioned outburst stresses the relationship between art and destruction in a way he had never done during his Dada years, and he responded to his discovery with the *papiers déchirés*, collages made from torn paper that often included fragments of his own drawings. He was still using this method in the 1940s, and Motherwell reproduced *papiers déchirés* in both *On My Way* and the journal *Possibilities*, which he also edited (fig. 2). Likewise, the collages Motherwell made in the late 1940s echoed Arp’s preference for torn,

uneven edges, their rough contours creating an impression of gesture not often associated with the hard edges of conventional *papiers collés* (fig. 3). In turn, the *papiers déchirés* Motherwell selected for illustrations possessed similarly direct and vigorous qualities. But there were important differences in the artists' approaches. With the first *papiers déchirés*, Arp gazed across more than a decade at the original impulses that had resulted in some of Dada's most radically distinctive objects; he then took time into his own hands, turning to actions commonly associated with destruction to generate new works. Arp's strategy acknowledged, even required, the active and inescapable presence of negating and destructive processes, but made therapeutic use of the inevitable, recouping the forces of destruction in an act of creation.

In contrast, in Motherwell's collages, the torn edge of the paper became the mark of the artist's presence, the collaged equivalent of a brushstroke. The identification between the torn and painted edge is particularly important to such works as *In Gray and Tan* (1948), where torn, triangular-shaped pieces of mottled blue paper lie atop a similarly rough triangular form painted in pale blue stripes. This play between gesture and edge would prove decisive in the concurrent development of Motherwell's well-known *Elegies to the Spanish Republic*, whose ragged forms arrayed across the picture plane echoed the torn papers of his collages.

The Abstract Expressionists' response to Arp focused on limited aspects of his work: his reliefs' provisional approach to composition, embodied in the obdurate hybridity of their physical form, and, in his *papiers déchirés*, the recuperative possibilities of the otherwise destructive act of tearing paper. That the Abstract Expressionists put these interests at the service of a deeply expressive, highly personal approach to art would likely not have been satisfying to Arp, who had spent much of his career seeking ways of working that diminished the artistic ego. Their attitude also proved problematic to many younger artists, for whom other aspects of Arp's work would be more appealing.

Arp and Kelly

One of the few American artists of this generation who had an actual exchange with Arp was Ellsworth Kelly, who came to Paris in 1948 to study art on the G.I. Bill. He was introduced to Arp at a Hans Richter opening in the spring of 1950 and, subsequently invited to his studio, visited Arp on at least three



Fig. 4 Hans Arp: *Construction élémentaire*, 1916, Collage, 24,6 × 21,1 cm, Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck, Remagen

occasions. Kelly showed him photographs of his work, and even asked him for a letter of recommendation for a Guggenheim fellowship.¹¹ At the time he met Arp, Kelly was looking for ways to create works of art that were neither composed in the conventional sense nor focused on inner emotional experience, as art in the United States, with the rise of Abstract Expressionism, increasingly was.

Kelly found his way in part by making reliefs. These works' hybrid nature, between painting and object, their play of positive and negative space, and their embrace of both abstraction and representational associations placed them squarely in the midst of Arp's own concerns, even if the actual inspiration for their forms arose from Kelly's careful observation of daily life. Arp's sympathy is apparent in Kelly's letter to John Cage:

[...] when I visited [Arp] again I showed him photographs of my recent work which he liked and said that I was courageous, which I don't quite understand. It was courageous for him in 1916 and for Mondrian and Kandinsky. Benefitting [from] their struggle it is very natural today to continue.¹²

During Kelly's visits, Arp showed the young artist his Dada chance collages, and described making collages by cutting up or tearing paper and letting the pieces fall (*fig. 4*).¹³ Arp embraced chance not as an all-out, rigidly followed procedure, but as a process that for him appears to have been important for the freedom it offered: freedom from ego, and from being caught in one's own talents, habits, and expectations. Kelly began experimenting with this strategy during the summer and fall of 1950, in torn

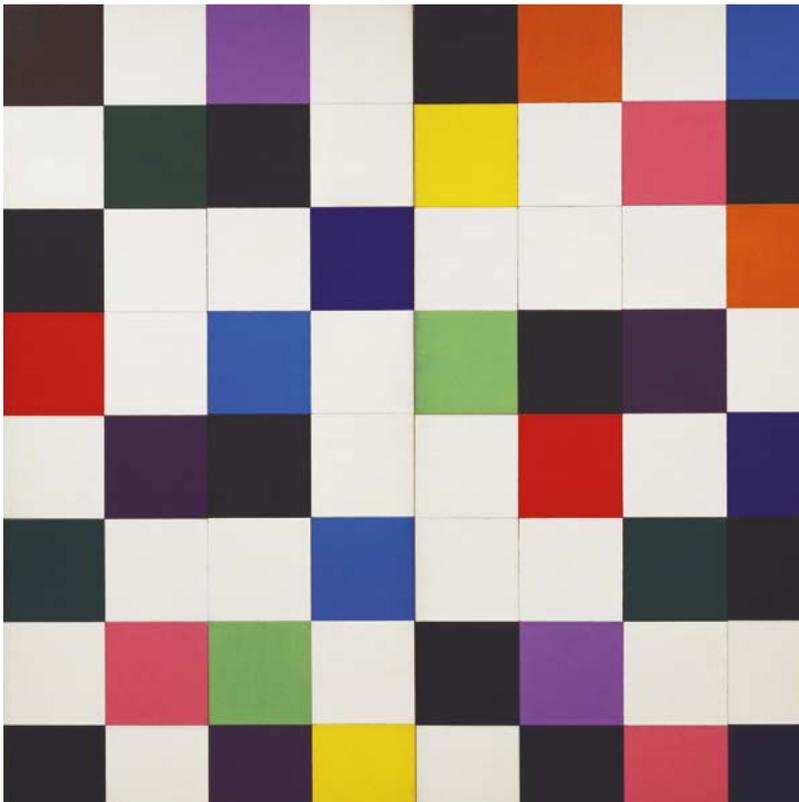


Fig. 5 Ellsworth Kelly: *Colors for a Large Wall*, 1951, Oil on canvas, sixty-four panels, 240 x 240 cm, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, gift of the artist

paper collages, but also soon in a group of works in which he would cut up an existing composition and reconfigure its elements according to chance, as in *Meschers* (1951).

The works generated by applications of different kinds of chance were crucial to the development of Kelly's art. He found in his experiments an analogue for the coherence nature presented despite its overwhelming variety. Kelly observed the "leaves, grass, cracks in the wall, all the randomness of a million pieces and variations. This way of composing was endless and didn't need 'me' – [the works] made themselves – it seemed nature worked for me using the laws of chance."¹⁴ His conclusion is impossible to imagine without Arp's example, even as Kelly put it into practice on a scale far beyond anything Arp ever attempted. One night, Kelly had a dream in which he and some students were on a scaffold making an enormous wall painting composed of square sections. Upon awakening, he made a sketch, cut it into squares, reassembled the squares by chance, flipped the resulting collage, then painted it at an enlarged scale in individual panels corresponding to the original collage components, resulting in *Cité* (1951).¹⁵

Kelly further developed a system in which he determined how to fill each square of a grid by drawing from a box slips of paper with numbers corresponding to positions on the grid. This approach culminated in a series of collages composed of intensely hued papers cut into squares, then placed in a grid by chance selection. These collages became the basis for color panel paintings, such as the magisterial *Colors for a Large Wall* (1951) (*fig. 5*). Kelly used chance in tandem with a range of decisions and choices to create compositions generated out of a sort of collaboration with principles found throughout nature. For him, as for Arp, there was no discrepancy between systems of chance and observations of the natural world.

Arp on Display II

Kelly's visits to Arp's studio also provided him with an introduction to the art of Sophie Taeuber-Arp, and his enthusiastic response undoubtedly endeared him to the older man.¹⁶ Since her death in 1943, Arp had become a tireless champion of her work, and his desire to exhibit their work together was one of the most confounding elements of Arp's presence in the New

York art world after World War II. New York had its share of artist couples, but joint exhibitions between spouses were by no means common, and were indeed usually detrimental to the women.¹⁷

A 1950 exhibition at the Sidney Janis Gallery presented the work of Arp and Taeuber-Arp side by side, as did a 1960 exhibition at the Galerie Chalette. Faced with the couple's collaborations, Arp's frank admission of Taeuber-Arp's influence, and the paradox of what were seen as Arp's "feminine" organic forms alongside Taeuber-Arp's "masculine" geometric ones, most reviewers scrambled to distinguish their respective works from one another and to preserve Arp's prerogative as modernist artistic genius, consistently to Taeuber-Arp's detriment. One review located Taeuber-Arp's weakness in her very independence from Arp's example:

Still, there is [...] a dialectic in the Chalette exhibition. One cannot help feeling that in Arp's own work one is seeing the fruits of a rigour that must, to some degree, have been absorbed into his sensibility as the result of Taeuber-Arp's more disciplined and less fanciful outlook [...]. [Arp's] poetry was not transmissible, and so this dialectic of two disparate natures makes itself felt for only one party to the equation. Arp was able to mingle these separate claims and make them nourish each other; Taeuber-Arp was not.¹⁸

Arp's collaborations with Taeuber-Arp share with his engagement with chance a willingness to undermine the romantic ideal of the solitary creator, an abnegation of authority that stirred admirers, such as Kelly, even as it made other observers deeply uneasy. It was likewise with other aspects of Arp's approach to making art. For the Abstract Expressionists, expression was paramount: they embraced the torn, gestural edges of Arp's *papiers déchirés* and the intransigent physicality of his reliefs, but not his desire to yield up artistic control through collaborations and the action of such natural forces as chance, and to give form to his visions by removing evidence of the artist's hand at work.

To appreciate the relative lack of impact Arp's 1958 retrospective made on the New York art world, it is helpful first to consider how perceptions of Arp's work by New York audiences changed in the 1950s. During this period, the dominance of his reliefs in exhibitions began to be challenged by the increasing visibility of his sculptures, which were becoming more widely

available as Arp gained the resources to have cast them in bronze, a practice he had scarcely pursued before World War II. Like his reliefs, Arp's sculptures displayed almost no traces of the artist's hand, but they manifested this quality in a very distinctive way. Arp tended to build up plasters by hand, finding the form of each sculpture as he worked on it. Then he usually turned the plasters over to others to be cast in bronze, or carved in stone. Although Arp stressed that his sculptures were "formed by the human hand", their streamlined, flowing contours possessed a sort of formal inevitability, as if Arp's labors had only guided the object toward a perfectly natural conclusion.

One reason for the difficulty in recovering the early importance of Arp to the Abstract Expressionists is that most of them intensely disliked his sculptures. Especially when rendered in marble or gleaming polished bronze, the smooth, swelling forms of Arp's three-dimensional works struck the Abstract Expressionists as impersonal and even a bit disingenuous. Willem de Kooning's aversion was typical. At a panel discussion in the 1950s, he compared the "pebble" of Arp with the "potato" of Van Gogh, discounting the rhetoric of nature that was by then commonplace in discussions of Arp's work:

The potato seems like a Romantic [organic] object. [...] you can watch it growing if you don't eat it. It is going to change – grow, rot, disappear. A pebble is like a Classical thing – it changes little if any. [...] If it was big, you could keep the dead down with it.¹⁹

To observers who valued process, and expected to see visible indications of it, Arp's sculptures – unlike his reliefs and *papiers déchirés* – seemed shut off from experience, a closed circuit. The phenomenon of Neo-Dada did little to change this impression, as the works so christened tended, especially early on, to display the irregular contours and indexical traces signaling the artist's active presence. Arp's 1958 retrospective heightened this impression by emphasizing sculpture – 49 were included, in contrast to 32 reliefs, an imbalance reinforced by the sculptures' three-dimensional presence and generally larger size. In a review of the retrospective, William Rubin noted that Arp's sculpture was "cut off" from recent developments in sculpture embodied by the work of David Smith, Richard Stankiewicz, and Louise Nevelson – that is, artists who made sculpture by "manipulating" materials, rather than by carving or modeling.²⁰ Although Rubin recognized Arp's early reliefs as

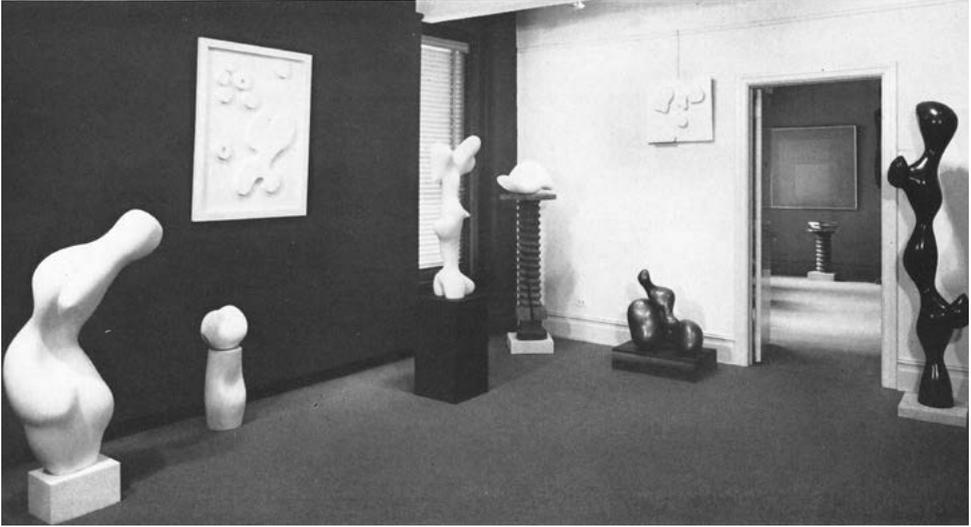


Fig. 6 Installation view of the exhibition *Sculpture by Jean Arp in Marble, Bronze, and Wood Relief from the Years 1923–1963*, Sidney Janis Gallery, New York 1963, Archive Sidney Janis Gallery, New York

antecedents of this contemporary trend, the sculpture Arp had been making since 1930 appeared to Rubin “a dead end for the history of art,” incapable of serving as “a starting point for others”. What Rubin describes as the “smooth, anonymous ‘finish’ of Arp’s sculptures” gave away nothing of the artist’s engagement with his materials: “In thus submerging the traces of the hand, [Arp] counters the main flow of modern art.”

Rubin assessed Arp’s sculptures by means of their surface, not their structure. He also completely missed indications of other types of processes, such as Arp’s practice of fragmenting plasters to create new forms. Attentiveness to such processes reveals Arp’s mind – if not hand – at work. Even the uncanny smoothness of his sculptures likewise resulted from long processes of filing and sanding, perhaps to diminish the visible presence of the artist’s hand, but more likely to create a surface that becomes one with the disparate and sometimes surprising forms emerging as one moves around his sculptures.

Arp and Judd

If Arp’s 1958 retrospective had virtually no impact on Neo-Dada, it nonetheless did not show Arp to be a dead end. Instead, in the early 1960s the artist



Fig. 7 Hans Arp: *Torso with Buds*, 1961, Bronze, 188 x 32 x 30,5 cm, Raymond and Patsy Nasher Collection, Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas

Donald Judd responded favorably to the very qualities in Arp's sculpture that Rubin found problematic. In 1963, at a time when he was supporting himself by writing reviews, Judd visited an Arp exhibition at the Sidney Janis Gallery, and in response wrote one of his characteristically terse yet incisive texts (*fig. 6*).²¹

Judd's criticism ranged widely at this time, but his engagement with Arp was not limited to a single exhibition review. In fact, in his last published essay, Judd reiterated his esteem of Arp.²² Although it's not known if Judd visited the 1958 Arp retrospective, its catalogue and other publications on the artist were in Judd's library, and he owned a woodcut by Arp, *Multiple Femme V* (1956).²³

One of the pleasures of reading Judd's early art criticism, in addition to

its pragmatic wit and brusque intelligence, is the way it affords glimpses of Judd's own concerns and struggles as a maturing artist. By the time he saw Arp's 1963 show, Judd had moved from making paintings to making reliefs and his first freestanding works, and later recalled Arp as one of the only modern artists working in relief.²⁴ Coming out of painting yet seeking unity of form and experience through the physical and conceptual wholeness of the work of art, Judd somewhat paralleled Arp's journey into sculpture, with both making the transition in part through freestanding reliefs.

The Sidney Janis Gallery's Arp exhibition presented mostly works made in the previous five years, and in keeping with the trend toward emphasizing Arp's sculpture, featured ten works in stone and eighteen bronzes but only nine reliefs. After a brief summation ("Arp's work is nearly always good, and so the exhibition is") Judd then focused the remainder of the review on the sculptures, and the elusive quality that made them special – a quality difficult enough to verbalize that the only two sculptures mentioned by name in the review are the ones that Judd disliked: "The least likable sculptures are the few which actually resemble the human body. *Sculpture Classique* is obviously a standing figure, although smoothed and without feet. *Demeter* is also insufficiently changed."

Judd was perfectly capable of admiring artworks that differed enormously from his own – for example, those of Lee Bontecou or Claes Oldenburg. But he could also be critical, even hostile, toward the European modernist tradition, which in his view had substituted intellectual structures for direct experience. Yet he saw something different in Arp. The problem with *Sculpture Classique* (1960) and *Demeter* (1960) is not so much that they traffic in representation and allusion. As Judd explains, "[Arp's] sculpture is always based on the body, but there is a big difference between an approximation, a description and the more frequent oblique reference." Instead, the problem arises when a sculpture's dependence on represented bodies as subject matter leads Arp to sacrifice its wholeness as an object in favor of an emphasis on those parts that make it recognizable as a torso or standing figure. As Judd insists, "A good piece [by Arp] is a whole which has no parts."

Judd didn't single out a work in the exhibition that met this criterion, but the 1961 bronze *Torso with Buds* offers an apt illustration of his point (fig. 7). *Torso with Buds* was installed near the doorway in the Janis exhibition, so visitors would see it from different angles as they came and went through the doorway. In a sense, *Torso with Buds* is nothing *but* parts – conjoined

prolate spheroids, to be precise. But Arp makes from these a body whose wholeness comes from the limits he places upon it: the bottom spheroid is cut, so that it rests flat on the ground; the tip of the top spheroid he attenuates and slightly curves, a trajectory that subtly closes off the possibility of additional upward growth. The “buds” that branch off likewise come to smaller, duller points that arrest and contain the spark of growth. Judd’s perceptive assessment of a good piece by Arp, a whole which has no parts, seems to speak directly to *Torso with Buds*:

The protuberances can never be considered other, smaller units; even partially disengaged sections are kept from being secondary units within or adding up to a larger one. This lack of distinct parts forces you to see the piece as a whole. The wholeness that most of the sculptures have comes from the passionate sense of a body; the perception of its wholeness dominates its parts.

Strikingly, Judd writes “the passionate sense of *a* body”, not *the* body – that is, the sensation of wholeness he notes arises not from one depiction of the human body being more abstract and thus more “successful” than another. Instead, Judd is making a more radical distinction: the sense of corporeality that Arp’s sculpture conveys results from his creation of *a* body that lives, vibrantly, within itself. This distinction, between “the” and “a,” clarifies Judd’s next comment: “Because of the sensation of sensuous wholeness, Arp’s work is never unspecific, although it is unusually general, even empty in a way.” Arp’s work is sensuous, whole, and general as far as its subject matter goes: to Judd, it’s empty of the conventional associations of subject matter – general as a body but always specific as an object, specific in the holistic integrity that Arp’s passion has brought to its creation. Judd’s concern with wholeness further allows him to appreciate the smooth, seemingly untouched surface of Arp’s sculpture that put off de Kooning and Rubin. In the last sentence of his review, Judd concluded, “Because of the sensation of wholeness, the sensation of the surface is highly developed in Arp’s work. The single surface dominates the distentions and indentations.”

Judd’s thoughts about specificity and wholeness would find greater expression in an essay he finished the following year, *Specific Objects*. In *Specific Objects*, which dealt mainly with contemporary art, Judd wrote of works that were neither painting, nor sculpture, nor hybrids, but completely new forms.



Fig. 8 Donald Judd: *Untitled*, 1965, Galvanized iron, Moderna Museet, Stockholm

As was the case with Arp, the experience of a specific object was an experience of wholeness that dominated the various aspects and materials of its creation. As Judd wrote in *Specific Objects*, in terms that echo his Arp review, “It isn’t necessary for a work to have a lot of things to look at, to compare, to analyze one by one, to contemplate. The thing as a whole, its quality as a whole, is what is interesting.”²⁵

Judd’s thoughts about Arp attest to the unexpected afterlife artists and their works can enjoy, a larger arena than one circumscribed by the concept of influence. Artists do not always respond to art works – or anything else – in straightforward or easily predictable ways, and it can be difficult to recover what an encounter with an artwork meant to any individual. We should also not underestimate the importance of the artist’s living presence, if only through his or her work: when Judd praised or de Kooning criticized Arp, they were speaking of someone still alive, still making art capable of surprising, engaging, or irritating. Arp visited the US on a few occasions after the war, and not speaking English, he did not mingle as easily with younger artists as Duchamp did. But his living, creative presence was important nonetheless, and his death in 1966 marks the beginning of a new chapter, the passage of his potential impact into history – another sort of relationship to the past, but one still marked by encounters, above all, with his work in all its varied and imaginative forms.

1 Letter from James Thrall Soby to Marguerite Hagenbach, March 9, 1958, Exhibition Records, 631.9, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.

2 My research has shown that the term “Neo-Dada” arose in the New York art world earlier in the 1950s. Unlike Dada, Neo-Dada was not used by artists to identify themselves as a movement or group; most of them disliked the term, or, at best, viewed it with bemusement. Catherine Craft: *An Audience of Artists: Dada, Neo-Dada, and the Emergence of Abstract Expressionism*, Chicago 2012.

3 Leo Castelli Gallery records, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

4 S.T.: *Jean Arp*, in: *Arts* 37/1962 (November), p. 44.

5 The exception was the Gallery of Living Art, whose founder A.E. Gallatin was adamantly loyal to abstraction and consistently presented Arp’s work within that context.

6 The paragraphs on Abstract Expressionism that follow are adapted from my book *Craft* 2012.

7 Elaine de Kooning: *Gorky: Painter of his own Legend*, in: *Art News* 49/1951 (January), p. 64.

- 8 Pollock's works with cut-out elements include *Cut Out* (c. 1948-50); *Cut Out Figure* (c. 1948-50); *Rhythmical Dance* (1948); *Untitled* (c. 1948); and *Shadows: Number 2, 1948*.
- 9 Jean Arp: *On My Way. Poetry and Essays 1912-1947* (ed. by Robert Motherwell), New York 1948; Robert Motherwell (ed.): *The Dada Painters and Poets. An Anthology*, New York 1951.
- 10 Jean Arp: *And So the Circle Closed*, in: Arp 1948, p. 77.
- 11 Nathalie Brunet: *Chronology, 1948-1954*, in: *Ellsworth Kelly. The Years in France, 1948-54*, exhibition catalogue (ed. by Ellsworth Kelly, Jack Cowart, Alfred Pacquement, and Yve-Alain Bois), National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. 1992, pp. 185-191.
- 12 Letter from Ellsworth Kelly to John Cage, September 4, 1950, quoted in: *Ibid.*, p. 187.
- 13 In May or June 1951, Kelly also acquired a copy of *On My Way*, which included retrospective descriptions by Arp of his collage processes. See Yve-Alain Bois (ed.): *Ellsworth Kelly: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Reliefs, and Sculpture, Volume One, 1940-1953*, Paris 2015, pp. 270-71.
- 14 Kelly quoted in Diane Waldman: *Ellsworth Kelly*, in: *Ellsworth Kelly. A Retrospective*, exhibition catalogue (ed. by id.), Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York 1997, p. 21.
- 15 Bois 2015, pp. 238-243.
- 16 Yve-Alain Bois: *Sophie Taeuber-Arp. Against Greatness*, in: Catherine de Zegher (ed.): *Inside the Visible. An Elliptical Traverse of Twentieth-Century Art*, Cambridge, Mass. 1996, p. 417n1. See also Bois 2015, pp. 270-273.
- 17 Same-sex couples, such as Johns and Rauschenberg, were of course never shown together with any acknowledgement of their relationship.
- 18 Hilton Kramer: *The Innocence of Jean Arp*, in: *Art International* 4, 10/1960 (December 31), p. 41.
- 19 William Chapin Seitz: *Abstract Expressionist Painting in America*, Cambridge, Mass. 1983, p. 102. See also Irving H. Sandler: *The Triumph of American Painting. A History of Abstract Expressionism*, New York and Washington, D.C. 1970, p. 219.
- 20 William Rubin: *Month in Review*, in: *Arts* 33/1958 (November), p. 51. Other quotes in this paragraph also come from this page.
- 21 Donald Judd: *In the Galleries: Jean Arp*, in: *Arts* 37, 10/1963 (September), reprinted in Donald Judd: *Complete Writings 1959-1975*, New York 1975, p. 92. Unless otherwise noted, quotes by Judd in the paragraphs that follow come from this page. In 2011, the Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas presented a small Arp exhibition, and Arie Hartog gave a talk about Judd and Arp, which he later published, as Arie Hartog: *Looking at Arp (reading Judd)*, in: *Chinati Foundation Newsletter* 17/2012 (October), pp. 54-59.
- 22 Donald Judd: *Some Aspects of Color in General and Red and Black in Particular (1994)*, in: *Donald Judd*, exhibition catalogue (ed. by Nicholas Serota), Tate Modern, London 2004, p. 146, p. 149.

23 Judd's library is catalogued on the website of the Donald Judd Foundation, <http://library.juddfoundation.org/JUDDlibbrowse> (accessed January 4, 2016). *Multiple Femme V* comes from a 1956 suite of woodcuts for a book by Ivan Goll; it was never published in France, but in 1962 an American publisher issued a translation, with Arp's prints. Judd's print is thought to be one of the unsigned prints from the 1962 publication. Judd likely purchased *Multiple Femme V* later in his life, although the intricate meandering of white lines over its black surface does have some affinity with an untitled 1961 painting by Judd; in both, line unifies rather than divides the pictorial field, making distinctions between figure and ground deeply ambiguous. The print still hangs in Judd's home and studio in Manhattan. My thanks to Katy Rogers at the Judd Foundation for her assistance.

24 Judd 1994, in: London 2004, p. 149.

25 Donald Judd: *Specific Objects*, in: *Arts Yearbook 8* (1965), reprinted in Judd 1975, p. 187.

One Man Laboratory

Hans Arp and the Museum of Modern Art

Cara Manes

The relationship between Hans Arp and the Museum of Modern Art was forged early and developed steadily. Establishing this critical partnership between artist and institution was Alfred H. Barr, Jr., MoMA's founding director. It was Barr who would first exhibit Arp's work at MoMA, and who would nurture the Museum's long range involvement with the artist, whom Barr once referred to as "a one man laboratory for the discovery of new form", invoking the scientific terminology he had often used to describe the Museum itself as a site of generative experimentation.¹ More than twenty years passed from the time Arp's work was first shown at the Museum in Barr's two landmark 1936 group exhibitions, *Cubism and Abstract Art* and *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism*, and when he was given a major retrospective in 1958. In the intervening period, MoMA focused on building its collection of Arp's work, which today totals nearly 70 sculptures, reliefs, and works on paper. This essay zeroes in on the two key moments of 1936 and 1958 along the arc of this productive relationship. An account of Arp's presence within these early exhibitions aims to underscore not only the ways in which Arp figured prominently into Barr's conception of modernism, as he was first articulating it in those exhibitions, but also the ways in which Arp's work shaped Barr's thinking. A chronicle of Arp's major 1958 retrospective – the first in a museum in the United States – and its critical reception demonstrates how the Museum of Modern Art served as a portal into Arp's oeuvre for an American audience at a critical juncture for American art.

Cubism and Abstract Art

In March 1936, not yet seven years after the Museum of Modern Art first opened its doors, Alfred H. Barr, Jr. launched an ambitious series of

exhibitions intended to address principal tendencies in the art of the twentieth century in what he described as a “comprehensive, objective and historical manner”.² The inaugural exhibitions *Cubism and Abstract Art* and *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* were conceived as a pair meant to provide a framework for understanding the essential strains of modern art as articulated in their respective titles.³ Together, they played a profound role in introducing European modernism to an American audience.

Cubism and Abstract Art featured nearly 400 works in various media. They were grouped together thematically and installed roughly chronologically

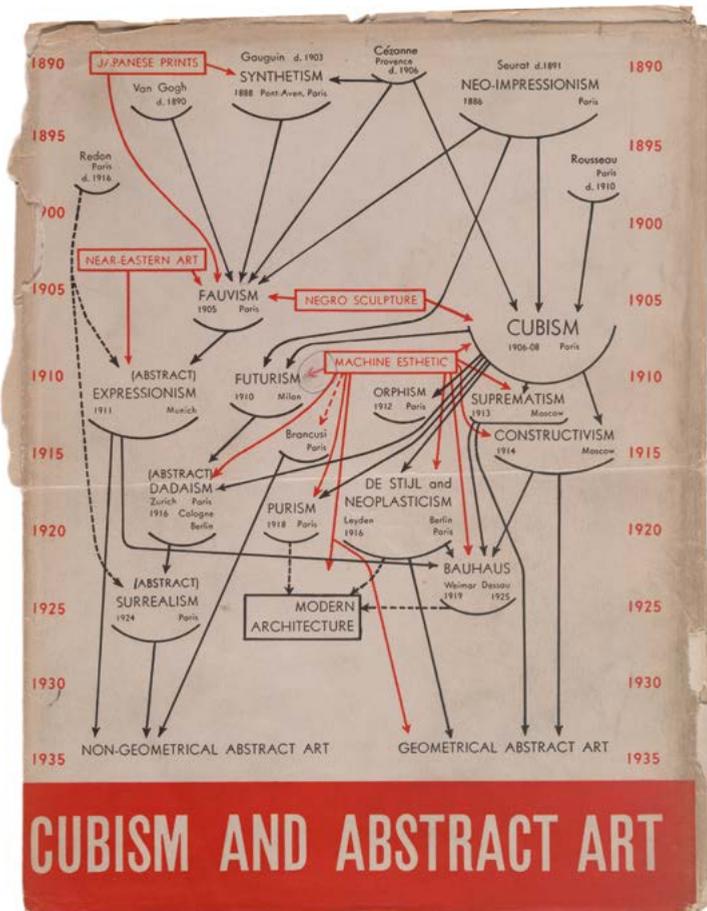


Fig. 1 Cover of the catalogue *Cubism and Abstract Art* (1936), offset, printed in color, 25,70 × 55,60 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York. On the front-cover dust jacket is a diagram designed by Barr charting the sources and evolution of modern art. This particular copy of the book was Barr's own.

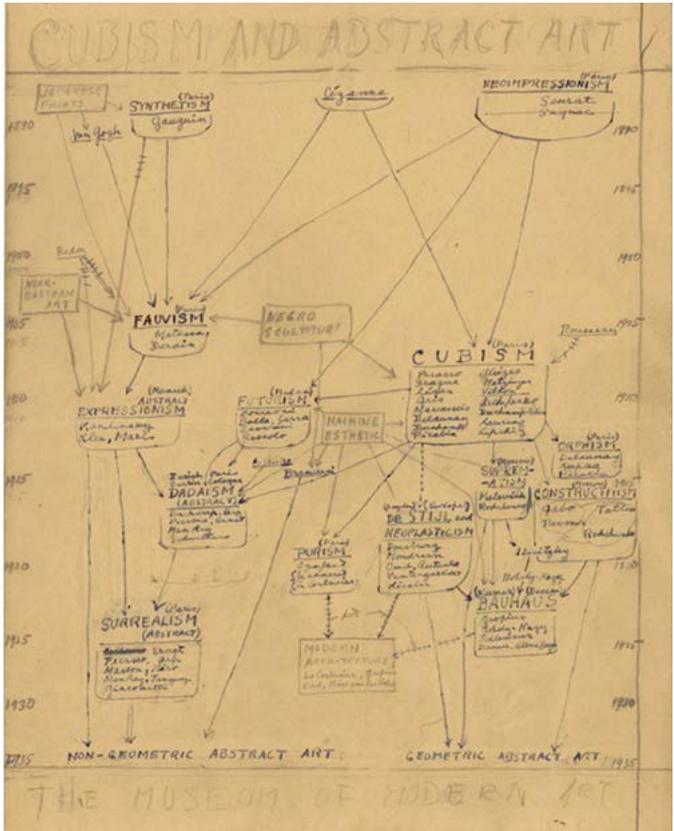


Fig. 2 Alfred H. Barr, Jr.: Hand-drawn draft of the diagram on the dust jacket of *Cubism and Abstract Art*, 1936, pencil and ink on paper envelope, 36,50 x 29,20 cm, Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York

across all four floors of gallery space in the Museum’s townhouse building at 11 West 53 St. The exhibition gave material form to what Barr referred to in the accompanying exhibition catalogue as “the impulse toward abstract art during the past fifty years”.⁴ To illustrate the conceptual framework for his claim, he created a now-famous flowchart, which was reproduced on the cover of the catalogue (*fig. 1*). In his catalogue essay, he explained the chart by employing an aquatic metaphor: from the spring of Impressionism emerge two main currents, he posited. One finds its sources in Cézanne and Seurat, flows through the “widening stream of Cubism and finds its delta in the various geometrical and Constructivist movements which developed in Russia and Holland during the War and have since spread through the

World”. Barr termed this current “geometrical abstract art”. He characterized it as intellectual, structural, geometrical, and rectilinear, among other adjectives, and deemed it the “first and most important”. Barr then identified a second and historically “secondary” current that developed from the font of Gauguin, passing through Matisse’s Fauvism and Kandinsky’s “abstract Expressionism”, then through “abstract Dada”, and finally into “abstract Surrealism”. Barr defined this type in opposition to the first – as “non-geometrical abstract art” – and described it with contrasting terms such as emotional, organic, biomorphic, curvilinear, romantic, and decorative.⁵

Barr placed Arp emphatically in the “non-geometrical” camp. While the final version of the chart omits almost all names of artists, one of several of Barr’s preparatory drawings does identify the principal artists associated with each movement (*fig. 2*). This sketch and others like it illuminate the conceptual path of Barr’s endeavors to reduce the art of his time into one tidy diagram so seemingly comprehensive and scientifically precise that it would inevitably prove abstraction as the logical result of all that came before it.⁶ Revealed in this sketch is a sense of how Barr was beginning to figure Arp along this trajectory – aligned with both Duchamp in the list of Dada names and Picasso in the list of Surrealist names. Barr concluded his introductory text for *Cubism and Abstract Art* by citing Arp as representative of the “non-geometrical” tendency (the other being Miró).⁷ In a separate entry on Arp later in the catalogue Barr went so far as to introduce the idea of a typological Arp “shape”, which he characterized as “a soft, irregular, curving silhouette half-way between circle and the object represented”, noting its appearance in the work of many of his peers and “many lesser men”.⁸

In light of Barr’s unwavering categorization of Arp’s work in these terms, one might find Barr’s actual selection of the artist’s work and their placements within the exhibition somewhat curious. Three of the four included works were shown together in a corner of a room, near Picasso’s *Nude Standing by the Sea* (1929) and works by Miró, Masson and Ernst.⁹ The works were: *Bird-Man* (1924–25), a small painted wood relief that was part of the collection of the Société Anonyme; *Relief* (1930), a painted wooden relief from a New York private collection; and on a pedestal on the floor, *Human Concretion* (1935), a 20-inch-tall plaster that was then in the artist’s collection, but which Barr would soon secure as a gift to the Museum (*fig. 3*). Together the works assembled in this gallery illustrated Barr’s argument



Fig. 3 Beaumont Newhall: Installation view of the exhibition *Cubism and Abstract Art*, Museum of Modern Art, New York 1936, Photographic Archive, Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York



Fig. 4 Beaumont Newhall: Installation view of the exhibition *Cubism and Abstract Art*, Museum of Modern Art, New York 1936. Pictured through doorway is Arp's *Composition* (1915), Photographic Archive, Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York

for the place of Surrealism in the narrative of non-geometrical abstraction and the artists who best supported this position.

But what might then be made of the fourth exhibited work, *Composition* (1915), an abstract collage from the artist's collection that Barr chose to display alone in a stairwell, just outside a gallery of work by Mondrian, van Doesburg, and Vantongerloo (*fig. 4*). Barr discussed this work in the catalogue in a section dedicated to "abstract Expressionism in Germany". He referred to Arp's affiliation with members of the Blue Rider group and argued that his collages revealed the influence of Cubism. However, he then went on to propose that the collage's pure abstraction set it apart from both Parisian Cubism and Munich Expressionism, and that it instead anticipated the abstraction of Neo-Plasticism. He persisted, claiming that "only Malevich in Moscow in 1913 had gone further in the direction of pure geometry".¹⁰ Striking in this passage is how Barr champions Arp as a key figure in his narrative trajectory of geometrical abstraction – on the other side of the chart. Also remarkable is the superlative tenor of Barr's observations – indeed the magnitude of his claim – that at this early moment *no one* but Malevich was pushing geometric abstraction as far as Arp. Keenly aware of Arp's significance in this realm, Barr seems to have been grappling with how to position this early geometric work in light of the conviction with which he staked his claim for the artist's role in the development of biomorphic abstraction. This tension played out in the layout of the exhibition itself, where the physical placement of the collage, alone in a stairwell, affirms Barr's written casting of Arp's work in proximity to the abstraction of Mondrian, but ultimately in a kind of world unto itself.

Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism

Arp was well established as a progenitor of and poster child for biomorphic abstraction by the time *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* opened a few months later, in December 1936. The exhibition was meant to explore more deeply that "secondary" current of modernism as articulated by Barr's chart. In the introductory text to the accompanying catalogue, Barr identified two means by which Surrealists address spontaneity – either through content, as in the fantastical but meticulously rendered images of Dalí, Tanguy, and others, or through technique, as in the free-form,

“automatic”, or “chance-based” compositional methods adopted by artists such as Masson and Miró, taking up early experimentation “previously carried on by Kandinsky, Klee, and Arp”.¹¹ Here again Barr explicitly acknowledged Arp as an antecedent. However, whereas in the earlier text Barr asserted Arp’s prescience in the development of geometric abstraction, he now suggested that the artist was in part responsible for originating the entire strain of Surrealist practice rooted in the exploration of chance as a compositional method.

The checklist published in the first edition of the catalogue included some 25 works by Arp, though not all of them were exhibited. Those installed in the galleries were presented in two different contexts. Two painted wooden reliefs, *Miller* (1916) and *Birds in an Aquarium* (c.1920), were featured in the Dada section of the exhibition alongside Sophie Taeuber-Arp’s *Dada Head* of 1920 and works by Ernst and Masson. The second presentation of works, all dated from 1925 to 1935, were shown together in a nearby gallery featuring what Barr considered likeminded Surrealist work of the abstract, “biomorphic” variety. In this space Barr once again chose to position several examples of Arp’s Surrealist work, including the same plaster *Human Concretion* (1935) from the previous show, in proximity to works by Picasso, Miró and others.

Barr made the selection of works for the exhibition in close dialogue with the artist. He visited Arp at his studio and home in Meudon in the spring of 1936. Correspondence in the Museum of Modern Art’s archives between Barr and Sophie Taeuber-Arp around this time reveals that Arp prepared lists of suggested works for Barr, and that occasionally Arp would question Barr’s selection or propose a substitution. In one exchange, Taeuber-Arp, acting as translator for Arp, explained that Arp would send an additional ink drawing along with the selection for the show and that Barr should choose one to keep for himself, as “a figure of [Arp’s] gratitude for the work you are doing for the modern art”.¹² As Taeuber-Arp rightly suggests, the stakes of Barr’s project were high and its outcome would cast a lasting light on the institution.

Jean Arp: A Retrospective

In October 1958, twenty-two years after *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism*, the Museum of Modern Art opened *Jean Arp: A Retrospective*. The artist’s

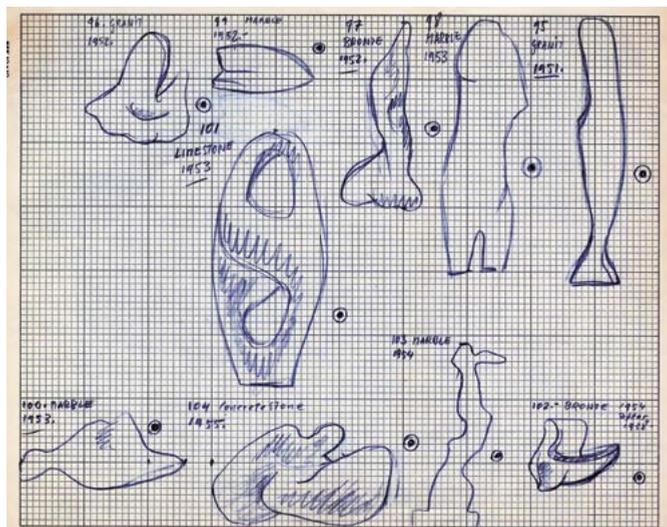


Fig. 5 René d'Harnoncourt: Drawing of selected works to be included in *The Art of Jean Arp*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1958. René d'Harnoncourt Papers, [IX.A.82–83], Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York

major monographic exhibition was organized by longtime Museum trustee James Thrall Soby. At the time Soby was serving the second of two terms as interim Chairman of the Department of Painting and Sculpture, an appointment made by Museum Director René d'Harnoncourt. Though Barr was not involved in the exhibition, the former Director's commitment to the artist was unwavering. In the intervening years he had steadily made key acquisitions of Arp's works for the Museum's collection. At this point, building the collection was Barr's primary responsibility. Having been fired from his directorial position in 1943, he maintained his institutional affiliation through various roles thereafter.¹³ Yet, even without his direct involvement, the exhibition hewed closely to Barr's characterization of Arp in that it clearly favored his "non-geometrical" production and prioritized his recent work.

By 1958, the Museum of Modern Art was a very different institution than it had been in its fledgling years. Under new leadership, the experimental, provocative spirit of Barr's exhibitions of 1936 – with their double hung walls and crowded, mixed media spaces – had given way to an aesthetic of order and authority, articulated in successive iterations of handsome, confidently installed presentations of twentieth-century masters.

Indeed, the Museum had affirmed its position as a bastion of European modernism by mounting major retrospectives of many of the artists included in Barr's early shows, such as Mondrian, Miró, Klee, and Picasso.

Running only seven-and-a-half weeks, from October 8 to November 30, 1958, *Jean Arp: A Retrospective* still managed to bring together more than 110 works from 40 private collectors, nine museums in both the United States and in Europe, and from galleries in New York, Paris and Berlin. Soby had not intended to organize the show and in fact had sought a more suitable curatorial candidate. He confided to d'Harnoncourt his concern that Arp may have been resentful that the Museum was so slow to offer him a large-scale solo exhibition, considering the long list of his contemporaries

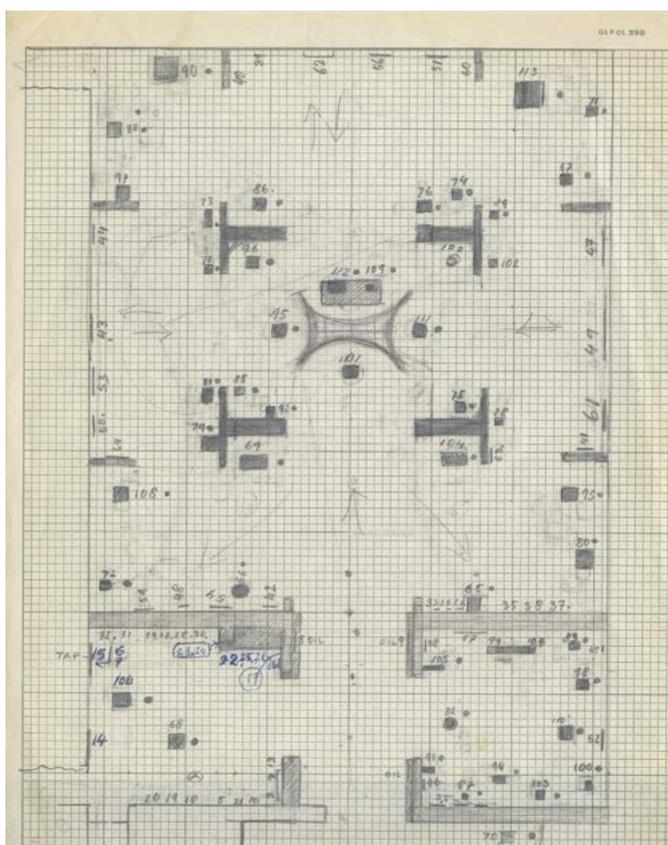


Fig. 6 René d'Harnoncourt: Hand-drawn floorplan for *The Art of Jean Arp*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1958. René d'Harnoncourt Papers, [IX.A.82-83], Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York

who had already gotten their due.¹⁴ Soby felt that the right curator might be able to mitigate any such hard feelings. Early on, he had proposed to hand the project to the British historian Herbert Read, who would eventually publish a monograph on Arp, and the German art historian Carola Giedion-Welcker, author of one of the earliest scholarly surveys of modern sculpture and a close friend of the artist.¹⁵ Though he ultimately took on the responsibility himself, Soby left the bulk of the research to associate curator Sam Hunter and the installation to d’Harnoncourt, whom Barr described as “the world’s foremost master of museum installation”.¹⁶ D’Harnoncourt brought an unusual approach to this practice: he hand-sketched and numbered every work that was to be included in all the exhibitions that he installed (*fig. 5*).¹⁷ These drawings reflect the organizational logic of the installation, each one a proposed grouping of works that could be understood in relation to the other. In turn, this exercise determined the installation plan, which d’Harnoncourt then also sketched, each numbered work corresponding to a location in the hand-drawn floor-plan (*fig. 6*). The main portion of the exhibition space was roughly divided into four sections around a thick central anchor wall with four concave sides, an exhibition design feature that subtly recalls the quintessential Arp “shape” Barr wrote of twenty years earlier. The majority of the works in this central space were freestanding sculptures; consequently the exhibition skewed dramatically toward Arp’s post-1930 output. The small number of early works included in the retrospective, which amount to less than one quarter of the show’s checklist, was mainly relegated to the two small square galleries near the entrance – antechambers to the show’s main sprawling spaces (*fig. 7*).

The 1958 Arp retrospective was the first event to follow an extensive unplanned series of renovations occasioned by a serious fire in the Museum nearly six months earlier. The destruction was rampant, and a handful of large works in the Museum’s collection (including one of Monet’s *Water Lilies*, 1914–26) were severely or irrevocably damaged.¹⁸ After the fire, focus shifted toward the restoration effort, which interrupted the Museum’s scheduled programming. The intended opening of the Arp retrospective was postponed by a month, causing a considerable administrative burden for Soby and his staff. Moreover, it thwarted a proposed tour of the exhibition. From a marketing standpoint, the Arp exhibition therefore became a critical means through which the Museum announced its triumphant return from peril. The timing couldn’t be better. That the Museum



Fig. 7 Soichi Sunami: Installation view of the exhibition *Jean Arp: A Retrospective*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1958, Photographic Archive, Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York

was about to launch a major retrospective of a major figure provided the institution with the perfect hook. MoMA's press office relied heavily on Arp's reputation for its branding campaign, positioning the artist as the headliner of a suite of exhibitions that together marked the reopening of the building.¹⁹ The press responded in kind. The *Boston Globe*, for example, reported: "Raising literally from the ashes of a near-disastrous fire last spring, the Museum of Modern Art has opened its handsomely refurbished home on West 53rd St with a stunning [multi-part] show."²⁰ This unified branding campaign provided a context for the critical response to the exhibition, as well.

Reviews in the local and international press tended to focus on Arp's recent sculpture, and many critics drew the same conclusions about it, lauding its expressive properties, its references to nature, and its sensuous appeal. But in one particularly insightful albeit mixed review of the show in the *New York Herald Tribune*, chief art critic Emily Genauer posed interesting questions about Arp's relationship to his contemporaries. What, she asked, is the difference between the way that Arp approached chance – which was in her estimation a calculated compositional device aimed at creating the look of spontaneity – and contemporary artists interested in "capitalizing on chance effects secured when paint hits and drips down a

picture surface”.²¹ In other words, hadn’t Pollock’s Abstract Expressionist experimentation pushed the investigation of chance even further?

Indeed, while the Museum’s overarching position at mid-Century was one of authority, unabashedly championing figures who easily fell within the parameters of Barr’s flowchart, this moment was also one of transition, as the Museum was beginning to exhibit contemporary American art. Concomitant with but often overshadowed by major solo shows of largely European artists were exhibitions that MoMA dedicated to next-generation Americans. This practice was not without precedent. Barr’s second show at the Museum, *Paintings by 19 Living Americans*, took place in 1930 and featured Georgia O’Keeffe and Edward Hopper, among others. But most famous among these efforts to engage with contemporary American art was curator Dorothy Miller’s series of seven “Americans” shows between 1942 and 1963. These surveys introduced the artists who would come to define American practice in those decades, from Arshile Gorky, Robert Motherwell, Franz Kline, and Mark Rothko to Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, James Rosenquist and Frank Stella. And, in late 1956, the Museum launched a new monographic exhibition series called “Artists in Mid-Career”, organized by Hunter and focused on contemporary work of middle-generation artists in America. The series covered Jackson Pollock, the subject of the inaugural exhibition, and David Smith, among others, until it was eventually phased out after Hunter’s departure from the Museum. In fact, while spearheading the research for the Arp exhibition, Hunter implored Soby to reconsider the gallery space designated for Arp’s show once he discovered that prioritizing Arp on the exhibition schedule would effectively pre-empt the next show in his mid-career series. Ultimately, that show was postponed anyway and it would be another decade before its subject – Willem de Kooning – was offered an exhibition at the Museum.²²

These details of MoMA’s exhibition history point to the charged nature of this moment in the evolution of the institution’s identity. The tightly woven fabric of its mission and vision was beginning to loosen to the new possibility of contemporary American art. A look at the Museum’s exhibition schedule during the same late fall season in the years preceding and succeeding the Arp retrospective reveals an institution in transition: two years before, in late 1956, Pollock had been showcased; then Chagall in 1957; then Arp; and then, just one year later in late 1959, Johns, Kelly, Rauschenberg, and Stella all made their MoMA debuts in the landmark group show 16

Americans. Considering Arp along this continuum and against this backdrop of institutional flux expands his status from an emblem of the codified, revered, “original avant-garde”, to one of the urgent present, whose contributions are positioned in generative dialogue with an international community of contemporary artists.

Some of this dialogue had admittedly begun long before the exhibition. As Catherine Craft notes in this volume, there is one artist whose personal relationship to Arp is well documented at an earlier moment, and for whom Arp was a key figure.²³ In 1951, while living and working in Paris, Ellsworth Kelly proposed a book project called *Line Form Color* as part of a bid for a fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. He wrote that it was to be “an alphabet of plastic pictorial elements”.²⁴ Arp agreed to serve as the young artist’s reference for the application, although it was rejected. Nevertheless, Kelly completed the book, which was ultimately published in 1999. Comprising forty uniformly sized drawings, it explored passages of straight and curved lines, formations of individual shapes, and combinations of usually two to three colors as well as black and white. Kelly later spoke of Arp’s engagement with chance as crucial in the



Fig. 8 Clipping from the folder *Arp Shapes*, discovered 1978, Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers, [10.A.2], Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York

development of his own compositional approach, but he also cited Arp's encouraging feedback on this early project as particularly meaningful. The project itself ended up being of the utmost significance for Kelly's own trajectory: the highly personal vocabulary of line, form, and color that he developed through making this work became the foundation of his artistic practice for many decades to come.

Coda

There is a special set of files in the Museum of Modern Art's archives that contains items removed from Alfred H. Barr's desk drawers in 1978. These files hold a heterogeneous mix of materials – from notes and transcripts to clippings and photographs that for whatever reason he chose to keep close at hand. Some of the folders relate to current projects, while others are more general in scope, on subjects penned in Barr's hand ranging from “German Expressionism” to “Italian trip” to “Penguins”. Among these files was one he called “Arp Shapes,” and inside was a stack of unannotated newspaper and magazine clippings – a small body of proof to a claim he made long before: “The Arp ‘shape’, a soft, irregular, curving silhouette half-way between circle and the object represented, appears again and again in the works of Miró, Tanguy, Calder, Moore, and many lesser men” (*fig. 8*).²⁵ With this little collection of ephemera, Barr seems to proclaim that the ubiquity and importance of the Arp shape is not fixed within the realm of fine art. Rather, it extends to all of modern visual culture.

1 As quoted in James Thrall Soby: *Introduction: The Search for New Forms*, in: *Arp* (ed. by id.), exhibition catalogue, Museum of Modern Art, New York 1958, pp. 7–11, p 7. The catalogue accompanied the concurrent exhibition *Jean Arp: A Retrospective* (which was also occasionally referred to as *The Art of Jean Arp* in certain sources).

2 Alfred H. Barr, Jr.: *Cubism and Abstract Art* (edited by id.), exhibition catalogue, Museum of Modern Art, New York 1936, p. 19.

3 In addition to *Cubism and Abstract Art* (MoMA Exh. #46, March 2 – April 19, 1936) and *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* (MoMA Exh. #55, December 7, 1936 – January 17, 1937), the series also included *Romantic Painting in America* (MoMA Exh. #246, November 11, 1943 – February 6, 1944).

- 4 Barr 1936, p. 19.
- 5 Ibid. for all citations in this passage.
- 6 For more on these charts, see Glenn D. Lowry: *Abstraction in 1936: Barr's Diagrams*, in: *Inventing Abstraction. 1910–1925* (ed. by Leah Dickerman), exhibition catalogue, Museum of Modern Art, New York 2011, pp. 359–363.
- 7 Barr 1936, p. 68.
- 8 Ibid., p. 186.
- 9 Picasso's painting was listed in the catalogue as no. 231 with the title *Bather by the Sea*. The credits note that it was lent from the Collection of the Bignou Gallery, Paris. It now resides in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (1996.403.4).
- 10 Barr 1936, p. 70.
- 11 Alfred H. Barr, Jr.: *A Brief Guide to the Exhibition "Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism"*, in: *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* (ed. by id.), exhibition catalogue, Museum of Modern Art, New York 1936. Reprinted as *Introduction* in the third, revised edition of *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* ed. of 1947, pp. 9–13, p.12.
- 12 Letter from Sophie Taeuber-Arp to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., September 2, 1936. MoMA Exhs., [55.4], Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York. For a firsthand account of Barr's travels in advance of the exhibition as detailed in his travel notebooks, see Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers, [9.E.1], *ibid.*
- 13 The circumstances around Barr's dismissal are well-known and well-documented. See, for example, Sybil Gordon Kantor: *Alfred H. Barr Jr. and the Intellectual Origins of The Museum of Modern Art*, Cambridge, Mass 2002, in particular the Epilogue, pp. 354–377.
- 14 Letter from James Thrall Soby to René d'Harnoncourt, October 25, 1957. MoMA Exhs., [631.8], Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.
- 15 Herbert Read: *The Art of Jean Arp*, New York 1968 and Carola Giedion-Welcker: *Modern Plastic Art: Elements of Reality, Volume and Disintegration*, Zürich 1937; later revised as *Contemporary Sculpture: An Evolution in Volume and Space*, New York 1955.
- 16 Alfred H. Barr, Jr. cit. after Kantor 2002, p. 365.
- 17 The Museum's archives contain beautiful, meticulously rendered drawings of the Arp exhibition's entire checklist. René d'Harnoncourt Papers, [IX.A.82–83], Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.
- 18 Among many other sources, news articles at the time detail the fire's destruction and the events leading up to the Museum's reopening. Public Information Records [II.A.51]. Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York. Soby informed Arp of the fire in a letter to Marguerite Hagenbach, April 20, 1958, MoMA Exhs., [631.9], *ibid.*

19 The others were *The Philip L. Goodwin Bequest*, a selection of works given by the Museum's first architect and Vice Chairman of its Board of Trustees and included works by Brancusi, Picasso, Léger, Klee, and Dove (MoMA Exh. #632); *Works of Art: Given or Promised*, featuring twelve recent acquisitions and another several works from private collectors promised to the Museum (MoMA Exh. #633); and *Architecture Worth Saving*, a selection of architectural photographs (MoMA Exh. #634). Each of these exhibitions ran from October 8 to November 9, 1958.

20 Gene Brackley: *Phoenix on 53d Street*, in: *Boston Morning Globe*, November 3, 1958, n.p. Public Information Records, [II.B.151], Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.

21 Emily Genauer: *Jean Arp, An Abstract Sculptor*, in: *New York Herald Tribune*, October 12, 1958, n.p. Public Information Records, [II.B.151], Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.

22 Hunter left the Museum in May 1958 during preparations for the Arp exhibition to become the chief curator and acting director of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, which incidentally was one of several venues under consideration for a proposed but ultimately unrealized tour of the Arp retrospective. James Thrall Soby Papers [I.8], Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York. In a letter to Soby dated December 5, 1957, Hunter urged Soby to reconsider the proposed move of Arp's exhibition to the first floor galleries from the planned third floor space, "which somehow carries more prestige with it for the artist." MoMA Exhs., [631.8], *ibid.*

23 See the essay of Catherine Craft in this publication, pp. 32–52.

24 Ellsworth Kelly: *Line Form Color*, Harvard University Art Museums, Cambridge, Mass 1999, n.p. Kelly recalls that he was out of the country for an exhibition of his own work in Paris for the duration of the Arp retrospective, and therefore did not have a chance to see the show in person. Email correspondence with the author, June 16, 2015.

25 Barr 1936, p. 186. The "Arp Shapes" folder is part of the Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers, [10.A.2], Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.

A Dada Among Pragmatists

Brandon Taylor

On what terms was a European Dada to be understood in the aesthetic melting-pot of post-war America – moreover a Dada whose recent works embodied a complex combination of joy and unease; a sense of bivalency and mockery always mixed up somehow with bursting, fructifying form; a remarkable *Naturphilosophie* that had come to inhabit his work at its startling, enigmatic best? The relevant turning point is the year 1930, when – so Hans Arp tells us – he reached a reassessment of his impulse to name his poems and wall reliefs as if they had the character of Surrealist poems: *Bird Mask* (1918), *Moustache Watch* (1923) and *Moon Frog* (1924) are examples of the type. “Suddenly my need for interpretation vanished”, Arp wrote in retrospect, “and the body, the form, the supremely perfected work became everything to me. In 1930 I went back to the activity which the Germans so eloquently call *Hauerei* [hewing]. I engaged in sculpture and modelled in plaster.”¹ In New York after the Second World War those sculptures would help define this late-coming Dada in at least two ways: as a quasi-figurative abstractionist in the succession of Rodin or Henry Moore, but also as a provocative manipulator of counter-meanings whose character, so I shall argue, we are still deciding how to assess.²

Of Mutability

One of Arp’s earliest carved works gives a hint of what was to follow. *Torso*, of 1931, has a faint resemblance to an upright figure belonging to what could be read as a classical tradition; but might as easily be seen as a swerve away from one, in seeming to possess a kind of gathering, animate force; more accurately a bundle of forces that pull and push against each other as if wanting to dissolve the given figure and twist it into some more elongated and attenuated totality (*fig. 1*). Throughout the remainder of the 1930s Arp



Fig. 1 Hans Arp: *Torso*, 1931, white marble, 61 × 39.5 × 18.45 cm, Private Collection

“hewed” a further group of carved and plaster-modelled forms that pursue a similar course of trying to reconcile – to the extent that it was possible at all – the mobility and changefulness of natural form with the necessary stasis of the actual sculpted work. By the mid-1930s the programme of Abstraction-Création – *for* “abstraction” and *against* totalitarian-style figuration – had become little more than a memory for him; while “Concrete Art” had transcended its earlier extremism – the kind associated with van Doesburg – and developed associations and principles of its own. Yet by 1935 Arp had himself thrown off the word “concrete” in favour of the more labile term

“concretion” and used it to name a group known as *Human Concretions* that begin to suggest process and growth – a category of form in which genesis and evolution in their own terms seem intrinsic to the sculpted thing. Arp’s explanation of his idea is not easy. “Concretion signifies the natural process of condensation, hardening, coagulation, thickening, growing together”, he would write later. “Concretion designates curdling, the curdling of the earth and the heavenly bodies. Concretion designates solidification, the mass of the stone, the plant, the animal, the man. Concretion is something that has grown.” Then, and no less paradoxically: “I want my work to find its humble place in the woods, in the mountains, in nature”, as if searching for a new kind of sculptural artefact of a kind that is no longer stationary and no longer at home in the gallery or the museum.³ But he knew that the statement could make sense of his new collages too. Having once cut paper edges with great precision and stuck the pieces down with fanatical care, he now, around 1930 or 1931, returned to recuperate commitments that had been present at the very start of his career in art. Referring to the pieces exhibited at the Jeanne Bucher Gallery in Paris in 1933, he later wrote: “I began to tear my papers instead of cutting them neatly with scissors [...] I tore up drawings and carelessly smeared paste over and under them [...] I stuck my collages together with a wad of newsprint instead of pressing them carefully with blotting paper, and if cracks developed, so much the better.” With such an attitude he was able to accept “the transience, the dribbling away, the brevity, the impermanence, the fading, the withering [...] of our existence” (*fig. 2*).⁴

These statements were published in the catalogue for Arp’s Museum of Modern Art show of 1958, by which time the possible lives of a Dada in New York were changing fast. In the meantime, it was surely his good fortune to have been invited by Robert Motherwell to prepare a volume of images, prose and poetry for publication in the Wittenborn-Schulz series *Documents of Modern Art*. Motherwell, educated in the humanities and having studied in Paris, was familiar with European literature and philosophy and with French art and writing in particular – slightly less so with the German tradition from which Arp, in one of his roots, was descended. What is distinctive about *Arp: On My Way: Poetry and Essays 1912–1947* on its appearance in 1948 is not only the rich mixture of poetic and biographical texts written by Arp himself, and not only the flavour imparted by its three languages, namely the German and French of Arp’s native Alsace as well as



Fig. 2 Hand Arp: *The Light-headed ones*, 1934, torn paper collage and ink, 45,7 x 37,2 cm, Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth

the English of the book's publisher. It is photography that now makes a claim to being a visual technology well suited to explaining how Arp's distinctive conception of "nature" could reconcile the intensity and provocation of Dada with the inescapable stasis of the sculptural thing: its brute materiality, its subjection to gravity and light, above all its relation to the ground. For it is startling, in the pages of *On My Way*, to find Arp's *Human Concretion* of 1935 photographed lying in a garden of clover in no less than three distinct orientations to light and gravity, which is to say three distinct modes of contact with the ground (the left-hand page of the pictorial spread shows back and front of the same resting position) (fig. 3). There is a

quasi-cinematic implication that the object is in movement from one frame to the next, the work's trumpet-like protrusion turned to face the ground, in one, facing half-up in two others, while in a fourth frame it is fully raised – a creature first of all asleep but with its own power to rouse itself and then slowly elevate its neck and face the sky. It is no exaggeration to say that a sculpture not having a single principal as well as stable mode of placement with respect to its support was (and remains) without precedent in modernist conceptions of object-hood and aesthetic theory and remains virtually unique in the much larger Western tradition of three-dimensional work.⁵

The photographic displays presented in *On My Way* bring us face to face with Arp's conception of "nature" and with the intuitions that enabled him to find one workable and I think notable form of the Dada spirit within it. The photographer of *Human Concretion* for *On My Way* was the Hamburg-born Rolf Tietgens, who after arriving in the US from Germany in 1939 had become enamoured of Surrealist conceptions of the photograph that owed nothing – in practice – to the radical practices of Man Ray or Boiffard or of Bataille's *Documents*; but rather embodied a sort of everyman's Surrealism that urged exploitation of camera angles, truncation, conjunction, inversion and the like that any owner of a small hand-held camera of that era could practice.

Tietgens writes in the American popular magazine *Minicam* of the "super-reality" that can be accessed by looking through the camera lens inventively and by capturing objects in surprising conjunctions with each other. A hidden dimension to things "comes out of the life of the objects", writes Tietgens, "touches us somehow and gives the feeling that something previously unknown has sprung into life."⁶ Tietgens also trained his camera on Arp's *Giant Seed* of 1936 (titled *Plant Organism* in the new publication), making it appear like a large bird-like creature pausing on its flight and looking upwards into the sky (*fig. 4*). In another photograph of the same work he takes advantage of the revolving base that Arp provided for the work and photographs it from below, the sculpture now turned against the passing clouds and the sun's glare as if to suggest the sculpture as part of the larger sensory continuum, one bud or protuberance melting into the fluffiness of the cloud behind it, while the other looms threateningly above, darkened and lowering like a sudden change in the weather.⁷ Other photographs in this and the following decade confirm how labile and how animate such works were intended to look – and it is reasonable to think that Arp

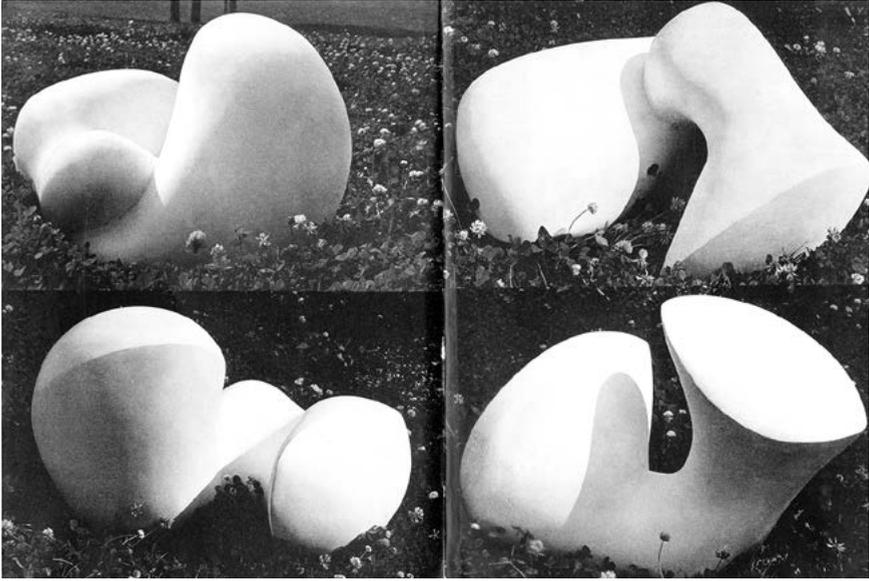


Fig. 3 Hans Arp: *Human Concretion*, 1935, limestone, 73 × 49,5 × 45 cm, page from *Arp: On My Way. Poetry and Essays 1912–1947* (ed. by Robert Motherwell), New York 1948, pp. 130–131

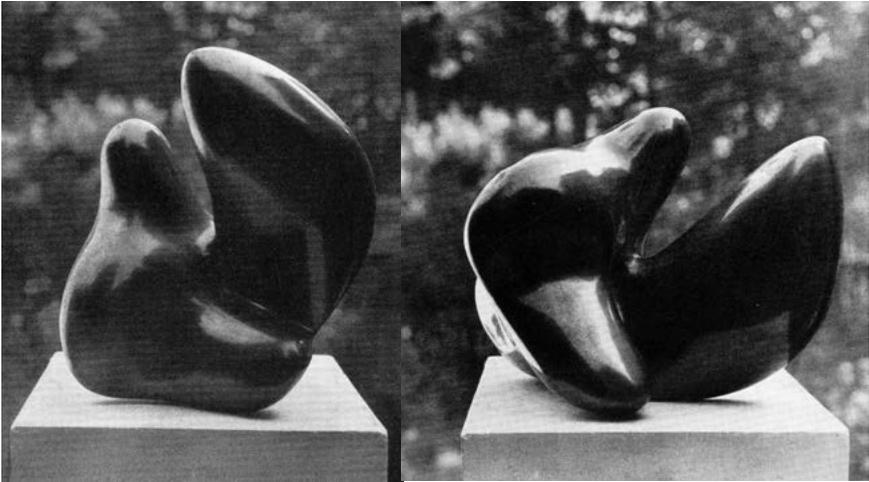


Fig. 5 Hans Arp: *Mirr*, bronze version, 1936, 17 cm high, page from *Arp: On My Way. Poetry and Essays 1912–1947* (ed. by Robert Motherwell), New York 1948, pp. 56–57



Fig. 4 Hans Arp: *Plant Organism*, 1936, limestone on revolving base, 150 × 110 × 100 cm, page from *Arp: On My Way. Poetry and Essays 1912–1947* (ed. by Robert Motherwell), New York 1948, p. 44

encouraged it. With the resources of photography now fully mobilised, we find the granite sculpture *Mirr* of 1936 with four alternative positions on its base (three are reproduced in *On My Way*) (*fig. 5*); the granite sculpture *Lunar Armor* of 1938 with three (two are in *On My Way*); the plaster sculpture *Interregnum* of 1938 (in a later granite version known as *Shell Crystal*) with four (two are in *On My Way*); while *Oru*, a work of 1953, has three; and so on. This endowment of mutability in the art-work – the sculpture no longer a fixed entity but a quasi-animal being with an interior life of its own – was already fundamental to Arp's outlook by the mid-1940s and the camera angles of Tietgens and others quickly became its ideal servant.

"Dada-nature"

Yet it was not only mutability that energised Arp's best work in this vein. Behind even the apprehension of mutability lay a special Dada conception of what nature is in relation to man as an organism; and while Arp drops clues to his thinking in his voluminous writings, not many of his American

supporters appear to have recognised them. His statement that “We don’t want to copy nature. We don’t want to reproduce, we want to produce. We want to produce like a plant that produces a fruit [...] we want to produce directly and not by way of any intermediary” had been printed for Peggy Guggenheim’s *Abstract Art, Concrete Art* exhibition in 1942 at her Art Of This Century Gallery, and again for Basel’s *Konkrete Kunst* exhibition in 1944, before it appeared again in *On My Way*.⁸ But what did it mean, and what did it imply? In his editor’s preface to *On My Way* Robert Motherwell does a creditable job in evoking what he sensed was Arp’s special understanding of nature – but he does so without fanfare, and without coming to terms with the full richness of the position that Arp, through his writings in three languages, had by that time come to occupy. “Arp is a pastoral artist”, Motherwell said, quoting Arp’s statement that “my reliefs and sculptures fit naturally in nature.” His sense of scale derives “from adjusting the human body to its surroundings, garden or field [...]. His process is slow and even as nature’s, carving that has the effect of water run over human stones [...]. No wonder predatory man nauseates him!” – the last referring to those passages in Arp’s poetry and prose where he bemoans the mechanical domination of nature to which the Dadas had reacted so strongly at the time of the First World War. Motherwell adds: “His words explode at the workings of modern society, costumed fraud [...] the Dadaist in him is aroused, and he writes true poetry, spontaneous and unforced, without desire to ‘be’ a poet.”⁹

Yet it is in Arp’s own recollections and statements – not all of them easily available in 1946/47 – that his Dada conception of nature is to be found. In one reverie he recalls walking on shores of Lago Maggiore in 1914, finding great pleasure in recovering broken bits of wood, grass and weathered stone, and thinking of them as tokens of nature’s formative power – starkly different, as it must have seemed then, from traditional aesthetic conceptions of “the beautiful” or the natural “sublime”. A broken twig, he affirms somewhere, is more beautiful than the formulaic vistas of European landscape art. In the pages of the Dada-Constructivist publication *Merz*, too, can be read some determined efforts to recuperate an idea of “nature” that is of a piece with modern science and simultaneously essential to a Dada way of looking at the world. *Merz* No. 6 for October 1923, prepared by Arp and Tristan Tzara, contained images of six wood reliefs by Arp that helped announce that “nature” was to be claimed as one of Dada’s most potentially productive terms. It is further to be assumed, I think, that *Merz* No. 8–9 for

July 1924, edited by Schwitters and Lissitzky – an unlikely pairing – also meant something to Arp in the context of introducing “concrete” and “concretion” as better pieces of terminology for the new art than “abstract” or “abstraction”, with their implication of non-figuration or disappearing subject-matter. The 1924 issue of *Merz* was titled *Nasci* and bore on its cover: “NATUR VON LAT. NASCI D.I.WERDEN ODER ENTSTEHEN HEISST ALLES, WAS SICH AUS SICH SELBST DURCH EIGENE KRAFT ENTWICKELT GESTALTET UND BEWEGT”, as well as “*Nature, du latin NASCI, signifie devenir, provenir, c’est à dire tout ce qui par sa propre force, se développe, se forme, se meut*”, which I render as: “Nature, from the Latin NASCI, signifies becoming, originating, which is to say everything that by its own force develops, forms, dies.” “All the trouble that we expend on defining the beauty of nature”, *Nasci* further states, “comes and will come to nothing, for being ourselves nature we struggle to change the face of the world. Nature herself is oblivious to eternal beauty and by continually changing its forms she gives birth incessantly to new creation. Modern nature is the other kind – that which comes from man” and is based on the concept of mechanism, or machine. “Nature” requires new interpretation. “The machine is nothing more than a paint-brush”, *Nasci* states, “one of the most primitive, whose purpose is to give form to amorphous nature; on the contrary, by its means we have discovered a new nature, so far unknown. Modern art and science have arrived at the same result, and by independent means. Like science, art has decomposed form into its fundamental elements, then recomposed them according to the universal laws of nature. ALL FORM IS A CONCRETE MOMENT OF AN EVOLUTION. THE WORK OF ART IS NOT A FIXED PROPOSAL BUT A MOMENT OF DEVELOPMENT.”¹⁰

Partly in the light of those issues of *Merz*, the relation between Dada and form was already complex by the time *On My Way* was in preparation. Georges Hugnet, whose essay *The Dada Spirit in Painting* had appeared in *Cahiers d’Art* in 1932 and 1934 and was soon to be included in Motherwell’s edition *The Dada Painters and Poets* of 1951, had claimed the *Nasci* issue of *Merz* to be evidence that Dada had gone astray. He says that after the early *Merz* issues involving Tzara, the magazine had “changed abruptly; [that] *Merz* had never had much unity, and was very uneven;” that No. 8–9 was “only remotely a Dada review, other interests having opposed Dada and usurped its place”. In adding that “*Nasci* came out for a new order,

abstract in tendency, i.e. the discovery of *form*”, Hugnet was telling a greater truth than he realised – Arp, Schwitters and Lissitzky having all been concerned to save nature from merely mechanical mechanism, apart from human concerns.¹¹ In particular, Arp’s own writings between the time of *Merz* and that of *On My Way* were full of repudiations of a merely mechanical conception of nature – nature as a piece of clockwork with wheels rotating according to physical regularities. “Oblivious nature” versus “the machine” was in essence a Kantian theme; and as Tzara had already observed, Arp “loved Kant’s writings”; suggesting that since at least his Zurich days Arp had gravitated to a “nature” whose roots lay at least in part in the Romantic generation of Novalis, Schelling, and Hölderlin; while Kant’s fulminations against natural mechanism stayed with him in the studio. A machine, Kant had argued in *The Critique of Judgement*, has “solely motive power”, whereas nature is composed of self-preserving, self-repairing organisms possessing “inherent formative power [...] in which every part is reciprocally both end and means.”¹²

Yet while *On My Way* contains indications that nature, for Arp, had “formative power”, there are hints of a “nature” that at the same time is not meaningful in the way in which intended or sense-making action is. Motherwell surely knew that the notion that “nature” is somehow *in* man – man as part of nature – was already becoming a familiar one in the New York art world in the 1940s, and it would not have been difficult for either of them to align Arp’s statements with the aleatory, “automatist” procedures being adopted with paint and paper alike in the studios of the day. The difficulty lay in the fact that Dada had always insisted on something else. Firstly, most young New York artists would view the principle that “nature is in man” as referring to individual man (perhaps American man in particular) whereas Arp never tired of “collaboration” – sometimes his word is “cooperation” – in consequence of which the “formative” or “formal” organisation of his Dada work had a tendency to appear multi-layered, dense or even obscure; and for wholly Dada reasons. Carola Giedion-Welcker commented that Arp’s symbolic language not only “appears to express the principles of growth and continuous transformation that one finds in nature” but that “he used combinations of organic and geometric shapes [which] produce an ambiguous effect, which enhanced the remarkable double-level of his art at that time” – she is talking directly about the work of the 1930s.¹³ And while one can see many of his sculptures’ profiles as wrecking, complicating, or throwing into



Fig. 6 Hans Arp: *Marital Sculpture*, 1937, wood, 39 × 29,5 × 27,5 cm, Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth

doubt the presence of a unitary form-principle governing the conception and shaping of the work, it can perhaps be stated that those profiles appear charged with a kind of active and persistent *anacoluthia* or semantic jumping from one form-assertion to the next; possessed of what the lexicographers call “a want of grammatical sequence; the passing to a new construction before the original one is completed.”¹⁴ The aptly-named *Marital Sculpture* of 1937, for example, is a truly anacoluthic work, its lathe-turned rounded forms abruptly interrupted by two sawn planar sections, made as if to expose an “inside” to matter such as might be obtained by diverting or spoiling or wounding one form-impulse with another (*fig. 6*). *Shell Crystal*

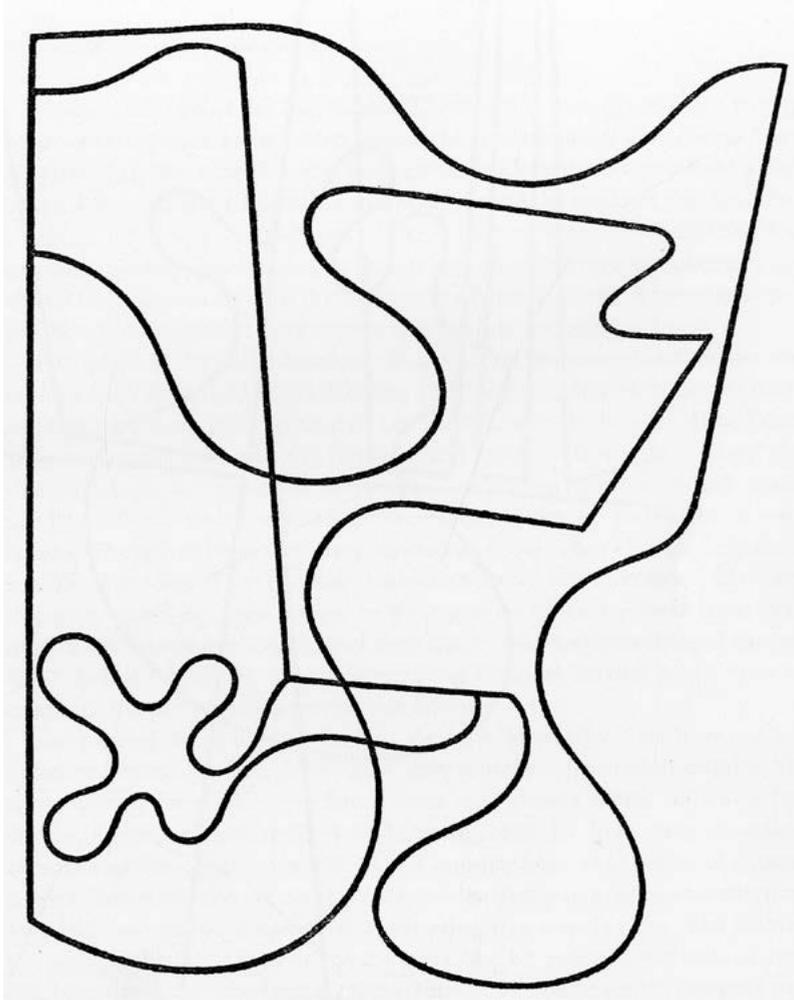


Fig. 7 Hans Arp and Sophie Taeuber-Arp: *Duet Drawing*, 1939, page from *Arp: On My Way: Poetry and Essays 1912–1947* (ed. by Robert Motherwell), New York 1948, p. 73

(1938) and *Oru* (1953) also present plane sections through an otherwise rounded form for purposes, so it appears, of rendering unstable the intentional direction or temporality of the work, perhaps even implying a time-lag between one generative moment and another. Giedion-Welcker speculates elsewhere that “the intersection of purely organic forms by sharp geometrical planes [...] implies the introduction of a new element that is semi-architectural and, one might almost say, intentionally civilising”; yet the stronger impression is that of forming techniques vying with and against

each other in those cases where “sharp geometrical planes” are destructive of a viable moulded shape; a shape prior, in the order of manufacture, to the application of the saw.¹⁵

Marital Sculpture was a “cooperation” between Arp and Sophie Taeuber – and is just one item in a long list of cooperations between him and other artists that tell us much about the interplay of “nature” and “Dada” in his work (and perhaps in theirs) since the very beginning of his career. Cooperation had taken place early in the cross-stitching pictures done with Sophie Taeuber in 1916–17, and again in the series of *Duo-Collages* with Sophie dating from 1918–19. The *Cadavres Exquis* with Oscar Dominguez, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Marcel Jean and Raoul Hausmann in various combinations in 1938 are further, albeit conventionally Surrealist examples; while the collaboration with Sophie, Alberto Magnelli and Sonia Delaunay for the *Album de Grasse* in war-torn France in 1941–42 is a notable further case. Significant clues to the functions of cooperative work can be found in several places in *On My Way* – not only the collaborative torn collage of 1946 at page 103, but the three *Duet Drawings* from 1939 that appear on pages 71, 73 and 74 of that remarkable book (*fig. 7*). How are we to describe them? It is unsurprising, against the background of Sophie’s tragic death in 1943, that prominence should be given to the productivity of their partnership in art, and in a basic sense collaboration – cooperation – can be neutrally understood as “distributed” authorship – a division of labour in which two or more people agree to contribute something identifiable as their own. But importantly, collaboration can mean two further things: on the one hand a dilution of intention, a kind of abandonment or ceding of desire that comes with closeness to another person or group, a mutuality at the most intimate level of the self which is less a weakening than a surrendering of the will; on the other hand an exemplification of a higher and more developed form of will, one that wishes not to dilute but to intensify authorship – authorship now cast as delegation or permissiveness, aimed at completing or constituting another kind of whole; in which case “agency” in the such cases is lapsed and supercharged at the same time, a deflection of sense-making in the direction of simultaneous, burgeoning form. *Not* presenting a single intentional thrust for the work – rather complicating and multiplying it – goes towards a “Dada nature” in which form is bursting and fructifying and yet lacking in singleness of purpose; which is to say, lacking any purpose at all.

“Philosophies have less value for Dada than an old abandoned toothbrush”, wrote Arp in *On My Way*. “Dada abandons them to the great world leaders. Dada denounced the infernal ruses of the official vocabulary of wisdom. Dada is for the senseless, which does not mean nonsense. Dada is senseless like nature. Dada is for nature and against art. Dada is direct like nature. Dada is for infinite sense and definite means.”¹⁶ In fact it is an excerpt of an earlier, more insistent and more paradoxical text, the so-called *Strasbourg Configuration*, written in German 1931 at the beginning of his activities with sculpture and torn-paper collages but not published (and then only in French) until 1963. We do well to consider it here, since it contains the most succinct statement of how “nature” belongs with Dada and how Dada exemplifies “nature” when viewed in an Arpian way. “i was born in nature” the text begins. “i was born in strasbourg. i was born in a cloud. i was born in a pump. i was born in a robe. i have four natures. i have two things. i have five senses. sense and non-sense. nature is senseless. make way for nature. nature is a white eagle. make dada-way for dada-nature.” And then later, “dada is for the senseless which is not non-sense. dada is as senseless as nature and life. dada is for nature and against art. like nature dada wishes to assign each thing to its essential place.”¹⁷

Dada meets America

These are difficult ideas; made more difficult not just by the intensity of New York culture and living, but by the fervour of the so-called achievement culture that can be diagnosed in the city at that time – the individualism of personal striving in the midst of a vastly energised consumption economy that was also new. The say-so of one naturalised American can be taken as evidence here. Charles R. Hulbeck had arrived in America from Europe in 1936, and by the early 1950s was living in what he describes as “a marvelous suite” at 88 Central Park West while practicing as an existential psychoanalyst and giving lectures at the American Institute for Psychoanalysis in New York from the standpoint, roughly, of Otto Rank and Karen Horney, both known for their analyses of the inhibiting effects of the *Zeitgeist* on the creative capacities of the individual.¹⁸ Hulbeck is valuable to us for his reading of the American psyche during the years of the country’s rapid post-war industrialisation – what in a paper on *The Creative Personality*, read before

the Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis in 1943, he had characterised as “mechanisation, collectivity, nationalism” bolstered by a “trend toward commercialisation” and “the atomization of the human mind [in which] the worker only sees parts of the product and is deprived of any possible interest in the product as a whole.”¹⁹ Hulbeck’s disillusion with the ideological goals of 1940s and 1950s America is palpable in virtually everything he wrote about the version of democracy then on offer. “American democracy”, he says in another text, “as we see it today, is totally different from the democracy of the pioneers; it has changed from an unruly desire for individualism to a mass democracy, and the causes are not bad intentions or negligence. The very opposite is true; the masses have won, because this country, more than any other in the world, firmly believes that it is the majority that should have everything.”²⁰ Readers will recognise Dr. Hulbeck as none other than Richard Huelsenbeck, who with Arp, the Janco brothers, Tzara, Emmy Hennings and Hugo Ball had unleashed their energies at the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich in 1916. In the age of the atom bomb, Huelsenbeck wrote in a later paper, the self-satisfied motto of the man of the masses is basically optimistic and pragmatic. “Everything is fine and getting better all the time. His religion is progress. The invention of television continued his unshakeable optimism no less than the denotation of H bombs.”²¹ But also: “He kills his enemies with regret and rationalises his ugliness by having a hobby at home [...] a dog, a sculpture, or playing the piano. He kills and dabbles in art.”²²

Huelsenbeck’s disillusion with the prospects for a truly Dada art in America can be explained in different ways. He was out of touch with America’s younger generations, perhaps – did not see their shows or understand their creative strivings. Yet his testimony chimed well – *faute de mieux* – with the sober and classicising qualities of James Thrall Soby’s exhibition of Arp’s work at the Museum of Modern Art in 1958. Surviving installation photographs suggest a thorough-going suppression of Arp’s Dadaist *Naturphilosophie* that had been successfully foregrounded in *On My Way*. Here, in a serenely classical atmosphere, Arp’s post-1930 sculptural objects appeared on single all-white pedestals in spacious yet clinically anti-natural spaces – those of the “white box” enclosure from which all sense of natural reference and experience had been banished – while a selection of his wall-mounted reliefs hung in glaringly white spaces as if called upon to provide a clear antidote to what one of Arp’s own supporters had

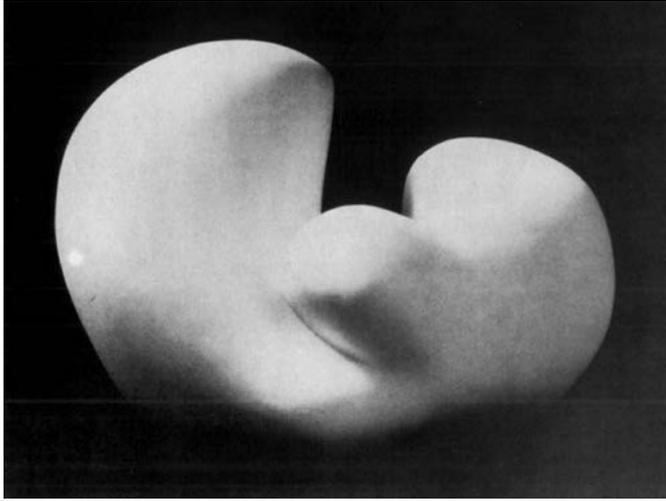


Fig. 8 Hans Arp: *Human Concretion*, 1935, cement version, photographed by Soichi Sunami for Arp, exhibition catalogue (ed. by James T. Soby) Museum of Modern Art, New York 1958

called the “silly naiveté” of experimental and non-conformist art.²³ Significantly, *Marital Sculpture*, *Mirr*, *Torso*, *Shell Crystal* and *Oru* were all presented classically in Soby’s show. Arp’s 1935 *Human Concretion*, to take another instance, having wriggled in garden clover in the earlier publication, now sits calmly atop a gleaming pedestal as if incapable of change, and appears in the catalogue in a low-contrast shot by the celebrated Japanese photographer Soichi Sunami exuding absolute balance and calm (*fig. 8*). In his catalogue introduction Soby repeats Alfred Barr’s assessment of Arp as “a one-man laboratory for the discovery of new form” and goes on to affirm the importance of his technical facility, his inventiveness with “problems of a formal order”, and the salience of his contribution to modern “sculpture in the round” in the tradition of moderns such as Rodin, Barbara Hepworth and Henry Moore.

Arp, too, seems to have been lulled towards such a reading of his work. Importantly, he seems to have been ready to suppress his fascination with mutability, and with the nature-like attributions of modern man – his “senselessness” which is not “non-sense”. By now, too, there is the suggestion of a fraternal bond between European Dada and the dominant ethos of the New York School. He is reflecting on the “transience” of his torn collages, and remarks with evident satisfaction that many of them had

found their way to museums and collectors in the United States. “I believe that they represent the transition from abstract painting to ‘liberated painting’, as I should like to call the new American painting.”²⁴ “These torn-up papers”, he says in reference to the collages that he once exhibited at Jeanne Bucher in Paris, “these scraps, including some that pointed a finger into the air, Zen papers, papers beyond time and space. This entire development took place without my realising it. The paper-tearers became legion, and the result of those papers was *tachisme*.”²⁵ Then, in a statement that switches back momentarily to the theme of Dada-nature: “The divine dream is a bridge between too much and too little;” while he acknowledges Sophie’s part in the articulation of such a programme. “This dream is a fundamental part of my plastic search”, he now wrote. “Similarly, Sophie Taeuber created her luminous dream between coming-into-being and passing-away.”²⁶

It is only in that last phrase that Arp recaptures something of the labile quality of human, animal and vegetable life that continues to endow his works with such ambiguity and strangeness, and accounts for what I have called the anacoluthic structure of their meaning. The broader situation is that, by 1958, “Neo-Dada” was becoming the name of a new manner of paradox and playfulness having little in common with events in Paris, Zurich or Berlin of thirty or forty years before. Huelsenbeck, for his part, by the time he left America for Switzerland in 1969, had fully convinced himself of Dada’s incompatibility with America. “At heart I feel unhappy when I have to function well”, he confesses on departing.

And I more and more become aware of the fact that functioning well is the sickness of the American civilisation – just about to kill the remaining stock of personal freedom and spontaneity. During my last years in the States [...] I became sick of my growing success and orderliness [...]. I wanted to go back to some kind of chaos: not a chaos that kills, but a chaos that is the first step to creativity.²⁷

As he exclaimed in his *Memoirs*, written as Arp’s Museum of Modern Art show was being prepared, “Dada, the laughing, weeping, half-cynical, half-blustering theorem, devoid of system and even substance, a mixture of clowning and religion, half-writing, half-art, Dada, which wants to

destroy itself in order to survive, this last *bon mot* that was sucked up along with leftover coffee in Zurich's Odéon and Bellevue – has pathetically little to do with a way of life that aims at material perfection [...]. Dada cannot exist in America.”²⁸

- 1 Hans Arp: *Looking*, in: *Arp*, exhibition catalogue (ed. by James Thrall Soby), Museum of Modern Art, New York 1958, pp. 12–16, p. 14.
- 2 The present text is a shortened version of a longer article on the dialogue between Arp and the idea of nature. I must thank the many individuals who raised helpful questions on this topic at the conference *Hans Arp and US*, held at the American Academy, Berlin, 22–24 June, 2015.
- 3 Arp 1958, pp. 14 f.
- 4 *Ibid.*, pp. 15.
- 5 The later exception is the Brazilian artist Lygia Clark's folding *bichos* sculptures that can be placed in different orientations both internally and with respect to a support.
- 6 Rolf Tietgens: *What is Surrealism?*, in: *Mimicam Magazine*, July 1939, pp. 30–37, p. 30.
- 7 This photo was published in Stefanie Poley: *Hans Arp. Die Formensprache im plastischen Werk*, Stuttgart 1978, plate 82, p. 58.
- 8 *Konkrete Kunst* was organized by Max Bill for the Kunstmuseum Basel in 1944. The passage occurs under the heading *Concrete Art* in Hans Arp: *Arp. On My Way: Poetry and Essays 1912–1947* (ed. by Robert Motherwell), New York 1948, p. 70.
- 9 Robert Motherwell: *Prefatory Note*, in: Arp 1948, p. 6.
- 10 Unattributed, in: *Merz* 8/9, July 1924, n.p.
- 11 Georges Hugnet: *The Dada Spirit in Painting*, in: Robert Motherwell (ed): *The Dada Painters and Poets*, New York 1951, pp. 123–196, p. 164 (my emphasis).
- 12 Immanuel Kant: *Critique of Judgement* (1790), trans. J.C. Meredith, Oxford 2007, para 66.
- 13 Carola Giedion-Welcker: *Arp: An Appreciation*, in: Arp 1958, pp. 20–26, p. 24.
- 14 Entry in *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 1964.
- 15 Carola Giedion-Welcker: *Introduction*, in: *Modern Plastic Art: Elements of Reality, Volume and Disintegration*, Zurich 1937; reprinted in: Jon Wood, David Hulks, Alex Potts (eds): *Modern Sculpture Reader*, Leeds 2007, pp. 145–158, p. 152.
- 16 Hans Arp: *I have become more and more removed from aesthetics*, in: Arp 1948, pp. 47–48, p. 48.

- 17 Hans Arp: *Strasbourg Configuration*, in: *Jean (Hans) Arp: Collected French Writings* (ed. by Marcel Jean), London 1974, pp. 47–48, pp. 47 f.
- 18 Hulbeck would later go towards the so-called “onto-analytical” methods of the Swiss philosopher Ludwig Binswanger, and receive the Binswanger Prize for onto-analysis.
- 19 Charles R. Hulbeck: *The Creative Personality*, in: *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, December 1, 1945, pp. 49–58, pp. 54 and 51 f.
- 20 Richard Huelsenbeck: *The Dada Drummer*, in: Id.: *Memories of a Dada Drummer* (ed. by Hans J. Kleinschmidt), Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1974 (first edition 1969), pp. 1–95, p. 80.
- 21 Richard Huelsenbeck: *The Agony of the Artist* (1957), in: *Ibid.*, pp. 177–179, pp. 178 and 177.
- 22 Charles F. Hulbeck: *Completeness-Incompleteness: The Human Situation*, in: *The American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, January 1, 1956, pp. 54–62, p. 56.
- 23 The phrase occurs in an uninspiring text written by Arp’s friend the critic Jean Cathelin almost a decade before. Jean Cathelin: *On Sincerity: the Work of Jean Arp*, in: *Jean Arp*, exhibition catalogue, Buchholz Gallery, New York, January–February 1949, n.p.
- 24 Hans Arp: *Looking*, in: New York 1958, pp. 12–16, p. 15.
- 25 Hans Arp: *Collages* (1954), in: Arp 1974, pp. 328–329, p. 329. Motherwell too had proposed in the preface to *The Dada Painters and Poets*: “there is a real Dada strain in the minds of the New York School of abstract painters that has emerged in the last decade.” Motherwell, 1951, pp. xi-xix, p. xix.
- 26 Arp 1958, pp. 15 f.
- 27 Richard Huelsenbeck: *On Leaving America for Good*, 1969, in: Huelsenbeck 1974, pp. 184–189, pp. 187 f.
- 28 Huelsenbeck 1974, pp. 79 f.

Across the Atlantic

The Correspondence and Friendship between Hans Arp and Frederick Kiesler

Stephanie Buhmann

A series of letters in German and English, which are archived in the United States, Germany, Austria and France, documents the friendship between Hans Arp and the Austrian-born and New York-based artist Frederick Kiesler (1890–1965). Their vivid exchange largely focused on their work, which between them spanned the genres of sculpture, painting, architecture, poetry, and installation. It lasted more than three decades, commencing in 1930, developing during the 1940s, and only ending with Kiesler's death in 1965. Especially during its early years, their friendship was inspired by mutual support. In the 1930s and 1940s, several years after Kiesler had emigrated to the United States in 1926, Arp became an important link to Kiesler's former roots in the European avant-garde. In fact, Arp helped to translate some of Kiesler's writings into French and to publish his work in Europe. Meanwhile, Kiesler was an early ally in the United States for both Arp and Sophie Taeuber-Arp, when neither had been fully established there yet. When Arp visited New York in 1949 for the first time, he stayed with Kiesler, an event both remembered fondly.

Arp and Kiesler met astonishingly late, considering that their circles had overlapped as early as 1923 when Kiesler acquainted several of Arp's friends in Berlin, including Hans Richter, Theo van Doesburg, Lázló Moholy-Nagy and El Lissitzky. However, a letter from Kiesler's wife Stefani (Stefi, Steffie) Kiesler to Nelly and Theo van Doesburg from April 1926 indicates that the Kieslers had not met Arp in person before departing for America: "Too bad that we didn't make his acquaintance."¹ Their first meeting must have occurred in 1930 in Paris, during Kiesler's first visit to Europe since leaving.² The introduction could have been made through the van Doesburgs, who can be seen in a photograph from that trip along with Arp, Kiesler, and his wife (*fig. 1*). The person obviously missing from this picture is Taeuber-Arp, who might have taken it. By 1936, the Kieslers, Arp and Taeuber-Arp



Fig 1. Theo van Doesburg, Stefi Kiesler, Hans Arp, Nelly van Doesburg and Frederick Kiesler, Paris 1930, The Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private Foundation, Vienna

exchanged Holiday cards.³ The oldest letter that is preserved was mailed in January 1938 from Taeuber-Arp to Stefi Kiesler, whom she politely addressed as “Mrs. Kiesler” then. It focused exclusively on professional matters, introducing Taeuber-Arp’s magazine *plastique* and especially the third issue, which was dedicated to American artists “and for the first time shows in Europe, what is being made abroad.”⁴ As *plastique* was meant as a connection between artists of all continents, according to Taeuber-Arp, it needed special support. She was hoping that Stefi Kiesler would propose a subscription to the New York Public Library, where she had worked as Foreign Language Specialist since 1927. One can only speculate whether Stefi Kiesler would have been able to follow up on this proposal, because with the beginning of World War II *plastique* ceased publication.

In 1940, after the National Socialists had labeled Arp and Taeuber-Arp’s work as “degenerate”, the artists fled to Grasse, an unoccupied region of France. Soon after, they attempted to emigrate to the United States, but their



Fig. 2 Frederick Kiesler: *Jean Arp*, 1947, Pencil on paper, 65,20 × 50,10 cm, Gift of the D. S. and R. H. Gottesman Foundation. Acc. no.: 107.1963, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

efforts were in vain. In a letter to his Swiss collector Maja Sacher, Arp described how a recent attempt to leave for America with a ticket sponsored by the Museum of Modern Art had failed due to new stipulations.⁵ When he and Taeuber-Arp fled to Switzerland from Southern France in 1942, New York's thriving art scene must have seemed far removed from the War. In fact, two influential art exhibitions took place that year, both of which included works by Arp and Kiesler. From October 14 through November 7, André Breton curated a group exhibition entitled *First Papers of Surrealism* for the Coordinating Council of French Relief Societies. Sponsored by the fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli, it was held at the Whitelaw Reid Mansion at 451 Madison Avenue. In a letter to Kiesler, Breton listed the many artists he intended to include, among them Kiesler and Arp.⁶ The exhibition catalogue, which was conceived by Duchamp, also names them, albeit without providing illustrations.⁷ On October 20, Peggy Guggenheim opened her gallery Art of this Century at 30 West 57th Street, which had been designed by Kiesler. There, biomorphic walls and furniture provided a dramatic staging for artworks. Additionally, some paintings were installed on baseball bats

and lit by blinking spotlights, lending them the effect of floating freely in space.⁸ Arp's work was showcased in this context several times. In February 1944, a year after Taeuber-Arp's accidental death by carbon monoxide poisoning, Arp was given a solo exhibition there. His New York based friends loaned almost all the works. Simply entitled *ARP*, the exhibition was a gesture of support in the wake of Arp's tragic loss. It was accompanied by a small pamphlet, listing all the lenders. Kiesler's name is among them, stating that he contributed an untitled gouache by Arp from 1930 to the show.⁹

In 1947, the Galerie Maeght presented the *Exposition Internationale du Surrealisme* in Paris. Curated by Breton and Duchamp, it included works by Arp, as well as Kiesler. The latter traveled to the opening from New York to realize an elaborate exhibition concept that featured works by different Surrealists. In Kiesler's *Salle des Superstitions*, yellow and blue light, a black painted lake by Max Ernst and wall hangings generated a daunting atmosphere. That Arp was especially taken by *Salle des Superstitions* is reflected in his essay on this piece, which was first published in *Cahiers d'Art* in its French translation.¹⁰ Kiesler was grateful for this support and how strongly he felt about Arp is evident in a drawn portrait of his friend from that year (*fig. 2*). Carefully rendered, *Jean Arp* (1947), which now belongs to the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art, is one of only few such works within Kiesler's oeuvre. Furthermore, Kiesler continued to support the work of both Arp and Taeuber-Arp among his friends and professional contacts in New York. His cause was aided by the publication of Arp's book *Arp. On My Way: Poetry and Essays. 1912–1947* in 1948, which was part of the Museum of Modern Art's series *The Documents of Modern Art* and conceived by Robert Motherwell.¹¹ When in 1948 the art dealer Curt Valentin began to express interest in organizing an Arp exhibition at the Buchholz Gallery in New York, Arp thought of visiting the city. It was during this time of planning that Kiesler and Arp corresponded most frequently.

On January 29, 1948, after thanking Kiesler for his support of Taeuber-Arp's work, Arp wrote him that he intended to include him in his new book *Onze Peintres vus par Arp: Täuber, Kandinsky, Leuppi, Vordemberge, Arp, Delaunay, Schwitters, Kiesler, Morris, Magnelli, Ernst* (*fig. 3*). The letter reveals how fond and supportive they were of each other at the time. Arp wrote that he had not received Kiesler's Christmas gift yet, but "that I love you even without this gift and I always hear your beautiful Wagner voice resonating in my chest."¹² In February, Kiesler reported that he had spoken with the gallerists

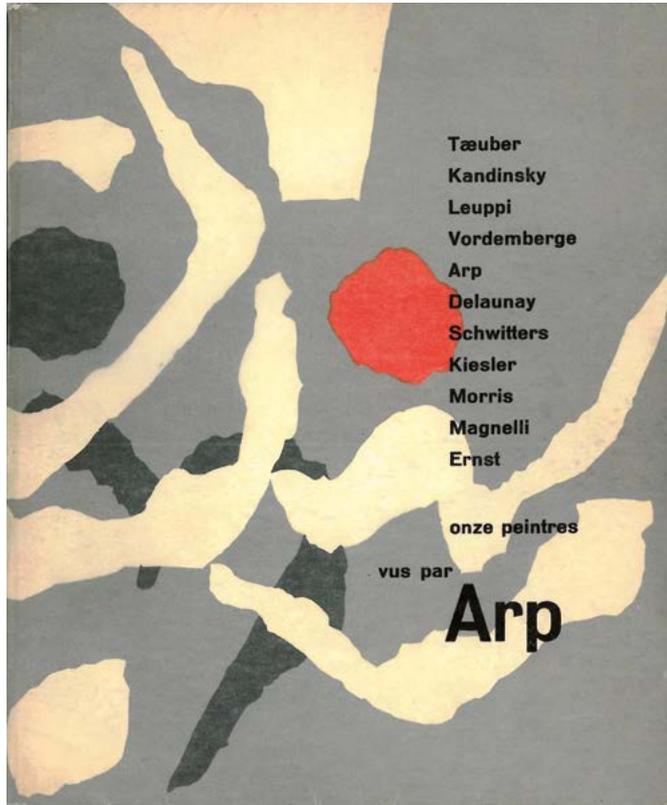


Fig. 3 Cover of Hans Arp: *Onze Peintres vus par Arp: Tæuber, Kandinsky, Leuppi, Vordemberge, Arp, Delaunay, Schwitters, Kiesler, Morris, Magnelli, Ernst*, Zurich 1949. Designed by Richard Paul Lohse, Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth

Aimé Maeght and Curt Valentin about possible Arp exhibitions in October and December 1948. He suggested to aim for an exhibition at Maeght's gallery in Paris for October before sending "the entire Arpichelago" to New York thereafter. He also advised him that December was the "best month for sales." Nor did he forget the late Taeuber-Arp and stated that it should not be too hard for him to arrange a New York exhibition of her work at the same time. Lastly, he made an offer that considered the difficulties of every day life in post-war Europe: "Should you need anything from the United States, Steffie and I would be happy to take care of it. We are doing this for many of our friends and you must not think that you are bothering us."¹³

I have to stay somewhere peaceful

In the summer of 1948, after Valentin encouraged Arp to attend his own opening in January/February 1949 and promised that all his New York expenses would be covered, Arp began to plan his trip.¹⁴ He decided against a hotel and wrote Kiesler that he would only consider coming if he could stay with him: “I have to stay somewhere peaceful to not crumble under cocktail shouting [...]. It is impossible for me to live on the 600th floor of a Waldorf Astoria-Hotel, I would even prefer an uncooked egg by Kiesler.”¹⁵ Showing his gratitude, Arp promised to present Kiesler’s drawings to a new publishing house in Stuttgart. Later that summer, he also helped to translate a German-language essay by Kiesler for a French architectural magazine.¹⁶ On October 4, 1948, Arp confirmed that he had booked two tickets on the ship *America*. According to Arp, “Fräulein Hagenbach” would accompany him, so he asked Kiesler to book her a room in the Hotel Chelsea. He was increasingly nervous about this trip: “Hopefully, I will feel comfortable.”¹⁷ In late October, he even admitted: “I would probably not come to New York if I couldn’t live with you.” It is the New York winter he feared most: “I need 6 comforters, because I suffer from 6 illnesses, especially frost and blizzards are dangerous for me.”¹⁸



Fig. 4 Hans Arp looking at the New York Skyline from Stefi and Frederick Kiesler’s apartment at 56 Seventh Avenue, New York 1949, The Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private Foundation, Vienna

On December 30, 1948, Arp and Hagenbach departed with the *America* from Le Havre. They arrived in New York about five days later. Two letters from Valentin addressed to Arp at Kiesler's apartment in late January and early February 1949 suggest that Arp stayed several weeks with Kiesler.¹⁹ A photograph taken of Arp on Kiesler's terrace at 56 Seventh Avenue captures him before a stunning view of the Empire State Building (*fig. 4*). It was a busy time for Arp, who by then had many friends and supporters in town. He later expressed to Kiesler how much he had appreciated his time with him and especially remembered the "nightly food expeditions," which had provided Kiesler with roast beef for his "nocturnal life."²⁰ On January 18, Arp's exhibition opened to great acclaim at the Buchholz Gallery. A few weeks later, Kiesler hosted a party in his honor.²¹ Among those invited were the director of the Museum of Modern Art Alfred Barr, who could not attend, as well as the Swiss born but New York based photographer Rudy Burckhardt.²²

After his return to France, Arp kept his promise and included Kiesler in his "book with essays about the fathers of fine art."²³ However, the first chapter of *Onze Peintres* is a loving homage to Taeuber-Arp: "She always knew the right way, like a wanderer, who is overseeing the ways of the land from a high tower [...]. Only fairy tales of infinite beauty could reflect the light of her being."²⁴ It was a very personal book for Arp and all of the participating artists had a special relationship with him and Taeuber-Arp. For Kiesler, this project was both evidence of their friendship, but also professionally significant. Not only did his name appear next to Kandinsky, Delaunay, Schwitters and Ernst, for example, but his chapter received prominent placement within the text. One finds it in the middle of the book, where it is bound. An image of *Salle des Superstitions* is accompanied by Arp's German essay *Das Ei Kieslers und seine Salle des Superstitions*, which had previously been published in French in *Cahiers d'Art*.²⁵ It provides one of the most poetic yet poignant descriptions of Kiesler's vision of the *Endless House*:

[...] in this egg-shaped building, man can only exist well embraced, as if in a good womb. This egg-shaped house integrates itself into the elements. It rests on earth, it floats through water, it glows in the fire, it hovers in the air [...] Kiesler wants to heal man from his anxieties and cramps, to guide him bright and light back to nature.²⁶

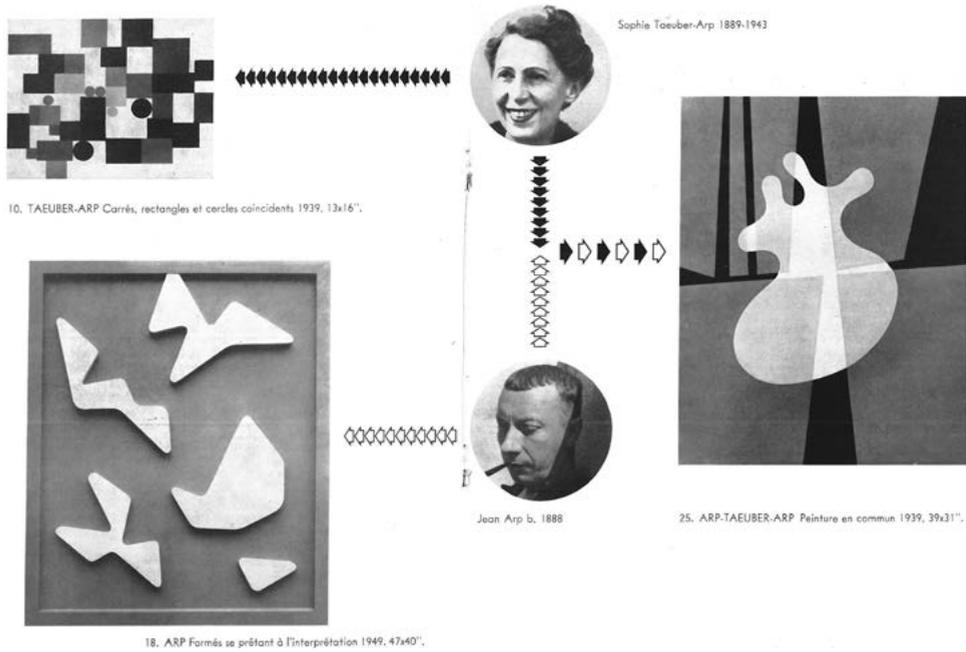


Fig. 5 Brochure that accompanied the *Arp/Taeuber-Arp* exhibition at Sidney Janis Gallery, New York 1950. Designed by Frederick Kiesler in 1949, Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth

Mirror of the two-fold way

That same year of 1949, Kiesler began to design a catalogue for the upcoming Arp/Taeuber-Arp exhibition at Sidney Janis Gallery (January 30–February 25, 1950). In June 1949, Janis wrote him from Europe that Arp was enthusiastic about the show and would send him photos for the catalogue’s layout.²⁷ However, in July, Kiesler warned Janis of delays, because he still had not received the promised materials from Arp.²⁸ In fact, Kiesler did not receive them until the end of October. In the accompanying letter, Arp described the content of the submitted photographic material and stressed the importance of Taeuber-Arp’s influence on his own work: “[...] before I met Sophie I had not made any vertical or horizontal compositions. Inspired by her, the first works of that kind developed on paper.” Arp reminded Kiesler that the format of this publication should be the same as *plastique*, because he intended to finally publish *plastique* No. 6 and wanted to include Kiesler’s catalogue as its main component.²⁹

If one compares the eight-page pamphlet for the Janis exhibition with the various documents submitted by Arp, it is evident that the final publication was much less extensive than originally anticipated, probably due to time constraints. Its centerpiece features a portrait of both Arp and Taeuber-Arp alongside images of their own works and a communal painting entitled *Peinture en commun* (1939) (fig. 5). With the help of distinct graphics, such as arrows, these visuals are arranged like a family tree. Though Kiesler's response to the publication is undocumented, Arp was not disappointed:

I thank you for all the trouble you had with the catalogue. Please keep the drafts for the original plan of the catalogue safe and do not part with these photographs for publication. I'm convinced that we will see through this "Mirror of the Two-Fold Way", this beautiful title sounds like it was invented by Lao-Tse.³⁰

In 1950, Arp thought once more about moving to the United States, explaining to Sacher that he only sold works there.³¹ That spring, he travelled to Cambridge, Massachusetts, to finish his two relief designs for Harvard University, as well as to New York City. This time he was downright excited by the city, which he described to Sacher as a "tremendous" place, "where skyscrapers shoot upward as if part of a powerful tropical vegetation."³² He also spent time with Kiesler. After that trip, Arp must have acted as an intermediary between Kiesler in New York and Aimé Maeght in Paris, reporting: "[Maeght] pretends to only know one drawing by you and he told me that [...] the transport costs would be too high for him at the moment." In the same letter to Kiesler, Arp admitted that he had had difficulties describing Kiesler's work and advised him to focus on an exhibition in New York so that a catalogue could be made.³³ In his response, Kiesler acknowledged the complicated nature of his work and that he had a "true struggle" on his hands. He asked: "Please do not describe to anyone the type of my work. I have been warned by all my friends not to do so." However, Kiesler was not ready to give up on working with Maeght and reminded Arp that he had to bring Maeght to Arp's studio twice and that it had taken an "eternity before you now seem to finally work together."³⁴

In March 1954, Arp had another solo exhibition with the Gallery of Curt Valentin. Because he could not come to New York this time, Kiesler wrote him: "[...] three days ago at your exhibition opening – greatly enjoyed

your delightful sculptures, especially the big one and the wounded Arpholes [Arpschlöcher] and the white marble girl in the glow of being expecting!” Kiesler mentioned whom he had seen at the event (Kurt Seligmann) and whom he had missed (Hans Richter, Richard Huelsenbeck), adding: “regretted that you and Marguerita weren’t here – like back when.”³⁵ That Arp himself yearned for New York in the mid-1950s is revealed in a letter from Hagenbach to Richter: “High buildings have recently been built in Basel (modest, 12 stories high) but Hans is happy about each one, because they remind him of New York. He sometimes truly yearns for New York, like you do for Europe.”³⁶ After receiving the *Grand Prize for sculpture* at the Venice Biennial in 1954, however, Arp’s professional international commitments increased drastically.

Though Kiesler did not achieve the same level of international fame, he was also frequently occupied with demanding projects. On May 2, 1954, Kiesler’s solo exhibition opened at the Sidney Janis Gallery. It featured a selection of his *Galaxies*, installations made of multiple-paneled paintings. The sculptural quality of these segmented works faintly evokes Arp’s reliefs, which Kiesler admired and later described to Arp once as “earthly crystallizations of heavenly dreams.”³⁷ A few weeks later, perhaps in response to Kiesler’s success, Arp wrote him a letter that revealed the new demands on his time: “Not so long, but it weighs heavily on me that I neglected to thank you for your warm letters of friendship. It is the fault of my ceaselessly restless gypsy life, which I am forced to lead [...] the back and forth [...].” He suffered from not finding any time for his poetry and ended his letter nostalgically: “I often think of you and the room in the penthouse, which you offered me so kindly [...] I love New York and will try to come back soon. I love you and Steffie [...].”³⁸ Besides brief greetings on postcards, this is the last preserved direct letter from Arp to Kiesler. After that, Marguerite Hagenbach maintained all correspondence.

In May 1956, Kiesler wrote Arp for the first time in English, a language Arp did not speak: “Dear Arp, [...] Never hear from you. But we are still in communication. That underground movement which is the opposite of “resistance”: persistence.”³⁹ Kiesler proudly reported that after 27 years of work, he was finally allowed to build a building in the heart of Manhattan. However, he also yearned for Europe. Furthermore, Kiesler indicated that he would like to bring Stefi Kiesler, who had not been back in over twenty years and whom he wanted Arp to encourage to make the journey:

I think it would help a great deal if you could encourage her to come to Europe [...] Stefi, who admires you greatly, needs, after so many years of having given her devotion to so many, attention, esteem and warmth. It's a cold world, sometimes to the freezing point, in spite of the hissing heat of atom bomb explosions.⁴⁰

One of these days I shall write you a long long letter

Kiesler's next letter, dated June 6, 1957, was more lighthearted: "These lines shall only tell how much I missed you all these years, and that I've written you often but not actually with ink and paper. [...] One of these days I shall write you a long long letter, but don't wait for that to write me a long long letter."⁴¹ At that point, Kiesler was mainly focused on his architectural endeavors, such as the recently opened World House Gallery at the Carlyle Hotel in New York. He sent Arp its inaugural exhibition catalogue, which included a large relief by Arp and Kiesler wrote him that Arp had had an impact on this project. Soon, Kiesler followed up enthusiastically with another idea. He wrote that he had recently spent a weekend with the filmmaker Thomas Bouchard, who had made two previous films about Joan Miró and Fernand Léger. Kiesler had suggested to him to make a film about Arp. Kiesler would accompany Bouchard and already had dates in mind: "We would come to Europe in August and would stay through the fall [...]. The most important thing of course is to see whether it's possible to talk with you so that the human aspect colors the film."⁴² Kiesler knew how important Arp's poetry was to him and proposed further: "I also thought a lot about poetry, your poems in verse and prose and your world of abstraction, where you live with Jacob Boehme and Thomas de Aquino. It would be a walk through the world of Arp. Nothing pompous. Not an art film. Un document humain."⁴³ Unfortunately, due to Arp's poor health at the time, this project was not realized. He had suffered from another heart attack in April, and though he seemed to be recovering, he needed rest. It was Arp's companion and later second wife Hagenbach who responded to Kiesler's proposal: "It would have made me happy to see a beautiful film being made about Arp and his work, but he currently is still an unpeeled egg (not an egg of Kiesler!) and hence I'm afraid for him of interviews, photos and such things."⁴⁴ Despite this concern, she invited Kiesler to visit them.

Kiesler's next letter made no further mention of the proposed film. Instead,

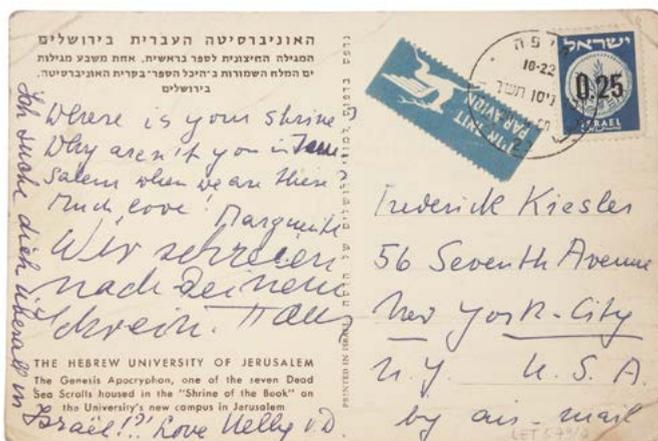


Fig. 6 Postcard to Frederick Kiesler from Hans Arp, Marguerite Hagenbach and Nelly van Doesburg while visiting Jerusalem. Arp refers to Kiesler's *Shrine of the Book*: "Wir schreien nach Deinem Schrein.", stamped April 24, 1960, The Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private Foundation, Vienna

he invited Arp to accompany him to Jerusalem in November 1957 to tour the site for his *Shrine of the Book*. As part of the Israel Museum, this building was to house the Dead Sea Scrolls and it would become the only large structure that Kiesler has ever built. Though Kiesler and Arp would never travel to Israel together, Kiesler did receive a postcard from there in April 1960, mailed by Arp, Hagenbach and Nelly van Doesburg (fig. 6).⁴⁵ Kiesler's *Shrine of the Book* was an incredibly important project for him and he asked Arp whether he would like to write an introductory text: "I would bury it in a bomb-proof shelter in my new building, and the Chinese legions sweeping over Africa in the year 2250 would dig them out and make of them the flying standards of eternal peace." Excited and full of desire to travel, he added: "In the meantime, I shall actually be in Rome, Milan and Venice for a week only and would naturally adore to spend a few days with you, either in Ascona, Verona, Pomona, or in Meudon, *val fleuris*."⁴⁶ Kiesler did visit Europe in the spring of 1958 and was able to meet with Arp at least twice: he visited Arp in his studio and Arp came to him when he fell ill (fig. 7).⁴⁷ He wrote Arp in July: "What a lovely time I had with you and how charming of you to have visited me during my illness [...]. It was simply too much work and hustle and bustle. Work is easy compared to life. It seems to me I'm about to discover it." Their time together must have reinvigorated Kiesler, who informed Arp that he had framed his portrait of



Fig. 7 Frederick Kiesler and Hans Arp in Arp's Studio, Paris 1947, The Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private Foundation, Vienna

him from 1947 as soon as he had returned to New York: “it looks so very much like you.” (*fig. 2*) Kiesler reminded him further that Arp had promised him several books and a sculpture: “I am missing the books you promised to send to me and also the sculpture, because they represent to me a friendship symbolized in reality with gripping truth. [...] I will be eternally grateful for it.”⁴⁸

At the time Kiesler mailed this letter, he was also looking forward to Arp's upcoming retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art, which according to the press release was to feature “more than a 100 marble and stone sculptures, wood reliefs, and paper collages“, as well as be accompanied by an extensive catalogue.”⁴⁹ Kiesler wrote that he hoped to see Arp in New York for this occasion: “[...] behave well now, be a good boy, so that your doctor may allow you to meander the waves of the wide, wide ocean.”⁵⁰ Within two weeks, Hagenbach responded to Kiesler, asking about the aforementioned sculpture: “[...] what puzzles me is to know if you had chosen a special sculpture at Meudon or if Arp only had promised to send or bring

you one. Please let me know!”⁵¹ Kiesler wrote back immediately, admitting that nothing had been selected: “No, we have not chosen a special sculpture, but I would like so very much to have any one that you and he might see fit. Thank you so very much for it.”⁵² However, Kiesler never seemed to have received a sculpture by Arp. Nothing further is mentioned in letters or documented otherwise. However, when Arp visited New York a few months later, he did give his friend a volume of his newly published poems and dedicated it with a drawing.⁵³

My ears are filled with memories

After Hagenbach confirmed that they would travel to New York in time for the museum opening on October 6, 1958, Kiesler wrote back excitedly: “We shall have a ticker-tape parade for him à la Lindbergh, riding Broadway up and down.”⁵⁴ He right away informed mutual friends, corresponding with Mies van der Rohe and Dorothea Tanning, for example, who asked: “Is he really coming? That must be a very bright light indeed on the New York horizon.”⁵⁵ Kiesler attended a dinner in honor of Arp on October 5, and he went to the gala opening at the Museum of Modern Art the following night. Because Arp stayed for almost two months, he and Kiesler probably would have seen each other several times. However, it would be their last occasion to get together. Kiesler’s subsequent letters to Arp often revealed a sense of melancholy, as expressed in a poem that he mailed to his friend in the context of a letter in 1960:

The H-ARP is singing in the spring
But I can’t hear
My ears are filled with memories
Which crowd out the tender sounds
Or is it an ear-vision that you are
Speaking to me
And it’s my ear-blindness
That I can’t understand?⁵⁶

It must have been obvious to Arp and Kiesler after seeing each other in 1958 that their demanding careers and failing health could make future

meetings difficult. In fact, as early as 1960, Kiesler wondered: “Are we ever to meet again?” Nevertheless, they never lost touch completely. Kiesler continued to inform Arp about his current professional endeavors and shared ideas for promoting Arp’s work in the US. In July 1962, Kiesler wrote that he would like to see Arp’s poems translated into English. “Do you know of somebody who would be fit to translate your magnificent writing?” he asked and offered to find him a publisher in New York. Kiesler also added that Simon and Schuster would publish his own journals.⁵⁷ It was again Hagenbach who replied, explaining how busy they had been with museum exhibitions in Basel, Copenhagen, Stockholm, and London. She admitted that it was difficult to translate Arp’s poems, because he “played so much with words.” In regard to his health, she reported that he was doing surprisingly well, but that she had to watch out for him: “Fame is not easy to endure and Hans is much too soft and friendly to say no to the many young fans who are trying to visit us. So I sometimes have to bark like Cerberus!”⁵⁸

In 1963, Arp had a solo exhibition with the Sidney Janis Gallery. He was unable to travel due to his health. It also was a difficult year for Kiesler, whose wife had passed away in September and who had suffered from a heart attack himself soon after. When he finally wrote Arp in October 1964, he did not mention that he had married his friend Lillian Olinsey in March, while he was still in the hospital. Aware of his mortality, he focused only on his work. He mentioned that the Guggenheim Museum had held a big exhibition of his environmental sculptures. The Louvre had expressed interest as well, if Kiesler could secure two other venues in Europe. He asked Arp outright: “Would you be kind enough to help me in writing to some directors in Germany, Zurich, or London?”⁵⁹ Hagenbach’s response did not arrive until four months later and was hardly encouraging. She explained that they could not help with any museum connections in Europe, because for “an exhibition at the Musée National d’Art Moderne in Paris or the Tate Gallery in London, one needs an official request from the countries to which the artist belongs. This is always handled through the ‘Relations Culturelles’. Our intervention doesn’t help at all, because it is about ‘dough’. Why don’t you try to have the Museum of Modern Art support this exhibition, then it should be easy.”⁶⁰ For the last time she expressed their hope to see Kiesler in the near future. On December 27, 1965, Kiesler died in New York, only six months before his friend Hans Arp.

- 1 Letter from Stefi Kiesler to Theo and Nelly van Doesburg, April 26, 1926 (in German), The Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private Foundation, Vienna (hereafter Kiesler Foundation, Vienna).
- 2 According to a calendar entry by Stefi Kiesler, *ibid.*
- 3 Letter from Nelly van Doesburg to Stefi Kiesler, January 3, 1937 (in German), *ibid.*
- 4 Letter from Sophie Taeuber-Arp to Stefi Kiesler, January 23, 1938 (in German), *ibid.*
- 5 Letter from Hans Arp to Dr. Paul and Maja Sacher, November 5, 1941 (in German), in: Erika Billeter: *Leben mit Zeitgenossen. Die Sammlung der Emanuel Hoffmann Stiftung*, Basel 1980, p. 37 f.
- 6 Letter from André Breton to Frederick Kiesler, not dated (in French), Kiesler Foundation, Vienna.
- 7 *First Papers of Surrealism* (organized by André Breton and Marcel Duchamp), exhibition catalogue, Council of French Relief Societies, New York 1942.
- 8 Peggy Guggenheim: *Ich habe alles gelebt*, Bergisch-Gladbach 1995, pp. 256 ff.
- 9 *ARP*, exhibition catalogue, Art of this Century Gallery, New York 1942.
- 10 Jean Arp: *L'Oeuf de Kiesler et la Salle des Superstitions*, in: *Cahiers d'art* 22/1947, p. 281.
- 11 Hans Arp: *Arp: On my Way Poetry and Essays 1912 1947* (ed. by Robert Motherwell), New York 1948.
- 12 Letter from Hans Arp to Frederick Kiesler, January 29, 1948 (in German), Kiesler Foundation, Vienna.
- 13 Letter from Frederick Kiesler to Hans Arp, February 28, 1948 (in German), *ibid.*
- 14 Letter from Curt Valentin to Hans Arp, July 20, 1948 (in German), Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth (hereafter Archive Stiftung Arp).
- 15 Letter from Hans Arp to Frederick Kiesler, August 10, 1948 (in German), Kiesler Foundation, Vienna.
- 16 See letter from Hans Arp to Frederick Kiesler, September 10, 1948 (in German), *ibid.*
- 17 Letter from Hans Arp to Frederick Kiesler, October 4, 1948 (in German), *ibid.*
- 18 Letter from Hans Arp to Frederick Kiesler, October 29, 1948 (in German), *ibid.*
- 19 Letters from Curt Valentin to Hans Arp, January 28 and February 7, 1949 (in German), Archive Stiftung Arp.
- 20 Letter from Hans Arp to Frederick Kiesler, October 30, 1949 (in German), Kiesler Foundation, Vienna.
- 21 Letter from Hans Arp to Frederick Kiesler, March 26, 1949 (in German), *ibid.*

- 22 Letter from Alfred Barr, Jr. to Frederick Kiesler, May 5, 1949 (in English) and letter from Hans Arp to Frederick Kiesler, January 26, 1950 (in German), *ibid.*
- 23 Letter from Hans Arp to Frederick Kiesler, October 30, 1949 (in German), *ibid.*
- 24 Hans Arp (ed.): *Onze Peintres vus par Arp: Täuber, Kandinsky, Leuppi, Vordemberge, Arp, Delaunay, Schwitters, Kiesler, Morris, Magnelli, Ernst*, Zurich 1949, pp. 7 f.
- 25 Arp 1947, p. 281.
- 26 Arp 1949, pp. 28 ff: ([...] in diesem eiförmigen Gebäude, kann nun der Mensch geborgen, wie in einem guten Schosse, leben. Dieses eiförmige Haus fügt sich vollendet in die Elemente. Es ruht auf der Erde, es treibt durch das Wasser, es lodert im Feuer, es schwebt in der Luft [...] Kiesler will den Menschen von seiner Angst, von seinem Krampf heilen und ihn wieder licht und leicht in die Natur einfügen.)
- 27 Letter from Sidney Janis to Frederick Kiesler, June 30, 1949 (in English), Kiesler Foundation, Vienna.
- 28 Letter from Frederick Kiesler to Sidney Janis, July 6, 1949 (in English), *ibid.*
- 29 Letter from Hans Arp to Frederick Kiesler, October 30, 1949 (in German), *ibid.*
- 30 Letter from Hans Arp to Frederick Kiesler, January 26, 1950 (in German), *ibid.*
- 31 Letter from Hans Arp to Maja Sacher, February 20, 1950 (in German), Archive Stiftung Arp.
- 32 Letter from Hans Arp to Maja Sacher, June 12, 1950 (in German), *ibid.*
- 33 Letter from Hans Arp to Frederick Kiesler, May 13, 1950 (in German), Kiesler Foundation, Vienna.
- 34 Letter from Frederick Kiesler to Hans Arp, July 17, 1950 (in German), Archive Stiftung Arp.
- 35 Letter from Frederick Kiesler to Hans Arp, March 31, 1954 (in German), *ibid.*
- 36 Letter from Marguerite Hagenbach to Hans Richter, November 5, 1955 (in German), *ibid.*
- 37 Letter from Frederick Kiesler to Hans Arp, May 21, 1956 (in English), *ibid.*
- 38 Letter from Hans Arp to Frederick Kiesler, July 21, 1954 (in German), Kiesler Foundation, Vienna.
- 39 Letter from Frederick Kiesler to Hans Arp, May 21, 1956 (in English), Archive Stiftung Arp.
- 40 *Ibid.*
- 41 Letter from Frederick Kiesler to Hans Arp, June 6, 1957 (in English), *ibid.*
- 42 Letter from Frederick Kiesler to Hans Arp, July 9, 1957 (in German), *ibid.*

43 Ibid.

44 Letter from Marguerite Hagenbach to Frederick Kiesler, July 15, 1957 (in German), Kiesler Foundation, Vienna.

45 The *Dead Sea Scrolls* refer to the ancient Hebrew scrolls that were discovered in eleven caves along the northwest shore of the Dead Sea between the years 1947 and 1956.

46 Letter from Frederick Kiesler to Hans Arp, October 14, 1957 (in English), Archive Stiftung Arp.

47 Letter from Kiesler's secretary to the Graham Foundation, April 11, 1958 (in English), Kiesler Foundation, Vienna.

48 Letter from Frederick Kiesler to Hans Arp, July 14, 1958 (in English), Archive Stiftung Arp.

49 *Museum of Modern Art Announces Six Exhibitions*, press release, June 25, 1958, Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.

50 Letter from Frederick Kiesler to Hans Arp, July 14, 1958 (in English), Archive Stiftung Arp.

51 Letter from Marguerite Hagenbach to Frederick Kiesler, July 29, 1958 (in English), *ibid.*

52 Letter from Frederick Kiesler to Marguerite Hagenbach, August 4, 1958 (in English), *ibid.*

53 Letter from Marguerite Hagenbach to Harold Diamond, May 24, 1975, *ibid.*

54 Letter from Frederick Kiesler to Marguerite Hagenbach, August 4, 1958 (in English), *ibid.*

55 Letter from Frederick Kiesler to Mies van der Rohe, August 4, 1958 and letter from Dorothea Tanning to Frederick Kiesler, December 27, 1958, Kiesler Foundation, Vienna.

56 Letter from Frederick Kiesler to Hans Arp, April 26, 1960 (in English), Archive Stiftung Arp.

57 Letter from Frederick Kiesler to Hans Arp, July 16, 1962 (in English), *ibid.*

58 Letter from Marguerite Hagenbach to Frederick Kiesler, July 24, 1962 (in German), *ibid.*

59 Letter from Frederick Kiesler to Hans Arp, October 2, 1964 (in English), *ibid.*

60 Letter from Marguerite Hagenbach to Frederick Kiesler, February 26, 1965 (in German), *ibid.*

The Exile Connection

Walter Gropius' Commission of the "Harvard Relief" from Hans Arp

Maike Steinkamp

Hans Arp traveled to New York for the first time during the winter of 1948 and 1949 for the opening of his premier solo exhibition in the United States. He had high hopes for the show, held at Curt Valentin's Buchholz Gallery, as he viewed the American market as the only viable alternative to the European one for his art at that time.² Since Walter Gropius, the German architect who taught in the United States, had commissioned Arp to create a relief for the Harvard Graduate Center at that time as well, the artist recognized this as his chance to achieve renown for himself and his work in America. On April 20, 1950 Arp wrote to Valentin:

Dear Valentin,

The tiresome preparations for my journey are finally over. On Thursday night I fly to New York. Friday afternoon I'll come knocking at the door of your dear little *Kunstkammer* outfitted with snow goggles so that the shimmering gold won't blind me. Then I'll fall into your arms.

I'll be staying with the Huelbecks [Huelsenbecks]. I'm really looking forward to seeing you again, although I can only stop in New York for a little while on my way to Harvard University in Cambridge. A great task awaits me there – it will lead to fame and as such will hopefully result in my own golden inlet in your little *Kunstkammer*.³

When Arp wrote the letter to Valentin, he was just about to depart for his second stay in the United States in just over a year. However, this time he had a letter of recommendation from Harvard University.⁴ Walter Gropius had invited him to view the already completed Graduate Center, which the architect had designed together with TAC, The Architects' Collaborative. How Arp and Gropius first came into contact remains unknown. Yet it is likely that the two knew each other from Paris, where Gropius had

organized the Deutsche Werkbund exhibition in 1930.⁵ Siegfried Giedion, whom Arp knew well, also may have played a role in their introduction; the Swiss architectural historian had taught with Gropius in the architecture department at Harvard from 1938–1939 and again in 1950.⁶ No known correspondence exists between Gropius and Arp regarding the commission. Therefore it is to be assumed that Arp and Gropius made the agreement in person when Arp was in the US the year before.

Walter Gropius at Harvard

Gropius had been appointed Professor of Architecture at the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University in 1937. He had begun his exile in London in 1934, as the National Socialists' rise to power in 1933 had seriously diminished his chances for commissions in Germany.⁷ Shortly after his arrival at Harvard, Gropius had tried to align its architecture program with the Bauhaus teachings and ideas he had been developing since 1919. His strategy was both conceptual as well as personal, in that he brought former friends and colleagues to teach at Harvard, including Josef Albers and Marcel Breuer, as well as Martin Wagner, the former municipal building officer of Berlin.⁸ Furthermore, Gropius' recommendation had also helped Siegfried Giedion secure his teaching positions at Harvard.⁹

In addition to changing the curriculum, Gropius promoted Bauhaus principles by means of architecture itself. After his arrival in Cambridge, he and Breuer realized a large number of architectural projects in the United States. Nevertheless, it was a full decade after his appointment that Harvard University commissioned Gropius to design a new complex of buildings on its traditional and time-honored campus. It was not only the first modern building complex at Harvard, but also the first modern building of any kind at one of the major universities in the US (*fig. 1*). The Harvard Graduate Center was the first large public project that Gropius realized in the United States in collaboration with TAC, a group of young architects who had studied under him at Harvard. It is comprised of an ensemble of eight steel-frame buildings: seven three-story dormitories and a single-story student center with a dining hall and lounges. Outside the student center a “sunken garden” unified the buildings in the complex and served as a common space. As Siegfried Giedion elaborated in his 1954 biography of Gropius, the

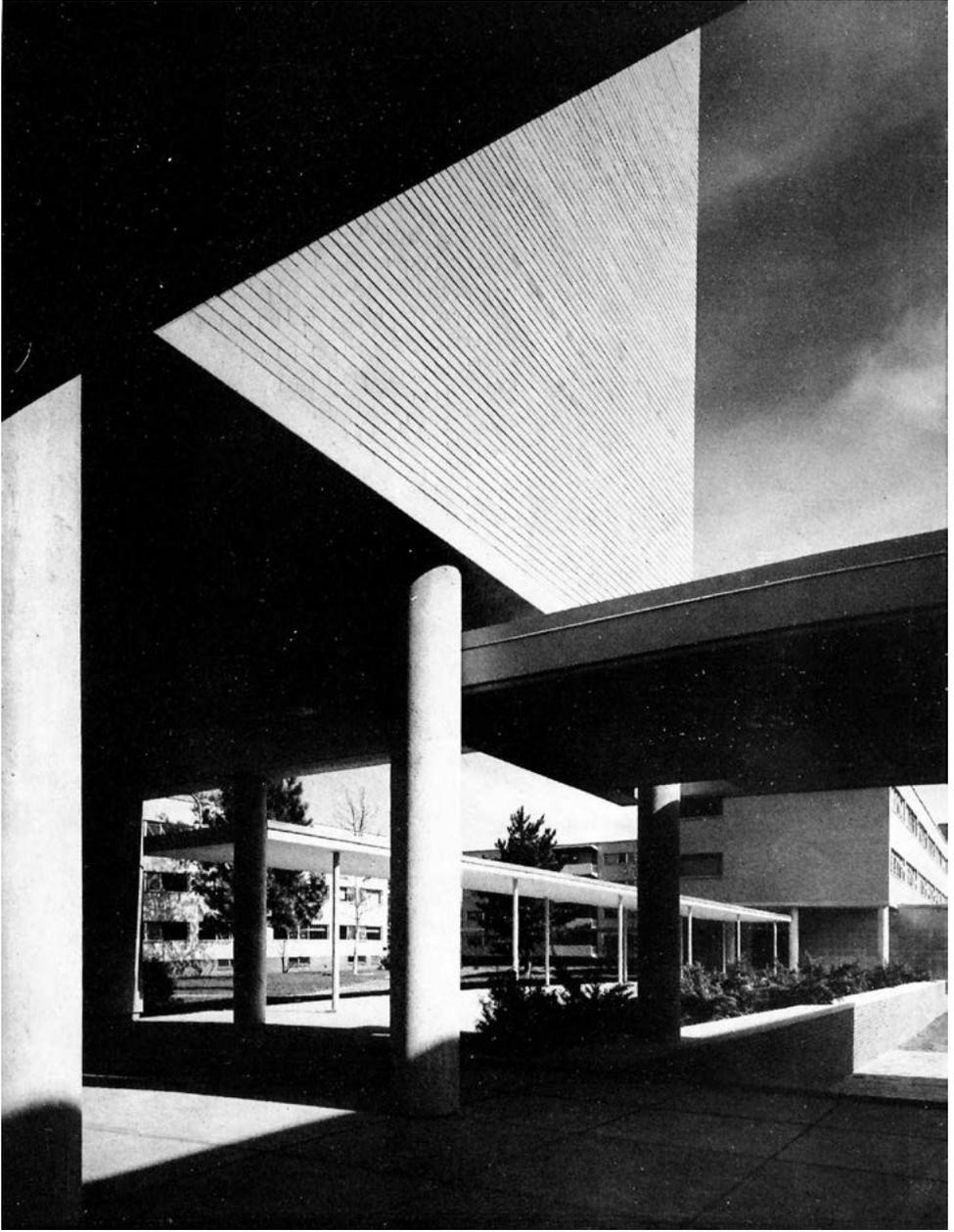
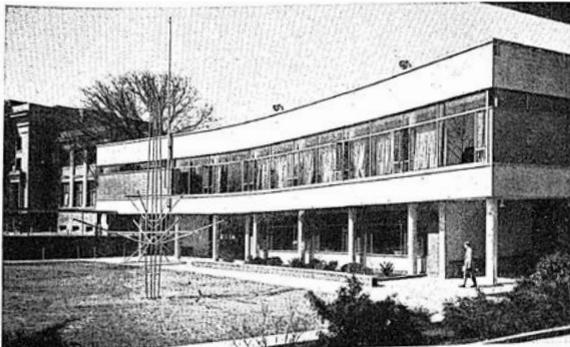


Fig. 1 Robert Damora: Detail of the Architecture of the Harvard Graduate Center, designed by Walter Gropius in collaboration with TAC, The Architects Collaborative, published in: *L'Architecture D' Aujourd'hui*, December 1951, p. 41

architects wanted to dissolve the individual building masses into a sweeping, open design. A sense of lightness and movement would be created through the interplay of mass and space, interior and exterior, thereby allowing for a new spatial experience.¹⁰ In its boldly modernist formal language, the Harvard Graduate Center differed markedly from the rest of the more traditional architecture on campus. Gropius aimed to develop a new architectonic language in which the dynamic needs of the present found a contemporary form of expression. For Gropius and his comrades in TAC, this also meant educating the public about the aesthetic and emotional properties of art and architecture. Building upon Gropius' idea of the "Gesamtkunstwerk",

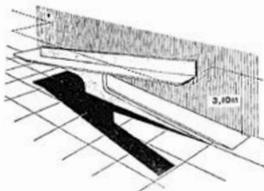


de coïncider. Les plus petits salons, au Nord de la cour principale, sont revêtus de panneaux de verre et métalliques de couleurs vives.

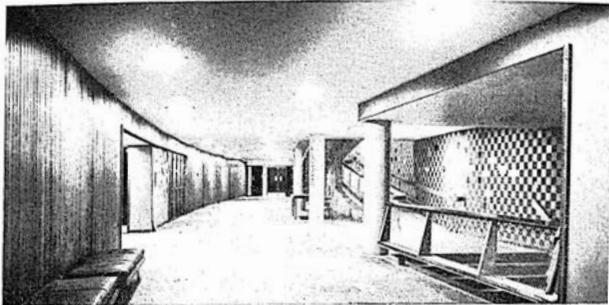
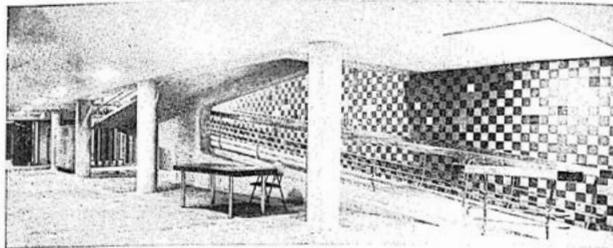
Les différents bâtiments sont reliés par des passerelles, ce qui a permis de faire desservir plusieurs bâtiments par une même cage d'escalier. Les chambres sont de deux types: simples et doubles (respectivement 2,70 m. x 3,80 et 5,40 m. x 3,80, hauteur sous plafond: 2,45 m.). Elles comprennent un placard, prévu de construction, qui amortit les bruits côté couloir. Les étudiants disposent de 223 chambres simples et 176 doubles.

En accord avec l'esprit de la fondation, dans le but de favoriser les échanges culturels, les étudiants ne sont pas groupés par spécialités.

Le prix de revient s'établit à \$ 2 millions pour l'ensemble des chambres, soit \$ 3.489 par chambre.



SCHEMA CONSTRUCTIF DE LA RAMPE.



Photos Walter R. Fleischer.

LE FOYER DU CENTRE, SALONS ET RESTAURANTS. CULTURE EN ACIER DE H. LIPPOLD.

LA GALERIE, ET LA RAMPE CONDUISANT AUX SALLES A MANGER, MUR EN CERAMIQUE DE COULEUR DE H. BAYER.

Fig. 2 Page from *L'Architecture D'Aujourd'hui*, December 1951, with Harkness Commons, the student center, at top. Below photos of the ramp designed by Herbert Bayer inside the student center (photos: Walter R. Fleischer)

which he had elaborated upon during his time at the Bauhaus in the 1920s, they championed the connection between the visual arts and architecture.

Gropius and his fellow architects thought that over the course of the Industrial Revolution, the more subjective aspects of the arts had suffered due to an overemphasis on facts and logic. The “intuitive qualities”, which were in Gropius’ opinion the source of all creative action, were underrated. In an essay in the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin* of October 1950, Gropius argued for a “code of visual value”, elaborating that architects should no longer “flounder about in a lingerless welter of borrowed artistic expression”. Should this continue, then “[we] shall not succeed in giving form and substance to our own culture, for this implies selective choice of the artistic means which best express ideas and spiritual directions of the time”.¹¹ Although he bemoaned the lack of visual literacy in his article, Gropius was convinced that the obstacle was not insurmountable. Rather, students must be given both the opportunity as well as the time to look at art in order to develop their visual skills.¹² It was this final reason that motivated Gropius to design an artistic program for the Graduate Center.

Gropius commissioned artworks from former Bauhaus colleagues, among others. Herbert Bayer, Josef Albers and the Hungarian György Kepes were all living and working in the United States by then.¹³ Bayer created a mural for the smaller dining room in Harkness Commons, the student center, as well as a wall panel of colored tiles along the ramp leading to the second floor (*fig. 2*). Albers contributed an abstract brick relief situated behind the fireplace that was between the lobby and the adjoining music and common rooms. By contrast, Kepes designed a series of world maps for the entrance halls.

Only one American artist received a commission. The sculptor Richard Lippold created the abstract *World Tree* from rust-free metal tubing. Standing almost ten meters high, it graced the lawn in front of Harkness Commons.¹⁴ Harvard had insisted that at least one young American artist be involved. Only when he had met this stipulation did Gropius receive the necessary financial means to carry out his artistic program.¹⁵

Gropius also requested designs for the Graduate Center from Joan Miró and Hans Arp. Whereas Miró created an abstract composition of over six meters in oil on canvas for the dining room at Harkness Commons, Arp designed two multi-part reliefs.¹⁶ In contrast to Miró, who never visited the site, Arp traveled to Harvard in April 1950 in order to gain a fuller sense of

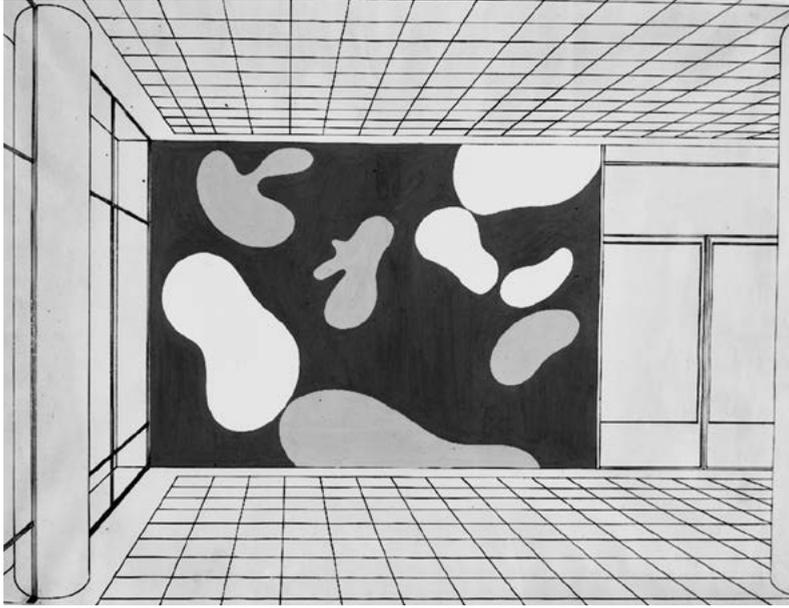


Fig. 3 Hans Arp: *Abstraction*, 1950, Gouache and black ink on off-white wove paper with architectural design, 51 × 65,5 cm (1951.119), Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, Mass

the architectural space. This on site visit was important to Arp, a fact of which Gropius was conscious. Furthermore, two years earlier at the 1947 Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) at Bridgwater, an international conference on modern architecture and aesthetics, Gropius had attributed great significance to the site-specificity and the close collaboration between the architect, sculptor or painter.¹⁷

In a letter he wrote to Arp just before his arrival at Harvard in 1950, Gropius pointed out their common goals:

From your public statements, I understand that you and I are in agreement on the importance of on site collaboration between architect, sculptor and painter. Mutual understanding and mutual support for the work can only develop by means of the visual itself.¹⁸

Nevertheless, before Arp visited Cambridge, he seems to have made two sketches for murals, which are preserved at the Busch Reisinger Museum, now part of the Harvard Art Museums. In these sketches Arp embedded

watercolor designs for the two planned reliefs within schematic architectural renderings (*fig. 3*). The two ceiling-high reliefs were to be comprised of the discrete biomorphic forms that are so characteristic of the artist. Differing in shape and size, these forms would create a sense of rhythmic movement across the wall's surface. Upon closer inspection, it is clear that the designs not only starkly differ from the final work, but that they were also intended for an entirely different location. In 1958, John Coolidge, the director of the Fogg Art Museum at that time, clarified the reason for this discrepancy:

[...] Arp was commissioned to do a mural at the end of a student common room in one of the dormitories occupied by the Law School students. A leading New York law firm agreed to pay for the common room. When they saw the sketch of the Arp they refused to have the Arp included in the room they were paying for. Thus, when Arp arrived, they had to improvise a commission for him at the last moment.¹⁹

The initial designs were never realized. Siegfried Giedion likewise confirmed that both Arp's plans as well as Miro's design found little resonance with the building project's donors and were therefore rejected.²⁰ Ultimately, Arp designed two multi-part wood reliefs that were to be installed on opposite walls in the dining room of Harkness Commons (*fig. 4 and 5*).²¹ Norman Fletcher, an architect and member of TAC, recalled that Arp made numerous sketches and drawings on site in order to finalize the composition.²² Both reliefs were reinstalled at the beginning of 1958, as it was determined that they hung too low. Arp had not considered that tables would be placed in front of the wall and that "people would interrupt the picture plane," as he put it in a letter to Gropius in 1952.²³ The *Constellations* on the left side of the room, renamed in *Constellations II* in 1958, was subsequently changed, as simply hanging the forms higher was not possible. In 1958 Marguerite Hagenbach, Arp's second wife and administrator of his artistic oeuvre, sent a letter on behalf of Arp indicating the precise placement and color of each form ("Arp suggests painting the forms in a light grey-blue").²⁴ Furthermore, she sent a plan of the final version of the relief with handwritten notes by Arp as to show how the single elements should be reinstalled (*fig. 6*).

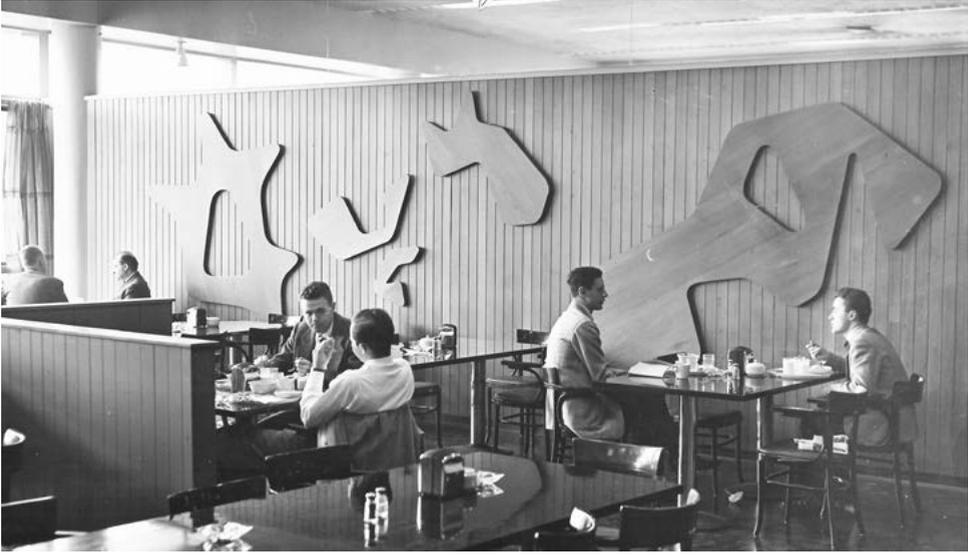


Fig. 4 Hans Arp: *Constellations*, 1950 (Rau 398), American Redwood, Harvard Graduate Center, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth (photo: Fred Stone)



Fig. 5 Hans Arp: *Constellations*, 1950 (Rau 397), American Redwood, Harvard Graduate Center, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth (photo: Fred Stone)

Originally Arp had planned further changes in response to the dining room's distinct architectural space and interior design. In a letter to Gropius of March 1952, Arp suggested installing the single forms of the reliefs on two painted boards of equal heights but differing lengths. The single forms and the board itself was supposed to be colored in blue, yellow and

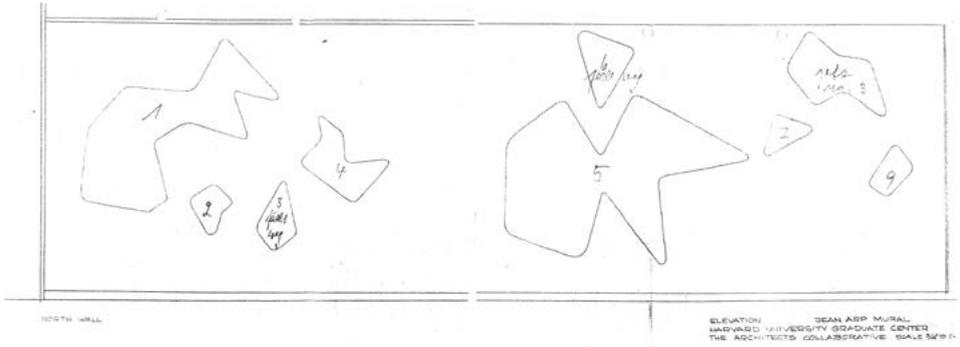


Fig. 6 Sketch with handwritten notes by Hans Arp for the reinstallation of the *Constellations* (Rau 397) at the Harvard Graduate Center, November 1958, Copy in the Archive of the Fondazione Marguerite Arp, Locarno

yellow-green.²⁵ Arp’s requirements for the rearrangement and coloring of the reliefs were never realized, although he had intended to withdraw them from Harvard and pay back the fee, if the forms remained on the “distracting wood paneling” („störenden Holzriehmen“) on which they were installed.²⁶ In any case, the reliefs remained where they were only with slight changes in height, position and color, as the changes Arp had proposed would have been too cost intensive.

Hans Arp’s reliefs at Harvard

The two reliefs that were realized in 1950 consist of individual biomorphic forms made from American Redwood that are scattered across the long sides of the dining room. As in the original designs, the separate organic shapes of various sizes enter into a playful dialogue with one another. For Arp, the individual forms were not as important as the interplay between them and their relationships to the surface and to the surrounding space. He conceived of his compositions not as fixed, but rather as temporary formations with the possibility of being continually changed and developed.²⁷ The artist drew inspiration for his reliefs and their continuous variability in nature, particularly in the elemental yet transcendental forms of stars, clouds and stones, as their ongoing metamorphoses cannot be manipulated or controlled by humankind. Arp referred to these entities as “cosmic forms”. In *Forms*, a text of 1950, he elaborated:

The forms that I created between 1927 and 1948 and that I called
cosmic forms
were vast forms
meant to englobe a multitude of forms such as
the egg
the planetary orbit
the path of the planets
the bud
the human head
the breast
the sea shell
the waves
the bell
I constellated these forms
“according to the laws of chance”.²⁸

These forms arranged “according to the laws of chance” are indeed composed. Nevertheless, it was the moment of chance, the moment of intuitive creation that Arp wanted to emphasize. These apparently random but in actuality carefully planned biomorphic “Constellations” had been a central aspect of his art since the 1930s. They are found in his collages and writings as well as his reliefs. In these works, Arp utilized a limited repertoire of similar forms, which he continually arranged anew. To this end, he began using cardboard cut-outs, so-called *découpages*, that he rearranged until he was satisfied with

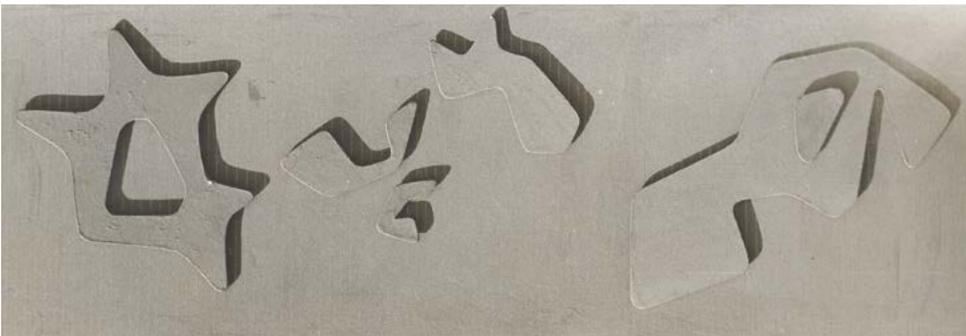


Fig. 7 Photo of the cardboard template for *Constellations* (Rau 383) later installed at the Harvard Graduate Center, 1950, Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth

the composition. Arp himself referred to this process as “Formenspiele”, or the interplay of forms.²⁹ He would then transpose the final composition to cardboard, which would serve as the model for the fabrication of the object. In this way, Arp also created the template for the Harvard relief.

In a letter to Walter Gropius from April 27, 1950, Arp described his process:

In the meantime I've used cardboard to create three different interplays of form that will hopefully serve my work. These forms are not the infinite, silent forms that I used to create, but primitive forms with veiled meaning. For me they are more human and beautiful in a primitive sense.³⁰

The forms that Arp created and arranged culminated in two cardboard mock ups, photographs of which are preserved in the archive of the Arp Foundation (*fig. 7*). Arp did not make these templates himself. Rather, he left cut-outs and designs at Harvard that were then transferred to cardboard on site. Arp refers to this fact in a letter to Gropius on June 11, 1950:

I would be grateful if you could write to me sometime whether the cardboard mock up that you had made after the blueprints and my small cardboard models was successful. Would you perhaps send me a photo? I assume that you are not using the watercolor sketches intended for the first project and ask that you please return them at some point.³¹

This process was typical for Arp. Since executing his earliest reliefs in the late teens, he had relied upon the assistance of craftsmen. What counted most were the idea and the creation of a specific form. Moreover, later changes to his reliefs were not out of the question. In a 1952 letter to Gropius, he wrote of the intended changes to the Harvard reliefs: “fortunately my reliefs would remain true to the example of observable nature and thereby enable a myriad of formations”.³²

Arp's earlier “Constellations” were small in size. The artist realized the principles behind them on a monumental scale and in relationship to the surrounding architecture for the first time in the Harvard Relief. In 1957, the art historian Carola Giedion-Welcker described the reliefs and their integration within the architectural space of the Graduate Center as follows:



Fig. 8 Bablén: Hans Arp in front of his relief *Constellation UNESCO* in Paris, 1958, Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth

Like passing stars, clouds, birds and leaves, the forms move along the regularly veined wooden wall, broadening finally into “constellations.” It is a relaxed poetic interplay of motions, forms and surfaces. Arp’s fantastic world is here incorporated into the daily life of a young generation, which lives in this environment. By coupling with this building these irrational spheres that transcend its spatial and functional tasks, Walter Gropius gave proof of an especially sensitive understanding of our present needs.³³

It was just this union of rationality and irrationality, the technical and the creative, the functional and the subjective that led Gropius to commission a

design from Arp for the Graduate Center in the first place. Through the artistic scheme within his building complex, Gropius aimed to expose the young generation that frequented its halls to a new level of perception that would supersede the purely rational and the everyday – a goal with which Arp’s biomorphic and metaphorical *Constellations* aligned perfectly.

Coda

Gropius’ commission for the Graduate Center sparked a wide demand for large-scale reliefs from Arp, including one for the University of Caracas in Venezuela in 1953/56 and another for the headquarters of UNESCO in Paris in 1958. The Harvard relief was crucial in setting the stage for these later commissions. Moreover, it clearly served as the basis for the design of the Paris commission and likely informed the aesthetics of his other public works as well (*fig. 8*).³⁴

The realization of the Harvard Relief also marked the beginning of Hans Arp’s international artistic reputation and widespread commercial success. Just as the artist had anticipated, the commission ultimately served as an artistic calling card that made his work famous in the United States. Arp even thought of immigrating to the US during this period. He had received an offer for a teaching position from Hugo Weber, with whom he had worked on the compilation of Sophie Taeuber’s *Catalogue Raisonné* since 1945 and who had begun to work at the School of Design in Chicago just one year later in 1946.³⁵ Josef Albers had also invited him to teach at Black Mountain College in 1948, an offer he had made once before in 1936, at the onset of Second World War.³⁶ Indeed, Hans Arp and his wife Sophie Taeuber thought about leaving Europe for the US during that time, a plan that was ultimately never realized.³⁷ Yet even after the war’s end, the United States remained the only country where many immigrants – Albers among them – foresaw an artistic future. In a letter to Arp from December 19, 1948, Albers wrote: “Anyway, if there is still a future, I can only imagine it in this part of the world. I would therefore be grateful if you would consider my offer and let me know what you think of it.”³⁸

Arp did not take Albers up on his offer. Yet it still remains unknown whether Arp was truly serious about immigrating to the US during this period. But the significance of the European immigrant scene in New York, with

which Arp maintained close contact, cannot be overestimated. People like Curt Valentin, Hans Richter, Richard Huelsenbeck, Josef Albers and last but not least Walter Gropius, who had already known and appreciated Arp's work back in Europe, provided him with the opportunities to hold exhibitions and carry out major projects in the US. This access to the American art market, the American collectors and museums was crucial for Arp's career. Europe's artistic centers had been devastated during World War II and recovered slowly from its traumas, whereas the American art scene was thriving.

Arp was keenly aware of these developments. As mentioned at the beginning of this essay, Arp thought that in the wake of the Second World War, the American market provided a singular chance for financial success. In a letter to Maja Sacher of February 20, 1950, he wrote:

America is the only country where I am currently selling and it is also the place where I have the most admirers for my art. There are practically no French collectors of my work. The whole time that I've lived here, I've only sold to three French collectors. For the time being, Germany holds no serious prospects and my Swiss collectors love me but haven't bought much recently.³⁹

This would not be the case for long. Arp's work found increasing recognition in Europe through multiple exhibitions and awards. And it all began with Arp's sojourn in the United States and the realization of Gropius's commission for the Harvard Relief.

1 I would like to thank Lynette Roth and Robert Wiesenberger of the Harvard Art Museums for their great support in my research on Hans Arp's relief for the Harvard Graduate Center.

2 Letter from Hans Arp to Maja Sacher, February 20, 1950, Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth (hereafter Archive Stiftung Arp).

3 Letter from Hans Arp to Curt Valentin, April 20, 1950, Archive Stiftung Arp. (Lieber Valentin, endlich sind die ermüdenden Vorbereitungen zur Abreise beendet. Ich werde Donnerstag Nacht nach New York fliegen und im Laufe des Freitag Nachmittages an Dein trautes Kunstkammerlein pochen, mit einer Gletscherbrille bewaffnet, damit nicht das marinemarinerte Gold mich blendet, und werde in Deine Arme fallen. Ich wohne bei Huelbecks [Huelsenbecks]. Ich freue mich sehr Dich wieder zu sehen, aber ich werde mich auf der Hinreise nach Cambridge, Harvard University, nur kurze Zeit in New York aufhalten. Es ist eine grosse Arbeit, die dort auf mich wartet und sie dient hauptsächlich dem Ruhme und wird solchermassen hoffentlich auch von meiner Seite ein kleines Goldgerinsel in Dein obenerwähntes Kunstkammerlein leiten.)

- 4 Letter from Hans Arp to Curt Valentin, April 3, 1950, Archive Stiftung Arp.
- 5 Gabriele Mahn: *Sophie Taeuber-Arp und Hans Arp – Bauhausfreunde in Frankreich*, in: Isabelle Ewig, Thomas W. Gaehtgens and Matthias Noell (eds.): *Das Bauhaus und Frankreich*, Berlin 2002, pp. 433–447, p. 442.
- 6 Iris Bruderer-Oswald: *Das neue Sehen. Carola Giedion-Welcker und die Sprache der Moderne*, Bern 2007, p. 253
- 7 For Gropius' projects in the United States see Franz Schulze: *Die Bauhaus Architekten und der Aufschwung der Moderne in den Vereinigten Staaten*, in: *Exil. Flucht und Emigration europäischer Künstler 1933–1945*, exhibition catalogue (ed. by Stephanie Barron), Los Angeles County Museum, Neue Nationalgalerie, Los Angeles/Berlin 1998, pp. 225–234.
- 8 Josef Albers immigrated to the US in 1933. From this date he taught at the Black Mountain College in North Carolina until he received an appointment at Yale University in 1950. He had guest lectureships at Harvard. Gropius had worked with Breuer when he was living in exile in London and at Harvard he promoted Breuer's candidacy for an assistantship at the Architectural Department to support his teachings. Furthermore, Gropius and Breuer established an architectural firm and realized projects in the US before its dissolution in 1941. Martin Wagner came to the US in 1938 and upon Gropius' recommendation was appointed Assistant Professor for Regional Planning at Harvard University. Jill Pearlman: *Inventing American Modernism. Joseph Hudnut, Walter Gropius and the Bauhaus Legacy at Harvard*, Charlottesville and London 2007, p. 115.
- 9 *Ibid.*, pp. 80ff.
- 10 Siegfried Giedion: *Walter Gropius. Work and Teamwork*, New York 1954, pp. 57 f. For an extensive description of the architecture of the Harvard Graduate Center consult: *Harvard Build a Graduate Center. New dormitory center retains quadrangle pattern, recast student life in a modern mold*, in: *Architectural Forum. The Magazine of Building*, December 1950, pp. 61–71 and *Centre Universitaire Harvard*, in: *L'Architecture D'Aujourd'hui*, 38/1951 (December), pp. 40–48.
- 11 Walter Gropius: *Tradition and the Center*, in: *Harvard Alumni Bulletin*, October 14, 1950, pp. 68–71, p. 68.
- 12 Giedion 1954, p. 58.
- 13 Bayer immigrated to the US in 1938. He worked as an architect, sculptor and landscape designer. György Kepes immigrated to the United States in 1937. He taught Design at the New Bauhaus in Chicago before he was appointed at the School of Architecture and Planning at the MIT in Boston in 1947.
- 14 Reginald R. Issacs: *Walter Gropius. Der Mensch und Sein Werk*, Vol. 2, Berlin 1984, pp. 979 f.
- 15 Letter from John Coolidge to James Thrall Soby, December 1, 1958, Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, Mass, Curatorial files.
- 16 The painting by Miró was replaced by a replica of ceramic tiles in 1967. Since that time the painting has been part of the collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Isaac 1984, p. 980.

- 17 Siegfried Giedon: *Walter Gropius. Work and Teamwork*, New York 1954, p. 58.
- 18 Letter from Walter Gropius to Hans Arp, April 22, 1950, copy of the letter housed at the Fondazione Marguerite Arp, Locarno. (Ich weiß von Ihren öffentlichen Äußerungen, dass Sie mit mir einig sind, wie bedeutend die örtliche Zusammenarbeit zwischen Architekt, Bildhauer und Maler ist. Gegenseitiges Verständnis und gegenseitige Unterstützung im Werk kann sich ja nur aus dem Visuellen selbst entwickeln.)
- 19 Letter from John Coolidge to James Thrall Soby, December 1, 1958, Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, Mass, Curatorial files for 1951.118–119.
- 20 Giedon 1954, p. 58.
- 21 The two reliefs are registered in Rau's Catalogue Raisonné under No. 397 and No. 398. Rau No. 397 was the one remodeled in 1958 (*Constellations II*, Rau 592). In 1958 three bronze reliefs based on the designs of the Harvard Relief were also made: *Constellation Harvard I–III* (Rau No. 593–595). *Constellation Harvard I* is a version of Rau No. 592. Bernd Rau (ed.): *Hans Arp. Die Reliefs. Oeuvre-Katalog*, Stuttgart 1981, pp. 284 f.
- 22 Memo of a telephone call with Norman Fletcher, Partner of the TAC, October 7, 1992, Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, Mass, Curatorial files for 1951.118–119.
- 23 Letter from Hans Arp to Walter Gropius, March 25, 1952, copy of the letter housed at the Fondazione Marguerite Arp, Locarno.
- 24 Letter from Marguerite Hagenbach for Hans Arp to Walter Gropius, November 24, 1958, copy of the letter housed at the Fondazione Marguerite Arp, Locarno. (“Arp schlägt vor die Formen in einem hellen Graublau zu streichen”)
- 25 Letter from Hans Arp to Walter Gropius, March 25, 1952, copy of the letter housed at the Fondazione Marguerite Arp, Locarno.
- 26 Letter from Walter Gropius to Hans Arp, December 17, 1957 and letter from Hans Arp to Walter Gropius, January 15, 1958, copy of the letter housed at the Fondazione Marguerite Arp, Locarno.
- 27 Harriett Watts: *Hans Arp und das Prinzip der Konstellationen*, in: *Arp 1886–1966*, exhibition catalogue, Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart, Musée d'Art Moderne Strasbourg e.al., Ostfildern 1986, pp. 112–121, p. 112.
- 28 Hans Arp: *Forms*, in: *Arp on Arp. Poems, Essays, Memoirs by Jean Arp* (ed. by Marcel Jean), New York 1972, pp. 274–275, p. 274. The text was first published in French in: Jean Arp: *Formes* in: *Art d'Aujourd'hui*, 10–11/1950 (May/June).
- 29 Rainer Hüben: *Von “Puppen“ und anderen Decoupages*, in: id. and Roland Scotti (eds.): *Pouppées*, exhibition catalogue, Museum Liner Appenzell, Appenzell 2007, pp. 11–24, p. 12.
- 30 Letter from Hans Arp to Walter Gropius, April 27, 1950, copy of the letter housed at the Fondazione Marguerite Arp, Locarno. (Inzwischen habe ich 3 Formspiele in Pappe fertig gestellt, die mir hoffentlich für meine Arbeit dienen werden. Diese Formen sind keine unendlichen, stummen Formen, wie ich sie früher schuf, sondern primitive Formen mit einem verhüllten Sinn. Für mich sind sie menschlicher und in einem primitiven Sinne schön.)

- 31 Letter from Hans Arp to Walter Gropius, June 11, 1950, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass, Houghton Library. (Ich wäre Ihnen sehr dankbar, wenn Sie mir gelegentlich schrieben, ob der Kartonentwurf, den Sie nach den blue-prints ausführen liessen und für den ich Ihnen meine kleinen Kartonformen zurückliess, geglückt ist. [...] Ich nehme an, dass sie nun die aquarellierten Entwürfe für das erste Projekt nicht mehr brauchen und bitte Sie, mit dieselben gelegentlich zurückzuschicken.)
- 32 Letter from Hans Arp to Walter Gropius, March 25, 1952, copy of the letter housed at the Fondazione Marguerite Arp, Locarno. (Da meine Reliefs zum Glück das Beispiel der sichtbaren Natur treu befolgen, ist eine Unzahl von Anordnungen möglich.)
- 33 Carola Giedion-Welcker: *Hans Arp* (Documentation Marguerite Hagenbach), London 1957, p. XXX. Giedion-Welcker was giving the Harvard relief much attention in her essay which is showing the relevance of the work to Hans Arp. In this context see also id.: *Urelement und Gegenwart in der Kunst Hans Arps*, in: *Werk*, 5/1952 (May), pp. 164–172, p. 170.
- 34 Regarding the monumental relief of Hans Arp for the UNESCO see Herta Wescher: *Die Hochreliefs in Bronze von Hans Arp*, in: *Quadrum VI*, 1959, pp. 35–37. Arp realized another monumental relief in aluminum in 1959/60 for the facade of the Technical University in Braunschweig.
- 35 Letter from Hans Arp to Curt Valentin, August 15, 1950, Archive Stiftung Arp.
- 36 Letter from Josef Albers to Hans Arp, December 19, 1948, Yale University Library, New Haven, Conn, Albers Papers.
- 37 Letter from Hans Arp to the Sacher family, November 5, 1941, reproduced in: Erika Billeter: *Leben mit Zeitgenossen. Die Sammlung der Emanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung*, Basel 1980, n.p.
- 38 Letter from Josef Albers to Hans Arp, December 19, 1948, Yale University Library, New Haven, Conn, Albers Papers. (Anyway, wenn es noch eine zukunfft gibt, kann ich sie nur in diesem teil der Welt sehen.)
- 39 Letter from Hans Arp to Maja Sacher, February 20, 1950, Archive Stiftung Arp. (Amerika ist das einzige Land, in dem ich z. Z. verkaufe und in dem ich die meisten Freunde meiner Kunst habe. Französische Sammler meiner Kunst gibt es so gut wie keine. In der ganzen Zeit, in der ich hier lebte, habe ich nur an drei französische Sammler verkauft, Deutschland kommt für die nächste Zeit auch nicht ernsthaft in Betracht und meine Schweizer Sammler lieben mich zwar sehr, aber kaufen in letzter Zeit ganz ganz selten.)

Dreams and Projects

Hans Arp and Curt Valentin in New York

Eric Robertson

It is impossible to discuss Arp and the US without alluding to his relationship with Curt Valentin, the New York-based German gallerist, in the years 1946 to 1954. Two valuable and interrelated testimonies of their exchanges in that period are, firstly, their quite extensive correspondence held in the archives of the Stiftung Arp in Berlin, and, secondly, the beautiful limited edition volume of texts and woodcuts entitled *Dreams and Projects* that Arp produced in 1952 with Valentin's support (*fig. 1*).¹ Before the war, Valentin had made his name as a dealer of modern and contemporary art, firstly with Alfred Flechtheim in Berlin, and then with Karl Buchholz in Hamburg. When he emigrated to New York in 1937, he used Buchholz's name for the gallery he opened there, and from which he sold modern European art, including works by a number of artists dubbed "degenerate" by the National Socialists.² By 1951, Valentin's reputation had grown sufficiently for the space to be renamed the Curt Valentin Gallery.

During his time working for Alfred Flechtheim in Weimar Germany, it is possible that Valentin was aware of Arp's work; Arp may have been acquainted with the gallerist, given Flechtheim's extensive connections with the avant-garde scene. The first record of their correspondence in the Arp Archive, however, dates from the autumn of 1946, with a letter addressed to Arp by Valentin; it is a reply to a letter that Arp had sent from Switzerland. Writing from the Buchholz Gallery at number 32 East 57th Street, New York, Valentin confirmed that he had sent a cheque for two sculptures by Arp.³ Valentin's letter is polite and reserved, but with a note of mild irritation that Arp did not arrange to have both sculptures delivered together, thereby burdening Valentin with two sets of shipping costs and customs procedures. Perhaps surprisingly for a letter from one German speaker to another, it is written in English, but this is explained by the fact that Valentin had dictated it to his secretary. Of the contents of the two boxes of correspondence in

the Arp-Valentin dossier, the only letters addressed to Arp in German, and occasionally in French, are those typed or written by Valentin himself.

By the following June Valentin had visited Arp's studio in Meudon and purchased more of his work. This included *Sculpture Silencieuse* (1942), for which he paid 60,000 French francs, and an unspecified small granite sculpture for which he agreed to pay 40,000 francs. Valentin bought these pieces on the condition that he could exchange them for other works if necessary. Valentin instructed Arp to have them sent by the Parisian firm Lefebvre-Foinet, the well-known suppliers of art materials. Typed in German, the tone of Valentin's letter has warmed since their initial exchange; while still addressing his recipient with the formal "Herr Arp", he signs off with the words "Schönste Grüße."

Writing in September 1947, Valentin gives Arp the green light for an exhibition of his work in the winter of 1948–49.⁴ Valentin follows this up, imploring Arp to send every one of his works that he can bear to part with; he also floats the idea that he would be prepared to represent Arp in the US.⁵ Arp replies expressing his willingness to enter into such an arrangement and for the first time airs the idea of spending some weeks in

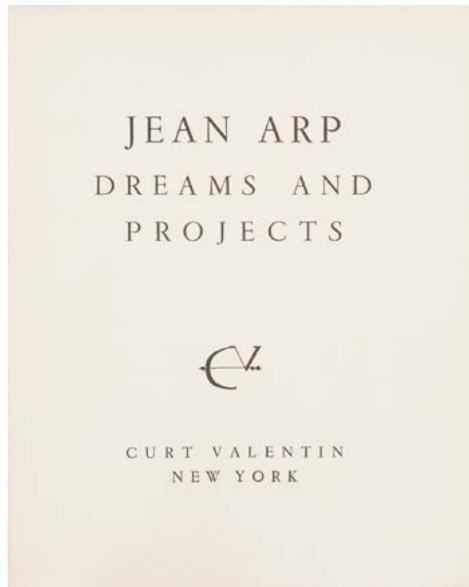


Fig. 1 Cover of Jean Arp: *Dreams and Projects*, Curt Valentin, New York 1952, Stiftung Arp e.V. Berlin/Rolandswerth

the United States. In their ensuing correspondence they continue to discuss what the precise terms of such an agreement might entail, and in more than one instance Valentin expresses the worry that another US dealer may try to elbow him out. Arp does admit that Samuel Kootz is hoping to exhibit his work, but reassures Valentin that he will not look further afield for a US representative.⁶

Valentin's letter of October 20, 1947 shows that Arp had already committed to the idea of having an exhibition of his work at Valentin's New York gallery. Valentin proposed that this should take place in winter 1948 or spring 1949, subject to Arp's preference and availability. The following month, Valentin broached the subject of a book by asking Arp if he would like to illustrate one; in this letter Valentin alludes to a book on Henry Moore that had appeared in the UK with substantial funding thanks to the high profile that Moore commanded.⁷ By the end of January 1948, the planned exhibition was taking shape and Valentin firmed up the terms of what he had described as their "gentleman's agreement": He announced that he would buy Arp's marble sculpture *Méditerranée* (1941) for 80,000 French francs; additionally, he pledged to pay a monthly sum of 50,000 francs into Arp's account from February through to the start of the exhibition. As their correspondence continued, Arp sent Valentin regular updates on his progress and continued to produce work at an impressive pace. Marguerite Hagenbach also liaised with Valentin over the permissions needed for Arp's sculptures to travel from her private collection in Switzerland to the US, for which proof was needed that the works were not stolen war goods.⁸

On September 8, 1948, Valentin, still hoping to open the exhibition in October or November, confirmed receipt of a consignment of Arp's sculptures, but was still waiting for Arp's drawings and collages. Even at this late stage, Valentin was still unsure as to whether Arp would be able to travel to New York for the opening of his exhibition. He urged Arp to book places on a transatlantic liner while they were still available.⁹ On the last day of September, Valentin wrote again, clearly anxious about Arp's unstable health, but also about the fact that drawings, collages and five sculptures he had commissioned for the exhibition had not yet arrived. Valentin was also concerned about the possible threat posed by Arp's dealings with Sidney Janis around the latter's planned exhibition of work by Sophie Taeuber. Writing on the same day, Arp was less preoccupied by the exhibition or its

contents than by the rapidly rising cost of living in France and the fact that he was still waiting to receive payments from Valentin. Nevertheless, a week later, Arp confirmed that he had booked places for Marguerite Hagenbach and himself on the liner *America* which was due to leave on December 16; he added that he would try to obtain aircraft tickets in the meantime. In light of this news, Valentin suggested they postpone the start of the exhibition until January 1949.¹⁰

Throughout October, Arp and Valentin haggled over the price Arp should charge for his work. On the one hand, Arp worried that he would make no money out of his trip to the US; on the other, Valentin suggested that Arp was hiking his prices too much and estimated Arp's revised prices to be around 40% higher than their original sums. In the meantime, Arp's and Hagenbach's departure had been delayed until December 30, by the slow sailing of the ship and by strikes in New York. Writing to Valentin, Arp requested that one of his works, a white relief, be made available to him on his arrival, as he needed to make a small adjustment to it.¹¹ Meanwhile, he agreed to postpone resolving their disagreement regarding their "gold panning" (*Goldwäscherei*) until they met in New York.

As the day of the opening neared, further problems arose that threatened to jeopardize the exhibition: Arp's sculpture *Etoile* (1939, *fig. 2*) had arrived in New York, but in transit it had broken away from its base; and, no less worryingly, Valentin declared that he was unhappy with Jean Cathelin's English translation of Arp's preface for the exhibition catalogue. This news upset Arp, who considered Cathelin to be a friend and a thoroughly reliable writer. Valentin's views on Cathelin's translation are clear: "Reading Cathelin you would think I am putting together an exhibition of verses that snake their way along the walls; but I wanted to do an exhibition of SCULPTURES."¹² Arp seems to have had his way, as the text went into print with only a few deletions.

Arp's and Marguerite Hagenbach's stay in New York, during which they also spent time at the home of Frederick Kiesler, clearly cemented Arp's working relationship with Valentin. Their correspondence after this point marks a new level of informality: they begin to address each other more informally as "Du", and Valentin invents a string of nicknames for Marguerite by punning on her surname: "Hagenbachlein", "Hagenstrom" and "Mme Ruisseau de Hagen." Arp for his part has clearly warmed to his dealer too: he begins to address him as "Lieber ami", "Cher Monsieur", "Lieber Freund",



Fig. 2 Hans Arp: *Star*, 1939, Bronze, cast 1/5 (Rudier 1949)
21,5 × 16,5 × 3,5 cm (without base), base: 13 × ø11 cm,
Privat collection St. Louis.

and in one letter recalls how they laughed like “deranged men” during his stay in New York.¹³

Valentin’s energetic promotion of Arp was clearly instrumental in establishing the latter’s reputation in the US, just as it had been for Henry Moore, and this seems to have triggered a growing awareness of his work in the wider international sphere.¹⁴ In the wake of the exhibition, Valentin was pleased to report to Arp that he had made many sales, and Arp too was able to announce that the Musée d’art moderne in Paris had bought one of his sculptures. Another important new client was Nelson Rockefeller, the New York businessman, philanthropist, art collector and later Vice President of the United States, who bought the relief *Interregnum* (1949). In the same period, he also purchased works by other modern sculptors and artists including Lipchitz, Marcks, Beckmann and Calder. As Valentin commented wryly to Arp, “The change in his house will be more noticeable than that in his wallet.”¹⁵ In April 1950, Arp received an invitation to exhibit five sculptures at the Venice Biennale, and the following year the Tate Gallery bought



Fig. 3 Hans Arp: *Pagoda Fruit*, 1949, Bronze, cast 1/3 (Susse 1949), 88,9 × 67,9 × 76,2 cm, The Tate Collection, Tate Liverpool

Pagoda Fruit (1949, fig. 3). It is against this background of growing international acclaim that the idea behind *Dreams and Projects* takes shape.

Curiously, their growing friendship did not prevent Arp from sending Valentin on occasion some strongly worded letters complaining about the latter's slowness to pay him. On Valentine's Day 1951, a date whose appropriateness was not lost on Valentin, the gallerist lost his patience with the artist's petulance, and addressed a letter to him that manages to convey exasperation and a measure of indignation, but without losing his characteristic bonhomie:

Dear Arpshole,

Thank you for your unpleasant letter of the 11th of this month. The fact that you have not received your money, *mon cher*, is down to your own revolting slovenliness. We had agreed that you would collect the cash regularly from Maurice [Lefebvre-Foinet]. That's why there is terrible confusion in your bank account. [...] I have been, and still am, an honest buyer of your sculptures. Has any other art dealer bought so many things from you? Still, I will keep on buying – but I have to pay in installments.¹⁶

Valentin did have a point: Arp's growing reputation in the US was largely thanks to him, and Arp did well out of his exhibition in New York: sales amounted to \$2,250, a sum roughly equivalent to an average individual's annual earnings in the US in 1950.¹⁷

Origins of *Dreams and Projects*

In September 1951 we find Arp's first mention of a book publication, to which he refers in a letter to Valentin as "unsere Mappe" (our portfolio). This generic term is significant, since it makes clear that Arp saw this endeavor as qualitatively different from his many previous book publications. While the portfolio or album form is relatively rare in Arp's oeuvre, it does have some notable precedents: one particularly striking example is the *Arp-Mappe*, published in 1923 by Kurt Schwitters as the fifth issue of his *Merz* journal series, and which includes seven "Arpaden", minimalist prints by Arp, all of which depict simple forms deriving from his preoccupation with what he

termed an “object-language”. Another prominent precursor of Arp’s and Valentin’s project is the portfolio that Arp made in 1941–42 with Sophie Taeuber, Alberto Magnelli and Sonia Delaunay, and which is a valuable record of the collaborative work that the four artists undertook in the southern French town of Grasse, having fled there to escape Nazi Occupation.¹⁸ Arp initially wanted the new portfolio to contain twenty-five woodcuts – perhaps a subtle allusion to Tristan Tzara’s *Vingt-cinq poèmes* – and for it to feature a preface by his fellow poet and artist friend Camille Bryen along with a new text on sculpture written by Arp himself. A draft letter written by Arp in 1958 alludes to a recording of his readings “aus *Dreams and Projects* in der deutschen Originalfassung” (from *Dreams and Projects* in the original German version).¹⁹ While the album was taking shape, however, Valentin suggested to Arp that his texts might appear only in French.

At any rate it is clear that, by late 1951, this project was well underway. On November 18, Arp reported to Valentin that he would return the following day to Meudon, where he hoped to finish the portfolio. He also mentioned that the Surrealist poet Benjamin Péret was prepared to write an introduction for the book, but would expect 100 US dollars for doing so. Valentin agreed to this, albeit grudgingly (“I think it is quite a tough charge, but never mind.”).²⁰ In the event the book was published without Péret’s involvement. Other important aspects of the volume changed too: writing to the book’s translator Ralph Manheim at the end of 1951, Valentin states: “The French title of the book is CHEMINS ET PROJETS. For the time being, we translated it WAYS AND PROJECTS, which I am sure is wrong.”²¹ But just a month later, Arp wrote to Manheim informing him that he had changed the title to *Projets et rêves (Projects and Dreams)*. In the same letter he enclosed his own textual contribution to the publication: instead of the single essay on sculpture that he had originally envisaged, he had produced the five short texts in French and German that served as the basis for the definitive book that went to press.²² The correspondence does not reveal at what point the decision was taken to publish the book with a single title in English; nor does it clarify whose decision it was. It is likely that Arp and Valentin, spurred on by the success of Arp’s exhibition at Valentin’s gallery and anticipating the next one, recognized the desirability of addressing the North American buying public in its own language.

Dreams and Projects – a livre d'artiste?

Two fundamental characteristics of an artist's book, as defined in a pioneering study by Anne Moeglin-Delcroix, are, firstly, that it should be aesthetic as much as literary, and, secondly, that the artist must be involved in the entire process from conception through to printing.²³ *Dreams and Projects* amply meets both criteria. Indeed, the process leading to its publication reveals a degree of perfectionism that may surprise those familiar with Arp's Dada-era insouciance towards accident and error. In liaising with the Parisian printers Féquet et Baudier, Arp showed a high level of care over the formatting of the book, the quality and appearance of its reproductions and its textual elements too. On January 29, 1952, Marguerite Hagenbach writes to Baudier on Arp's behalf requesting that two titles be changed; she adds that three plates are not yet ready as they all have minor imperfections that require rectification.²⁴ Arp even requests the dimensions of one plate to the nearest millimeter. That being said, the erstwhile Dadaist does reveal a lingering openness to the workings of chance: the printers had suggested giving two plates, numbers 26 and 27, imprecise borders (*fig. 4*).²⁵ Arp happily embraces this creative idea and asks for them to do further tests along the same lines. This creative collaboration with the printers harks back to Arp's Dada-era acceptance of printers' typographical errors.

By March 10, Féquet et Baudier were able to report that Ralph Manheim had amended his translations in accordance with the minor changes Arp had made to his texts. The book was now ready to go to press; proofs had been sent to Arp and Valentin. Four months later, on July 19, Marguerite writes to Valentin that Arp has been in hospital in Neuilly for a heart complaint but is now back in Meudon. She reports that Monsieur Féquet has brought copies of Arp's book for him to sign, which he will do as he convalesces.²⁶ Ten days later Hagenbach writes again to Valentin to let him know that the ten luxury editions and fifty normal ones that he had requested are ready to be sent to him.²⁷

Aesthetics of the livre d'artiste

The luxury edition held in the Arp Archives is a beautifully crafted object: presented in a cardboard sleeve, it contains unbound sheets, which justify

Arp's description of it as a "Mappe" or portfolio rather than a "Buch". The title page, in English alone, leads on to Arp's five short texts in English, French and German; while the printers referred to them collectively as a preface, they are no such thing in any conventional sense, and certainly do not describe or present the artworks that follow them. Instead, they confront the reader with oneiric, surreal images of single and compound forms in which we encounter an array of Arpian objects familiar from his object-language of the 1920s, such as eyes, hats, birds and navels. Arp evokes a world inhabited by stars that write, night-birds that read, amphoras with moustaches, wandering flowers, speaking eyes, bespectacled eggs, and clouds that turn into cravats. Thematically, they do however touch upon concerns relating to the creative practices of writing and producing visual images; curiously, however, these references attribute the creative process not to the poet himself, but to the natural world that surrounds him. One text contains this observation: "The stars write with infinite slowness and never read what they have written."²⁸ Elsewhere we read: "More and more I am obsessed by the thought that I am living in an unreal dream world. Behind me the writing goes on, audibly, slowly, distinctly. Easily my ears read the neat script. It is a treat for my ears."²⁹

At such moments, the poet seems to relinquish his own agency in the creative act and become instead a mere channel for nature's language. In other instances, the text alludes to the multiplicity of languages – perhaps at such moments reflecting meta-textually on the book itself: "The adroit and crafty butterfly hunter who hunts through the air with his hat suddenly stops in consternation despite his huntsman's luck, because he realizes that along with the butterflies he has been swinging living divine reason, the logos, back and forth in his hat."³⁰ Such observations are interspersed with more philosophical reflections on the state of humankind: "Why have we torn the umbilical cord that attached us to the primal depths!"³¹ The threat that the atomic era posed to humanity is a theme that recurs with increasing frequency in Arp's writings after 1945.

Turning to the visual component of the album, the twenty-eight plates are stylistically diverse but rendered homogeneous by their shared palette. Some twenty-one employ just black and white; the remaining seven use grey-blue too. Both they, and the texts that preface them, are multi-referential and waver between conveying a given subject matter and being resolutely non-figurative. Plate no. 17, *Mythical project: plant-personage*

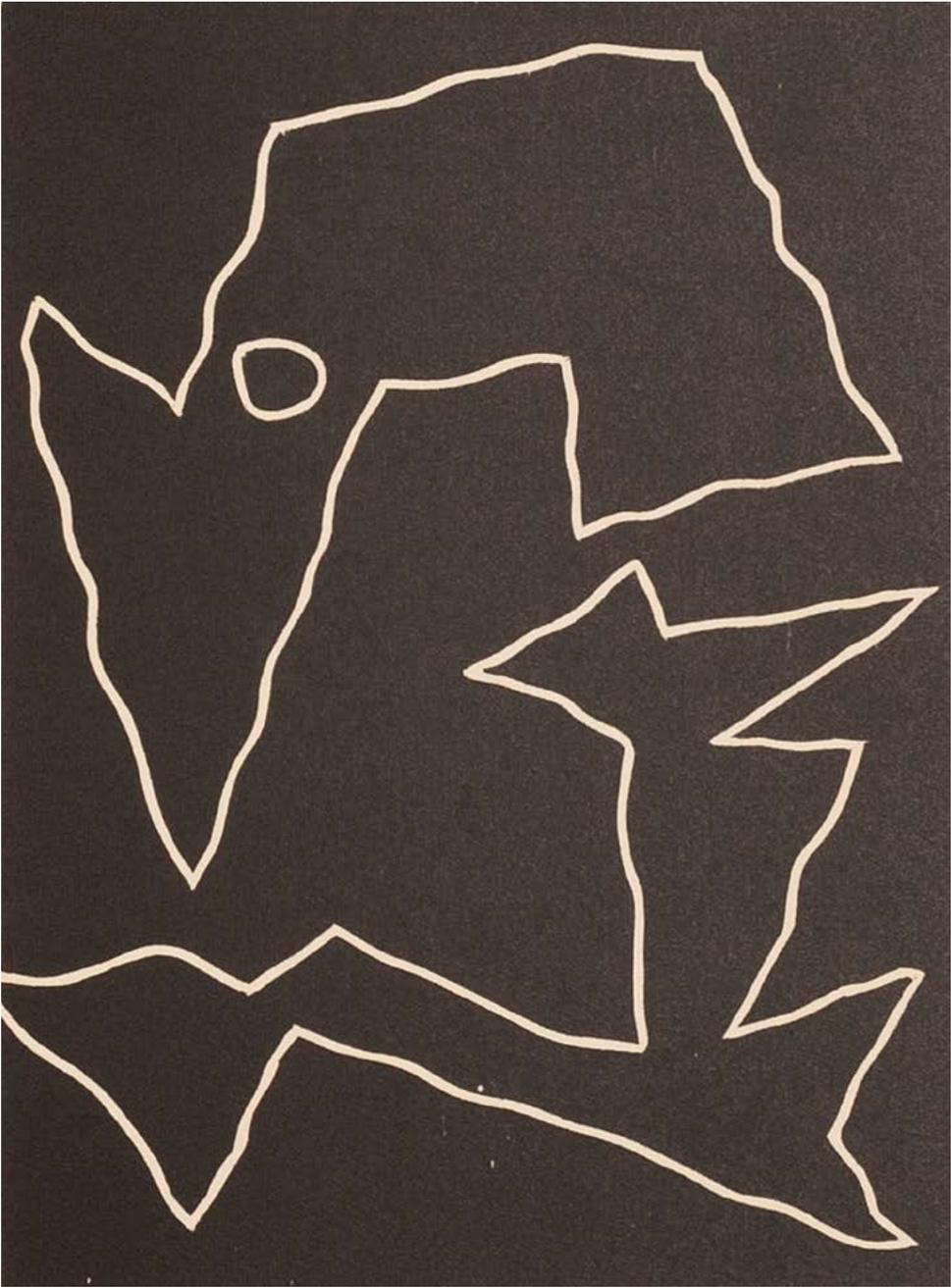
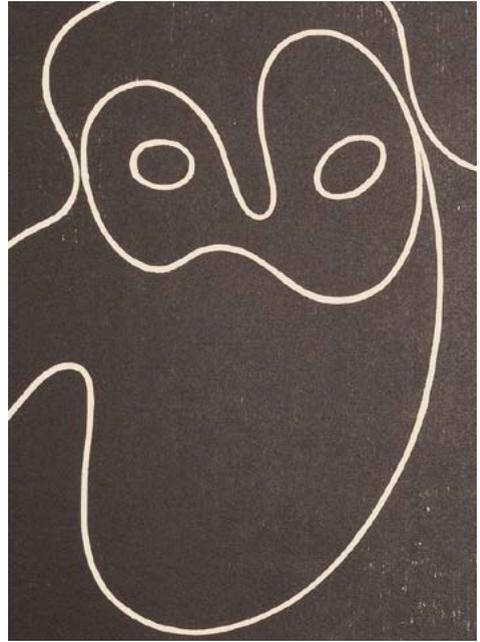
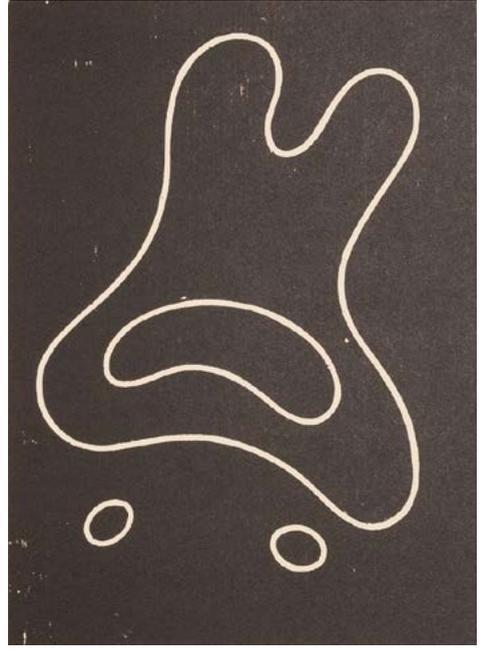
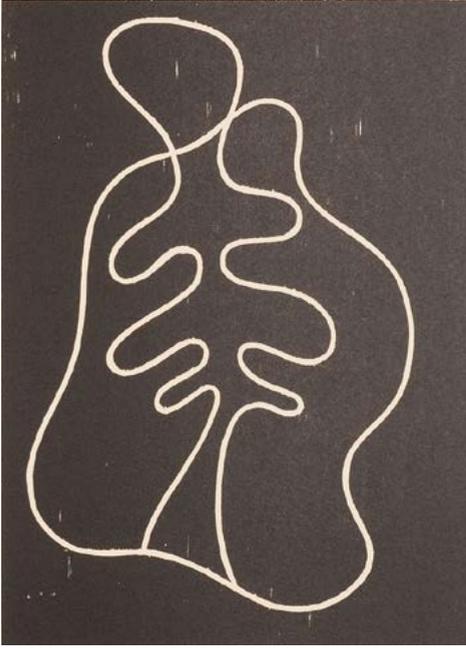


Fig. 4 Hans Arp: *Mirage of a Voice*, in: Jean Arp: *Dreams and Projects*, Curt Valentin, New York 1952), Plate 26



Figs. 5–8 Hans Arp: *Mythical project: plant-personage; bat, mouth, navel-eyes; Solar bread, telescope; Mask of Philosophy* in: Jean Arp: *Dreams and Projects*, Curt Valentin, New York 1952, Plates 16, 17, 18, 19

is a characteristic Arpian conflation of two normally incompatible elements: this coupling occurs by both visual and textual means, the hyphen of the title aligning with the visual overlapping of planes (*fig. 5*). It is uncertain which lexical element designates which form: the taller of the two shapes resembles a leaf or plant-like form, but also has vaguely humanoid traits. The wider shape may represent the personage or the plant, or alternatively may merely signify a landscape forming a backdrop.

Some image-title combinations create the effect that Roland Barthes defined as “relay”, whereby the textual message, rather than neatly coinciding with the visual image, propels us beyond the image to look for new meanings not apparent in it.³² Plate 18, *Mythical project: hat, mouth, navel-eyes* poses a visual conundrum that resists straightforward visualization: how, and on what sort of creature, are we supposed to imagine “navel-eyes” (*fig. 6*)? And the identity of the “mouth” is indeterminate: is it the downturned, lozenge-shaped form or the animalesque snout at the top of the image? Presumably the former; but if this is so, what is it doing inside the hat? The spatial indeterminacy of the mouth, the point of articulation of speech, relates neatly to the instance in the prefatory text cited above that evokes the logos swaying back and forth in a hat; here too, it seems, Arp endows his visual lexicon with an ambiguity that reminds us of the inherent instability of words and languages.

This instability becomes apparent in some other ways of which Arp may not have been fully aware. For instance, in Ralph Manheim’s English translation of the title of plate 16, the English word “telescope” sits awkwardly alongside the French “lunettes” and German “Brille” (both meaning spectacles), and seems ill-suited to the image itself (*fig. 7*); and Manheim’s translation of plate 19 transforms the *Masque de philosophe* (*Philosopher’s Mask*) rather unhelpfully into a “Mask of Philosophy” (*fig. 8*). But in spite of such imperfections, this book is a treasure and deserves to be considered as one of the most successful collaborations between Arp the poet and Arp the artist and printmaker. Not only that, but its multilingual presentation, and its incorporation of poetic texts alongside related visual works, compel us to see it as strikingly far ahead of its time. *Dreams and Projects* is a decidedly modern publication that anticipates the preoccupation in the early twenty-first-century with linguistic plurality and intermediality.

From a contemporary perspective, then, it is easy to understand why *Dreams and Projects* was a valuable addition to Arp’s oeuvre and a

worthwhile artistic undertaking for Valentin; upon its publication, however, it met with very limited commercial success. The price, 75 US dollars, may have deterred some potential customers who would not have hesitated to spend much larger sums on a sculpture, painting or other artwork, but who perhaps were less inclined to see a luxury edition of a limited-run artist's book as a profitable investment. Valentin, for his part, had clearly relished his involvement in *Dreams and Projects* as a creative undertaking, but was fully aware of its shortcomings as a commercial venture. Thus he wrote to Arp in March 1952:

Beloved Boy,

[...] Where books are concerned the fact is that I am not bad at producing them, but I just can't sell them and the warehouses are piled up with skyscrapers of the books that I publish with enthusiasm and love. But my illegitimate grandchildren will reap the profits and will share these, if not with you, then with others. Now send me my sculpture and I'll make you some cash too.³³

In another letter to Arp, written a few months later, Valentin again bemoaned their "expensive book", reflecting that it had brought in a mere 753,59 US dollars in profit but had cost nearly four times more to produce. As Valentin put it: "It will be a little while before we can start to divide up the proceeds."³⁴ Arp reassured his friend that it is in the nature of such books to gain in value, and they concurred that, even if it was unlikely to bring them riches, it would be beneficial to their grandchildren.

Coda

Valentin hosted a second exhibition of Arp's work at his gallery from March 2nd to 27th, 1954, but in circumstances very different to those that accompanied the previous one. In the intervening time, Arp's international reputation had grown very dramatically, with commissions and exhibitions around the world; this much becomes clear in a letter from Marguerite Hagenbach to Valentin in February 1954. It reveals that, while Arp was preparing for Valentin's exhibition, photographs of his work appeared in the magazine *Art d'Aujourd'hui* and his poetry had received reviews in the *Neue Zürcher*

Zeitung; he had received a commission for the Institute of the University City in Caracas; and, most significantly, he had been invited to have a personal show at the Venice Biennale, where an entire room and portico would be set aside for the exclusive display of his work.³⁵ In the same letter, however, it becomes clear that both Arp's and Valentin's health had become a subject of serious concern. Firstly, Arp's cardiologist had advised him against making another transatlantic journey; and, more worrying still, Valentin had suffered an embolism in February and was bedridden.

In February, just weeks before the exhibition was due to open, Valentin wrote to Marguerite Hagenbach in English: "I am really getting desperate about the mix-up regarding the sculpture which is still to come. [...] One of the reasons for all the confusion is that Arp changes the titles too often – makes it very difficult to keep the records straight."³⁶ The following day, ominously, Valentin was too ill to write, but instructed his secretary Jane Wade to write to Arp to enquire about some wood reliefs that had apparently failed to arrive in New York for the exhibition. Two days later, it transpired that the works had indeed been sent; it was not Arp but Maurice Lefebvre-Foinet who had changed the titles of three of Arp's sculptures. As Valentin explained to Marguerite Hagenbach: "His reason was to give titles which are more realistic, because sometimes we avoid paying duty by doing so, since abstract sculpture is dutiable. However Maurice could have told me about it, and the confusion would not have occurred."³⁷ At the start of February, shortly before the exhibition catalogue was due to go to press, a last-minute panic arose when Valentin's secretary, Jane Wade, reported that the last page of the essay that Arp had written for the exhibition catalogue had gone missing. Arp travelled from Basel to Paris to retrieve another draft of the text, only for the original sheet to turn up again at Valentin's gallery.

In spite of these misunderstandings and hitches, the exhibition duly took place, and once again Arp proved a success in New York. Poignantly, though, it would be one of Valentin's last ever exhibitions: he suffered a fatal heart attack only five months later while visiting the sculptor Marino Marini in Italy ahead of the exhibition of his work that Valentin was preparing. It seems that the gallerist had not heeded the warning sign that his embolism had brought him; Valentin's death was almost certainly hastened by his refusal to slow down his frenetic work rate. In June 1955 an exhibition of sculpture, paintings and drawings was organized to mark the closing of the Curt Valentin Gallery. The range of works documented in the catalogue

bears witness to the astonishing quality and range of modern art that Valentin had promoted through his gallery.³⁸

To conclude, given that Arp and Valentin clearly had quite different personalities, it is perhaps surprising that they established such a successful relationship. A deep understanding of art united them, and this allowed what had begun as merely a business relationship to grow into a genuine friendship. For the catalogue of the second exhibition at Valentin's gallery, Arp produced an essay that Valentin praised as "außerordentlich und außerordentlich schön" ("extraordinary and extraordinarily beautiful"). It ends with words that sum up Arp's views on art, but also, rather fittingly, might come to characterize his relationship with Valentin and their collaboration on *Dreams and Projects*: "I prefer to think of the artist's work as dreams rather than work. Love also is more likely to be called dream than work."³⁹

1 The research undertaken for this essay was conducted at the Archive of the Stiftung Arp e.V. in Berlin in April 2015 with the assistance of an Arp Research Fellowship. I am grateful to the Arp Foundation, and especially to its curator, Dr. Maike Steinkamp, for facilitating this and helpfully granting me access to the Arp-Valentin correspondence and other unpublished materials. All letters between Arp and Valentin cited in this essay are held in the Archive of the Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.

2 Anja Tiedemann: *Die „Entartete“ Moderne und ihr amerikanischer Markt. Karl Buchholz und Curt Valentin als Händler verfemter Kunst*, Berlin 2013.

3 Letter from Curt Valentin to Hans Arp, November 5, 1946.

4 Letter from Curt Valentin to Hans Arp, September 13, 1947.

5 Ibid. (Ich würde gern zu einer Vereinbarung kommen, die mir gewisse Rechte für Amerika gibt, so wie ich sie für Lipchitz und Henry Moore habe. Denken Sie doch einmal darüber nach. Es könnte segensreich sein, für Sie und für mich, für beide Teile.) English translation of the Arp-Valentin correspondence are by Eric Robertson.

6 Letter from Hans Arp to Curt Valentin, September 27, 1947.

7 Letter from Curt Valentin to Hans Arp, October 20, 1947. The book to which Valentin refers could be *Henry Moore. Sculpture and Drawings. With an Introduction by Herbert Read*, London 1946.

8 Letter from Marguerite Hagenbach to Curt Valentin, April 20, 1948.

9 Letter from Curt Valentin to Hans Arp, September 8, 1948.

10 Letter from Hans Arp to Curt Valentin, September 8, 1948.

- 11 Letter from Hans Arp to Curt Valentin, undated [between November 10, and December 17, 1948].
- 12 Letter from Curt Valentin to Hans Arp, December 21, 1948. (Wen man Cathelin liest würde man denken ich mache eine Ausstellung von Versen, die sich an den Wänden entlangschlängeln; ich wollte aber eine Ausstellung von PLASTIK machen.)
- 13 Letter from Hans Arp to Curt Valentin, January 31, 1950 and letter of March 24, 1949.
- 14 For Moore see Pauline Rose: *Henry Moore at the Museum of Modern Art*, New York 1946.
- 15 Letter from Curt Valentin to Hans Arp, December 20, 1949. (Die Veränderung in seinem Hause wird eher spürbar sein als in seinem Geldbeutel.)
- 16 Letter from Curt Valentin to Hans Arp, February 14, 1951. (Liebes Arpschloch, vielen Dank für Deinen unliebenswürdigen Brief vom 11 ds Mts. Daß Du Dein Geld noch nicht bekommen hast, ja mon cher das ist Deine eigene und widerwärtige Schlamperie. Wir hatten ausgemacht daß Du Dir die Pinke regelmässig beim Maurice abholst. Die Konfusion in deinem Konto ist heillos infolgedessen. [...] Ich bin ein braver Käufer Deiner Skulpturen gewesen und bin es noch. Hat Dir ein anderer Kunsthändler so viele Dinger abgekauft? Trotzdem kaufe ich weiter – aber ich muss in Raten bezahlen.)
- 17 U.S. Census Bureau, *Income of Persons up 10 Percent in 1951*. Current Population Reports: Consumer Income, 26 September 1952. Available at: <http://www2.census.gov/prod2/popscan/p60-010.pdf>
- 18 Located in the administrative department of Alpes-Maritimes, Grasse remained part of the “free zone” of France until November 11, 1942, when the Italian army took control. On September 8, 1943 it fell under German Occupation. Jean-Louis Panicacci: *L'Occupation italienne et ses ambiguïtés: l'exemple des Alpes-Maritimes*, www.departement06.fr (last access : 30.9.2015)
- 19 Handwritten draft of a letter from Hans Arp to Walter Höllerer, undated [between February 14 and March 17, 1958]. I am grateful to Agathe Mareuge for drawing my attention to this document.
- 20 Letter from Curt Valentin to Hans Arp, November 30, 1951.
- 21 Letter from Curt Valentin to Ralph Manheim, undated [c. December 1951–January 1952].
- 22 Letter from Hans Arp to Ralph Manheim, January 17, 1952.
- 23 Anne Moeglin-Delcroix: *Esthétique du livre d'artiste (1960–1980)*, Paris 1997.
- 24 According to Hagenbach's letter, *Projet au profil noir* should become *Profil noir sur face grise* and *Formes géométriques - biologiques* is to have the suffix *Objets d'une vie casanière*. The three plates requiring rectification are *Concrétion mythique*, *Coquille géométrique* and *Objets places selon les lois du hasard, echo*. Letter of Marguerite Hagenbach to Paul Baudier, January 29, 1952.
- 25 Letter from Hans Arp to Paul Baudier, February 12, 1952.

- 26 Letter of Marguerite Hagenbach to Curt Valentin, July 19, 1952.
- 27 Letter of Marguerite Hagenbach to Curt Valentin, July 29, 1952.
- 28 Hans Arp: *Between the lines of time*, in: *Dreams and Projects*, Curt Valentin, New York 1952, n. p.
- 29 Hans Arp: *The Udders Have Run Dry*, in: Ibid.
- 30 Hans Arp: *Into the Radiant Silence*, in: Ibid.
- 31 Hans Arp: *The Udders Have Run Dry*, in: Ibid.
- 32 Roland Barthes: *Rhétorique de l'image*, in: *L'Obvie et l'obtus. Essais critiques III*, Paris 1982, pp. 25–42; especially pp. 30–33.
- 33 Letter from Curt Valentin to Hans Arp, March 27, 1952. (Geliebter Bube, [...] Mit den Büchern ist es so, daß ich nicht unbegabt bin solche zu produzieren, nur verkaufen kann ich sie nicht und in den Lagerhäusern häufen sich in Wolkenkratzerhöhe die Bücher die ich mit Eifer und Liebe verlege. Aber meine unehelichen Enkelkinder werden den Nutzen tragen und auch diesen Nutzen, wenn auch nicht mit Dir, mit anderen teilen. Nun aber sende meine Plastik und ich werde Dir auch etwas Pinke schicken.)
- 34 Letter from Curt Valentin to Hans Arp, c. 1952 (Es wird also noch ein Weilchen dauern ehe wir beginnen können, uns den Nutzen zu teilen.)
- 35 Letter from Marguerite Hagenbach to Curt Valentin, February 12, 1954.
- 36 Letter of Curt Valentin to Marguerite Hagenbach, February 9, 1954.
- 37 Letter from Curt Valentin to Marguerite Hagenbach, February 12, 1954.
- 38 *Curt Valentin Gallery. Closing Exhibition: Sculptures, Paintings and Drawings*, exhibition catalogue, Curt Valentin Gallery, New York 1954. The sculptors listed in the closing exhibition include Arp, Brancusi, Braque, Reg Butler, Mary Callery, Degas, Lipchitz, Maillol, Matisse, Picasso, Rodin; painters exhibited include Ensor, Gris, Kirchner, Klee, Marc, Masson, Morandi, Kokoschka, Schmidt-Rottluff and others.
- 39 Hans Arp: *Preface*, in: *Jean Arp*, exhibition catalogue, Curt Valentin Gallery, New York 1954, n.p.

The Loyal Underdog

Observations on Hans Arp and Galerie Chalette

Arie Hartog

A central idea of the European avant-garde was the destruction of the bourgeois world. Sparked by a fundamental critique of modern art as a mirror of societal norms, during the First World War period a new art emerged which used aesthetic means to fight back against the bourgeoisie and the modern art it espoused. Its subsequent development showed how one part of this avant-garde found a bourgeois public, which appreciated the new aesthetic but not necessarily the original societal visions. By the end of this transformation process there was a long, coherent narrative spanning from the beginnings of Modernism to the abstract art that absorbed the avant-gardes.

The deconstruction of this major narrative has brought the many avant-gardes and their anti-bourgeois habitus back into sharper focus. The transformation process whereby avant-garde turned into classic Modernism, on the other hand, has been little studied.¹ The remarkable story of the Franco-German artist Hans Arp seems emblematic of this process, particularly since the abundance of research material allows for a changing perspective between the meta and the micro levels.² Until Arp received the sculpture prize at the Venice Biennale in 1954, his work was well known but rarely purchased.³ This changed in the second half of the 1950s. The former *enfant terrible* had found his bourgeois audience.

It is not insignificant that in the US of the 1960s, this process was perceived as the “demise of the avant-garde”.⁴ Writing in *Vogue* magazine in 1963, William Chapin Seitz, curator at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, had described the circle surrounding the former avant-garde in terms of “fashionable commercialism”.⁵ Hence the avant-garde had outlived its function, he argued; no longer was there an antibourgeois vanguard – and what remained of it was a market for modern art. But the same process could just as well be described the other way round: the once avant-gardist art had found its place within modern capitalist society. Obviously an

ever-expanding group of American consumers were interested in contemporary culture.⁶ Whether that implied a loss of brisance or a gain in relevance is still a topic of discussion.⁷ For the late 1950s and early 1960s in the US, it is true that the emergence of a major narrative about modern art and the progressive commodification of this art, i.e. making it into a commercial product, are synchronous and probably connected developments. The material on Hans Arp suggests the same, as will be shown in the following. In 1972, the journalist Hilton Kramer called Hans Arp a typical artist caught between Dadaism and bourgeoisie. Whilst feeling he belongs to the first group, according to Hilton, he enjoys the (economic) interest of the second. This conflict shatters the Utopia of the avant-garde.⁸

In the United States the dissolution of the avant-garde in the 1960s and early 1970s was thus described from the standpoint of a structural perspective. This deserves to be considered in greater depth, since there are various overlapping levels in the process of modern art's commodification, and a viewing perspective focusing on individual participants adds little to our knowledge. There may be modern artists who planned their marketing and mastered the trade; Hans Arp was not one of them.⁹ His work was featured in a flexible network that can partially be reconstructed. Decisions made within this network determine the artist's fame to this day, but were not, for the most part, made by him. To render this complexity halfway visible is the aim of the following observations, for which the material on Galerie Chalette serves as a starting point. On the American context: after the Second World War, the American collectors and museums had initially discovered the European avant-garde and then, during the 1950s, their own.¹⁰ After 1960 these merged into one another. A large market for modern art could only emerge when the idea of an avant-garde as the vanguard that had to be discovered receded into the background. Not the new but the valuable became sought after.

The dépendance

In 1954 Arthur and Madeleine Lejwa founded Galerie Chalette in New York.¹¹ They were Jewish immigrants from Europe, who had met in the 1940s in New York and married there in 1947. The name of the gallery alluded to their family name (originally Szalet) and evoked French flair. It was not

supposed to be a “Gallery” but a “Galerie”, and in this naming of their firm the Lejwas were directly making reference to Europe. Having started out as the American representation of Edition Maeght, and hence with the graphic art of Georges Braque, Marc Chagall, Henry Matisse and Joan Miró, in the late 1950s the Galerie cooperated principally with the Galerie Denise René and the Galerie de France.¹² From 1948, Denise René regularly showed works by Hans Arp and played an important role in establishing his profile as a sculptor.¹³ What determined the predominant perception of the artist as a sculptor was the catalogue raisonné of his sculptures, published in 1957.¹⁴

The original focus of Galerie Chalette on French art was broadened in the late 1950s to encompass modern European sculpture. After an exhibition of contemporary English sculpture in 1956, the Galerie received exclusive American representation of Barbara Hepworth.¹⁵ In 1960, an exhibition of Sophie Taeuber-Arp and Hans Arp came, via the Galerie Denise René, to the Galerie – which by now had become established one block away from the Metropolitan Museum of Art on the Upper East Side. The Museum of Modern Art had shown a large solo exhibition by Arp in 1958. Arp’s work was already actively represented by Sidney Janis, whose Midtown gallery was also located in the vicinity of the latter museum. The relative proximity of two New York galleries representing Hans Arp in the early 1960s is, first of all, evidence of the great interest in the artist. Secondly, this proximity possibly contains a hint that they addressed different target groups. Did Sidney Janis represent the established New York bourgeoisie, and the Lejwas the parvenus? In this context, there is a revealing letter from Denise René in which she explained to the Lejwas that their exhibition could only be held at a decent time interval after Sidney Janis’s planned exhibition of Arp and Mondrian in January 1960 (*see fig. p. 165*).¹⁶ Presumably the Lejwas were arguing that they would reach a different audience, but Denise René knew that they would present competition for the other dealer, nevertheless. Thirdly, this is evidence that competition between dealers is determined not only by the commodity on offer but also by the narrative in which this commodity is embedded. If a new dealer wants to offer a commodity that another is already offering, in a market with a limited supply, then he should quite literally sell it differently.

In summer 1960, Denise René exhibited a large number of the new, so-called threshold sculptures by Arp in Paris.¹⁷ His great success as a sculptor since 1954 was based on his organic forms sculpted in the round, but now



Fig. 1 Hans Arp: *Treshold wave*, 1960, Bronze, 46 × 65 × 10,5 cm
(photo: Etienne Bertrand Weill)

he was showing double-sided, flat and perforated objects developed from drawings (*fig. 1*). The Galerie, probably anticipating that the artist's new direction would not conform to the expectations nor the preferences of the now explosively developing market, made a parallel exclusive offer of a bronze casting of an early figurative sculpture by the artist: *Kaspar* (1930), which would become one of Arp's most famous works (*fig. 2*).¹⁸

The Lejwas had acquired two works by Arp from Denise René in 1959. In March 1960 their Galerie showed the exhibition *Construction and Geometry in Painting, from Malevich to "tomorrow"*, which included two paintings by Arp and subsequently travelled to Cincinnati and San Francisco. The exhibition was linked closely to the programme of the Galerie Denise René and the developments in Paris. Whereas abstract Expressionism had become mainstream in New York by that time, the exhibition presented geometric abstract painting up to the present day. The Paris contest between lyrical and geometric abstraction in the 1950s, which was lost by the Galerie Denise René as representative of the second position, was perpetuated on the other side of the Atlantic.¹⁹ The catalogue text was penned by Michel Seuphor, who saw a contemporary repetition of the opposition between the Paris group *Cercle et Carré* and the Surrealists from the early 1930s, and contrasted the seriousness and silence of the geometric abstract art with the much more attention-provoking forms of Surrealism and (abstract or



Fig. 2 Hans Arp: *Kaspar*, 1930, Bronze, 50 × 28 × 19 cm
(photo: Etienne Bertrand Weill)

lyrical) Expressionism. Thus, a context was created in which Hans Arp could be presented. Whilst he was known in Europe – and in the environs of the Museum of Modern Art and Sidney Janis – principally as an important precursor of Modernism, a Dadaist and a Surrealist, as the double exhibition with Piet Mondrian had shown, Galerie Chalette also attempted to present him as a contemporary geometric abstract artist.

This context explains the double exhibition, with works by Sophie Taeuber-Arp and Arp that was shown at Galerie Chalette in November 1960. While the double exhibition at Sidney Janis ten years previously presented viewers with precursors of abstraction which were taken further in contemporary American art, here it was more about taking up a position against abstract Expressionism. Alongside works by Arp and his late first wife, the exhibition showed nine reliefs which he had made in 1960 based on drawings of hers. Individual expression and personal hand – the

overriding concepts of expressionism – were not the theme of this exhibition. The elaborate bilingual catalogue once again presented a text by Michel Seuphor. This text, *Mission Spirituelle d'Art* of 1954 had defended the position of stereometric abstraction in Paris at the time, but now it was being reprinted in a different context, this time in opposition to expressive movements in contemporary American art. Seuphor, a long time companion and close friend of Arp, had been left out of the catalogue for the Museum of Modern Art exhibition in 1958. And although perhaps not too much weight should be attached to this fact, it is remarkable that Galerie Chalette should



Fig. 3 Hans Arp: *Shadow Figure*, 1960, Bronze 14 × 7 × 7 cm (photo: Erienne Bertrand Weill)

market Hans Arp precisely in the style to which he was assigned by the art writer Seuphor: Arp as an abstract artist, Arp as a European and Arp as an esoteric. Whereas in 1957 Carola Giedion-Welcker saw in the sculptor's art a symbolic protolanguage that united humanity across national borders, Seuphor interpreted modern abstract art as a religious phenomenon. In the modern era he saw it as having taken on the role of religion, confronting humankind with a wholly unearthly, transcendental beauty. Furthermore Seuphor emphasised again and again that American abstract art had European forerunners. In the US, in contrast, the standard motif was that while Americans knew and appreciated the European artists, they did not consider them as their forerunners.²⁰

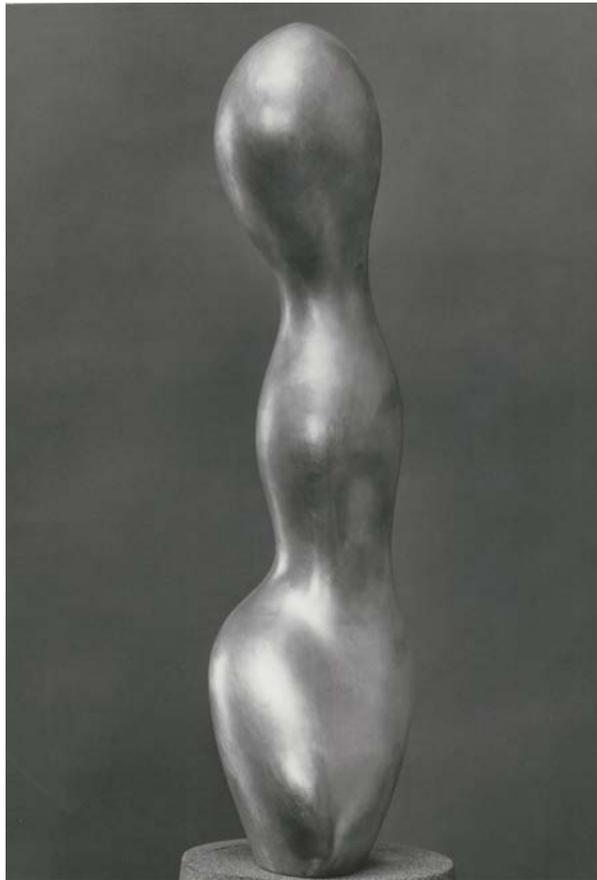


Fig. 4 Hans Arp: *Intent-Pensive*, 1960, Bronze, 56 × 16 × 15 cm
(photo: Etienne Bertrand Weill)

The works had come from Paris and the narrative was likewise imported. From the perspective of Hans Arp's oeuvre, the exhibition was a success.²¹ All the exhibit's sculptures were sold within one year, even the threshold sculptures which had struggled to find takers in Europe. Then, in 1960, two double exhibitions involving Arp were held in New York. Sidney Janis's at the start of the year and Chalette's at the end. In both cases, his works that could potentially be reproduced and supplied in editions were combined with other, rare works. Arp had decided that his late wife's works were only permitted to be sold to public collections; for his own oeuvre, no absolute exclusivity applied. It was available in the market.

The correspondence between Marguerite Arp-Hagenbach and the Lejwas shows what great pressure rested on the studio of Arp, who had suffered a heart attack just a short time before. Sculptures were distributed among the dealers as soon as they had a number; only later were they given titles. Since the production in these years was adjusted to the huge demand, while the artist's health constantly worsened, the role of the studio grew ever greater. The correspondence is also remarkable because it is multilingual. Just like the Arps, the Lejwas switched completely naturally from German into English or French, to which Marguerite would respond in one of the three languages. In October 1961, Marguerite Arp granted the Lejwas authorisation for an edition of ten bronzes after a small plaster model that they had chosen in the presence of François Arp, the artist's brother, at the studio in Meudon.²² The figure did not yet have a title and so it was sold as the *Shadow of the Orient* (1960) (fig. 3). This title was later assigned to another figure, leading to the renaming of this figure as *Shadow Figure*. In the same letter there is talk of further requests from the Lejwas, but since these would have led to conflicts with the dealers in New York and Paris, they were turned down. Marguerite clearly pigeonholed Galerie Chalette as an underdog. It is revealing that although Galerie Chalette had indicated an interest in a new figure *Intent-Pensive* (1960), Marguerite proceeded to promise the complete edition to Denise René (fig. 4). Concurrently with his flat, two sided sculptures, Arp had developed a group of vertical works, sculpted in the round and based on classical torsos, which sold more easily. All of them went to Denise René or the Galerie Pierre in Paris, Sidney Janis in New York or the Galerie d'Art Moderne in Basel. Arp was spoken for.



Fig. 5 Hans Arp: *Classical Sculpture*, 1960, Bronze, 119 × 23 × 17,5 cm
(photo: Etienne Bertrand Weill)

Changes in the market

Although the 1960 exhibition at Galerie Chalette was held in New York, it was controlled from Paris. Nevertheless, it brought the Lejwas into personal contact with Hans Arp and Marguerite Arp-Hagenbach and in the following years there was sporadic correspondence between them and the Lejwas paid occasional visits to Meudon and Solduno. In 1961 they acquired the marble *Fruit of a Stone* (1959), probably through the Galerie Denise René. At the same time they became reliable sellers of the work, which reinforced their position in the network of dealers. Their position also became stronger because the market changed. A clear indicator of this are the commissioned bronze casts of Arp's sculptures. More than 100 bronzes were cast in 1962, but fewer than 25 in 1965.²³ Whereas up until then the dealers had competed for individual casts, now the slowly expanding stock was being sold via

all the available channels. The first boom, when the question had been whether sculptures by the famous sculptor could be offered at all, was over. Now the question was which works a dealer could present.

In November 1962 a third gallery in New York had shown a solo exhibition with works by Arp. The New Art Center Gallery showed works from various sources which, as far as can currently be reconstructed, had all featured in earlier exhibitions, and also included two works which the Galerie Chalette had displayed. The Paris studio and Marguerite Arp-Hagenbach played no part in the organisation, so that when the catalogue arrived, a few of the special works lent for the exhibition came as a surprise to them.²⁴ On the other hand, when Sidney Janis opened a solo exhibition of works by Arp in April 1963, he presented his gallery to the New York public as the indisputable first-choice address for this artist. He had direct access to works from the foundries and stonemasonries and, in addition to reliefs and bronzes, he showed ten marble sculptures, which set a new emphasis within the artist's work. In January 1965, Galerie Chalette showed its solo exhibition of Hans Arp. In the interim, it had seemingly emancipated itself from its parent company in Paris but still barely had direct access to works by Arp. Most of them came from Paris via Denise René but some were from the Galerie d'Art Moderne in Basel, the third gallery representing Arp in the top flight of the international art trade. It is noteworthy that Chalette also offered a cast of the *Classical Figure* (1960) which Sidney Janis had prominently presented two years previously (*fig. 5*). The object originally came from Basel. The *Classical Figure*, as its title promised, was a connecting link between Arp's biomorphic visual language and the classical, vertically oriented and horizontally articulated style of sculpture that was reminiscent of female figures. This visual formula cropped up synchronously in the oeuvre with the so-called threshold sculptures and covered the market for a tempered style of Modernism – as shown at the Sidney Janis exhibition – which was developing primarily in the US. Here, Arp was anything but an avant-gardist. As Denise René observed, Arp's threshold sculptures were almost impossible to sell, whereas his sculptures alluding to female torsos were highly popular.²⁵ Galerie Chalette sold the *Classical Figure* to the project developer Leonard Rosen from Miami, who acquired another cast of the same figure at Sidney Janis during that period, as well as two marble sculptures and two further Arp bronzes from Chalette. Rosen resold both versions within a short time, a clear indication that the market for modern

art was growing ever more speculative. Discovering something new had ceased to be the driving motive.

In this context the precise identification of individual versions of works became more and more important, and from the late 1950s onward, photographs signed by Arp or Marguerite Arp-Hagenbach served as certificates.²⁶ The material on Hans Arp shows how his American collectors switched between the dealers quite naturally. The crucial question was still that of supply. David and Carmen Kreeger, subsequently the benefactors of the Kreeger Museum in Washington, acquired their first bronze by Arp at Chalette in 1962, and the second, *Torso Sheaf* (1958), at Sidney Janis in 1965. In both cases these were works which had not been shown in the galleries' exhibitions. While Janis had obtained the work directly from Meudon, Chalette could only make use of the circuitous route via the Galerie d'Art Moderne. Thus, there were three New York galleries in the early 1960s showing and selling Hans Arp. Only Sidney Janis had direct access to the artist's material. The other galleries, including Chalette, only obtained works indirectly but in sufficient quantity to meet a high demand. As Michel Seuphor wrote in 1965: "The first collectors of Arp were Belgians, then came the Swiss and the Americans, of which there are now very large numbers."²⁷

In this high-demand market dominated by one "top dog" and without direct access to works by Arp, the Galerie Chalette established its own position. Since 1961 the Lejwas had built up a sizeable collection of works by Arp. Of course, this collecting reflected their passion for the artist, but it was also an effective method of removing works from the price policy of the dominant dealers and Arp's studio. The commissioned works from Paris and Basel came with a price stipulated in Europe, and in the event of a successful sale, the Galerie Chalette received a 20% cut. This arrangement evolved in the early 1960s into the opportunity for the Lejwas to acquire works for their own collection for 80% of the stipulated price.²⁸ As soon as the works were part of their own collection, they were exempt from the pricing policy of the other dealers and Marguerite Arp-Hagenbach. Since the prices of Arp's works were still rising, this required considerable capital, but boosted the Galerie's profit forecasts and its operative freedom.

A second strategy concerned the secondary market, i.e. works which had already been traded. The New York art market was highly dynamic in the mid-1960s and the Lejwas were buying as well as selling. Today this secondary market is far less visible than the exhibitions of 1960 and 1965 and the

catalogues released to accompany them, but Galerie Chalette's archive gives pointers to the major part it played. The costs it records for purchases and sales relating to Hans Arp around 1965 point to a profit margin of more than 50%. A result like that depended upon maintaining an extensive network of customers and potential suppliers. The impression even arises that the main function of the effectively publicised exhibitions was to position the Galerie in the secondary market. Arp was not the Galerie's only artist, but he was the most high-profile.²⁹ Thirdly, though not the Galerie's own strategic decision, the fact that Barbara Hepworth left Galerie Chalette was an important factor in its growing concentration on Arp.³⁰ During the exact period that Hepworth was executing her most important international commission, *Single Form* (1961–1964) for the UN building in New York, and making a distinctive bid for attention from the American market, she signed a contract with the Marlborough Gallery which had maintained a New York branch since 1963.³¹ Hepworth became a footnote in the history of Galerie Chalette.

Collecting, endowing and selling

On 7 June 1966, Hans Arp died in Basel. In 1968 the second catalogue raisonné of sculptures was published with an introduction by Eduard Trier. The sculptural oeuvre was completed and documented with two catalogues raisonnés. How close the relationship between Marguerite Arp and the Lejwas had become in the meantime may be surmised from the fact that the artist's widow stayed at their home to attend the Arp exhibition at Sidney Janis in 1968.³² Commercially, however, business transactions with Chalette continued to be conducted via the Galerie Denise René and the Galerie d'Art Moderne. By now, another gallery on the American continent had appeared on the scene: the Dominion Gallery in Toronto which, just like Sidney Janis, obtained direct access to the holdings in France.

The few large sculptures were an exception. Shortly before the artist's death, a first bronze cast of the *Giant Pip* of 1937 had been produced for the Fondation Maeght. It is evident from the letters that Marguerite and the Lejwas had talked about the figure in connection with architecture and that the gallerists had inspected the limestone version in Paris. Since the Lejwas anticipated a market for large sculptures in the US, and the other galleries

were evidently unwilling to take the financial risk, the Lejwas for once succeeded in reserving a cast directly from the foundry. The large figure was to become the centrepiece of their collection, and since the other galleries had no stake in the purchase, they could acquire the piece for 50% of the stipulated purchase price.³³ The Lejwas's Arp collection grew and changed. It received a large influx in 1968 when a group of works by Kasimir Malevich were exchanged with Marguerite Arp for seven bronzes by Hans Arp.³⁴ These included a version of the figure *Kaspar*. It was the cast numbered 0/3, i.e., a version outside the edition which was originally intended for the artist personally or for public collections. As far as it is possible to establish, the Lejwas – who were an exception to the bulk of the art trade in this respect – did very little trade in 0-numbers and retained them in their collection.³⁵

In summer 1968, the Lejwas came up with the idea of making enlargements of pre-existing figures for new editions. There had already been some enlargements of figures for the American market in Arp's lifetime, one such instance being the case of the *Classical Sculpture*, but the reaction from Meudon was unequivocal: a decision had been taken that not a single figure sculpted in the round was to be enlarged.³⁶ The situation with the threshold sculptures appeared somewhat different. In his text for the catalogue raisonné, Eduard Trier had referred to the architectonic character of these figures and mentioned the idea, which was obviously Arp's own, to place enlargements of these figures in the landscape. At the end of 1968, the Lejwas and Marguerite Arp concluded a contract for the enlargement of nine threshold sculptures.³⁷ Arthur Lejwa obtained the right to commission an enlargement of every figure to a contractually specified scale. No stipulation was made as to material, only that the figure should be welded. The requisite patterns were supplied by the studio in Meudon, which gave due regard to the special status of Galerie Chalette without having to break the existing agreements with other galleries. From the start, it was a certainty that one figure should be executed for New York and one for Jerusalem. Marguerite Arp waived the fee that she was entitled to for the Jerusalem sculpture,³⁸ a gesture that betokened the special bond with Jerusalem which united the Lejwas, Arp and herself.³⁹ At the beginning of the 1970s, the Lejwas donated enlargements of *The Three Graces* (1961) to the city of Jerusalem and of *Threshold Configuration* (1959) to the Metropolitan Museum in New York, which inaugurated the new accession with an exhibition comprised largely of works from the Lejwas's collection. By endowing the city of Jerusalem with

gifts of large sculptures by Robert Engman, George Rickey and Stephanie Scuri, the Lejwas documented their unabated interest in simple abstract art. The New York enlargement was financed by means of a reduction of the *Threshold Configuration*, produced in consultation with Marguerite Arp in an edition of 300.⁴⁰ Other enlargements of the threshold sculptures were not initially produced by the Lejwas, although in 1974 there was still talk of potential buyers, which can be evaluated as a sign of a certain decline in interest in Hans Arp's work.⁴¹

From the start, the enlargement of *The Three Graces* was named *On the Threshold of Jerusalem* (1972) (fig. 6).⁴² Madeleine Chalette-Lejwa interpreted the three verticals as the three Abrahamic religions, but what seems most important is that this particular title reinforces the interpretation of the thresholds that Arp himself gave, as transitions between this world and the hereafter.⁴³ The thresholds are then a simple and highly striking symbolic form of what happens when an idea is extended by another dimension. Arthur Lejwa wrote to Marguerite Arp-Hagenbach about how Arp would probably have rejoiced to see his work take its place among the great religious shrines of the Eternal City.⁴⁴ What Michel Seuphor called the esoteric component in Arp's work remained important to the Lejwas.

After Arthur Lejwa had died on October 27, 1972, Madeleine Lejwa launched into the organisation of a large travelling exhibition consisting of works from their collection, which was destined for five museums and opened in Pittsburgh in 1975. In her letters, she recounts how she personally stitched a protective cover for each figure. In 1976 she donated an enlargement of Arp's *Oriforme* (1962) to the National Gallery in Washington to mark the Bicentennial. The figure was dedicated to the American people in gratitude. Hans Arp in the United States was now irrevocably associated with the names of Arthur and Madeleine Lejwa and of the Galerie Chalette. Today (2016) the figure is sited in front of the Fralin Museum in Charlottesville.

Concluding remarks

Madeleine Chalette-Lejwa died in 1996. In 1999 her collection went to the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. Thanks to this bequest, it received one of the largest collections of works by Hans Arp in museum ownership. Madeleine Chalette-Lejwa's great commitment as a benefactor, which was honoured in

Jerusalem in 2005, disguises the fact that the Galerie was first and foremost a successful commercial venture even in the 1970s.⁴⁵ The majority of the sculptures shown in the travelling exhibition of 1975 and 1976 that were not 0-numbers were sold within two years. The Lejwa collection thereafter remained a flexible holding, in which a substantial turnover was recorded over the entire period studied, i.e. between 1959 and 1980.⁴⁶

In terms of a history of the modern art market, the Lejwas were no “gatekeepers” and were, for that precise reason, so important for the work of Hans Arp. It was not the Lejwas who opened up the market, but it was they who managed to expand it considerably and who, especially, kept track of the circulation of the objects. In the 1960s, the secondary market for Arp was already at least as important as the primary market, which his widow was able to sustain for a long time from the stocks in the studio and with new casts. In the case of Galerie Chalette, all the data point to the conclusion that the Arp exhibitions were aimed at offering a known artist to a broader public, and overseeing the circulation of the objects in this market. The Galerie Chalette’s distinctive quality was that it represented one stylistic direction, namely geometric abstraction. These attributes give rise to a cautious typology. Exactly as for artists, art history – in so far as it studies the art trade – has a predilection for avant-gardes and discoverers. In the case of the Lejwas, such a narrative does not fit. Theirs was more a story of continuous work on behalf of an artist, carried out with great commitment and capital investment. They were collectors and gallerists, and these aspects were indissolubly bound together in the case of Hans Arp.

One conjecture: the esoteric description of the work of Hans Arp, which was the constant in terms of content for the Galerie and its milieu, seems to have correlated exactly with the expansion of the market for Hans Arp. The new, capital-rich audience that it set out to attract to the artist was not interested in art-historical rationales. This model came from France but in the US it served to conquer new strata of the market. A second conjecture: around 1960 in the US, Hans Arp was both a forerunner of Modernism and a contemporary artist in the spirit of international abstract art. Like barely any other, his oeuvre could be tied into multiple narratives. In an art market like the one developing in the US around 1960, that was no disadvantage. The art market is a cultural, social and economic phenomenon that is determined by many interconnecting factors. The question is not whether artworks become commodified; the question is when and how.⁴⁷

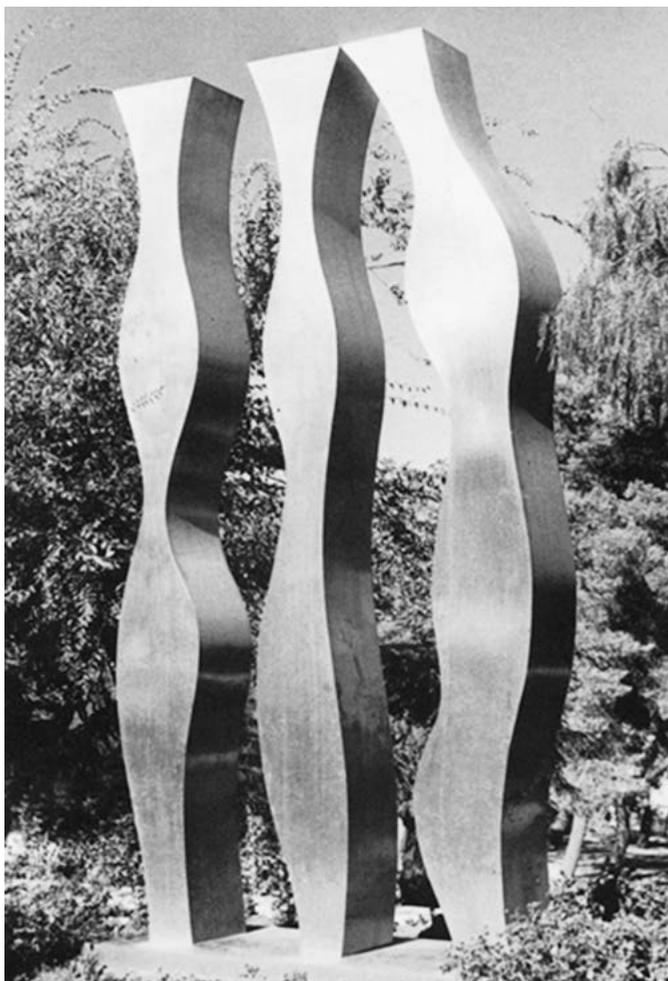


Fig. 6 Hans Arp: *On the Threshold of Jerusalem*, 1972, Duraluminium, 600 × 300 × 60 cm, public space, Jerusalem

- 1 An interesting exception, which explains the success of modern art in the US by its voidness of content, is Diana Crane: *The transformation of the avant-garde. The New York art world, 1940–1985*, Chicago 1995.
- 2 The emphasis of this essay is on sculpture because over time it has become possible to reconstruct the movements of individual versions of sculptures quite accurately. A collection of data built up in connection with the publication Arie Hartog (ed.): *Hans Arp. Skulpturen. Eine Bestandsaufnahme*, Ostfildern 2012 on individual sculptures by Hans Arp served as the basis. I thank Maike Steinkamp, who gave me access to countless materials from the archive of the Stiftung Arp e. V. To Kai Fischer I am grateful for pointers to Marguerite Arp-Hagenbach's index cards.
- 3 Jean Clay: *An Interview with Denise René*, in: *The Studio* 75/1968, pp. 192–195, p. 194.
- 4 Katy Siegel: *Since '45. America and the making of contemporary art*, London 2011, p. 102 f.
- 5 William Chapin Seitz: *The rise and dissolution of the avant-garde*, in: *Vogue* 112/4 (1. September 1963), pp. 182–183, pp. 230–233.
- 6 According to a theory much-discussed at the time and advanced by Alvin Toffler: *The Culture Consumers. A Study of Art and Affluence in America*, New York 1964. Toffler describes the democratisation of culture consumption, not of the art market. On fantasies about the democratisation of the art market, see A. Deirdre Robson: *Prestige, profit, and pleasure. The market for modern art in New York in the 1940s and 1950s*, New York 1995, pp. 255–257. She shows that although the group of buyers in New York around 1960 had grown larger, it did not extend much below the extreme upper middle class.
- 7 Stuart D. Hobbs: *The End of the American Avant Garde*, New York 1996.
- 8 Hilton Kramer: *The Age of the Avant-garde. An Art Chronicle of 1956–1972*, London 1974, p. 7.
- 9 Famed in this regard is, of course, Pablo Picasso. Michael C. Fitzgerald: *Marketing Modernism. Picasso and the Creation of the Market for Twentieth-century Art*, New York 1995.
- 10 A. Deirdre Robson: *The Avant-Garde and the On-Garde: Some Reflexions on the Potential Market for the First Generation Abstract Expressionists in the 1940s and Early 1950s*, in: *Art Journal* 47/1988, pp. 215–221.
- 11 Biographical details on Arthur and Madeleine Lejwa in Ruth Apter-Gabriel (ed.): *The Arthur and Madeleine Chalette Lejwa Collection in the Israel Museum*, Jerusalem 2005.
- 12 On the French art trade post-1945 see Julie Verlaine: *Les galeries d'art contemporain à Paris. Une histoire culturelle du marché de l'art*, Paris 2012.
- 13 On Denise René see *Denise René, l'intrépide. Une galerie dans l'aventure de l'art abstrait 1944–1978*, exhibition catalogue, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris 2001.
- 14 Carola Giedion-Welcker: *Hans Arp*, Stuttgart 1957.

- 15 Emma Roberts: *Representation and Reputation: Barbara Hepworth's Relationships with her American and British Dealers*, in: *Tate Papers* 20/2013 (<http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/20>, accessed on 15.1.2016).
- 16 Letter from Denise René to Galerie Chalette, October 19, 1959, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian, Washington, Galerie Chalette records, Box 1 (hereafter AAA, Washington); copies of all archive materials from the Chalette records quoted here are held in the Archive of Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth (hereafter Archive Stiftung Arp).
- 17 The concept is used here for the entire group of the perforated, two-sided flat forms in the oeuvre since 1959. Rudolf Suter: *Hans Arp. Weltbild und Kunstauffassung im Spätwerk*, Bern, Berlin e.a.l. 2007, pp. 414–418.
- 18 Especially this figure shows how important it is to study their origination and distribution as bronzes. The figure is dated to 1930; it was cast in bronze from 1959. See also Eric Robertson: *Arp. Painter. Poet. Sculptor*, New Haven, London 2006, p. 128 f.
- 19 Catherine Dossin: *Permutation on the Circle and the Square: Michel Seuphor's Historicization of Cercle et Carré, 1930–1970*, in: *Cercle et Carré and the International Spirit of Abstract Art*, exhibition catalogue, Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia, Athens 2013, pp. 272–291, p. 281 f.
- 20 Malcolm Goldstein: *Landscape with figures. A history of art dealing in the United States*, Oxford, New York 2000, p. 236 f.
- 21 Two works by Sophie Taeuber-Arp were sold. Letter from Marguerite Arp to Arthur Lejwa, April 10, 1961, Archive Stiftung Arp.
- 22 Letter from Marguerite Arp to Arthur and Madeleine Lejwa, October 14, 1961, *ibid.*
- 23 These are the figures gleaned from the casting data. Hartog 2012. A trend in demand can be discerned even if some details on foundries are incomplete. To some extent these details can be reconstructed thanks to casts that show up in the art market.
- 24 *Jean-Hans Arp. Sculpture, relief, drawing*, exhibition catalogue, New Art Center Gallery, New York 1962. Personal copy, Archive Stiftung Arp.
- 25 Catherine Millet: *Conversations avec Denise René*, Paris 1991, p. 24.
- 26 That Arthur Lejwa could request such certificates, even if the details he gave could not be unambiguously confirmed in Clamart, is a demonstration of the great trust that Galerie Chalette had come to enjoy. Letter from Arthur Lejwa to Marguerite Arp-Hagenbach, September 21, 1965. By the same token, in 1965 he pointed out the occurrence of fakes in the American art market. Letter from Arthur Lejwa to Francois Arp, September 30, 1965, both Archive Stiftung Arp. Both the certificate and the fake related to *Shell Head* (1958).
- 27 Michel Seuphor: *Le style et le cri, 14 essais sur l'art de ce siècle*, Paris 1965, quoted after the German translation (Olten 1967), p. 165 (trans. into English by Deborah Shannon).

28 Letter from the Galerie d'Art Moderne to Galerie Chalette, March 26, 1963 about the sale of CR144 (5/5, the letter refers to 0/5) to the Lewjas's private collection. The work was sold on in 1963 or 1964. Documents on this object are in the Archive Stiftung Arp.

29 Following Denise René's lead, the Galerie Chalette built its programme around geometric abstraction. A name that crops up more often than Arp's in the Galerie's books is that of Wojciech Fangor, a Polish painter who had emigrated to the USA in 1966 and was known as a pioneer of Op Art. In the second half of the 1960s the Galerie also increasingly presented the work of the American geometric abstract artist Leon Polk Smith.

30 Evidence about this parting of the ways is provided by Barbara Hepworth's workbooks in the archive of the Tate Gallery, London. Until 1962 the Galerie Chalette crops up regularly – including as a purchaser of entire editions – but only sporadically after that.

31 Roberts 2013, p. 19.

32 Letter from Marguerite Arp-Hagenbach to Madeleine Lejwa, January 18, 1968, Archive Stiftung Arp.

33 A certain sale price is mentioned in the correspondence preserved at the Stiftung Arp; the Galerie Chalette's revenue and expenditure account shows half of that amount. See AAA, Washington, Galerie Chalette records, Box 8.

34 Which of Malevich's works these were is not certain. It is likely that the exchange was in connection with Marguerite Arp's inheritance tax proceedings. Hartog 2012. Marguerite Arp and Madeleine Lejwa would go on to exchange various other works at later dates.

35 One exception could be CR154. On the 0-numbers Hartog 2012, p. 32 f.

36 During his lecture *Hans Arp and Sidney Janis* at the conference *Arp in the US*, Carroll Janis recounted that the enlargement (around 1963) had been suggested by his father. <https://vimeo.com/134925723>; 23:35, accessed on 15.1.2016. On the enlargements, see undated handwritten note on the Galerie Chalette's proposals list (1965 or 1966), Archive Stiftung Arp. Enlargements were proposed of CR18, CR40, CR97, CR138, CR145, CR167, CR168, CR181, CR174a, CR188, CR213, CR272a, CR281, CR289, CR310, CR348 and CR367.

37 Contract between Marguerite Arp and Arthur Lejwa, December 3, 1968, Archive Stiftung Arp. The contract concerned CR205, CR208, CR209, CR226a, CR227a, CR253, CR263 and CR279.

38 Letter from Marguerite Arp-Hagenbach to Arthur and Madeleine Lejwa, March 2, 1971, *ibid*.

39 The fascination with Jerusalem is a constant throughout the letters. It also surfaced in 1971 when Marguerite Arp-Hagenbach, possibly with encouragement from the Lejwas, donated a consignment of plaster figures to the Israel Museum.

40 As early as the late 1950s, the firm Alva Museum Replicas in consultation with Arp's studio had issued two figures (CR5 and CR57) as replicas. In the case of the edition of the threshold form, the contemporaneous account confirms that it was not a replica but a special edition made for the purpose of financing the large work. It is such – understandable – practices that have contributed somewhat to the lack of clarity in dealing with the sculptural work of Arp.

- 41 Letter from Madeleine Lejwa to Marguerite Arp-Hagenbach, February 4, 1974, Archive Stiftung Arp. The right to the enlargement reverted to Marguerite Arp and the Stiftung Arp e.V.
- 42 Letter from Arthur Lejwa to Marguerite Arp-Hagenbach, July 10, 1970, Archive Stiftung Arp. In this letter, Lejwa calls the small version *Les Trois Graces*, and the large one explicitly *Seuil de Jerusalem*.
- 43 Stephanie Rachum: *The Lejwa Legacy in Jerusalem*, in: Apter-Gabriel 2005, pp. 43–46, p. 44 and Jean Clay: *La singulière ascension de Jean Arp*, in: *Realités* 180/1961, pp. 192–195.
- 44 Letter from Arthur Lejwa to Marguerite Arp-Hagenbach, July 10, 1970, Archive Stiftung Arp.
- 45 Apter-Gabriel 2005.
- 46 In the case of the *Giant Pip* there is an undated note from Madeleine Lejwa to the Director of the Israel Museum (“Attention Robert Warshaw”), stating that Marguerite Arp-Hagenbach had agreed to donate the plaster of the figure to Jerusalem, should the bronze be sold successfully. AAA, Washington, Galerie Chalette records, Box 3.
- 47 Olav Velthuis: *Talking prices. Symbolic meanings of prices on the market for contemporary art*, Princeton, N.J. 2007, p. 28.

Arp and the Sidney Janis Gallery

Fifty Years

Carroll Janis

I am pleased to be able to speak at this symposium about Arp, my father and the Sidney Janis Gallery. I am going to talk about this fifty-year relationship in the most relevant way: how the gallery showed the artist and what works were selected for exhibition. Let me say first that my parents, Sidney and Harriet Janis, were early and devoted collectors of modern art. Within a decade of their first purchase in 1926 – a Matisse – they had acquired four cubist Picassos and his large *Painter and Model* (1928), Rousseau's *The Dream* (1910), and classic works by Mondrian, Klee, de Chirico, Dali, Léger, and Gorky. Alfred Barr showed their collection at the Museum of Modern Art in 1935 as "A Private Collection on Loan". When the gallery opened in 1948 with a retrospective of Léger, its direction was based on the aesthetic of their private collection. This can be seen clearly in the gallery's annual *Masters* exhibitions.

In the 1953 show of *French Masters 1905–52*, the gallery brought together Brancusi's incomparable *Bird in Space* (1927), with Mondrian's definitive *Large Composition with Red, Yellow, and Blue* (1927) and an impressive Arp relief, *Forms for Interpretation* (1949) (*fig. 1*). It was a beautiful assembly of the pure art of the twentieth century. While the Arp can be seen as an abstraction, its lively shapes in white on gray may, as its title implies, suggest clouds, birds in flight, running animals – whatever ones sees. It is a challenging concept that allows forms to change depending on how they are perceived, an idea akin to Marcel Duchamp's contention that the work of art is to be completed by the viewer.

In the far space, which was a private showroom that was often appropriated for gallery exhibitions, we see two exceptional Arp reliefs of 1932, each on the theme of five white and two black forms. While there are many ways one might hang two similar rectangles, I think Sidney found an unusual solution

by placing them corner to corner, above and below. This sets the reliefs “in flight” and integrates them in several ways with the other works. The two stepped rectangles echo the grid structure of the Mondrian as they do the rectangular components of Brancusi’s base. The reliefs’ clusters of cloud-like shapes complement the great curve of the Brancusi *Bird*. More generally, the interplay of nature and the ideal – an enduring concern of all three artists – finds a poetic extension in this installation.

Another memorable exhibition also dating to 1953 at the Sidney Janis Gallery was *International Dada*, curated and installed by Marcel Duchamp (*fig. 2*).



Fig. 1 Oliver Baker: *French Masters 1905–1952*, exhibition, Sidney Janis Gallery, New York 1953, Archive Sidney Janis Gallery, New York



Fig. 2 Geoffrey Clements: *Dada 1916–1923*, exhibition, Sidney Janis Gallery, New York 1953.
 Marcel Duchamp installation of the Zurich Wall with works of Hans Arp, Archive Sidney Janis Gallery, New York

Arp had loaned the two rare 1916 painted wood reliefs (seen at the top of his wall) and a collage, *Elementary Forms Arranged According to the laws of Chance*, 1916 (seen lower to the right.) It is one of a series of early paper cut-out collages which anticipated and perhaps influenced Matisse’s late work. Sidney thought Arp should have a fuller representation in the show, so he brought out *Assiette, Fourchette et Nombriil* (1923), which the gallery had recently acquired. Duchamp was delighted and he placed this painted relief in the center of the Arp wall (although it was too late to be included in his meticulous catalog listing.) With just five forms Arp presents a plate with an egg, which becomes a head with an eye, and a torso with navel, while two forks become two feet. The metamorphosis of organic shapes was a theme of many Arp works, often not easy for viewers to grasp. Duchamp turned his Dada exhibition into a festive space, suspending from the ceiling plexi-glass panels covered with collages and drawings.¹ Like his unique all-over string composition for *First Papers of Surrealism*, 1942, Duchamp’s *International Dada* deserves the term “installation as performance”.

Arp in Context

Sidney Janis was an early proponent of the museum show in a gallery setting – he did many – and he was also a pioneer of the two-artist exhibition in America. Showing *Arp/Tauber-Arp* in 1950, he then paired *Arp and Mondrian*, in 1960, an unsurpassed example of this genre (fig. 3). Here, the dialogue between the curvilinear and the rectilinear and the purity of the whole group was something wonderful to see each day. Exhilarating as well was the play of whites in the modern sense, as planes of color which ran through the works of both. Mondrian's *Place de la Concorde* (1938–43), now in the Dallas Museum of Art, hangs above two Arp marbles, *Flower Nude* (1957) and *Remembrance of the Cyclades* (1957). On the wall to the left is one more excellent variation by Arp on the *Constellation of Five White and Two Black Forms* (1932), a work which my parents eventually gave to the Museum of Modern Art in New York. They also gave MoMA the Mondrian canvases to the right – three great, late ones. Across the room (not visible here) Mondrian's jubilant *New York City I* (1942) was placed between two luminous white-on-white Arp reliefs. For lovers of pure modernism, this exhibition of thirty-five works was a kind of paradise. The gallery owned *New York City I* for more than three decades, but made it available to the Beaubourg in Paris when they needed a Mondrian for their collection.



Fig. 3 Oliver Baker: *Arp Mondrian* exhibition, Sidney Janis Gallery, New York 1960, Archive Sidney Janis Gallery, New York



Fig. 4 Eric Pollitzer: *A Selection of Paintings & Sculpture from Gallery Collection*, exhibition, Sidney Janis Gallery, New York 1961, Archive Sidney Janis Gallery, New York



Fig. 5 Otto Nelson: *25th Anniversary, Part 1*, exhibition, Sidney Janis Gallery, New York 1974, Archive Sidney Janis Gallery, New York

The masters show of 1961, *A Gallery Selection* featured marbles by Arp and Brancusi that had a particular resonance side by side (*fig. 4*). This time Arp's *Sculpture Classique* (1964) was the larger, upright work while Brancusi's *The Beginning of the World* (1924) was the smaller one resting on a base. Each has absorbed ancient classical form into a unique modern style: Arp the more figural, Brancusi more mythic. Against the far wall is Arp's dark bronze, *Trois Bourgeois* (1957) mounted on a light Arp base, and the white marble *Fruit Païen*, (1950) on a dark Arp base. These continue the theme of light and dark prominent in the Miró to their left and the Magritte to their right. When Seymour Knox came to the exhibition, *Sculpture Classique* was no longer available and he asked if Arp would consider making a larger version for his museum. Sidney relayed the request to Arp, who agreed to do an eight-foot marble. Today it is one of the glories of the Albright-Knox collection.

The gallery also showed Arp in a more Surrealist context. In the 25th *Anniversary Exhibition*, 1974, Arp's *Croissance* (1938), a monumental yet restless bronze, became the hinge of this room's installation (*fig. 5*). *Croissance's* billowing curves accord well with Delvaux's nude in *Phases of the Moon* (1939) and with de Chirico's figures in *The Endless Voyage* (1914). Arp's curves also contrast well with Giacometti's stick-figured *Pointing Man* (1947) and Magritte's upright gun in *The Survivor* (1950). Above, Ernst's two nested *Birds* (1926) embrace.

Arp One Man Shows

In *Jean Arp at Sidney Janis Gallery, New York*, 1963 most of the sculptures in this view are placed close to the walls (*fig. 6*). There is a variety in shape and size, an alternation of higher and lower, and a mixing of bronzes, wood reliefs and marbles. Among the marbles is *Croissance* (1960), delicate in contour, surface and proportion. We have already seen *Croissance* in bronze, but when the artist does it in marble, it has an altogether different feel. I'm not sure what it is, but it reminds me of looking at Vermeer's *Girl with the Pearl Earring* (1665). When you see her large earring as a pearl, its rarity, permanence and ideal shape reflect a sense of the girl's ideal character. But now some scholars tell us it is not a pearl, but rather a glass earring. If so, this would change much of our impression of the sitter and our understanding of the



Fig. 6 Oliver Baker: *Sculpture by Jean Arp: 1923 – 1963*, exhibition, Sidney Janis Gallery, New York 1963, Archive Sidney Janis Gallery, New York

painting. Then it is her fragility, and the sense of uncertainty in her expression, that come to the fore. Something analogous happens with Arp when you see the same form in plaster, bronze or marble. In this installation I find especially appealing the small marble, *Coupe de Nouage* (1961) set on a low Arp base. Sidney may have seen this pairing at Arp's studio. He once told me he had never had as intense an experience of sculpture as when walking through Arp's garden and seeing the way the artist set his works in nature. On the wall above *Coupe de Nouage* is *Torse-Masque* (1929), one of Arp's most varied white-on-white reliefs. To the right of the door is *Nu au Bourgeon* (1961), among the finest of Arp's large bronzes. Its forms speak directly to its dual nature as figure/plant. Don Judd, in his review of this exhibition in 1963, felt that works like *Sculpture Classique* and *Déméter* were too figurative – but today I, and others who know Arp's work well, consider them among his finest marbles. They reflect his late absorption with early Greek art and I find they do have a fine unity of form.² But in 1963 their figuration was understandably a problem for Judd who was asserting new minimalist ideas. In the private showroom can be seen Brancusi's *Fish* (c. 1926) and Alber's *Homage to the Square* (1958), an accompaniment to the main exhibition.



Fig. 7 Otto Nelson: *Marble, Bronze, and Wood Relief by Jean Arp*, exhibition, Sidney Janis Gallery, New York 1980, Archive Sidney Janis Gallery, New York

In his later installations, Sidney began to cluster works closely together. The unusually dense grouping in the 1980 show, *Marble, Bronze and Wood Reliefs by Jean Arp*, is like a forest of forms (fig. 7). The totality of the field vies for precedence over individual works, no matter how beautifully selected. This typifies what could be called Sidney Janis's late installation style. Its most dramatic realization was the *Brancusi + Mondrian* exhibit of 1984, which he achieved at age 87, shortly before he retired.

I decided to mark his retirement with a *40th Anniversary Exhibition* in 1989, as a homage. The show consisted of a double pairing of four European masters long championed by the gallery: Arp/Léger and Giacometti/Mondrian. Arp and Léger were a natural gathering of exuberant *joie de vivre* forms. But Giacometti and Mondrian was a new idea. Juxtaposing an expressionist style with a classic one, in 1989, was anathema to an older generation. But for me and my generation, it was exciting and I felt it should be done. The spiritual approach of both masters and the parallels of line, interval and unity of space overcame any doubt about the pairing of antithetic styles. Seeing their work together unexpectedly brought out the classic side in Giacometti and the existential in Mondrian.



Fig. 8 Allan Finkelman: *40th Anniversary Exhibition: Giacometti/Mondrian + Arp/Léger*, exhibition, Sidney Janis Gallery 1989, Archive Sidney Janis Gallery, New York



Fig. 9 Allan Finkelman: *Jean Arp in All Media*, exhibition Sidney Janis Gallery, New York 1990, Archive Sidney Janis Gallery, New York

This is one of the vantage points in the installation of the *40th Anniversary Exhibition*, 1989, in which all four artists could be seen together (fig. 8). It was impressive how Arp's marble of the earth goddess, *Déméter* (1961), held its own with the trio of modernist canvases I had set on successive planes in the gallery's space. In the foreground is Mondrian's *Large Composition* (1927) (which also appeared in the 1953 Masters show); in

the middle ground Léger's *Deux Acrobats* (1942–43); and at the far wall, Mondrian's *Composition in Blue, Red and Yellow*, (1930), a work once owned by Arp, next to which is the profile of a Giacometti head.

Arp in the Gallery's Final Decade

In 1990 we presented another one man show, *Arp in All Media* (fig. 9). As is evident, my idea of installation is very different from my father's. I like to see a lot of space around the sculptures, which I think helps bring out the distinctive qualities of each. The placing of the three beautiful marbles, *Groupe Méditerranée* (1959–65), *Torse de Chorée* (1958), *Trois Bourgeois* (1957), is in keeping with Arp's own spacing of elements in his wood relief, *Feuilles et Nombriels I* (1930), seen on the distant wall, on loan from the Museum of Modern Art. In the room to the left is *Torse-Stèle* (1961), a bronze of ectomorphic shapes and nocturnal mood. Arp's own cast of this bronze had a unique deep matte-black patina.



Fig. 10 Allan Finkelman: *Arp, Giacometti, Chillida, Yves Klein: A Mediterranean Installation*, exhibition, Sidney Janis Gallery, New York 1992, Archive Sidney Janis Gallery, New York

In the 1990s I showed Arp with a younger generation of artists including Yves Klein, Ellsworth Kelly and Roy Lichtenstein. In *A Mediterranean Installation*, 1992, Arp and Yves Klein filled our main exhibition room while Giacometti and Chillida appeared in two other rooms of the gallery (fig. 10). The luminosity of Arp's white marbles and the intensity of Yves Klein's *bleu* were mutually enhancing, and paralleled emerging color sensibilities of late twentieth century art. Arp marbles *Déméter*, *Sculpture Méditerranéenne* and *Etoile* (1960) and several white on white reliefs were interspersed with Klein panels and an array of his blue and pink sponges.

Arp was featured in the gallery's final exhibition, *50th Anniversary of Sidney Janis Gallery*, in 1998, together with Brancusi, Mondrian, Léger, Klee and other masters the gallery had favored since the beginning.

Sidney was always pleased to see Arp on his visits to Europe every summer. They had a long and cordial friendship. Arp, I understand, was keen on dancing and Sidney, who had been a professional ballroom dancer in his younger days, was delighted to demonstrate the latest steps. Arp was an eager student who looked forward to these dance lessons.

I never met Arp, and knew him only through his work and writings. I imagine he would agree that an artist/gallery relationship is like a dance of willing partners. In this case, the dance lasted half a century.

1 See my description of the show in Carroll Janis: *Duchamp Does Dada*, in: *Art in America*, 6/2006 (June/July), pp. 152–155, 215.

2 See Donald Judd: *In the Galleries*, in: *Arts Magazine*, September 1963, pp. 91–93. For Arp and Judd see also Catherine Craft's essay in the present publication.

Hans Arp in American Collections

David Nash

I'm here to talk about works by Hans Arp in American private collections. I have been in the very fortunate situation of having seen very many works by Hans Arp in private collections because when I came to New York in May of 1963 this was a period when American collectors were probably at their most active. And I have had the good fortune to follow Arp's reputation and reception among American collectors for many years. Since I left Sotheby's, I opened my own gallery in partnership with my wife in 1996. Since then, Mitchell-Innes & Nash has mounted several exhibitions of works by Arp. For instance, we did an exhibition called *Arp and Brancusi* four years ago and we were very lucky to get loans from the Museum of Modern Art and from the Hirshhorn Museum (*fig. 1*). As you will see from the installation photograph, the works are on pedestals! We do look at Arp's sculptures as objects and works of art to be admired, which are tactile and which can be owned.

Early Collectors

I believe that Arp's debut in America was in 1926, when his work was included in the groundbreaking *International Exhibition of Modern Art* at the Brooklyn Museum. It was organized by the legendary Katherine Dreier for the Société Anonyme, which was a group that was founded by Katherine Dreier, Man Ray and Marcel Duchamp to show avant-garde art in the United States. This exhibition showed the work of artists from twenty-two countries and was the largest of its kind since the Armory Show in 1913. The majority of the works by Arp in this exhibition came either from the artist or from European private collections. And as far as I know, not one of them stayed in the United States. The first work by Arp to enter an American



Fig. 1 *Arp and Brancusi*, exhibition installation, Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York 2011

collection was around 1933 when Albert E. Gallatin acquired a work for his Gallery of Living Art, which will be discussed further below.

In 1936 the Museum of Modern Art organized their encyclopedic show *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* in which 25 works by Arp were shown. Only one came from an American collection, *Leaves and Navels* (c. 1928), and was lent by Mr. and Mrs. John E. Abbott of New York. Arp's works were shown in group exhibitions in the 1930s and 1940s. In 1949, Curt Valentin gave the artist his first major solo exhibition at the Buchholz Gallery, for which Arp traveled to New York.

However, by the time I arrived in New York in 1963 many of the great pioneering postwar collections of twentieth-century art had already been formed and many of them had even been dispersed or given away to museums. In the United States it is amazingly rare to find a collection that passes from one generation down to the next. The high estate taxes make it almost impossible for the next generation to afford to hold on to their parents' collections of works of art, and so the collection ends up either being dispersed at auction or donated to a museum. One of the exceptions to this is the Morton Neumann family collection. A photograph shows Morton Neumann in his absolutely jam packed little house in Chicago (*fig. 2*). He is in his Dada and Surrealist room. He was a voracious collector of both those schools. Mort, as he was affectionately known, was a self-made man. His fortune derived from his business called Valmor Products, one of which was

apparently very effective in straightening curly hair! His collection, formed in the 1950s and 1960s includes not only Dada and Surrealism, but also many other celebrated artists of the twentieth century such as Picasso, Matisse, Dubuffet and last but not least Arp. The collection remains relatively intact – all the Arps remain – and is now in the hands of his son Hubert who lives in New York. Hubert is a collector in his own right and continues the family's tradition. Among the Neumann collection are two wonderful automatic drawings by Arp, one of which seems to look back to a woodcut by Kandinsky and the other which looks forward to the later *découpages*. Both are actually from the same year, 1918. He also owns two Dada reliefs from the mid 1920s which I think of as being quintessential Dada masterpieces. One is called *Calligraphy of navels* from 1928 and the other *Constellation of White Forms on Gray* (1929). In addition to that, he has two stone sculptures.

Another of the early collectors of modern and postwar European art was G. David Thompson, a steel magnate from Pittsburgh. Thompson was an extraordinary collector and formed most of his collection in the 1940s and



Fig. 2 Morton G. Neumann in his Chicago home, early 1970s, archive of the author

1950s. He had a very large number of works by Paul Klee (over 100) and another significant group of 69 sculptures and 80 paintings and drawings by Giacometti, which he sold to the dealer Ernst Beyeler in 1962 (fig. 3). This was the start of Ernst Beyeler's legendary career, all done with borrowed money! When Thompson died in 1965 his heirs decided to auction the plentiful remainder of his collection, amongst which were five excellent works by Arp. The painted wood relief, *White on White* of 1930, which Thompson had bought from the Curt Valentin Gallery in the 1950s was included in the sale in 1966 where it was sold for \$6,750 to applause from the audience since it was a huge price at the time. Also in the sale was this stone sculpture titled *Mythical Sculpture* (1949) which sold for the even more substantial sum of \$8,500 to a New York dealer named Jacob Weintraub. Alfred Barr was a great admirer of Thompson and attended the auction, where he bought several important works for the Museum of Modern Art, although none of them were by Arp. Barr wrote the introduction to the auction catalogue in which he described Thompson as a legendary collector. Thompson was much feared among New York dealers for his fierce temper and tough bargaining. I never met him but as a young cataloguer for Sotheby's I spent a week in his house in Pittsburgh researching and cataloguing his enormous collection. In addition to Picasso, Léger, Mondrian and Miró there were works by artists who were unknown at the time but who have since become recognized and much sought after by



Fig 3. G. David Thompson (right) and Ernst Beyeler (left), c. 1960, archive of the author

contemporary collectors: Günther Uecker and Wols being examples of artists he bought in the 1960s.

The next collector I would like to introduce is Walter Chrysler. He was the gifted and eccentric heir to the Chrysler Motor Car and real estate fortune and was a keen and early collector of Arp's work. I believe he owned more than six of the reliefs from the Dada period. Walter Chrysler was one of the American art world's great enigmas. He had a natural eye and a considerable fortune at his disposal and was an early enthusiast for modern art of the first half of the twentieth century. He put together an amazing collection of nineteenth- and twentieth-century paintings and exhibited them in a number of places including his museum in Provincetown and the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa. At the time it was discovered that thirty percent of his collection consisted of very crude forgeries. He had forgeries of cubist works by Braque and Soutine. It was just amazing! He must have known or perhaps his eye had turned sour or he thought he had found a bargain. I can't imagine why he bought such a large number of forgeries and then had the nerve to send them to an exhibition to the National Gallery in Canada. One of the first actions of the Art Dealers Association of America was to have that exhibition closed down. Walter Chrysler owned a 1934 white marble sculpture by Arp titled *Human Concretion* (1934) which is now in the Chrysler Museum in Norfolk, Virginia. Once all the fakes had been extracted from his collection, he gave the rest to that Virginia museum which then changed its name to the Chrysler Museum. It's open to the public and has some fantastic things in it, and no fakes.

Mrs. Harry Lewis Winston Malbin was another passionate collector of modern art. She came from Detroit and her principal focus was on the Futurists, Boccioni in particular. She also acquired Surrealist and Dada art in her vast collection and there was a small but important subsection of works by Arp. Unfortunately Mrs. Malbin's collection was dispersed at auction in 1990. She gave all her Boccionis to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the rest of her collection was sold at auction. Her children, however, were able to keep two marvelous pieces because of the money raised at the auction. One of them is a combined sculpture called *Dream Column* (1958) which is actually a combined piece. The marble head and the bronze base were made at different times and it has never been clear if it was Mrs. Malbin or Arp who put them together. This piece actually did get sold finally in 2007 for \$2,000,000 and is now in a California collection. The Malbin family still owns this extraordinary drawing titled *Portrait of Tristan Tzara* from 1919,



Fig. 4 Hans Arp: *Head, Tristan Tzara*, c. 1920, ink on paper, Collection of Mrs. Harry Winston Lewis Malbin

which Mrs. Malbin bought from Tzara himself in the 1940s and brought back to Detroit (*fig. 4*). Although probably not originally intended as a portrait of Tzara, Lydia Malbin felt that it looked enough like him with his monocle and stiff shirt and so it has been known ever since as a portrait of Tristan Tzara. Arp, who as you know also considered himself to be a poet, once said: “the Winston collection contains works whose beauty has not been touched by the eternal transformation of the ephemeral [...]” I’m not really sure what it means, but I’m sure it’s good!

Another collector from this period was a brilliant lawyer from New York named Ralph Colin, who bought many things from Curt Valentin. Amongst his many other accomplishments, Colin founded the Art Dealers Association of America in 1962. He was a great friend of Alfred Barr’s and a trustee of the Museum of Modern Art as well as legal counsel for Parke-Bernet until 1964, when it was acquired by Sotheby’s. Colin liked Arp’s marble sculptures and owned quite a few: *Concrete Sculpture*, a white marble of 1942; *Necktie in Silent Tension*, made in black granite in 1947, *Configuration in serpentine movements*, a white marble of 1950, and *Torso* also a white marble of 1953. I believe that some of these sculptures that were acquired in the 1950s still remain in the hands of his family.

Virgil Thomson, an artist and celebrated composer, also owned a few works by Arp, including a 1921 relief which he gifted to the Portland Museum of Art in Maine, as well *Star* (1939). He also had two or three reliefs which he eventually gave to the Museum of Modern Art. When I was doing an appraisal for Sotheby’s, we discovered a work by Arp in a drawer, which was one of those wonderful experiences when you work in the auction business and find something that the owner doesn’t know he has.

From the same generation it is important to mention the collector and dealer Ladislav Segy who was hugely instrumental in educating Americans about African art and sculpture. He was a dealer and a writer, and because he liked African art he also collected sculptures by other artists such as Arp, Lipchitz, and Henry Moore who drew inspiration from the arts of Africa.

Private Collections in Public Institutions

The Tremaine collection, which had at least three Arps including *Mirr* of 1936, was given by the Tremaines to the National Gallery in Washington.

Again, when Mrs. Tremaine died, the rest of the collection was sold at auction, but this work escaped.

Mrs. Albert Newman was the doyenne of the Chicago art scene – Chicago seems to feature a lot with collectors of Arp – but she gave her Arp, *Torso*, *Navel*, *Mustache-Flower*, a wood relief from 1930, and much of the rest of her fabulous collection to the Metropolitan Museum in New York.

The Gallatin Collection, which I mentioned above, went to the Philadelphia Museum in 1943. Albert E. Gallatin was a collector, scholar and founder of the first museum in America devoted to modern art. It was called the Gallery of Living Art and was housed for a while at New York University. In addition to showing and owning works by Miró, Picasso, Léger and Mondrian, I believe that he owned the first work by Hans Arp to enter a public collection in the US, either *Vase-Bust* of 1930 or *Configuration with two Dangerous Points* (c. 1930). Unfortunately New York University made the decision to close the gallery during the war in 1943. Ten years later, Gallatin donated the whole collection to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. So New York lost out on that one.

One of the most significant collectors of modern sculpture apart from Ray Nasher was Joseph Hirshhorn. He really made a specialty of buying sculptures and he gave his collection to the nation in 1966. He was very clever and conducted a kind of private auction. He went to several countries such France, Germany, Japan, and England getting proposals for his collection. In England he was even invited to have lunch with the Queen, but England's proposal in the end was rather paltry. He then went to Lyndon B. Johnson and said: "now here's my best offer what can you do". He managed to negotiate an incredible deal. Congress put up the money for architect Gordon Bunshaft to build a donut-shaped building on the National Mall, and while it is today part of the Smithsonian Institution, the Hirshhorn Museum honors the collector by name. He gave his collection, and the government did the rest. Obviously being a collector of sculpture, he had many Arps including the relief *Six White Forms and One Gray Make a Constellation on a Blue Ground* (1953).

Another great collector of sculpture was Ray Nasher. He and his wife Patsy gave their entire collection to his eponymous museum, which was established in 1990. Patsy had seen *Torso with Buds* from 1961 in a gallery in New York and really loved it. She talked to Ray about it but he was not so keen. She went ahead and bought it anyway, giving it to him as a present. It was the very first modern sculpture to enter the Nasher collection.

Herbert and Nanette Rothschild were collectors of Surrealism and owned several works by Mondrian. They owned at least four works by Arp, the earliest from 1928 titled *Construction* as well as *Mirr* a granite work from 1949/50, also two works in wood from the 1930s. Unfortunately, they couldn't hold on to the collection and it was dispersed.

Nelson Rockefeller owned several works by Arp including *Man with a Moustache*, a relief from c. 1924, as well as *Amphora of the Muse* in marble from 1959 and two further sculptures, one in granite and one in concrete (fig. 5). He gave to the nation the whole Rockefeller mansion and Kykuit estate, which is about 30 miles due north of New York, as well as much of the art from the house.



Fig. 5 Hans Arp: *Homme-Mustaches*, 1925, relief, 54 × 48,5 cm, Collection of Nelson Rockefeller



Fig. 6 Hans Arp: *Dream Flower with Lips*, 1954, white marble, 81,6 cm high, formerly Gates and Lallie Lloyd Collection

Seymour Knox, a real pioneer collector from the industrial town of Buffalo, in upstate New York, acquired this over life-sized marble sculpture titled *Classical Sculpture* (1963) in 1965 and today it can be seen standing among the masterpieces for which the Albright-Knox is famous. It is the most amazing collection, staggeringly advanced and of such high quality.

Walter Annenberg, former Ambassador to the UK, was a big collector who built for himself a house in the desert of Palm Springs surrounded by a 9-hole golf course with bright green grass. Visitors to the house can see *Entangled Simplicity* of 1961 and *Configuration*. These two works were in the company of paintings by van Gogh, Cézanne, Gauguin, Renoir, and Giacometti. Walter Annenberg gave all his paintings to the Metropolitan Museum and left his house to the Annenberg Foundation Trust. I believe the two Arps remain in the house and today Sunnylands is used for high-level retreats, meetings of heads of state, and economic conferences, all in tranquil surroundings, further enhanced by Arp's soothing sculptures.

Gates and Lallie Lloyd, who were collectors based in Philadelphia, owned *Dream Flower with Lips* (1954) (fig. 6). For me *Dream Flower with Lips* is one of Arp's great marble masterpieces and one that I love. It's a sculpture that I like even more as I have had the good fortune to sell it twice. It is still in the United States.

Who are the Collectors?

Who are the collectors of Arp today in the United States? Some names that spring to mind and whom I have helped over the past ten years to acquire works are Reed Krakoff, a fashion designer and former executive creative director of Coach, the Hudson family from Texas who own *Winged Being* (1961) in black marble which is in their apartment in New York, and surprisingly Steven Spielberg who has a very eccentric collection. He's interested in modern masters such as Matisse but also seeks out work by artists of diverse backgrounds. He bought this particular Arp sculpture because it looks so good in the alcove of his apartment.

I will end this talk with one of my favorite stories about Arp in an American collection. 25 years ago when I was still working at Sotheby's, I was asked to do an appraisal of the private collection of a New York dealer named Jacob Weintraub, whom I mentioned at the beginning of my essay. Mr. Weintraub was a very successful dealer who had worked his way up from being a modest print dealer just after the war to owning a very expensive gallery on Madison Avenue from which he sold many works by Arp and other artists. In a postwar refugee camp he met his wife Barbara and they worked together at building the business for more than 30 years. Barbara

died in 1975. Mr. Weintraub did not remain a widower for long and he quickly married again. It was a few years after his second marriage that I was asked to do the appraisal. His second wife, whose name was Bronka, showed me around the apartment and together we looked at the paintings on the wall and then at all his modern sculptures. On the coffee table was a nice little polished bronze piece by Arp that did not look very well cared for. It needed a good dusting and was covered in fingerprints and other smears. I asked Bronka why it was so neglected. Her response completely surprised me. She said that when Jacob's first wife Barbara died she had been cremated and that Jacob had filled this Arp sculpture with her ashes and sealed it with a plaster plug. The second Mrs. Weintraub said that the cleaning lady was very superstitious about this ash-filled object and refused to touch it! And I wonder if this isn't the only case of an Arp owning an American collector.

Chronology: Hans Arp and the United States

1916

Hans Arp meets Hilla von Rebay, a young artist who would later work as the advisor to the American collector Solomon Guggenheim.

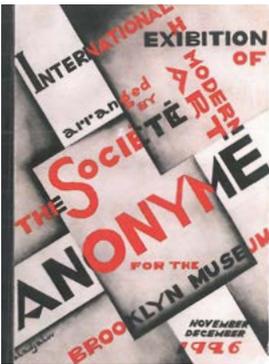


Fig. 1 Cover of the exhibition catalogue *International Exhibition of Modern Art*, Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn 1926

1926/27

The artist's society Société Anonyme, founded by Katherine S. Dreier, Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray, holds the *International Exhibition of Modern Art* at the Brooklyn Museum of Art from November 19, 1926 to January 1, 1927. Two of Hans Arp's works are included in this overview of international developments in contemporary art.

1931

The American artist Alexander Calder, who had lived in Paris since the mid-1920s, joins the artists' group Abstraction Création, of which Hans Arp is also a member. The two artists meet when Calder is working on his well-known "mobiles" in addition to his more rigid metal constructions, which Arp dubs "stabiles".

1932

Notes from a Dada-Diary (Art is a fruit) is Arp's first English-language publication. It appears in the transatlantic journal *Transition*, which was edited by Eugene Jolas. Arp also designs the cover for the March 1932 edition, in which his text is printed.

1933

Georges Héliou introduces Hans Arp and Sophie Taeuber-Arp to the American collector and painter Albert Eugene Gallatin. In 1927 the latter had founded the Gallery of Living Art in New York, which was the first public collection that was exclusively dedicated to modern art. Gallatin buys two works by Arp in 1933, the wood relief *Vase-Bust* and the gouache *Head-Nose*, both from 1930. Thanks to Gallatin, the work of Hans Arp and Sophie Taeuber-Arp eventually achieved widespread renown in the USA.

1934

The John Becker Gallery in New York launches an exhibition of 15 gouaches by Hans Arp.

Curated by James Johnson Sweeney on behalf of the Société Anonyme, *A Selection of Works by Twentieth Century Artists* is on view at the University of Chicago from June 20 until August 20, 1934. Works by Arp hang alongside those by Juan Gris, Piet Mondrian and others.

1935

Gallatin visits Arp at his studio in Meudon. At that time, the artist's works were hanging in Gallatin's Gallery of Living Art (which became known as the Museum of Living Arts in 1936) in New York. That same year, Gallatin commissions

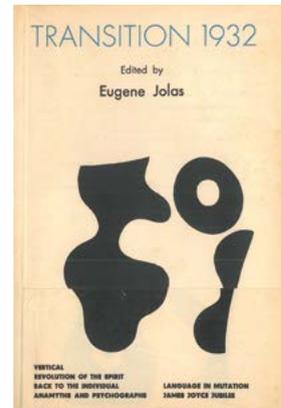


Fig. 2 Cover of *Transition* (ed. by Eugene Jolas), Paris 21/1932 (March), Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth

Arp and Taeuber-Arp to travel through Germany to acquire works by El Lissitzky, Lazló Moholy-Nagy, Piet Mondrian and Kurt Schwitters for his gallery.



Fig. 3 Soichi Sunami: Installation view of the exhibition *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1936–37, Photographic Archive, Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York

1936

Alfred H. Barr, Jr., the founding director of the Museum of Modern Art, mounts the groundbreaking group exhibitions *Cubism and Abstract Art* and *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* in the spring and winter of 1936. Arp's works are featured in both. In preparation for the second exhibition, Barr visits Arp at his studio in Meudon. Both exhibitions were highly instrumental in popularizing European Modernism in the USA.

That same year, Arp asks the former Bauhaus professor Josef Albers to keep an eye out for potential teaching positions in the US. Albers had emigrated to the United States after the National Socialists shut down the Bauhaus and had taught at Black Mountain College in North Carolina since 1933.



Fig. 4 Cover of *plastique*, Paris/New York 3/1938 (spring), Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth

1937

The journal *plastique* is founded with the financial support of Albert E. Gallatin. Edited by Sophie Taeuber with the collaboration of Hans Arp, George L.K. Morris and César Domela, the journal has transatlantic appeal. *plastique* offers a forum for concrete and abstract art in Europe and the US. However, in 1939, after only five issues, publication of *plastique* is ceased due to the political developments at the onset of World War II.

1937

The exhibition *Jean Arp* is held at the Putzel Gallery in San Francisco.

1940

Shortly before German troops occupy Paris in June 1940, Hans Arp and Sophie Taeuber-Arp flee to Grasse in the South of France. Before they reach their destination later that year, they find sanctuary with Peggy Guggenheim in Annecy for a few weeks in September 1940. The Museum of Modern Art offers to pay for Arp and Taeuber-Arp's passage to the United States, but the artists are unable to obtain immigrant visas.

1942

Hans Arp's work is exhibited in New York in *First Papers of Surrealism*, which was organized by André Breton and Marcel Duchamp. With over 105 pieces, including dolls and examples of non-Western masks and sculpture, it was the largest exhibition of Surrealism to date in the US.

A few days later Peggy Guggenheim opens her gallery Art of this Century in New York. Dedicated to contemporary American and European art, the gallery displayed examples of work by Arp as well as de Chirico, van Doesburg, Giacometti, Héliou and Picasso.

1942/43

As Arp and Taeuber-Arp are unable to immigrate to the US, they decide to move to Switzerland. Sophie Taeuber-Arp dies there in January 1943 in a tragic accident.

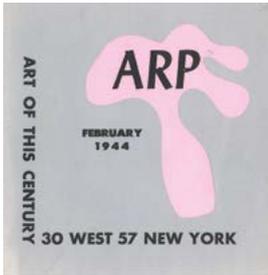


Fig. 5 Cover of *ARP*, exhibition brochure, Gallery Art of this Century, New York 1944, Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth

1944

Peggy Guggenheim, who owned several works by Arp, dedicates a solo exhibition to the artist in February 1944 at the Gallery Art of this Century. Fellow artist Max Ernst writes an essay for the brochure. Arp's friends in New York provided most of the loans.

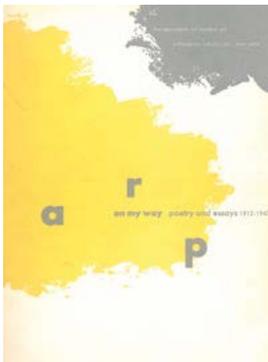


Fig. 6 Cover *arp. On My Way: Poetry and Essays, 1912-1947* (ed. by Robert Motherwell), New York 1948, Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.

1948

Josef Albers offers Arp a teaching position at Black Mountain College. Hugo Weber, Arp's collaborator on Sophie Taeuber's *Catalogue Raisonné* who was then teaching at the School of Design in Chicago, likewise makes an offer in that period.

That same year Hans Arp's book *arp. On My Way: Poetry and Essays, 1912-1947* is published by Wittenborn & Schultz in New York. Part of the Museum of Modern Art's series *Documents of Modern Art*, it was edited by Robert Motherwell.

1949

Curt Valentin's Buchholz Gallery in New York opens Hans Arp's first major solo exhibition in the US in January 1949. After Valentin emigrated from Germany to the United States, he helped European artists build their reputations there. Arp travels with his partner Marguerite Hagenbach to the United States for the first time to attend the opening.

Arp stays with his friend Frederick Kiesler, who had immigrated to the US from Vienna in 1926. He sees many of his artist friends and colleagues from Europe again in New York, including Richard Huelsenbeck and Hans Richter. He also visits Marcel Breuer in Connecticut in February 1949.

Arp also travels to New Haven, Connecticut to visit with Katherine Dreier at Yale University, where he views the collection of the Société Anonyme. Impressed by what he saw, Arp decides to donate *Turned Wood Sculpture* (1937) to Yale the following year in honor of his late wife Sophie Taeuber-Arp.

From March 10 to April 3, 28 sculptures and 8 collages by Arp, which had been in the Buchholz show, are on view at the Cincinnati Modern Art Society in Ohio.

1950

The Sidney Janis Gallery in New York holds the exhibition *Arp – Taeuber-Arp* from January 30 to February 25, 1950, which features the individual works of both artists in addition to six of their collaborative pieces.

Michel Seuphor introduces Arp to the young American painter Ellsworth Kelly. Kelly visits Arp a few times at his studio in Meudon, where he sees pieces by Arp and his late wife Sophie Taeuber-Arp. Arp supports Kelly's application for a Guggenheim Fellowship by writing a letter of recommendation to his old friend Hilla von Rebay.

In March 1950, Arp travels to the United States for the second time. After visiting New York, he moves on to Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, as Walter Gropius had commissioned him to design a large multi-part relief for the new Harvard Graduate Center.



Fig. 7 Cover of the *ARP* exhibition catalogue at Curt Valentins Buchholz Gallery, New York 1949, Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth



Fig. 8 Paul Weller: Hans Arp, Richard Huelsenbeck and Hans Richter in New York, 1949, Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth

1951

Dada Painters and Poets: An Anthology is published by Wittenborn & Schultz in New York. Edited by Robert Motherwell, it includes Arp's text *Dada was not a farce* (1949).

Participation in the exhibition *From Brancusi to Duchamp* at the Sidney Janis Gallery in New York.

1952

Publication of Curt Valentin's artist's book *Dreams and Projects*, which includes a collection of poems and woodcuts he commissioned from Arp for the project.

The poetry collection *New York Kantaten* (Basel 1952) by Richard Huelsenbeck, for which Arp drew six illustrations, is published.

In the same year, the exhibition *Jean-Hans Arp, Sculpture, Reliefs, Drawings* takes place at the Art Center Gallery in New York.

1953

From April 15 to March 9, 1953, the Sidney Janis Gallery in New York hosts the exhibition *Dada (1916–1923)*, which was curated by Marcel Duchamp. Arp played a definitive role by helping to put the organizers in touch with European artists. Richard Huelsenbeck and Hans Richter withdrew from the exhibition committee because they thought that the emphasis on Duchamp's art provided a limited view of Dada.

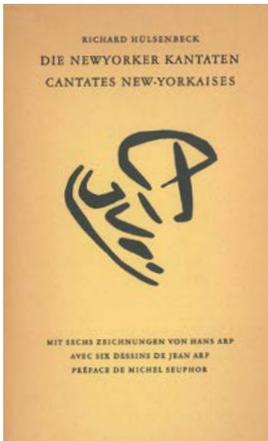


Fig. 9 Cover of Richard Huelsenbeck:
Die New York Kantaten.
Basel 1952, Stiftung Arp e.V.,
Berlin/Rolandswerth

Arp is also represented in the exhibitions *French Masters* and the *5th Anniversary Exhibition*, held from September, 29 to October, 29 at the Sidney Janis Gallery in New York.

1954

The Curt Valentin Gallery (formerly the Buchholz Gallery) in New York gives Arp a second solo exhibition from March 2–27, 1954 and includes sculptures, reliefs and collages.

1955

Arp's works are shown in the final exhibition at the Curt Valentin Gallery in June 1955. Valentin had died the previous year.

1957

Carola Giedion-Welcker's comprehensive book on Hans Arp's life and oeuvre, originally written in German, is released in the United States.

1957/58

Arp's works are included in the exhibition *Collecting Modern Art: Paintings, Sculptures and Drawings from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Lewis Winston*, which travels from the Detroit Institute of Arts to the San Francisco Museum of Art and the Milwaukee Art Institute from September 1957 through December 1957. Arp's essay on the Winston-Collection *Spéculations sérieuses et drôles/ Serious and droll Speculations* appears in the December 1957 issue of *Aujourd'hui, art et architecture*.



Fig. 10 Hans Arp at the house of the collector Lee Ault in Connecticut (c.1958), Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth

1958

In the fall, the Museum of Modern Art in New York opens the first Hans Arp retrospective in the United States. James Thrall Soby edited the exhibition catalogue, which includes texts by Richard Huelsenbeck, Robert Melville, Carola Giedion-Welcker, as well as the artist himself.

Arp travels to New York for the third and final time in October to attend his exhibition opening at the Museum of Modern Art. During his sojourn in the United States, he met the artist Louise Bourgeois and the critic and collector Lee Ault, among others. Afterwards, he takes a trip to Mexico with Marguerite Hagenbach, whom he would marry in 1959.



Fig. 11 Installation view of the *Arp – Mondrian* exhibition at Sidney Janis Gallery, New York 1960, Archive Sidney Janis Gallery, New York

1960

The exhibition *Arp and Mondrian* takes place at the Sidney Janis Gallery from January 25 to March 5, 1960. The artist is also represented in *XXth Century Artists* at the same gallery in October.

In March 1960 the Galerie Chalette shows the exhibition *Construction and Geometry in Painting: from Malevitch to Tomorrow*. Arp is represented with two paintings. Arp's Paris dealer Denise René organized the New York exhibition, which also traveled to the Contemporary Art Center Cincinnati, The Arts Club of Chicago and the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis.

In the same year – in October/November – the Galerie Chalette is showing the duo exhibition *Jean Arp – Sophie Tauber-Arp* in their New York gallery space. The exhibition was a cooperation with the Denise René Gallery in Paris.

1961

Arp is included in several group shows at the Sidney Janis Gallery, including *A Selection of Paintings and Sculptures* and *European Artists from A.-V.*

1962

From October 2–20, 1962 *arp. drawings and collages*, an overview of Arp's works on paper, is on view at the Borgenicht Gallery in New York

Arp has another solo show at the New Art Center Gallery in New York from November 3–30, 1962.

1963

The Sidney Janis Gallery grants Arp another solo show from April 29 until May 25. Donald Judd visits the exhibition featuring Arp's recent sculpture, and reviews it in the September issue of *Arts Magazine* (1963).

1964

Arp participates in several group exhibitions in the US, including two at the Sidney Janis Gallery as well as the *Pittsburgh International Exhibition of Contemporary Painting and Sculptures* at the Carnegie Institute Pittsburgh.

Arp is awarded the Carnegie Prize.



Fig. 12 Cover of the exhibition catalogue *Jean Arp*, Galerie Chalette, New York, 1965, Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth

1965

An exhibition held at the Galerie Chalette in New York from January to February is dedicated to Arp's work.

1966

Arp's work is exhibited at the Weintraub Gallery in New York.

Arp dies on June 7, 1966 in Basel.

1968

Sculptures by Hans Arp are shown at the Sidney Janis Gallery in New York from March 6 to April 6, 1968.

The *Arp Memorial Exhibition* is held at the UCLA Art Galleries in Los Angeles from November 11 to December 15. Additional venues included the Des Moines Art Center in Iowa, the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York.

1969

From November 14, 1968 to January 5, 1969, Arp's works are on view in the group show *Sculpture we live with* at the Museum of Art at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh.

1970

Solo exhibition at the Borgenicht Gallery New York and participation in the group show *20th Century European Art* at the Sidney Janis Gallery.

1971

The Sidney Janis Gallery in New York organizes the exhibition *An Arp Garden of Marbles and Bronzes*, which is held from October 4–30, 1971.

1972

The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York held the exhibition *Jean Arp. From the collection of Mme Marguerite Arp and Arthur and Madeleine Lejwa*.

Arp's works are featured in the group exhibitions *Colossal Scale* at the Sidney Janis Gallery as well as *20th Century Print* at the University of Pittsburgh.

1975/76

From 1975–1976, Arp's works are showcased in the traveling exhibition *Jean Arp, Sculpture, Reliefs, Works on Paper* at the Museum of Art at the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute in Utica, New York, and the Seattle Art Museum in addition to the San Francisco Museum of Art, the Toledo Museum of Art and the Galerie Chalette in New York.

1976

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York holds the exhibition *Jean Arp, 1887–1966* from July 14 to August 22, 1976.

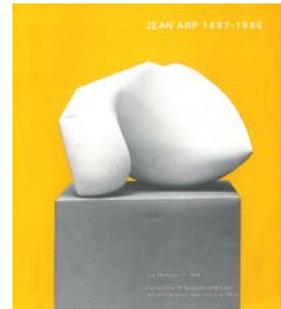


Fig. 13 Cover of the exhibition catalogue *Jean Arp 1887–1966*, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York 1976, Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth

1977/78

On December 15, 1977, the Museum of Modern Art in New York opens *Arp on Paper*, which remains on view until March 5, 1978. The exhibition then travels to the McNay Art Institute in San Antonio, Texas as well as the University Art Museum in Berkeley and the Art Museum in Santa Barbara, California.

1980

The Sidney Janis Gallery organizes the exhibition *Sculpture in Marble, Bronze & Wood Relief by Hans Arp*, which is held in New York from January 10 until February 16, 1980.

1983

Jean Arp: The Dada Reliefs is on view at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. from July 2 until October 30, 1983.

1986–88

The large traveling exhibition *Arp: 1886–1966* is organized in honor of the artist's centennial. In addition to seven showings in Europe, it also goes to the Institute of Art in Minneapolis from March 14 until May 24, 1987, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston from July 1 until September 20, 1987 and the Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco from December 3, 1987 until January 31, 1988.

1987

Jean Arp. Centenary Exhibition. Sculpture, Reliefs, and Graphic Work is held at the Museum of Art in Fort Lauderdale, Florida from February 12 until April 12, 1987.

From April to May, the Marisa del Re Gallery in New York exhibits selected sculptures from Arp's late period.

1990

Hans Arp is on view at the Michael Werner Gallery in New York from April 19 to June 2, 1990.

2000

The New York gallery Mitchell-Innes & Nash presents the exhibition *Arp. Line and Form* from October 12 to November 18, 2000.

2011

From March 29 to May 6, 2011, *Arp Brancusi* is on view at the Mitchell-Innes & Nash Gallery in New York.

2011/2012

The Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas unveils the exhibition *Jean Arp*, which addresses the significance of Arp's sculpture for the artistic development of Donald Judd.

2012

The exhibition *Jean Arp. A collection of wood reliefs and collages* is held at the Blain di Donna Gallery in New York.

Contributors

Stephanie Buhmann was born in Hamburg, Germany and has been based in New York since 1999. She received a B.F.A. and M.A. in the History of Art from Pratt Institute, New York. She is a contributing editor at *Artcritical*. Her texts have been published by a large variety of international newspapers and art magazines. She has translated several museum catalogue essays, including for The Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice and the Museum Pfalzgalerie Kaiserslautern. In 2015 she was Research Fellow at the Stiftung Arp e.V. Her first book entitled *Studio Conversations* is published by The Green Box in March 2016.

Catherine Craft is an expert in Dada, Abstract Expressionism, and Neo-Dada and curator at the Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas, where she organized the touring exhibition *Melvin Edwards: Five Decades* (2015) and has written catalogue essays on artists including Isamu Noguchi, Rachel Harrison, and Katharina Grosse. She is also the author of *An Audience of Artists: Dada, Neo-Dada, and the Emergence of Abstract Expressionism* (University of Chicago, 2012) and *Robert Rauschenberg* (Phaidon, 2013), as well numerous articles and reviews. Among other projects, she is curating the first major Hans Arp exhibition in the US in almost three decades, which will open at the Nasher in 2018.

Arie Hartog (born 1963 in Maastricht, NL) is director of the Gerhard-Marcks-Haus in Bremen. His research focus is the history of sculpture in the 20th and 21th centuries. He is the editor of the critical survey on the sculpture of Hans Arp (2012).

Carroll Janis received an M.A. in Art History at Columbia University and taught Humanities, Northern European Painting and Primitive Art. He has

published on Leonardo, Duchamp, Pollock and has spoken at symposia at Columbia, Harvard, Warhol Museum, Metropolitan Museum, and the College Art Association. Carroll Janis was associated with the Sidney Janis Gallery for most of its fifty-years existence. He has curated many shows, seven of which included works by Arp: *The Classic Spirit* (1964), *String & Rope* (1970), *40th Anniversary Exhibition: ARP/Léger, Giacometti/Mondrian* (1989), *Arp in All Media* (1990), *A Mediterranean Installation* (1992) and *50th Anniversary Exhibition* (1998).

Cara Manes is Assistant Curator in the Department of Painting and Sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art, where she is part of a team that organizes the ongoing displays in the collection galleries. She also works extensively on museum exhibitions and special installations, including *Take an Object* (2015), *Ellsworth Kelly: The Chatham Series* (2013), *Artist's Choice: Trisha Donnelly* (2012), *James Rosenquist: F111* (2012), and *Cy Twombly: Sculpture* (2011). She has contributed to a variety of publications, including *Films and Videos by Robert Morris* (Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves, 2011). She holds degrees from Wellesley College and the City University of New York.

David Nash is co-owner, along with his wife, Lucy Mitchell-Innes, of Mitchell-Innes & Nash, an art gallery established in 1996 with locations in New York on Madison Avenue and in Chelsea. The gallery specializes in Impressionist, Modern and Contemporary Art and represents living artists as well as estates. Mr. Nash began his career in 1961 at Sotheby's London joining the newly formed Impressionist Painting Department and moved to New York two years later where he soon became world-wide head of the Impressionist & Modern Art Department and enjoyed a 35-year career at the auction house.

Eric Robertson is Professor of Modern French Literature and Visual Arts at Royal Holloway, University of London. He is the author of *Arp: Painter, Poet, Sculptor* (2006, awarded the R. H. Gapper Book Prize), *Writing Between the Lines: René Schickele, Citoyen français, deutscher Dichter, 1880–1940* (1995), and *Picturing Modernity: Blaise Cendrars and the Visual Avant-Gardes* (forthcoming). He is the co-editor of *Yvan Goll – Claire Goll: Texts and Contexts* (1997), *Robert Desnos: Surrealism in the Twenty-First Century* (2006),

Dada and Beyond Vol 1: Dada Discourses (2011) and *Dada and Beyond Vol 2: Dada and its Legacies* (2012).

Maïke Steinkamp studied Art History, German and Italian Studies at the Universities of Bonn and Parma. She received her Ph.D. in 2007 with a dissertation on the reception of “degenerate” art after 1945 in the GDR. She worked as Assistant Curator at the Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle Bonn and the German Historical Museum in Berlin. From 2005 until 2012 she was Assistant Professor at the Department of Art History, University of Hamburg. In 2009 she was a Visiting Professor at Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts. Since 2012 she has been the curator of the Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.

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Loretta Würtenberger earned her doctorate in International Copyright Law at the Max Planck Institute after studying Law, Philosophy and Art History. She is the founder of the Institute for Artists’ Estates and a partner at Fine Art Partners, Berlin. Loretta has been lecturing regularly at universities across Europe for over fifteen years. She is the author of the book *The Artist’s Estate: a Handbook for Artists, Executors, and Heirs*, published in June 2016 by Hatje Cantz Verlag and has been working with the estates of Hans Arp and Sophie Taeuber-Arp since 2009.

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- Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck (Nic Tenwiggenhorn): 40
- Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private Foundation, Vienna: 89, 90, 93, 99, 100
- The Easton Foundation, New York: 25
- Ellsworth Kelly Studio Archives: 41
- Fondazione Marguerite Arp, Locarno: 26 (Carlo Reguzzi), 115
- Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, Mass: 112
- Krannert Art Museum and Kinkead Pavilion, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign: 38
- Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York: 174
- The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA/Art Resource, New York: 36, 41
- The Museum of Modern Art, New York: 54, 55, 65, 60, 61; 57 (Beaumont Newhall), 63, 84, 188 (Soichi Sunami),
- Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas: 46
- Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandseck: 19, 92, 95, 116, 187, 190, 192, 193, 194; 5, 191 (Paul Weller), 109 (Robert Damora); 110 (Walter R. Fleischer); 114 (Fred Stone); 118 (Bablén); 72, 79 (Wolfgang Morell), 22 (Leo Pompinon), 125, 134, 135 (André van Linn); 70, 145, 146, 147, 148, 150 (Etienne Bertrand Weill), 216–217
- The Tate Collection: 129
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Hans Arp in Clamart, c. 1958,
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The first volume of the new series of scholarly publications of the Stiftung Arp e.V. illuminates the wide-ranging aspects of Hans Arp's influence and reception in the United States. Especially after the Second World War Arps work achieved widespread recognition by American museums, galleries and collectors. During the 1950s also a new generation of American artists, like Jackson Pollock, Donald Judd or Ellsworth Kelly engaged intensely with the artist's oeuvre. Surprisingly Arp's influence on post-war American art, his contacts with collectors, patrons and artists have not yet been fully explored. Nor has enough attention been paid to the presence of his art in exhibitions, galleries and on the art market in the US, all of which have informed the reception of his work to this day. The publication explores these so important aspects in the career of Hans Arp.

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