



ARP

Interlude

**Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Hans Arp,
and Their Contemporaries:
Research by the Arp Fellows**

Vol. 1



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Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Hans Arp, and Their Contemporaries.

Research by the Arp Fellows

Jana Teuscher

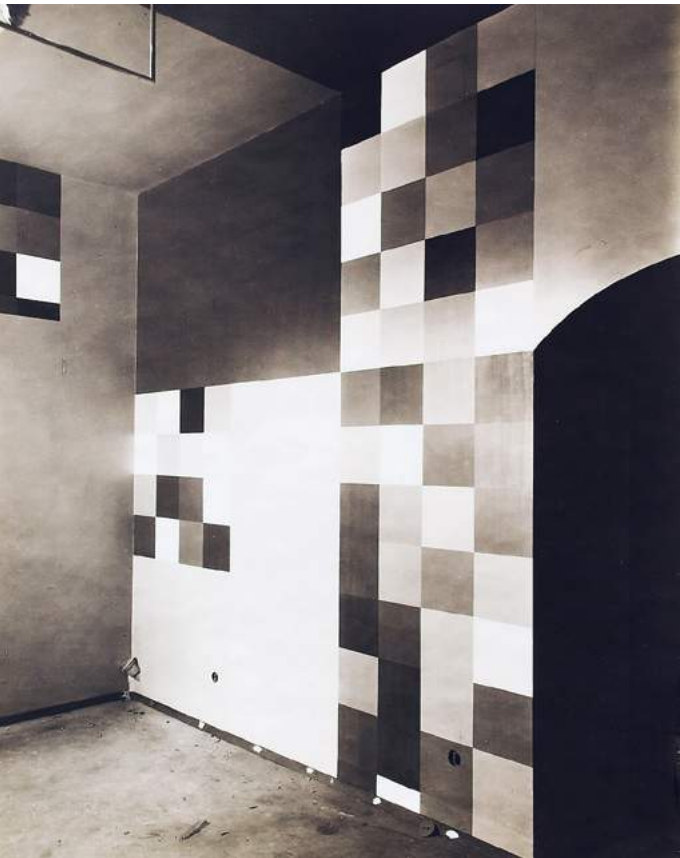


Fig. 1 Sophie Taeuber-Arp: Aubette café, Strasbourg, 1928. Photo attributed to Othon Scholl, Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth

Whether in Rio de Janeiro¹, New York, or Tokyo, Strasbourg (fig. 1), Zurich², or Venice (fig. 2), we encounter Sophie Taeuber-Arp and Hans Arp's work across the globe. With their sculptures, reliefs, works on paper, and textiles, both artists have long been established in the canon of avant-garde art and are, therefore, the subjects of academic and artistic debate.

At the Stiftung Arp e.V., research on the work of Sophie Taeuber-Arp and Hans Arp as well as that of their contemporaries is one of the most important tasks, as it deepens the understanding of both artists' multifaceted oeuvres in light of current approaches to research and ever-changing methodologies. For this reason, in 2015 the Stiftung Arp established research grants with which it supports the work of several academic researchers and artists each year.

The variety of projects is great, as the fellows explore different themes in contributions that take varied forms: They range from exhibition preparations and university research to doctoral and postdoctoral projects and in-depth studies on special topics for publications. In addition to traditional scholarly archival research, the Stiftung Arp e.V. also promotes the artistic exploration of Taeuber-Arp and Arp's art. Such projects can, for example, be related to the twentieth-century artists' creative expression and artistic technique or involve adaptations or transfers to the present day. As such, the variety of contributions makes our journal a laboratory of ideas.

Inviting the fellows to conduct research at our Berlin space involves far more than temporary financial support. Although we provide researchers with access to the archive and library, we also understand the purpose of the fellowship as an opportunity for exchange with other Arp fellows and with the foundation. The resultant dialogues can help make connections between the outcomes of various projects and build networks of researchers, so that the support provided by the fellowships can have a long-lasting impact.



Fig. 2 Hans Arp: *Shell and Head*, 1933, Bronze, Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice

In recent years, our fellows have written numerous, thematically varied publications that have greatly deepened our knowledge about Sophie Taeuber-Arp and Hans Arp, illuminated previously unstudied facets, placed works in novel contexts, opened our eyes to references to other artists, or revealed artistic networks.

The fact that our guests hail from different countries and research backgrounds is also reflected in their contributions. Students and instructors, artists, conservators, restorers, curators, and university-affiliated and independent researchers working in our archive and library approach the work from various perspectives, each drawing attention to different aspects of Taeuber-Arp and Arp's artistic production.

As our fellows as visit the archive throughout the year, we learn more about their research questions on Taeuber-Arp and Arp through direct exchange. In the process, we have been struck by how many exciting aspects of the Arp fellows' research have not yet reached a wider public.

This where the Stiftung Arp e.V.'s new digital journal comes in. The contributions by the Arp fellows, which until now have found their place on our website, have helped provide new impetus for research on twentieth-century art. In order to make these findings availa-

ble to a wider audience, the Stiftung Arp e.V. is pleased to offer this new publication format.

I would like to thank Loretta Würtenberger for providing the impetus for this journal, Sarah McGavran for the intensive collaboration on the content, and Ta-Trung for realizing the design. Last but not least, my thanks goes to our fellows, who were willing to present the results of their research in this journal to share them with a larger audience.

1 See Torres-Lopes, pp. 36–43.
2 See Beeli, pp. 4–10.



Jana Teuscher studied art history and history at the University of Hamburg and the University of Cádiz (Spain). In 2008, she earned her doctorate with a dissertation on seventeenth-century Roman church facades. She then worked as a research assistant at the Kupferstichkabinett (Museum of Prints and Drawings) at the National Museums in Berlin. This was followed by projects on provenance research for the New National Gallery, Berlin, and the Bröhan Museum, Berlin. Since 2018, Teuscher has been the Arp Foundation's curator. She regularly publishes on Sophie Taeuber-Arp and Hans Arp.

The Alteration of Sophie Taeuber-Arp's *Triptych* (1918)

Franziska Beeli

Starting Point

In the art historical reception, the 1918 *Triptych* in the collection of the Kunsthau Zurich (fig. 1) has been regarded as a masterpiece from the artist Sophie Taeuber-Arp's early period and as an homage to Byzantine art. In preparation for the exhibition *Sophie Taeuber-Arp: Living Abstraction* at the Kunstmuseum Basel, the Tate Modern in London, and the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 2021/22, *Triptych* was inspected with a focus on alterations as well as its inconsistent appearance and object history. The medium ascribed to the work—oil on canvas—is atypical for Sophie Taeuber-Arp's early period, and thus provided an impetus to examine the materials and dating.

The desire to gain an understanding of the object history and to establish solid findings upon which to develop a concept for conservation-restoration led to my master's thesis on the alterations of the *Triptych* (Advisor: Dr. Karolina Soppa, professor of conservation-restoration and studio director for the department of painting and sculpture, Bern University of the Arts; Co-advisor: Kerstin Murer, chief restorer, Kunsthau Zurich). Its detailed analysis encompassed the question of the date, which is closely tied to the alterations. This paper presents some of its central findings.

Introduction

Comprehensive technical findings are highly relevant to the understanding of an object's history and for addressing alterations. Only in this way is it possible to distinguish the original materials from later additions. Thus, the first part of the master's thesis—the object findings—presents the object-related investigations on the material structure of the *Triptych*, with a focus on the changes made to the object.



Fig. 1 Sophie Taeuber-Arp: *Triptych*, 1918. Oil on canvas on hardboard, 112 x 53 cm per panel. Kunsthau Zurich, gift of Hans Arp. Full view under VIS incident lighting, framed. Photo: F. Beeli, 2020

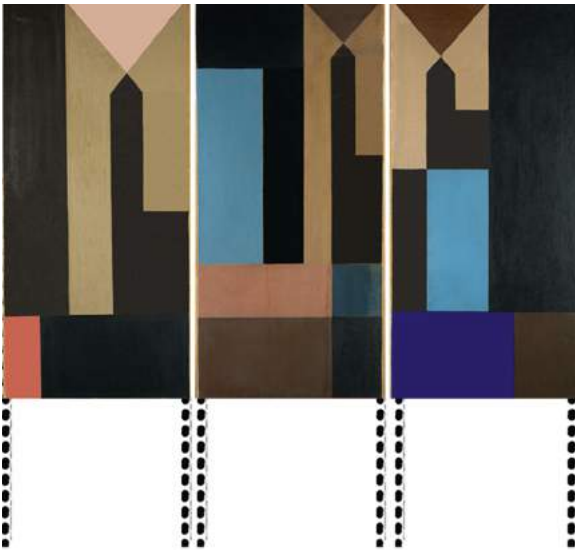


Fig. 2 Diagram of the first geometric composition of the *Triptych* with an outline of the longer format. Photomontage: F. Beeli, 2021



Fig. 3 Diagram of an alteration to the composition of the *Triptych*, around 1939 at the latest. Photomontage: F. Beeli, 2021

The second part consists of comparative object analyses and research on the alterations. These comparisons form a basis for tracing developments within Sophie Taeuber-Arp's oeuvre and for classifying the object findings within it; in doing so, the comparisons provide supplementary information for a re-evaluation of the dating.

By contextualizing the work within Sophie Taeuber-Arp's artistic development and environment, the third part of the thesis critically evaluates the object's history in context. In this manner, the history of the painting's reception is illuminated and re-evaluated.

Results and Interpretation

For the first time, it could be proven that the *Triptych* was clearly changed over the years. The phases of alteration may be roughly reconstructed as follows:

Macroscopic and microscopic examination revealed that the three panels have a first, flat layer of paint, each one in a different hue. It remains unclear whether it was used as a primer. On top of the monochromatic paint layers, the first geometric or "polygonal" composition was executed in oil (fig. 2), as was made clear by the measurement analysis and X-ray images. The cross-section analyses have shown that the artist herself adjusted the nuances during this primary stage of developing the geometric composition.

At a later point, the composition was changed in terms of both form and color, the format was shortened, and the supports were glued to hardboard panels (fig. 3). This finding was made through stratigraphic, macro-, and microscopic examinations, especially on the borders, in combination with examinations of depth. Specifically, the first "polygonal" composition was discarded and painted over in a gold-like hue. Colors were also adjusted in other fields. Visual material related to an exhibition and the work's exhibition history indicate that these changes took place around 1939 at the latest, presumably for a show of abstract art in Paris—that is, while the artist was still alive. The condition of the work indicates that the alterations are in part related to structural damage. The use of hardboard panels during Taeuber-Arp's lifetime—whether by the artist herself or on her behalf—would represent a unique case in her oeuvre, as this material is not known to have been used as an original support for her work up to this point. Rather,

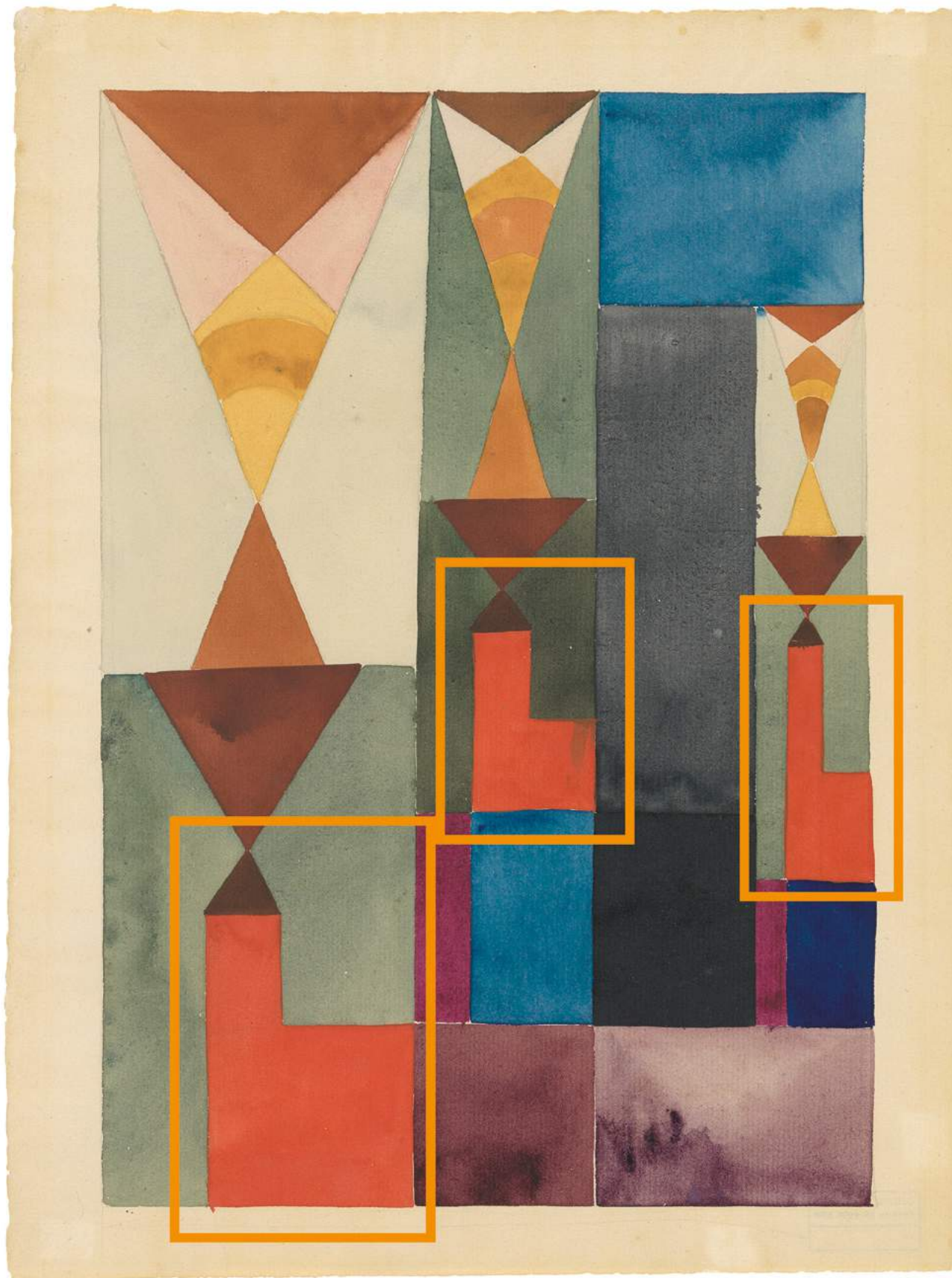


Fig. 4 Sophie Taeuber-Arp: *Vertical-Horizontal Composition with Reciprocal Triangles* (Corresponding to the *Triptych*), 1918. Gouache and pencil on paper, 31.5 x 23 cm. The orange outlines the “polygonal composition.” Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth. Photomontage: F. Beeli, 2021



Fig. 5 Diagram of the first geometric composition of the *Triptych* with the “polygonal composition” outlined in orange. Photomontage: F. Beeli, 2021

it is a material that was typically used in commissioned works by Hans Arp, including the “Recréations,” or later creations, made after her death.

The fact that the lower edge was trimmed is supported by an unpublished note by Hugo Weber, the coauthor of the catalogue raisonné from 1948, according to which the *Triptych* represented a room divider. If the original canvas supports were much longer, the work's dimensions would certainly match those of a room divider. Moreover, if the *Triptych* were originally conceived as an applied arts object, that would explain the atypical medium of oil on canvas for Taeuber-Arp's work of this period, which she only began using in her fine art practice at the end of the 1920s. Until then, her work had been exhibited exclusively within the applied arts context. In her early period, she primarily made paintings in gouache or aquarelle on paper or cardboard. The composition of the *Triptych*, however, can clearly be assigned to the early

vertical-horizontal compositions. Taeuber-Arp used this compositional format from 1916 to 1925. The combination of pure as well as mixed colors is also found in other works from this period.

A dating of the first composition around 1918 can, therefore, be considered correct—possibly in the form of a screen and less as a three-part painting. The alteration was probably intended to transform it into an early, purely geometric work of art.

The 1948 catalogue raisonné suggests that the 1918 gouache *Composition verticale-horizontale à triangles réciproques* (Vertical-Horizontal Composition with Reciprocal Triangles) corresponds to the *Triptych*. This can now be understood more clearly through the detailed technical findings: The similarity of the “polygonal” composition in the first layer of the *Triptych* with the “polygonal” composition of the gouache becomes apparent (figs. 4 and 5). This also speaks for a dating of

the *Triptych* around 1918—assuming that the dating of the gouache was correct. Both works have been interpreted as having a sacred connotation, due to the use of golden paint and the interpretation of the “polygonal composition” as a “church composition.” Through the research, however, it has emerged that this was not necessarily the artist’s original intent. Gold and silver tones recur in her oeuvre and can also be understood as “embellishments.” The sacral reference in the object’s later reception must stem from Hans Arp, because only he was aware of the original “polygonal composition” and that entire fields of color were rendered in golden paint. Clearly, later interpretations were based on his words about the *Triptych* in *Our Daily Dream*¹ in 1955. Whether the composition of the *Triptych* is a purely visual system, without reference to an actual object, or whether the design expresses the artist’s own spirituality cannot be answered conclusively. Correspondence and image reproductions certainly prove that other objects were altered during the artist’s lifetime. These changes indicate that Taeuber-Arp did not regard her works as fundamentally complete. For the *Triptych* specifically, no further object-related information could be found.

The golden fields of color were painted over in green around 1958 (when the work was given to the Kunsthaus Zürich) at the latest (fig. 1). In isolated cases, the color extends beyond the edge of the image to the hardboard panels. Generally, this layer of color is much thinner, like a glaze, in contrast to the opaque application of the other layers of paint. The structure of the support also stands out conspicuously in some places, and some areas appear darker. Thus, it is assumed that the overpainting was meant to cover losses in the paint layer. It is also noticeable that the application of the color at the edges of the fields is uneven, crudely extending into neighboring color fields. This method of application does not correspond to Taeuber-Arp’s precise technique and is considered to be an alteration made by another hand. Various lighting methods and material analyses revealed partial alterations, such as putty, retouching, and varnish applications that were atypical for Taeuber-Arp’s painting practice in terms of their materials, some of which only came onto the market after the artist’s death. They can, therefore, be regarded as material additions that did not originate with the artist herself. While the reason for the partial

application of varnish remains unclear, the partial application of paint in damaged areas can be understood as retouching—accordingly, as alterations made for the purpose of restoration.

With its compelling object history, the *Triptych* can now be better classified within the artist’s oeuvre. This project’s research findings also provide a basis for developing a concept for dealing with alterations. Additionally, this research can be used to clarify alterations in other works.

Looking Ahead

Hardboard—a material used by Hans Arp after the artist’s death—is also used in the “Recréations.” However, there has been little substantial research on the presence of materials made from wood fibers or shavings in the (supposed) “Recréations,” the (ostensible) “Duo-Arbeiten” with Hans Arp, or her reliefs. Thus, there is the need for further research on wood materials in her oeuvre, which is relevant for shedding light on attributions or to correct or differentiate them, in terms of both authorship as well as dating.

This important work by Taeuber-Arp also deserves further attention: On the one hand, it has a fascinating object history. On the other, the current, inconsistent appearance diminishes its aesthetic value. From both an art historical as well as a conservation-restoration perspective, the aim would be to ensure that work’s condition reflects its value and that its object history is communicated. As a follow-up project, a rough concept for restoration has been conceived and will be developed further.

1 Hans Arp: *Unserm täglichen Traum*, Zurich 1955, p. 14.



After an internship in furniture restoration, **Franziska Beeli** began studying conservation at the Bern University of the Arts in 2011. During her undergraduate studies, she completed a semester abroad at the Technical University of Munich under the department chair for restoration, art technology, and conservation science. She augmented her academic training at both private studios as well as museum institutions, graduating with a focus in painting and sculpture in 2016. In 2017, Beeli first encountered Sophie Taeuber-Arp’s work at the Museum für Gestaltung Zürich, where she was involved in the organization of a marionette exhibition that included the artist’s marionettes for the play *King Stag* (1918). During her master’s studies, also at the Bern University of the Arts, she continued her professional training as a conservator and restorer in the field of paintings and sculpture. In this context, Beeli returned to *King Stag* and examined the alternations to the marionettes in a technological study. As a student, she did further work at the Atelier Läuchli Eysler Hoess—Ateliergemeinschaft Konservierung Restaurierung and the Kunsthaus Zürich, where she eventually encountered another important work from Taeuber-Arp’s early period—*Triptych* (1918). Alterations were also present in this work, which she examined in detail in her master’s thesis. In 2021, she successfully completed her studies, and her thesis was nominated for the Swiss CRC Master Award the same year.

An Analysis of Sophie Taeuber-Arp's Materials and Working Methods

Gesine Betz

The aim of my research fellowship at the Stiftung Arp e.V.'s archive in Berlin in July and August 2021 was to examine and analyze the holdings related to Sophie Taeuber-Arp's materials and working methods. When confronting questions about painting technique, the evaluation of archival documents or the artist's writings serves as an important source for gaining insight into artistic techniques and developments. In addition, historical image reproductions as well as preliminary studies for the development of a composition can provide extremely helpful information for understanding the work process and painting technique.

The knowledge gained through the research fellowship will form the basis of a research project with the working title "Sophie Taeuber-Arp–Maltechnik der Schweizer Pionierin der Moderne" (Sophie Taeuber-Arp–Painting Technique of the Swiss Pioneer of Modernism). While in recent years there have been extensive studies on the painting techniques of Taeuber-Arp's male contemporaries, such as Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Cuno Amiet, Emil Nolde, Ferdinand Hodler, and Edvard Munch, no similar research has been conducted on the women painters of this period.

The research project will result in a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of the artistic techniques of this pathbreaking twentieth-century artist, her working practices, and the materials used in her artworks (marionettes, sculptures, reliefs, and paintings). It may also eventually produce evidence about the authenticity of artworks and whether they were executed by another hand, according to earlier models by Sophie Taeuber-Arp. In recent decades, scientific analyses have become essential to an expanded and holistic under-

standing the genesis of works of art. Thus, the results are also expected to be an asset to art historians grappling with the many open-ended questions about Sophie Taeuber-Arp's oeuvre.

In art technology, the work of art as a unique primary source is examined through optical and radiation diagnostic methods as well as material analyses, and the evaluation and interpretation of the results are combined with sources from the natural sciences and humanities. If there are written sources with concrete statements on the painting technique of individual works of art, these are suitable for in-depth art-technological investigations in order to assess the veracity of the source material. As a methodological approach to the study of art technology, this interdisciplinary approach involving written, factual, and pictorial sources has been established by researchers. By bringing together the separate results from different perspectives, the aim is to create as multi-layered and holistic a picture as possible.¹

Two masters' theses from the Bern University of Arts (HKB) conservation and restoration program currently form the basis for research into Sophie Taeuber-Arp's painting technique.² Additional scientific analyses and art technological examinations of painted works on paper³ and a wood sculpture, the so-called "Dada Head" of 1920,⁴ have been published in exhibition catalogues by the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York. Further insights stemmed from the Stiftung Arp e.V.'s extensive library of art historical literature on Sophie Taeuber-Arp and Hans Arp as well as the various early twentieth-century art movements, which was conveniently concentrated in one place. In particular, the international exhibition catalogues that include works by Sophie Taeuber-Arp and the catalogue from the artist's retrospective in Basel, London, and New York in 2021/22, which includes a scholarly review of her work, vividly illuminate the current state of art historical research.

Furthermore, the straightforward review of the two digitized theoretical texts written by Taeuber-Arp during her lifetime on the handling of color and form⁵ as well as her coauthored contributions to the journal *Plastique* was helpful for gaining a better understanding of how she implemented her theoretical views in her work. In terms of painting technique, it would be interesting to investigate whether she indeed used the pigments mentioned in her theoretical texts in her art.

To better understand the object history of individual works of art, it was also extremely useful to consult the object files available at the archive. Furthermore, the existing condition records and restoration documents on Sophie Taeuber-Arp's artworks provided partial information on the technological findings about the objects and serve as useful reference material when examining comparable works.

Important technological information can also be gleaned from the private letters Hans Arp wrote following Sophie Taeuber's death. For example, his exchange with her sister, Erika Schlegel, includes the mention that the Neuchâtel artist Lilli Erzinger "repaired some of the damaged paintings by Sophie [Taeuber-Arp]" at the Meudon studio in the spring of 1946.⁶ Further correspondence, for example between gallerists and buyers with Hans Arp and later Marguerite Hagenbach-Arp, allow for conclusions to be made about the posthumous handling of Sophie Taeuber's artworks.

The later reworking of the colors as well as new versions of wood reliefs by Hans Arp is, therefore, addressed in various contexts,⁷ and it is most likely that this information can also be applied to the aesthetic treatment of other artworks by Sophie Taeuber-Arp. Regarding questions of later changes and possible new creations in the artist's oeuvre, the documents and letters between various individuals and the Basel craftsman Marcel Schneider, who produced, restored, and overpainted works of art for Hans Arp, are of special interest. Knowledge about Marcel Schneider's materials and working techniques versus those of Sophie Taeuber-Arp could complement art historical research in evaluating authenticity and the attribution of artworks, as well as differentiating the hand of Sophie Taeuber-Arp from that of Hans Arp and others.

1 It is planned to publish the research results in the continuously developing online catalogue raisonné of Sophie Taeuber-Arp’s oeuvre within the framework of the Sophie Taeuber-Arp Research Project (STARP) as a joint research project with the Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth and the Gerhard-Marcks-Haus, Bremen.

2 Cathja Hürlimann: “Zur Maltechnik Sophie Taeuber-Arps. Herangehensweise, Materialien und Umsetzung untersucht an ausgewählten Gemälden von 1930 bis 1939,” Master’s Thesis, HKB, Bern, 2019; Franziska Beeli: “Die Umgestaltung des Werks ‘Triptychon’ (1918) von Sophie Taeuber-Arp. Werkuntersuchung, vergleichende Werkanalysen, Kontextualisierung,” Master’s Thesis, HKB, Bern, 2020.

3 Annie Wilker: “Planung und Präzision: Sophie Taeuber-Arps Arbeitsmethoden,” in: *Sophie Taeuber-Arp. Gelebte Abstraktion* (ed. by Anne Umland and Walburga Krupp), exh. cat. Kunstmuseum Basel 2021, pp. 298–303.

4 Lynda Zycherman, et al.: “Conservation,” in: *Dada in the Collection of the Museum of Modern Art* (ed. by Anne Umland, Adrian Sudhalter, and Scott Gerson), exh. cat. Museum of Modern Art, New York 2008, pp. 301–304.

5 Sophie Taeuber-Arp: “Bemerkungen über den Unterricht im ornamentalen Entwerfen,” in: *Korrespondenzblatt des Schweiz. Vereins der Gewerbe- und Hauswirtschaftslehrerinnen* 14/11–12 (1922), pp. 156–159; Sophie Taeuber-Arp and Blanche Gauchat (1927): *Zeichnen für textile Berufe* (ed. by Gewerbeschule der Stadt Zürich), 1927.

6 Letter from Hans Arp to Erika Schlegel, April 26, 1946.

7 In the letter from Marguerite Hagenbach-Arp to Dr. Peter Nathan of June 12, 1959, for instance, it says that Hans Arp had original natural wood reliefs refinished or the edges of wood reliefs subsequently painted in color. And in the letter from Marguerite Hagenbach-Arp to Carola Giedion-Welcker on March 25, 1960, she notes that Arp thought, “it can only do a white relief good to sand it down and paint it over again.” Further, “Both in Meudon and in my collection as well as that of Annie Müller are reliefs that have been refurbished by Hans Arp after every exhibition. Hans does not think that it is at all necessary for a relief from 1928 to show its age through dirt or damage.”



Gesine Betz is a conservator specializing in twentieth-century art. As a lecturer at the Bern University of the Arts, she is active in both teaching as well as research. She also works at the Zentrum Paul Klee in Bern as a painting conservator. In addition to her diploma in the Conservation-Restoration of art and cultural assets with a focus on painting, sculpture, and modern art at the Cologne University of Applied Sciences, she also successfully completed the part-time Master’s degree programme in European Cultural Heritage at the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder). During her time as a research assistant at the Berlin State Museums, she received advanced training in the conservation departments at the Alte Nationalgalerie and the Hamburger Bahnhof–Museum for Contemporary Art, after which she spent five years as a conservator at the Hessian State Museum, Darmstadt, responsible for works of art from 1850 onwards, including the “Block Beuys.” Further professional experience includes her collaboration with Christian Scheidemann’s Contemporary Conservation Studio in New York, the Museum Ostwall in Dortmund, and the Kunstmuseum Bonn.

“A Far Greater Influence Than Is Generally Assumed”: Sophie Taeuber-Arp and Fashion Design

Francesca Ferrari

In 1926, Sophie Taeuber-Arp posed for a photograph with her husband Hans Arp, her sister Erika Schlegel, and her nephew Leonard outside Schlegel’s home at 78 Plattenstrasse in Zurich (fig. 1). The image shows the four relatives squinting before the camera, with Leonard perched on top of a wall shielding his eyes from the bright sun. They form a fashionable ensemble: Arp, at the center, is enveloped in a double-breasted trench coat, while Schlegel and Taeuber-Arp, standing on either side, don a dark fur coat and a faux-leopard lined felt coat, respectively. Leonard, for his part, sports a pair of traditional Alpine lederhosen and a bell-shaped woolen jacket. At first glance, they all seem to wear winter staples available to middle-class Swiss buyers at the time. Yet, upon closer inspection, a detail reveals an exceptional example of Taeuber-Arp’s engagement with fashion design. Two geometrizing human bodies flanked with jigsaw patterns are embroidered within the stripes of Schlegel’s woolen sweater, visible under her coat.

Notably, these motifs proliferated in Taeuber-Arp’s artworks from the late 1910s and 1920s and bear her distinctive mark. The abstracted figures inhabit works such as her 1926 gouache *Five Extended Figures*, while similar angular motifs emerge in a 1916 embroidered pillowcase and, later, in a 1918–1920 portfolio for a book of fairytales (figs. 2 and 3). The revelation of this detail is twofold. On the one hand, it demonstrates the flexibility of Taeuber-Arp’s motifs to inhabit both two-dimensional works meant to be contemplated and three-dimensional objects endowed with specific everyday functions (an aspect that was highlighted in the ret-



Fig. 1 Erika Schlegel, Hans Arp, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, and Leonard Schlegel at Plattenstrasse, Zurich, 1926 (Photographer unknown). Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth

respective *Sophie Taeuber-Arp: Living Abstraction* held at the Kunstmuseum Basel, the Tate Modern in London, and the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 2021/2022). On the other hand, it provides a glimpse of a little-studied aspect of the artist's multifaceted engagement with the applied arts, that is, her endeavors in the realm of fashion design. I propose that, besides further illuminating Taeuber-Arp's interventions in the realm of textiles, these endeavors are significant in the context of her larger oeuvre because they exemplify the organic, transformative notion of ornament that she outlined in her pedagogical texts.

To be sure, wearable textiles informed by contemporaneous fashion abound in Taeuber-Arp's work from this period, especially in relation to performative contexts. The marionettes that she created for the 1918 staging of the play *King Stag* at that year's Swiss Werkbund exhibition and festivities are embellished with fragments of colorful fabrics, feathers, and metal implants that anticipate the daring couture experiments of the so-called Roaring Twenties. Moreover, since her childhood, Taeuber-Arp had crafted exoticizing costumes for masked balls, carnival parties, and, later, productions of Rudolf von Laban's dance school, creating sophisticated orientalist disguises as well as more avantgarde body-masks that transformed the wearer's figure.¹ Though

many examples of these costumes are documented in archival photographs, components of only three designs survive. These include a flowery headdress known to have been donned by Schlegel sometime in the 1920s, a shimmering pair of patchwork trousers that were part of a joint costume Taeuber-Arp and Schlegel wore together around 1924, and two geometric full-body masks that Taeuber-Arp designed after two Hopi katsina tithu (figs. 4–6) (Schlegel's colleague Carl Gustav Jung had brought the latter to Zurich from his 1925 trip to the Southwest of the United States). All her documented costumes display a sartorial attention to color-combinations, textural effects, and the relation between fabric and the surface of the body.

These qualities would have informed Taeuber-Arp's experiments with fashion outside of the realm of deliberate masquerade. Though no items of clothing of her making are preserved, her training and career as a woman artist bridging the so-called "fine" and "applied" arts in the early twentieth century would have been conducive to at least a partial engagement with the production or decoration of garments. In fact, Taeuber-Arp's avant-garde experiments with textiles were also groundbreaking because they unfolded against a highly gendered tradition that categorized this medium as a decorative, domestic activity of which women were the primary agents. This



Fig. 2 Sophie Taeuber-Arp: *Five Extended Figures*, 1926. Gouache, metallic paint, and pencil on paper, 29.2 × 23 cm. Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth



Fig. 3 Sophie Taeuber-Arp: *Cushion panel*, 1916. Wool on canvas, 53 × 52 cm. Museum für Gestaltung, Zurich

tradition often informed and perpetuated enrollment biases in art and trade schools, no matter how progressive, restricting female students to this discipline.² Taeuber-Arp lamented these biases in a 1912 letter to Schlegel, complaining that her application to attend a furniture design class at Hamburg's School of Applied Arts was rejected because the instructor only enrolled male students.³ Fifteen years after this disappointment, Hanna Krebs (then an instructor at Zurich's School of Applied Arts) prefaced the 1927 manual for drawing, design, and decoration that Taeuber-Arp co-authored with Blanche Gachat (another fellow teacher at the school) to "women students in the field of textiles."⁴ This dedication suggests that, well into the 1920s and during Taeuber-Arp's tenure as a teacher in Zurich, textile design was still largely practiced by women, and implied that other disciplines would be harder for them to access.

Perhaps as a reaction to these conditions, throughout her career Taeuber-Arp successfully reclaimed activities that at the time were mostly dominated by men, such as woodwork, architecture, and interior design. Yet, she also embraced the feminized connotations of certain genres, materials, and media in order to disrupt arbitrary hierarchies that cast interrelated phenomena such as art and craft, abstraction and decoration, women's and men's work as fundamentally opposed and incompatible. Indeed, she never shied away from the gendered connotations of physical adornment. She created numerous beaded necklaces, bracelets, purses, and one pendant that bear witness to her interest in decorating the female body (fig. 7). Similarly, she produced at least one wooden powder box, which belonged to Schlegel, that links her work to the intimate, embodied practice of personal grooming, including wearing makeup.⁵ These examples demonstrate Taeuber-Arp's enthusiastic interpretations of what were then conventionally feminine accessories and habits despite her experiences of exclusion. Taken alongside her ventures in disciplines traditionally denied to women, they show her polymathic approach to a variety of objects and her active resistance to arbitrary binary systems of value.

Taeuber-Arp's passion for clothing related to her larger fascination with bodily ornament. Her students remarked on her exceptional elegance, and candid snapshots, family photographs, and staged artistic images document her daring outfits.⁶ Consider the faux-leopard lining of the coat she wore in the picture mentioned



Fig. 4 Erika Schlegel wearing a costume with a head-dress designed by Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Zurich, 1920s (Photographer unknown). 6.5 × 4.4 cm. Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth



Fig. 5 Sophie Taeuber-Arp and Erika Schlegel wearing costumes consisting of hats and patchwork tops and trousers, Zurich, c. 1924 (Photographer unknown). 6.9 × 4.7 cm. Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth

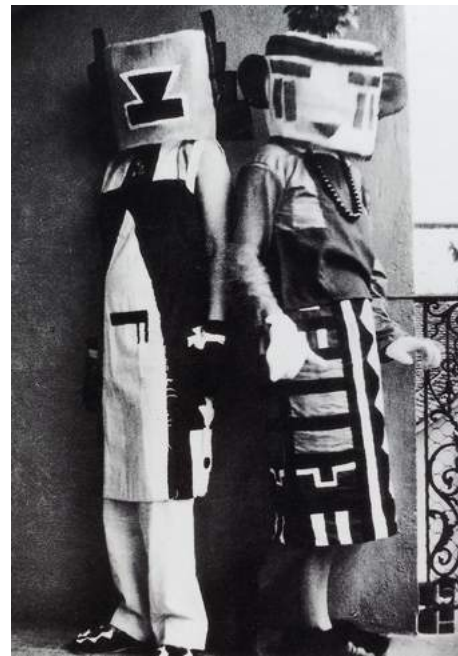


Fig. 6 Sophie Taeuber-Arp and Erika Schlegel wearing costumes inspired by Hopi katsina tithu, 1925 (Photographer unknown). Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth



Fig. 8 Sophie Taeuber-Arp and Hans Arp, Strasbourg, 1925 (Photographer unknown). Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth

above. Contemporaneous images show that she owned a matching bucket hat, and photographs taken in Meudon in the 1930s demonstrate that her taste for this material and pattern did not waver through the years, manifesting again in the form of a spotted fur collar and detachable sleeves. Other images from the 1920s and early 1930s show her wearing, among other items, flowery, kimono-like pajamas; an oversize plaid shirt (possibly Arp's?); a narrow, squarish tie with the attendant tie clip; a blouse and skirt with coordinated patterns encircling the collar and pockets; a bathing suit with contrasting profiles; and a whole range of stylish cloche hats (fig. 8).⁷ These and more recorded outfits relay a savvy game of mixing and matching that betrays a creative pleasure in alternating combinations of different materials, colors, and cuts.

In some cases, the same garments and accessories reappear across various images, suggesting Taeuber-Arp's savvy use of items of clothing to shape her image. Consider the most obviously staged among the three headshots that photographer Nicolai Aluf took of the artist posing with her wooden *Dada Head* in 1920 (fig. 9).⁸

Here, Taeuber-Arp sports a black bowler hat with a netted lace veil that partially covers her face. She also donned a tightly fastened, oversized jacket made of a dark, heavy fabric that starkly contrasts with its light collar and spherical buttons. The artist wore both the hat and the jacket, or at least comparable versions, in other documented contexts. A similar piece of headgear appears in a photograph depicting Taeuber-Arp seated at an outdoor table holding what looks like a glass cup of tea (fig. 10). Here, the rim of the hat seems a bit sharper than in Aluf's photograph, and the veil is thrown backwards, hanging loose over Taeuber-Arp's shoulders. Seen along with the artist's smile, the luminous outdoor setting, and the classic string of pearls around her neck, this accessory possesses a much less dramatic allure. Another photograph dated around the same time as Aluf's shots depicts Taeuber-Arp donning the jacket in another, more relaxed setting, this time leaning against the railing of a balcony.⁹ In this image, the jacket is open to reveal a necklace with an oval beaded pendant reminiscent of one that the artist made in



Fig. 7 Sophie Taeuber-Arp: *Geometric Forms and Letters* (beaded bag), 1920. Glass beads, thread, cord, and fabric, 17.3 × 13 cm flat. Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth



Fig. 9 Nic Aluf: Sophie Taeuber-Arp with her *Dada Head*, 1920. 11.7 × 9.6 cm. Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth



Fig. 10 Sophie Taeuber-Arp sitting at a table, n.d. (Photographer unknown). Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth

1918 (fig. 11). Standing with one hand in her pocket, her cuff roughly turned up, Taeuber-Arp shows off the light silky interior of the jacket and the deep horizontal cuts of the buttonholes.¹⁰

These examples demonstrate the versatility of Taeuber-Arp's outfits and suggest that, even when she was not openly engaging in a process of disguise, she knew how to dress a part—in the case of Aluf's portrait, the part of an avant-garde artist posing with a work exemplifying her affiliation with Dada.¹¹ Her deliberate use of clothes to mediate the photographer's depiction of her artistic persona clearly emerges when considering the distinct fashions in which she dons both the hat and the jacket. It is also proven by her drastic change of attire during the session; the two other headshots, in fact, show a more approachable Taeuber-Arp, hatless and wearing a simple blouse with a nondescript necklace. This transformation highlights the fact that the image is the more theatrical of the three surviving from that 1920 session, as it conveys a self-conscious fashioning of Taeuber-Arp's artistic persona.

This expert game of dress-up informed not only Taeuber-Arp's combinations of readymade clothes, but

also her original creations. At least once, the artist expressed a desire to engage with fashion as a maker, and not merely as a consumer. During a trip to Paris in 1921, she attempted to arrange a meeting with the celebrity stylist and avant-garde darling Paul Poiret, hoping to show him a portfolio of couture projects and potentially engage in a collaboration, which unfortunately never came to fruition.¹² Beyond this aborted plan, Taeuber-Arp seems to have accomplished a fashion project even more complete and radical than the embroidery on Schlegel's sweater. Another photograph from 1920 shows Taeuber-Arp clad in a shimmering gown and an elongated hat, standing on the slanted top of a roof in Zurich (fig. 12). Her authorship of this dress is unmistakable: the two rectangular shapes (seemingly made of a gleaming fabric) that extend vertically on the frontal length of the cape covering her torso resemble both the costumes that she designed for herself and Schlegel in 1924 and the geometric compositions that proliferate in her artworks, such as the 1915–1916 gouache *Vertical-Horizontal Composition on White Ground* (fig. 13). Though the hat has a garish, sculptural quality, this attire is not as clearly carnivalesque or mask-like as the

party suits that Taeuber-Arp is known to have designed. Rather, the elegant superimposition of distinct textures over the wearer's legs, the asymmetrical structure that leaves the right arm bare and covers the left with a wide, airy sleeve, and the matching satin-like pumps recall the daring couture experiments of popular fashion creators involved with avant-garde art circles such as Léon Bakst, Poiret, and Sonia Delaunay-Terk, who would become her close friend. Still, the gown has a subtle transformative effect on Taeuber-Arp's body, virtually redrawing its contours: the flared, low hem of the cape makes her torso appear compact, while the hat increases her stature. Together, these features shape her body into a cone of sorts, geometrizing Taeuber-Arp's figure so that it slightly resembles the abstracted personages that abound in her oeuvre, including the conical marionette *Dr. Oedipus Complex* (fig. 14). Unlike the marionette's rigid wooden outfit, however, the airy facture of the gown would have afforded Taeuber-Arp a fluid, graceful movement as well as a clear, delicate silhouette that would have presumably fit the stylish event she might have attended thus clad.

A pedagogical text on textiles that Taeuber-Arp wrote during her tenure at Zurich's School of Applied Arts and published in a teachers' association journal in 1922 demonstrates that she did not simply conceive of textiles as inert decorative vessels, but rather as vibrant surfaces that could shape objects and environments much like architectural interventions do. She instructed her students thus: "The decoration must not look pasted on, but must grow organically into the surface or out of the object."¹³ She contrasted this principle with what she called "the vapid copies of various styles in the latter half of the nineteenth century," mentioning buildings and pieces of furniture that, to her, could form "an environment [that] makes a visually sensitive person ill."¹⁴ The same cautionary tale appears in the 1927 text that Taeuber-Arp co-authored with Gauchat, which dismissed nineteenth-century architectural ornamentation as a way to dissimulate a sort of existential alienation: "By superficially applying and warping the most diverse types of style, an attempt was made to conceal the emptiness within."¹⁵



Fig. 11 Sophie Taeuber-Arp on a balcony, c. 1920 (Photographer unknown). Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth



Fig. 12 Sophie Taeuber-Arp on a roof, Zurich, 1920 (Photographer unknown). Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth

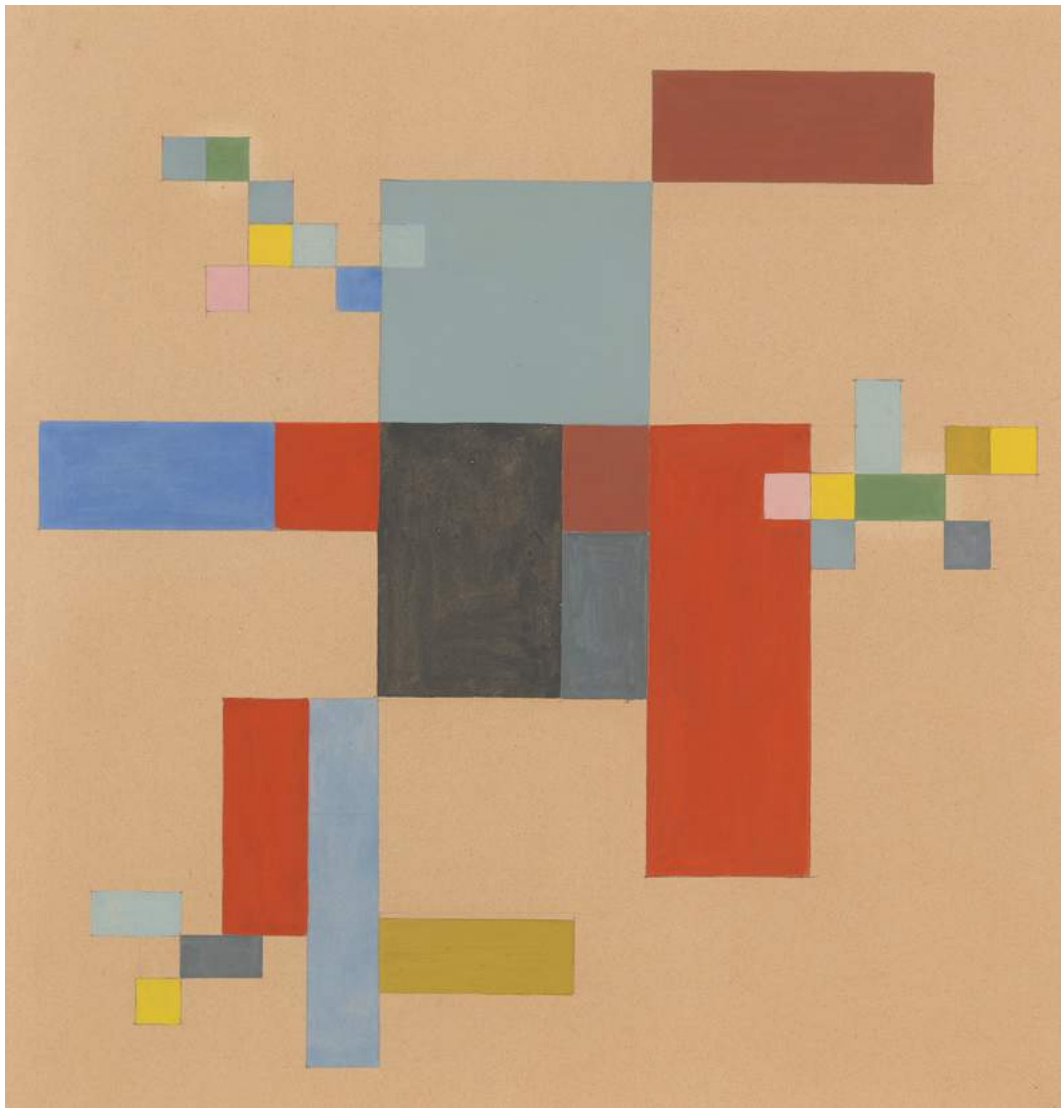


Fig. 13 Sophie Taeuber-Arp: *Vertical-Horizontal Composition on White Ground*, 1915–16. Gouache and pencil on paper, 29.5 x 28 cm. Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth



Fig. 14 Sophie Taeuber-Arp: *Dr. Oedipus Complex*, 1918. Oil on wood, brass sheet, and metal hardware, 38 x 19 x 19 cm. Museum für Gestaltung, Zurich

These two texts show that for Taeuber-Arp, ornament should have an integral connection to both its support and the thing it purports to adorn, fostering a sense of harmony between decorative motifs, materials, objects, and the environments they inhabit. Notably, as she addressed the ability of architecture and the decorative arts to impact their surroundings and the perception of the people living around them in her 1922 essay, she extended the same discussion to fashion: “by the way,” she asserted, “I also believe that clothing has a far greater influence than is generally assumed.”¹⁶ Much like buildings and everyday objects, she implied, fashion participates in the creation of a genuine world where decoration does not function as a mask and where makers “create things in accordance with our personalities and the present times.”¹⁷ In other words, fashion was another way in which Taeuber-Arp saw art and life come together, complementing her takes on other creative milieus.

Only a few objects related to Taeuber-Arp’s activity in fashion design survive, and the photographic evidence documenting her creations is scarce. Yet the artist’s production of accessories such as jewelry and purses; of wearable textiles for performative contexts such as carnival costumes and dance attire; and her demonstrable pleasure in dressing up suggest that fashion played an important part in her everyday life as well as in the development of her career and artistic persona. Deeply connected to her positioning of textiles as a medium that undermines arbitrary hierarchies separating art from craft, fashion design crucially relates to Taeuber-Arp’s distinctive theory of ornament. In her pedagogical writings, clothing emerged as a membrane symbiotically connected to the animated body moving in space, as transformative as it is transforming. In the context of her oeuvre, too, one could say that fashion had a “far greater influence than is generally assumed.”

1 On Taeuber-Arp’s costumes, see Natalia Sidlina: “Activating Form: The Ball Costumes,” in: *Sophie Taeuber-Arp: Living Abstraction*, eds. Walburga Krupp, Anne Umland, with Charlotte Healy, exh. cat. Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2021, pp. 39–41; Walburga Krupp: “‘Real Indians’: Sophie Taeuber-Arp’s Early Work with Regard to Foreign Cultures; Following the Trail,” in: *Dada Africa: Dialogue with the Other*, eds. Ralf Burmeister, Michaela Oberhofer, and Esther Tisa Francini, exh. cat. Rietberg Museum, Zurich, 2016, pp. 49–55; and Sarah Burkhalter: “Kachinas and Kinesthe-sia: Dance in the Art of Sophie Taeuber-Arp,” in: *Sophie Taeuber-Arp: Today Is Tomorrow*, exh. cat. Aargauer Kunsthau, Aarau, 2014, pp. 226–232. The problematic katsina tithu-inspired costumes are also addressed in chapter 3 of Francesca Ferrari: “Animated Geometries: Abstraction and the Body in the 1920s Work of Alexandra Exter, Paul Klee, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, and Joaquín Torres-García,” PhD diss., New York University, forthcoming.

2 See, for example, the Bauhaus as described in Anja Baumhoff: *The Gendered World of the Bauhaus: The Politics of Power at the Weimar Republic’s Premier Art Institute*, 1919–1932, Frankfurt am Main 2001. For an analysis of Taeuber-Arp’s gender within the Dada milieu, see Ruth Hemus: “Sophie Taeuber,” in: *Dada’s Women*, New Haven 2009, pp. 53–89, and Francesca Ferrari: “Envisaging Dada: Legibility and Illegibility in Sophie Taeuber’s *Dada Head*,” in: *Oxford Art Journal*, forthcoming 2022.

3 “I am disappointed that the teacher with whom I really wanted to draw furniture did not take any women.” Letter from Sophie Taeuber-Arp to Erika Schlegel, dated December 18, 1912. Cited and translated in Sigrid Schade, Walburga Krupp, and Medea Hoch: “On Sophie Taeuber-Arp’s Artistic Career and Understanding of Herself: A First Reading of Her Letters from the 1910s,” in: *Sophie Taeuber-Arp: Today Is Tomorrow*, exh. cat. Aargauer Kunsthau, Aarau, 2014, pp. 262.

4 Sophie Taeuber-Arp and Blanche Gauchat: “Guidelines for Drawing Instruction in the Textile Professions” (1927), cited and translated in: *Sophie Taeuber-Arp: Avant-Garde Pathways*, exh. cat. Museo Picasso, Málaga, 2009, p. 166.

5 Sophie Taeuber-Arp, *Powder Box*, c. 1918. Paint and metallic powder on wood, 29.8 × 16.5 cm. Private collection, on long-term loan to the Aargauer Kunsthau, Aarau. For a description of this object, see Walburga Krupp: “Beautiful, Perfect Things: Sophie Taeuber-Arp’s Early Applied-Arts Career,” in exh. cat. Museum of Modern Art 2021, pp. 32–33.

6 A mention of Taeuber-Arp’s elegance by former student Elsi Giauque appears in: *Sophie Taeuber–Hans Arp: Künstlerpaare–Künstlerfreunde*, ed. Sandor Kuthy, exh. cat. Kunstmuseum Bern, 1988, p. 90. Cited and translated in: Sidlina, “Activating Form: The Ball Costumes” in exh. cat. Museum of Modern Art 2021, p. 39.

7 A number of these images are preserved in the biographical photographs section in the archives of the Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.

8 For in-depth analyses of this photograph, see Hemus: “Sophie Taeuber-Arp,” pp. 55–57; Leah Dickerman: “Object, Mask, Abstraction: The Heads,” in exh. cat. Museum of Modern Art 2021, pp. 99–100; and Ferrari: “Envisaging Dada: Legibility and Illegibility in Sophie Taeuber’s *Dada Head*.”

9 Sophie Taeuber-Arp, *Pendant*, 1918. Beads, 4.7 × 3.8 × 0.5 cm. Private collection, on long-term deposit to the Aargauer Kunsthau, Aarau.

10 This photograph, preserved in the archives at the Stiftung Arp e.V. in Berlin, is inscribed “Sophie Taeuber Zürich 1920 env.” on the verso. However, the features of the person depicted in the image appear slightly different from the artist’s, though she unmistakably wears the same jacket that Taeuber-Arp wore in a 1920 photograph taken by Nicolai Aluf. Further research is pending to securely identify the subject of this photograph.

11 According to Adrian Sudhalter, Taeuber-Arp sent this headshot to Tristan Tzara for inclusion in his unrealized anthology *Dadaglobe*. See Adrian Sudhalter: *Dadaglobe Reconstructed*, exh. cat. Kunsthau Zurich, 2016, plate 151. On Taeuber-Arp’s complex stance towards visualizations of belonging to the movement, see Ferrari: “Envisaging Dada: Legibility and Illegibility in Sophie Taeuber’s *Dada Head*.”

12 See Laura Braverman with Walburga Krupp: “Chronology,” in Museum of Modern Art 2021, p. 306.

13 Sophie Taeuber-Arp: “Remarks on Instruction in Ornamental Design” (1922), in *Sophie Taeuber-Arp: Avant-Garde Pathways*, exh. cat. Museo Picasso 2009, p. 163.

14 Idem.

15 Taeuber-Arp and Gauchat, 1927, p. 166.

16 Taeuber-Arp, 1922, p. 163.

17 Ibid., p. 162.



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On the Search for Dance: Sophie Taeuber-Arp as the Iconic Dada Dancer

Karine Montabord

The research project I developed for my fellowship at the Stiftung Arp e.V. is part of my doctoral research, which seeks to re-establish dance as a full-blown constituent of the Dada movement. Further, I wish to track evidence of that interdisciplinary encounter in artworks. Sophie Taeuber-Arp is a central artist in my study, in which I frame her experience of dance and investigate how she transposed her dance practice into her artworks to encapsulate energy and movement.

Jean Arp played a significant role in the reception of Taeuber-Arp’s oeuvre. With his texts, poems, and the selection of works he exhibited, he truly shaped the image of her life and career. In two short texts, “Dadaland” (1938)¹ and “Jalons” (1951),² he strongly associates her dance practice with her involvement in Dada. He declares “for a while, dance was her main occupation; she preferred it to her other activities”³ and “from 1916 to 1918 Sophie Taeuber was dancing in Zurich,”⁴ almost as if she was not doing anything else. In “Dadaland,” he recalls her painting, making embroideries or papiers-collés—but only in collaboration with him.⁵ Dance, therefore, is presented as her predominant activity and as her speciality among Dadaists. Why would Arp emphasize her dance practice above all?

Was Dance Her Main Activity?

Sophie Taeuber-Arp’s curiosity about dance originated in her study of bodily movement during her time at the Wilhelm von Debschitz School in Munich,⁶ where stu-



Fig. 1 Mary Wigman, Jean Arp, Berthe Trümpy in Arosa, 1918/1919. (Photographer unknown). Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth

dents were encouraged to broaden their interests. As part of their training, they were asked to organize costumed events and balls. In Munich, she practiced Mesendieck gymnastics, discovering German Expressionist dance with Rudolf Laban and Mary Wigman after she moved to Zurich.⁷ She first joined Laban's summer school at Monte Verità in 1914, returning at least once in 1917, and took lessons at the Laban School in Zurich. She also taught textile design at the School of Applied Arts in Zurich and was establishing herself as an independent artist—as demonstrated by her artistic production and participation in exhibitions—and was involved in Dada activities. There is no doubt that dance had an important place in her life, but she also dedicated her time to many other activities. However, as she rarely referred to dance in her correspondence, it is difficult to understand how important it was for her and how intertwined it was with her other artistic practices.

Sophie Taeuber practiced dance as a student of Laban (in both lessons and public performances) and during Dada manifestations. Yet only three public performances can be clearly identified, all in 1917: the opening of the Galerie Dada on March 29; the closing lecture evening of the Laban School in Zurich on June 27; and the congress of the Ordo Templi Orientis at Monte Verità from August 15 to 24.⁸ Additionally, descriptions of her performances by fellow Dadaists are valuable but remain vague and not tied to specific events.⁹ The boundaries between public and private, social and artistic matters are blurry. Rehearsals and private events offered many other occasions for Sophie Taeuber to dance, in addition to Dada manifestations and Laban performances. Mary Wigman exemplifies the complex relationship between the two groups, as she never danced at Dada events but was closely connected to the movement as a friend of Sophie Taeuber and Jean Arp (fig. 1). She also attended Dada soirées and threw parties and was clearly identified as a primary actor in Zurich's artistic life.¹⁰

At Wigman's costume party on March 10, 1917, Sophie Taeuber was mentioned as a costume maker along with Arp and Maya Chrusecz.¹¹ Photographs and letters to Taeuber's sister underline how important making and wearing costumes was to her throughout her life; she taught textile design and was involved in the Department of Form of the Laban School, which was in charge of “providing all the necessary areas—clothing, props, etc.—to conform with the overall idea of any festival performance.”¹² Thus, it is surprising not to find any mention of costumes of her making for Dada soirées. The only picture that supposedly represents her dancing was actually taken offstage, and shows her wearing a cardboard costume by Arp, which was very different from the supple yet eccentric fabric ones she was making herself (fig. 2).

The final Zurich Dada soirée took place in April 1919, but it was only in 1920 that Sophie Taeuber claimed her affiliation with Dada. *On Dada Head*¹³ and *Fresco from the Zurich Dada Pantheon*,¹⁴ she applied her signature, the word “Dada” and the date. Both were to be reproduced in Tristan Tzara's project *Dadaglobe*, along with her famous portrait, half hidden behind the Dada Head (fig. 3). These works are in line with those she was making at the time, so the “Dada label” extends to her entire production. Dance was one activity among others, but it is possible that it was her primary means

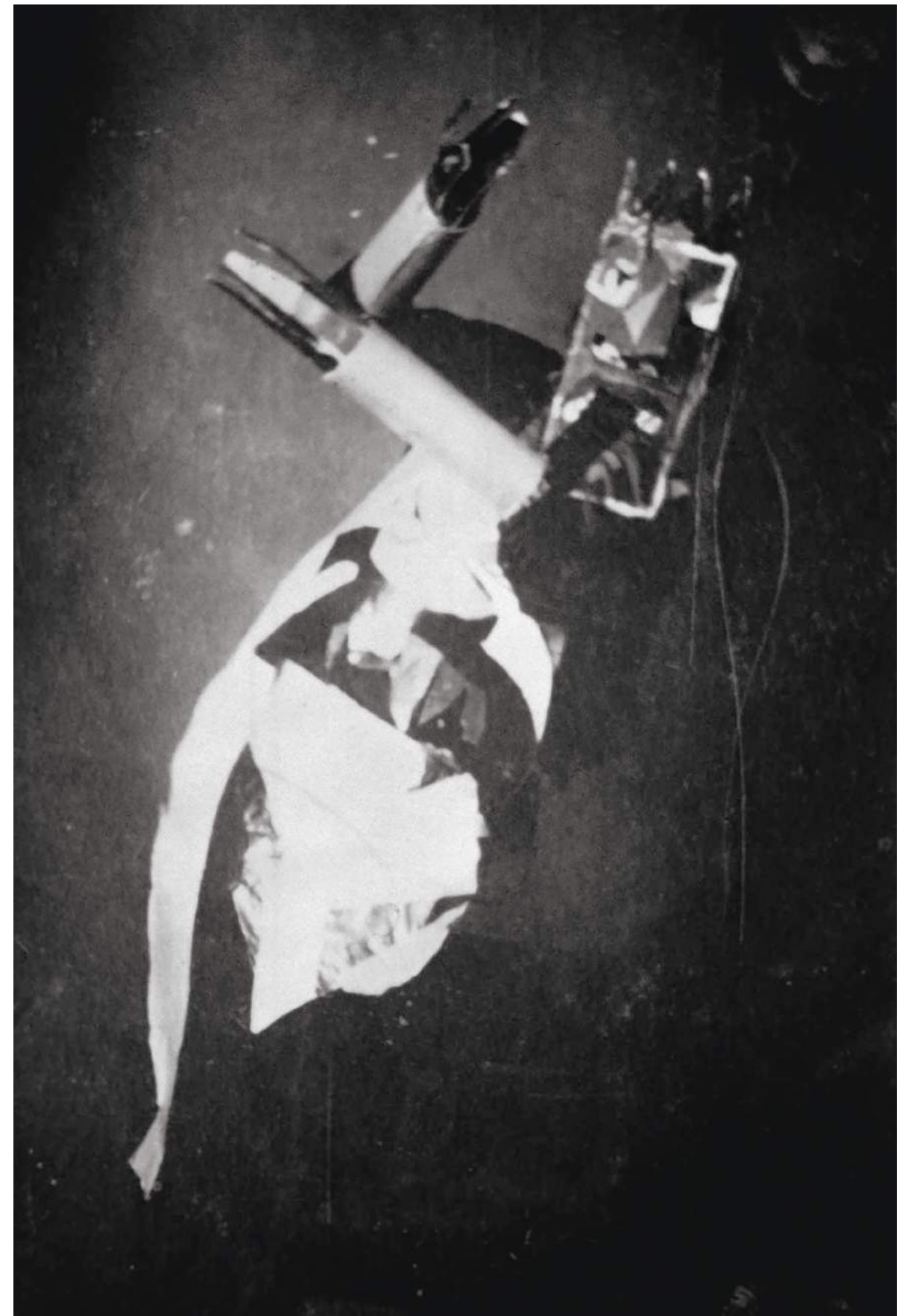


Fig. 2 Sophie Taeuber dancing at the opening of the Galerie Dada, Zurich, 1917. Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth



Fig. 3 Nic Aluf: Sophie Taeuber with *Dada Head*, Zurich, 1920. Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth

of expression during the Zurich Dada events and how she was identified by other Dadaists. With the end of the international conflict in 1918 and the reopening of the borders, the frenzy died down, and she may have felt the need to affirm her association with Dada in a more readable and durable way.

Dance as a Way to Stand Out

In “Jalons” and “Dadaland,” Arp does not mention any other dancers, thereby singling out Taeuber-Arp’s practice and presenting dance as her special contribution to Dada. He goes even further regarding the use of masks: “The management of the Applied Art School told Sophie Taeuber to give up participating in Dadaist events, otherwise she would lose her position. She was, therefore, forced to use a pseudonym and dance masked.”¹⁵ Dance is presented as a transgressive activity, associated with Dada’s bad press and Sophie Taeuber-Arp’s willingness to risk her position for it. This statement has been widely quoted in the literature on the artist, but there is nothing to prove or disprove it. It is plausible that the school was not thrilled to have a member of its faculty associated with

controversial activities. Yet Taeuber-Arp taught until 1929, and knowledge of her connection to both Dada and Laban could not have been restricted to the small cultural circle surrounding them.¹⁶ There was her social circle, her name published on programs, and her Dada work of 1920, among other evidence. Moreover, the costumes and masks worn at Dada soirées were not used to conceal identity as much as to transcend individuality through performance.

Puppet making is another trademark of Sophie Taeuber-Arp’s participation in Dada. In 1925, El Lissitzky and Jean Arp published a reproduction of the Guard from the *King Stag* in the Dada section in *The Isms of Art*.¹⁷ The wood-turned figures, with their geometric shapes and plain colors, immediately won over the avant-garde and were praised by many artists, who associated them with modernity and Dadaism (fig. 4). Although the *King Stag* marionettes are strongly linked to Dadaism and Taeuber-Arp’s dance practice today, they were created neither for a Dada manifestation nor a dance event. Yet reproductions were printed in Dada or related publications, and the aesthetic of the marionettes align with Taeuber-Arp’s works from that period. The play itself was set in the Zurich of 1918 and alludes to Dada.

The marionettes quickly drew great interest apart from the play, which was only performed three times in 1918. As Medea Hoch emphasizes, their performative nature was quickly forgotten, as they became art objects.¹⁸ During the last few decades, they have been exhibited in display cases in fully articulated, dynamic postures, weightless, caught in a jump or flying through the air in an attempt to convey their original purpose. The few photographs from 1918 only provide a glimpse of the staging, although they do reveal a sense of mobility quite different from more recent displays. Carl Fischer, the sculptor who turned the wooden marionettes after Taeuber-Arp’s designs, later recalled the difficulty in manipulating them.¹⁹ According to Bruno Mikol, additional strings were added later for greater ease.²⁰ In 1918 they were manipulated by students of the Applied Arts School who may not have had experience in the art of puppetry and were probably not able to make the most of the complex and unusual design of the marionettes. What, then, was Taeuber-Arp’s intent for these figures? How could an artist who paid so much attention to the relation between form and function and who was, at this time, a dance student, create such demanding marionettes? Does the design manifest the artist’s knowledge of movement from conception to handling? The remaining drawings of the marionettes only show the final stages of the design and the details of the commission are unknown, so the creative process is hard to gasp. However, it seems that the *King Stag* marionettes are the first and only puppets Taeuber-Arp made, which means it is possible that she was not able to fully consider the role and needs of the puppeteers.

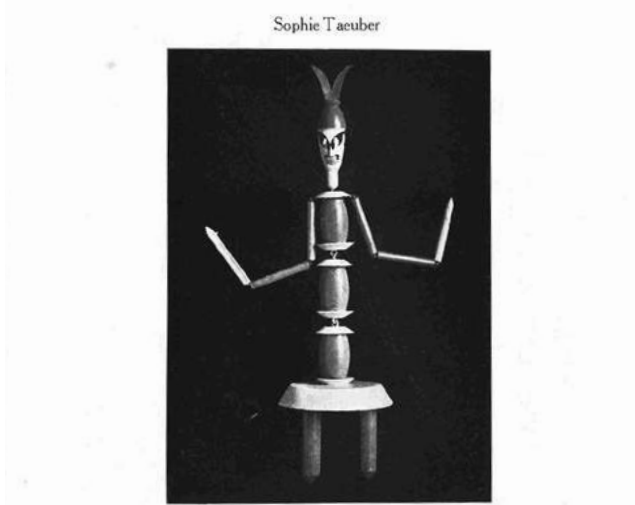
Another hypothesis is that Taeuber-Arp assumed the limited role of puppeteer from the beginning to use the physicality of the figures as a means of expression. Each assembly of geometric shapes creates a particular corporality, which generates movement that underscores the figure’s personality or situation. “Their mobility responds amazingly to the words which are uttered for them by hidden actors,”²¹ wrote Tristan Tzara. Even when their mobility is restricted, the marionettes convey movement through their structure. Hence, echoes of Taeuber-Arp’s dance practice may be sought more in the design of the marionettes than in their behavior on the 1918 stage. Although there are no substantial sources on the design process, the marionettes themselves survive and would benefit from study from the

live art point of view. Along those lines, contemporary artists have been inspired by the *King Stag* marionettes to create several works combining Dada and dance. Among these are Amélie Poirier’s *Dadaaa* (2019); Anka Schmid’s video installation *Sophie tanzt trotzdem* (Sophie dances anyway) (2014); and “Dada dance” (2021) by Anita Hugli, Patrick Lindenmaier, and Marina Rumjenzewa. The latter consists of two videos that were presented during the exhibition *Sophie Taeuber-Arp: Living Abstraction* at the Kunstmuseum Basel: *Lockdown Dada Dance* was projected on the museum building while *Marionettes in Motion* was shown alongside the puppets. These kinds of performative works based on the marionettes are providing new resources to qualify their inherent mobility.

Transmuting Experiences across Mediums and Disciplines

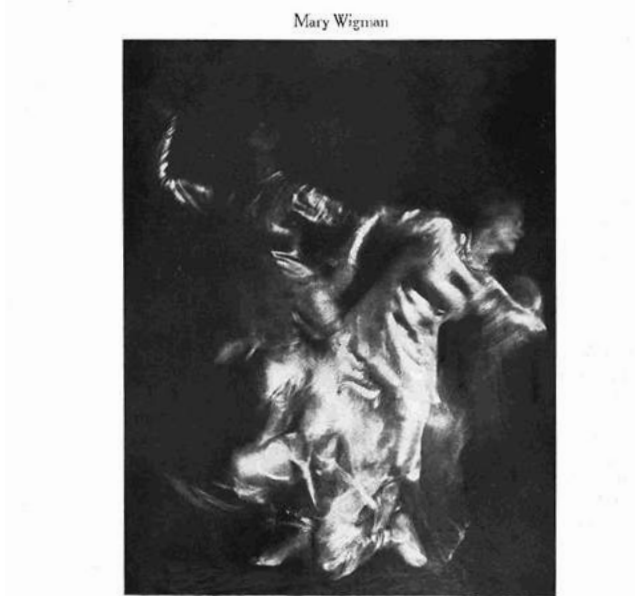
Since Jean Arp was involved creatively and romantically with Sophie Taeuber-Arp, his focus on dance may reflect his own interests. From a personal point of view, in many poems dedicated to Taeuber-Arp after her death, the lexical field of dance and movement serve as a lyrical portrait where her different art practices mingle with the aspects of her personality Arp chose to memorialize: “Sophie’s humour was mainly expressed in the dances she invented and in mischievous pantomimes.”²² He also recalled, “you painted the night that stretches the stars [...] you danced the padded landscape of the moon.”²³ In terms of art, some of Taeuber-Arp’s dance experiences may have been passed on to Arp through their collaborations, and he also spent time at the Laban School and with the dancers.²⁴ Both Arp’s organic approach to form and materials as well as his concern with movement and the body would befit a dialogue with dance.²⁵

Jean Arp clearly helped to construct that “ideal reception”²⁶ of Sophie Taeuber-Arp as a Dadaist and a dancer, making assertions that are difficult to verify today. In doing so, he simultaneously reaffirmed the openness and shifting nature of Dada. Judith Delfiner defines the latter as *materia prima*, or an undefined entity that only reveals itself when it takes shape.²⁷ With this in mind, dance is one of the many forms taken by Dada. Taeuber-Arp herself claimed her association with Dada,



W. Serner
Dada-Park

Ad Aktion. Man spreche nicht von Realismus . . . Revolutionsliedchen im Kaiser-Geburtstags-Stil. Nach stattgehabter Konsumation des vorrätigen Klischee-Zeugs bleibt es, Herr Pfemfert, erstaunlich gar sehr, mit welcher Vehe(wehe!)menz Sie und Konsequenz unentwegt Stiljünglinge, deren Expressionsmöglichkeiten allenfalls hinter Ohrfeigen liegen mögen, zu lancieren sich nicht entbrechen können. Und dennoch: Allwo bleiben Ihre vorkriegerischen Spezial-Trottel-Sonder-Extra-Nummern (Mangold, das Gollchen, Chajim Hirsch!!)? Noch zur Belebung: In Zürich, wo in großen Zeiten jeder Alleinerich hastenichjesehn sowas wiene Aura (Au!) rund um sich herum zu spinnen imstande ist, blies ein Arri- und Auravist, ansonsten in der Mitte ganz hervorragender Dinierer (Rubiner), auf seiner mit nachtschweißtriefenden Warmwichsbrieffen gepflegten Beziehungschalmei und — schwupps quetschten Sie, Herr Pfemfert, jeden Ohres bar, eine Vonzurmühlen-Extra-Sonder-Gans-Spezial-Nummer aus. Dieses war fürwahr sehr schlimm . . . Man spreche jedoch nicht von Realismus. Man spreche von einer Aktion . . .



l'antenne tremble sous l'abat-jour, cuisine de sabbats météorologiques, bagage, soupe stellaire dans l'ouragan leur solennelle
strident éclairage DO majeur projections d'hélices et poudre blanche dans la bouteille clé de 1^{er} ordre garantie pour toutes les malles je m'amuse dans le triangle de fer
étiquettes dans la pharmacie et confessions de la jeune amoureuse: l'amertume des machines à coudre les nuages et des étoiles éteintes dans un verre d'eau
des anges de carroussel bleu robinet pour les instincts
et la baguette sonne sur les mensonges des colliers grelots et cadenas

likely to gain visibility as an independent artist, but it also it reveals the value she put in her work from the 1910s. She was just finishing her studies and within Zurich's lively cultural life, she was extremely productive in various mediums. During those formative years, the multidisciplinary training of the Laban School and Dada's malleable nature served as a catalyst which, by way of unrestrained experimentation, created lasting bonds between various forms of expression. Taeuber-Arp worked from the ever-changing wellspring of her experiences, transmuting them into one medium or another to create a diverse yet unified oeuvre.²⁸ As part of the equation, dance resonates in her plastic works through her use of colors and shapes to animate space and reveal (dis)equilibriums and vibrations. Moreover, approaching Taeuber-Arp's abstraction by way of dance is an attempt to grasp its kinesthetic nature, from the artist's meticulous attention to the effects of every detail to the perception of the spectator.²⁹ Dance studies offers tools to make visible the "latent movement" described by Hugo Weber.³⁰ All Dada groups were formed by individuals, each with their own path, ambitions, and modes of expression. This is all the more so with respect to the Dada interest in dance. Artists' differing levels of curiosity for dance at once magnify their individuality and increase our understanding of the multiple roles dance played in Dada history.

Fig. 4 *Freudanalyticus* from *King Stag* published alongside a picture of Mary Wigman dancing, in *Der Zeltweg*, Zurich, November 1919

- 1 Jean Arp: "Dadaland" (1938), in: *Jours effeuillés, poèmes, essais, souvenirs, 1920–1965*, Paris 1966, pp. 306–310.
- 2 Jean Arp: "Jalons"(1951), in: *Jours effeuillés*, pp. 355–359.
- 3 Ibid., p. 358. All translations are by the author.
- 4 Arp 1938, p. 307.
- 5 Ibid., p. 306.
- 6 She attended the Lehr- und Versuchsatelier für angewandte und freie Kunst (Teaching and Experimental Ateliers for Applied and Fine Art) from 1910 to 1914.
- 7 Walburga Krupp: "Sophie Taeuber-Arp als Tänzerin und Dadaistin, Eine Wunschvorstellung der Rezeption?" in: Mona De Weerd and Andreas Schwab: *Monte Dada*, Bern 2017, p. 157.
- 8 Ibid., pp. 152–154.
- 9 Ibid., p. 160.
- 10 Tristan Tzara invited Wigman to dance at Dada events but the project never materialized. See her letter to Tzara from June 26, 1916, Fonds Tzara, TZR C 4231, Bibliothèque littéraire Jacques Doucet (BLJD), Paris.
- 11 Letter to Tzara, March 1917, TZR C 4237, BLJD.
- 12 Lecture given by the Laban School on June 27, 1917, transcribed and published in Dick McCaw (ed.), *The Laban Sourcebook*, London 2011, p. 37.
- 13 *Dada Head*, 1920. Oil and metallic paint on wood, 29.4 × 14 cm. Musée National d'art moderne–Centre George Pompidou, Paris.

- 14 *Fresco from the Zurich Dada Pantheon*, 1920. Oil on canvas on board, 27 × 34.5 cm. Musée National d'art moderne–Centre George Pompidou, Paris.
- 15 Arp 1951, pp. 358–359.
- 16 Laban was a polemical figure in his personal and professional life, promoting new dance methods that were sometimes controversial. If Dada was problematic for a school board, it was most probably the case with Laban's lessons as well.
- 17 Jean Arp and El Lissitzky: *Die Kunstismen/ Les ismes de l'art/The Isms of Art*, Erlenbach 1925, p. 20. *King Stag* was an adaptation of a Carlo Gozzi fable by André Morax and Werner Wolf for the opening of the Schweizerisches Marionettentheater (Swiss Marionette Theater). Sophie Taeuber was commissioned by Alfred Altherr, director of the Applied Arts School, to design the puppets. For actualised knowledge about the play, see Medea Hoch: "Interplay of the Arts on Stage: The King Stag Marionettes and Stage Sets," in: *Sophie Taeuber-Arp: Living Abstraction* (ed. by Anne Umland, Walburga Krupp, and Charlotte Healy), exh. cat. Museum of Modern Art, New York 2021, pp. 95–98.
- 18 Marcel Duchamp wrote: "At the Zurich exhibition in 1918, her marionettes in turned wood were the starting point for a new technique in decorative art," in: *Contemporary Sculpture*, London 1938, n.p., quoted by Hoch 2021, p. 97.
- 19 Carl Fischer in conversation with Gusti Gysin, July/August 1981, quoted in: Ibid., p. 98, note 16.
- 20 Bruno Mikol, in reference to the restaging by the St. Gallen Puppentheater in 1965. Bruno Mikol: "Sur le théâtre de marionnettes de Sophie Taeuber," in: *Sophie Taeuber-Arp*, exh. cat. Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, Musée cantonal des beaux-arts, Paris and Lausanne 1989, p. 64.
- 21 Tristan Tzara: "What We Are Doing in Europe," in: *Vanity Fair* (September 1922), p. 100. See also Mikol 1989, pp. 61–64.

- 22 Jean Arp: "Sophie" (1960), in: *Sable de lune*, Orbey 2005, p. 127.
- 23 Jean Arp: "Sophie rêvait Sophie peignait Sophie dansait" (1944), in: Arp 1966, pp. 185–186.
- 24 Arp designed stationary for the Laban School, and his poems were read at Wigman's or by Katja Wulff, another Laban student. Astrid von Asten: "Arp and Dada–A 'Win-Win Situation'", in: *Genesis Dada: 100 Years of Dada Zurich*, Zurich 2016, p. 128.
- 25 His painted woodcut *Danseuse* (1925, Centre Pompidou, Paris) has a troubling resemblance to the picture of Taeuber-Arp dancing: the overall bend of the figure, the white leg, and the black shape on the left.
- 26 To use Walburga Krupp's formulation. See Krupp 2021, p. 149.
- 27 Judith Delfiner: *Double-Barrelled Gun: Dada aux États-Unis*, 1945–1957, Dijon 2011, p. 14.
- 28 The idea of transmutation is based on Nell Andrew: "The forms in each of her mediums resist categorization by holding the very binaries of perception in unresolved tension [...]. She therefore appears to be thinking about translation, or better yet, transmutation between forms, which would make her aesthetic not formal and fixed but kinesthetic and intellectual." Andrew: "Dada dance: Sophie Taeuber's Visceral Abstraction," in: *Art Journal* 73/1 (2014), p. 20.
- 29 "Remarks on Instruction in Ornamental Design" and "Guidelines for Drawing Instruction in the Textile Professions," translated from German by John Gabriel in: *Sophie Taeuber-Arp: Avant-Garde Pathways*, exh. cat. Museo Picasso Málaga 2009, pp. 162–173.
- 30 Hugo Weber quoted in the 1948 catalogue raisonné. Georg Schmidt: *Sophie Taeuber-Arp*, Basel 1948, p. 121.



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Sophie Taeuber-Arp's Project Album

Jonathan Hammer

Sophie Taeuber-Arp's project album remains an open-ended question. What was its purpose, and why did she assemble it? Apparently, it was fluid and incomplete, in the sense that new things were added, and others removed. The last images of textile designs were a later addition. The simplest reading of this book, which on some level cannot be denied, is that sometimes "a rose is just a rose," a photo album just a photo album. With Taeuber-Arp, however, there are seldom simple readings. Her art practice was meticulous and at times almost overthought.

Often enough, scholars strive to isolate threads of intention and intellectual concern in an artist's body of work. For example: behold this period; take stock of the ceramics; note the reliance on this form or another. For many artists, creative impulse equals a non-defined miasma that allows for the chance to extract globules of interest, forming particular spheres of investigation. These result in the concrete formalization of ideas, or most traditionally, ideas as objects. Taeuber-Arp was not a "jack-of-all-trades," as she has sometimes been characterized. In her practice, as in that of many artists, there is an overlap of intent expressed through the use of different media. Even contemporary analysis of her project suffers from facile encumbrance by categorization. This may have transpired because of her ability to materialize and mimic art into professional occupation that often—perhaps because her precise methodology appears in opposition to the more "passionate" paradigm adopted by many artists of her time both male and female—comes across as quotidian, portraying her

as a "let's get the job done" figure, rather than one who drinks at the proverbial font of inspiration. STA was not a great improviser. She WORKS the sketches and designs, and erases with vigor until she achieves her desired outcome.

It is a given that an artist's drawings are an integral part of their paintings, that sculptures inform their printmaking, that costume design feeds their sculpture, etc., all as an endless babbling spring. In Taeuber-Arp's circumstance, the categories are even more distinct, as they do not closely relate to one clear endgame: studio art. I think, in fact, that she holistically became an example of a kind of axonometric working force, certainly more akin to a Renaissance woman than a "jack-of-all-trades." She is one artist seen from different viewpoints depending on which angle is pulled out into perspective. Hence, axonometric. What do we reveal by breaking the barriers that define Taeuber-Arp the dancer, Taeuber-Arp the painter, Taeuber-Arp the architect, Taeuber-Arp the theater designer, Taeuber-Arp the weaver/sewer, Taeuber-Arp the pedagogue, Taeuber-Arp the editor? Once the fences are dismantled, a broad body of work presents itself more in the form of set theory than classification. When A overlaps with B, we have AB. And this fundamental overlapping of zones carries aesthetic and conceptual consequences as well. A is also AB, and through AB, it also becomes B.

Thus, an architectural drawing can be read as a flattened abstract composition stripped of connotation, or just as easily as a textile pattern or a notation of dance movement. At that point, does it lose its significance as an architectural drawing and "become" one of the other recognizably defined zones of endeavor? The original might be read from right to left just as legibly as from left to right. The artist's project becomes more than one thing at once, depending on which thematic cord is pulled out. Several concerns can be embedded in one image, depending on viewpoint. This idea can also be taken literally. We don't need to limit the interpretation to subjective fields such as: this is "about" movement, this is "about" space, this is "about" violence, etc. Visual capacity can also withstand creative metamorphosis. In a reduced idiom, such as that found in Taeuber-Arp's art, a dancing human with arms extended can also be a plant—a cactus. But it is also a pure form COLUMN that can function two dimensionally as a textile pattern, or, just as easily, as a volume in

dialogue with surrounding space and physical features, like stairs and railings and corners.

If the photo album is simply a collection of realized finished projects—and here, realized is important because it shows concretely what she has accomplished, not what she wishes to accomplish—then so be it. Taeuber-Arp had a portfolio to show clients what she has done, instilling confidence for future commissions. However, if we delve into a less straightforward motivation for the album, or at least offer up a dual, more complex conceptual intention, however speculative, then maybe the album holds further secrets.

Free form more or less disappeared from Taeuber-Arp's work around 1930. This photo book dates from that time. Aubette, completed just a few years earlier, was her most ambitious architectural and public interior project (notwithstanding the Meudon house following directly on its heels). Certainly, Aubette marks a break for Taeuber-Arp in terms of leaving behind her teaching position and gaining an ability to earn money through commissions. She was nearly 40 and in full command of her capacity. Aubette was the beginning of something new, but it also retained elements that refer to earlier excavations. Highly stylized figures that she began after visiting Pompeii are incorporated into purely geometric motifs. The Aubette's function enables a type of theatrical environment, a stage set with no script, since the imagined customers play out their scenes spontaneously within the building as theater—café, salon, billiard room. By 1930, there was no more inexact gesture in her work, no more fluidity of cloth and fiber. All her concentration was focused on a rigid analysis of positioning. The movement inherent in the action of sewing or weaving or embroidering becomes a static investigation of the act itself, minus the human hand. The human is removed. What did this mean for her?

The first photo in the album is an interior of Aubette. The complex angles display many interstices and transparencies of space, a trope of arts and crafts practice that, cleansed of ornament, extends into modernism. Her schematic, rectangular, graphic paintings or (architectonic/dance) notations are framed by hefty lines that take physical shape in the form of pillars, covers for ceiling conduits, etc. The room presents itself more as a mise-en-scène than an interior restaurant design. The volume is in-the-round, and we are meant to be guided



through spaces three dimensionally, not as plantigrades but closer to tropical fish in a tank, defying gravity.

The next photo is her signature marionette from the play *King Stag*, titled *Guards*. A being not yet found on earth. Here is a creature who really does defy gravity through the puppeteer's auto-activation. The puppet is the master of ceremonies about to initiate what will become Taeuber-Arp's new world. The artist offers us an environment beyond the norm. She displays the being most akin to Hugo Ball's Dada bishop: the futuristic seer, the mystic, the fully armored soldier for DADA.

Following this personage are more photos of Aubette, where Taeuber-Arp sets the empty stage, again, not as designed, or dreamt of, but as actually built! Imagine the excitement. Then the play begins. The marionettes were made more or less concurrently with the "heads" sculptures. They are slightly post-Dada future beings peopling a landscape presided over by the outsized "magician" figure. They are the future form of evolved humanoids. Some of these characters are photographed on a black background almost as if they float in the void of an amniotic liquid. Clusters are grouped in the otherworldly artificial landscape suggested by a proscenium stage. Judging from Taeuber-Arp's crayon sketches of 1918, the scenography for the puppet play *King Stag* basically consists of her flattened drawings very slightly wrapped to create a mild sense of perspective. The backdrops are works of art rather than Palladian stage sets. Taeuber-Arp's theater world is art in the round, not staged artifice. This once-removed conceit of the theater from reality then abruptly switches back in the photo album to pictures of the sublime and glowing empty space of the Aubette. A new and very authentic "actual" reality.

But from where derives the source of the internal glow? The next five photos depict her stained glass. Taeuber-Arp was detailed and almost obsessive in her desire to use windows as tools for a more complete perceptive sensation. The windows function as paintings illuminated from behind. Natural inconsistencies within the glass lend a limited flaw-like ingredient that adds an iota of hand-crafted warmth, rendering her world touched by a spirit of something more meaningful than just a cold light. (Even at her most precise, the artist never abandoned reliance on her training.) Her spaces are bathed in glow mitigated naturally through glass. The last window photograph hints at the further stage

of human evolution as her dancing/praying figures—her marionettes with their arms raised, manipulated by a higher being—have been reduced to creatures of light, without corporeal weight, arms lifting toward the cosmos. Here is a divine speculation. She offers up a true idea of "architecture" as core interactive environment, leading us to the point where the architecture and the people who inhabit it are one and the same. And then the album returns once more to the Aubette. Back to the rarified achievement of this quest for peace, for a space that blocks out all hardship.

Photos of the Goemans Gallery commission are next up. A spaceship lands in a field as a shock. A working travel vessel of interplanetary exploration. These are the only photos that by necessity reveal tiny slivers of the real world. The aliens arrive in the form of Arp reliefs seen through the window from the street. A Magritte painting attests to the false reality of perception—the pipe as a rendering of a pipe. The dancing, boneless figure next to an extraterrestrial Tanguy vista, with the office control panel, the column, the overhead illumination, revealing these outlandish missives sent to earth through art.

Then comes the furniture, the desk. The module console to fly the ship that has landed but perhaps can no longer alight. The rationality of the control booth in a library surrounded by erudition, followed by the next photo isolated in its unadorned functionality. The desk calls out: look at me without a library. I have absorbed the learning. I am the self-navigating pilot of the future. A robot who needs no robot.

The flattened figures on the wall of Dr. Heimendinger's apartment from 1927 are the penultimate stage of human/alien interaction within space. The foyer is simply home to the creature. The creature figure is the pancaked depiction of the architecture. The space and the organism are sterile. There is no filth, there is no worldly worry, there is no pall, neither is there any true natural illumination. We see only cleanliness and tranquility. We are in a vacuum of design within a stabilized and hermetic universe. Following are photos of perfect cabinetry. They are ergonomic dashboards aestheticized for creatures that do not wash, do not need, do not desire, do not feel anxiety, do not crumble. Hers is not the world of the masses. Taeuber-Arp is not a Constructivist. Here, she lays bare a world of vapor, a world that settles the riddle of the Sphinx and provides the explanation to the three-pronged man, her cactus

figure. The future without strife, the modernist ideal. We are home.

But Taeuber-Arp partly refutes this cold world, knowing well that it becomes suffocating, that nothing grows from nothing. Next comes a series of photos that were added later and harken back to her earlier weavings and needlepoints. She releases the rigidity of the grid with the wobbly hand of inconsistency, as it found its source in her seminal fiber work. She includes a study that almost looks like painted fabric, painted silk mounted flat. Taeuber-Arp returns us to her roots, to the origin story, if you will. The weave is life, the textile is the beginning for her. The artist is scattering crumbs for us to recognize that her later, pure plastic oeuvre is nothing more or less than the formalized abstraction of her craft project. These rugs and tapestries are an archetypical excavation in a quarry that links the future with the distant past, that links her own artistic future with her own artistic past.

The works in the album belong to an ever-constant distillation toward a world wiped clean. The last image, placed in the album compilation displays a tapestry from 1918. It defines a pagan mise-en-scène linked to the worship of the otherworldly. The extraterrestrials landing. In a non-religious manner it at once displays both those who pray and those who are prayed to.

What Taeuber-Arp attempts in this mysterious photo album from 1930, assembled between the two wars, is a chance for a better world. She offers us a utopia, her utopia.



Born in Chicago in 1960, **Jonathan Hammer** has had 50 solo exhibitions. For more than 30 years, he has worked in several mediums, including works on paper, photography, unique books, sculpture, ceramics, and prints, as well as his signature screens and panels made from marquetry of exotic skins. Hammer has exhibited widely in Germany, Spain, Switzerland, Norway, France, England, Japan, Mexico, and the United States. His works are in many private and public collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Hammer Museum (UCLA); Berkeley Art Museum; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; New York Public Library; and the Jumex Collection, Mexico City. An authority on Zurich Dada, Hammer has published his critical writings on the subject in his book *Ball and Hammer*, Yale University Press, 2002. He has received many honors from institutions such as Art Matters, New York; Pro Helvetia (the Swiss Arts Council); the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, New York; the Pollock Krasner Foundation, New York; PEW Foundation, Philadelphia; and the Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin. Hammer is the founder of the Villa Bergerie artists residency project. He lives and works in Spain.

Hans Arp and Sergio Camargo: Laws of Chance, the Order of the Straw, and Disenchantment with Enlightenment Reason

Fernanda Lopes Torres

In an interview of 1954,¹ the Brazilian sculptor Sergio Camargo mentions an invitation from Hans Arp to participate in an exhibition. Then living in Paris, where he studied philosophy, the young Camargo would soon return to Brazil, and could not accept the invitation from the established artist, who by then was attracting international recognition. Arp would win the prize for sculpture at the Venice Biennale the same year, and some of his works would later be acquired by modern art museums in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.² The invitation, which confirms the importance of this contact with Arp for the formation of the Brazilian sculptor and the European artist's openness,³ was made in a decisive period for modern Brazilian art, when an affinity between Constructivist trends and country's current developmentalist project was recognized.⁴ Developed on an undeniable Constructivist basis, Camargo's work would reveal distrust in the transparency of decisions and procedures. As Rodrigo Naves points out, "the method could also reveal paradoxes involved in human actions," because "gestures and movements do not affect the world linearly, as a mere extension of the will or search for control. The order was always accompanied by the ravings of the order."⁵

This gap between intention and outcome relates to the "laws of chance" that Arp referred to in the names of certain works from 1928. As the artist himself emphasizes, chance does not mean "senseless," but rather occurs together with a certain order, justifying, as it were, the affiliation of this Dadaist par excellence with the Cercle et Carré and Abstraction Création groups, as well

as his a-geometry.⁶ The design of a plaster cast by Camargo approaches the seeming contradiction of Arp's biomorphic constructivism (fig. 1a).⁷ Camargo's constructive sensibility, however, takes another direction, turning effectively to geometric solids from which he obtains a singular organicity. In this sense, the critic Ronaldo Brito, who closely followed the production of the Brazilian sculptor from the 1970s, rightly identifies in it a "vital and unstable constructivism."⁷

Reliefs

Camargo's procedure is clear: he cuts cylinders of various dimensions and, after thoroughly investigating possible combinations between their segments, he arranges them. The cut, made at different angles, is the basis of the logical operation that generates spaces through which the light circulates, imponderable and smoothly diffused, producing physicality and organicity.⁸ The light falls upon the multiple planes and volumes generated by the cuts in the tiny cylinders of *Relevo* (Relief) 351 (fig. 2), lending it a painterly aspect. Thus, "whatever is fixed and permanent about it acts as a foil and resonator for all that is fleeting and changing," wrote the English critic Guy Brett,⁹ correctly pointing to the complexity of the perception that follows the straightforward procedure. The work is different at every moment, just like us, as our gaze attentively strolls over the intermittent play of light and shadow that disperses the

volumes on the surface. For Camargo, geometry mattered less than the corporeal values brought about by the "stumps," as he called the cylinder sections, which are painted white, for he was more interested in highlighting light and shadows than the wood itself. The result is a certain malleability, a constant pulse that keeps something of the imponderability of everyday life, aptly summarized by Camargo as the "order of the straw."

It should be noted that it is precisely in one of these unpredictable daily occurrences—or "chances," so to speak—the sculptor finds the relationship between plane and volume that would be decisive for his work. In the early 1960s, after experimenting with casting plaster in holes in the sand (fig. 1c), folds of fabric, and other methods,¹⁰ the banal act of slicing an apple, which involves cutting a volume from the inside, led him to his process. Perhaps closer to Arp's biomorphic works, these experiments—mostly destroyed by the artist himself—maintain "the element of chance and self-generation,"¹¹ which, according to Brett, was later incorporated into his more systematic research.

The cylinder as an element capable of revealing the many possibilities of volume in space—curved and straight lines as well as flat, concave, and convex surfaces—is to Camargo's work what the moving oval is to that of Arp. As basic units comprising potential states meant to encompass a multitude of forms, ovals and navels follow the organic flow of the pre-Dada and Dada drawings and refer to the biological and cosmic origin of life.¹² In engravings and drawings, black and white



Fig. 1 a Sergio Camargo: *Untitled*, undated. Plaster, 22 × 42 × 28 cm. Instituto de Arte Contemporânea-IAC, São Paulo

Fig. 1 b Sergio Camargo: *O Vento* (The Wind), undated. Painted plaster, 51 × 36 × 26 cm. Instituto de Arte Contemporânea-IAC, São Paulo

Fig. 1 c Sergio Camargo: *Untitled*, undated. Plaster and sand, 6 × 33 × 34 cm. Instituto de Arte Contemporânea-IAC, São Paulo

forms with fluid outlines continually change, aptly elaborating upon the principle of metamorphosis. And in the mid-1910s,¹³ these graphically delineated areas gain thickness in multilayered wood reliefs that could surge forward toward greater volumetric presence, breaking into the viewer's space.

Each element of these reliefs has lateral edges that recede back at a ninety-degree angle from the frontal plane, so that the thick, wooden ovoid areas cast definite shadows under light. The effect is accentuated in monochromatic reliefs, such as *Constellation* (1928, Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck) and *Formas Expressivas* (Expressive Forms) (fig. 3) whose shadows formed by the white elements overlap with the whiteness of the support, which, in turn, is inscribed on the white wall. In contrast to the illusionism of traditional painting, this establishes a sequence of concrete overlaps and projections into our physical reality.

Arp had addressed the idea of reality in his writings since at least 1915. Already aware of art as a production process capable of making the real emerge, he declared himself “for the reality, for the accuracy of the indefinable, the rigorous precision.”¹⁴ As such, we may consider his fluid ovals as plastic signs representing the dynamism of nature, which is understood as a hybrid phenomenon. Through the process of transformation, nature's elements enter into a kind of communion in the Romantic sense.¹⁵

Sculpture

This plasticity of the sign becomes tangible in the sculpture,¹⁶ which is based on Arp's concept of concretion and stands in opposition to symbolic or illusionist representations. As “the solidification of a mass,” the sculpture ensures an earthly presence, “just as sensuous and concrete as a leaf or a rock,” observes Arie Hartog, acknowledging Arp's interest in “the effect of the boundlessly flowing surface, which he achieved with a variety of materials.”¹⁷ Among them, the plaster, which seems especially consistent with the concept of concretion, which Arp described as a “process of condensation, hardening, coagulating, thickening, growing together.”¹⁸ Jana Teuscher recently noted that Arp's additive method enables “combinations of forms that seem to have grown that way.”¹⁹ In turn, Daria Mille observes that



Fig. 2 Sergio Camargo: *Relevo* (Relief) 351, 1971. Oil on wood, 49.2 × 49.2 × 4.5 cm. Collection Gilberto Chateaubriand, Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro. Photo: Romulo Fialdini and Valentino Fialdini



Fig. 3 Hans Arp: *Formas Expressivas* (Expressive Forms), 1932. Painted wood, 84.9 × 70 × 3 cm. Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo

“the forming process of stiffening plaster without a wire armature [...] strips the artist of all objective control, thus leading the way to the finding of an organic form.”²⁰ Arp used additive and subtractive methods side by side, although, as Arie Hartog notes, “it was chiefly the sanding of the form that gave his sculptures their finished appearance.”²¹ Through this direct contact with the material, which reinforced the haptic qualities of his oeuvre, Arp sought “the forming principle of reality,” a search that would only be possible “when critically repeating the historical path of sculpture.”²²

Arp, therefore, engages with the torso,²³ and takes as a starting point for his sculpture the anthropomorphism that forms the basis of Western sculptural and metaphysical traditions. And he reworks it, for example, in *Sitting* (1937, Stiftung Arp e.V.), in which a strange creature, whose measurements do not correspond to those of a human, exists in a smooth and continuous contour that mobilizes our touch and along which our gaze seeks an anthropomorphic image from elements that indicate the act of sitting. In this process, previous categories such as subject and object dissolve and begin to exist in a fluid contiguity of soft contours, as in *Man Seen by a Flower* (1958), where human, animal, and plant merge. Then a shell becomes a swan (*Shell-Swan-Swing*, 1935) or a bird appears as a leaf, and vice versa (*Leaf or Bird*, 1959). This permanent change of form that takes place before our eyes involves mental images, words, and objects.

If Camargo's cylinder constitutes a reduction of the torso,²⁴ maybe we can recognize in *Untitled* (fig. 4) a kind of *Sitting*, which, in contrast to the flowing surface of Arp's plaster, articulates a structure in space through the combination of three cylindrical pieces cut at severe angles. These precise cuts allow the sections to be fitted close to each other, revealing a kind of tense contortion. The matte white marble absorbs some of the diffuse light and awakens our sense of touch; the sharp, precise angles are counterbalanced by a sense malleability. The light draws a line at the end of the places where the cylinders are joined, and the sections that rise diagonally “cut” upward through the space. The cylinders unfold in lines, planes, weights, and directional energies that gain corporality. And in this process, which involves a design phase with models and prototypes, what “begins ready and immutable—the geometric element—ends up revealing itself in process of formation.”²⁵

The geometric element in this formation is evident in the large, compact block *Untitled* (fig. 5).²⁶ Here, in addition to the usual angle cut at the length of the cylinder, there is cut through its diameter, where the sections are joined. The result is a geometrized solid formed by sections of cylinders whose apparent point of union reveals its construction and suggests symmetry as we circulate the piece (or as it is turned on its base). Then, under a watchful eye, the massive marble block softens into curves that continually change—sometimes reaching an anamorphosis. Light passes through the body of the opaque white marble, imbuing the stone with a sense of life. The working method takes the penetration of light into account but does not control it. In this way, the sculptor's careful calculations rely upon the unpredictable and determinant effect of light to coalesce as works. “For one work of these that appears, are made thirty, forty that do not appear,” explains Camargo.²⁷ The more the sculptor explores the possibilities of geometry, the more he lets go of his own authority, proposing instead an “empirical geometry.”²⁸

We could say that, like Arp, Camargo acts “according to the laws of chance,” which implies not only “fortuitous combination, but also what happens to us, what befalls us.”²⁹ A central issue for the Dadas, chance merges with transience in Arp's work, an openness to what happens. It does not exist in strict opposition to order, as we note in his harmoniously composed Dada works.³⁰ Arp refers to the decisive influence exerted by the extreme simplification of the horizontal and vertical planes that Sophie Taeuber employed in her compositions, from which a “limpid calm” developed,³¹ part of “an unfathomable *raison d'être*, of an order, inaccessible in its totality.”³² It is not an order imposed by humans according to their arrogant point of view, which Arp says they have done with disastrous results since the Renaissance, continuing through the Enlightenment and into modernity, when it took on a new, troubled configuration. Thus, “far from being a random opposite to ‘structure,’” observes Briony Fer, chance “became a ‘law’ on which a natural as opposed to a mechanical or man-made order could be based.”³³ Certainly, the outbreak of the First World War foregrounded the question of order and rationalism for the Dadas. Positioning himself against “rationalism” in various writings, Arp aimed at a certain sense of order from which “civilized” Western man had deviated, taking instead the false di-



Fig. 4 Sergio Camargo: *Untitled*, 1973. Marble, 23 × 34.8 × 34.7 cm. Photo: Jaime Acioli. Collection Gilberto Chateaubriand, Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro

rection of technological progress that led him to war. As Hans Richter explains, in the face of the imminent “destruction of the world and the systematic elimination of every particle of human feeling,” the Dadas sought something that “would re-establish our humanity [...] a new unity combining chance and design.”³⁴ We can recognize this unity in Arp’s work, whose concept does not imply functional integration of art in society, but rather construction (concretion) consistent with a “vital need.”³⁵

In a distinct cultural environment, Camargo’s work belongs to a late form of Constructivism, which, without a consistent basic industrial culture, is not proposed as a model of production. Like the Brazilian Concretists and Neo-Concretists, Camargo acknowledges the infeasibility of making a dogmatic Constructivist project work in Brazil, considering it as “ethical fact, individual, more than political and collective,” related, according to Lorenzo Mammi, to the education of the

senses.³⁶ Along these lines, we understand that a Constructive sensibility guides the work of Sergio Camargo, whose rationality, which relates to the Enlightenment project “has something of the romantic record and its distrust of the all-powerful ability of the logos.”³⁷ After all, “rationalism is the most radical production of Fantasy,”³⁸ noted the artist, who understood art as “wild and certain adventure of knowing.”³⁹



Fig. 5 Sergio Camargo: *Untitled*, 1973. Carrara marble, 70 × 80 × 112 cm. Photo: Rafael Adorján. Estate Sergio Camargo. This work is exhibited in a permanent room of Paço Imperial, Rio de Janeiro, in a free reconstruction of Sergio Camargo’s studio in Jacarepaguá, Rio de Janeiro

1 Interview with Sergio Camargo: “Um artista fala de sua arte,” in: *Letras e Artes: Suplemento de A Manhã*, April 27 1954, p. 2.

2 The Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo was inaugurated in 1948 and the Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro (MAM Rio) in 1949. Arp’s relief *Expressive Forms* is held at the Museum of Contemporary Art of the University of São Paulo (MAC-USP), having been exhibited for the first time in 1949 in the Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo’s inaugural exhibition *Do Figurativismo ao Abstracionismo* (From Figuration to Abstraction). The relief *Configuration*, 1955 (bronze, 74 × 60 × 4.5 cm) is in the collection of MAM Rio, which also includes the sculpture *Human Lunar Spectral*, 1950 (pink limestone, 83 × 50 × 58 cm). A tapestry and a woodcut were destroyed by a fire in the museum in 1978.

3 Camargo mentions several artists and friends in the dedication to an exhibition. Arp is the second one: “To Hans Arp, sensual Huguenot, religious dancer of form, attentive visionary” (Translated from the Portuguese by the author). Camargo quoted in Maria Camargo and Iole de Freitas (eds.): *Preciosas Coisas Vãs Fundamentais: escritos de Sergio Camargo*, São Paulo 2010, pp. 96–97.

4 In Latin America, the 1950s were marked by the stimulation of industrialization and developmental optimism that considered progress as a means toward social transformation, which later extended to the cultural field with movements such as Concrete art, with direct connections to European avant-gardes and their project to build a new world from the association between art, science, technology, and industry.

5 Rodrigo Naves: “Introduction,” in: Ronaldo Brito: *Sergio Camargo*, São Paulo 2000, p. 7.

6 See Maike Steinkamp: “The A-geometric World of Hans Arp,” in: Maike Steinkamp and Marta Smolinska (eds.): *A-Geometry. Hans Arp and Poland*, exh. cat. National Museum Poznań, 2017.

7 Brito 2000, p. 35. The importance Camargo gives to “all the Dadas” in the text “Pensar Mondrian” is also noteworthy. See Camargo “Pensar Mondrian,” (undated) in: Camargo and de Freitas 2010, p. 107.

8 Camargo also worked with cubes. It is worth noting that, at the time of the invitation, the sculptures of both artists already reveal a certain organicity and plastic density, either on a flowing surface (Arp) or through angular cuts that broke the epidermal continuity of the figure even as they shaped it (Camargo, fig. 1b).

9 See Guy Brett: *Camargo–esculturas*, exh. cat. Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, 1994.

10 Only some of these experiments and photographic records are preserved, contrary to the artist’s wishes, as reported to the author by Piedade Epstein Grinberg, who helped organize his archive.

11 Brett 1994, n.p.

12 “Vivian Endecott Barnett has documented the extent to which Arp, Miró, and Kandinsky were influenced by encyclopedic illustrations of plant and animal cells.” Eric Robertson: *Arp. Painter, Poet, Sculptor*, New Haven and London 2006, p. 90.

13 According to Astrid von Asten, it should be noted “that it has been impossible to definitely determine when Arp produced his first relief.” Astrid von Asten: “When I exhibited my first concrete reliefs, I put out a little manifesto declaring the art of the bourgeois to be sanctioned lunacy: On the Origins and Development of the Relief in the Oeuvre of Jean Arp,” in: *Hans Arp: The Navel of the Avant-Garde*, exh. cat. Georg Kolbe Museum, Berlin, 2015, p. 26.

14 Marc Dachy: *Archives Dada: Chronique*, Paris 2005, p. 41. Translated from the French by the author.

15 In Arp’s endlessly metamorphosizing forms, there are echoes of the German poet Novalis’s unfinished novel *The Disciples at Saïs*, in which a disciple “became aware of the inter-relations of all things, of conjunctions, of coincidences. Ere long he saw nothing singly.” Novalis: *The Disciples of Saïs and Other Fragments*, London 1903, p. 93. We know that Arp read the Romantic poet, for whom nature–“the great Manuscript of Design which we decry everywhere”–could be accessed through poetry, a form of communion between the poet and nature.

16 Eric Robertson observes that language in Arp’s “hands takes on a troublingly tangible plasticity.” He cites the artist in conversation with Jean Clay: “Words have retained for me all their novelty, a mystery. I handle them as a child handles building blocks. I feel them, I shape them–like sculptures. I ascribe to them a formal volume which does not depend on their meaning.” Robertson 2006, p. 125.

17 Arie Hartog (ed.): *Hans Arp: A Critical Survey*, Ostfildern 2012, p. 23.

18 Hans Arp: “Looking,” in: *Arp* (ed. by James Thrall Soby), exh. cat., Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1958, pp. 14–15.

19 Jana Teuscher: “Germinating Art: How Arp Learned from Rodin while Also Doing Something Different,” in: *Rodin/Arp* (ed. by Raphaël Bouvier), exh. cat. Fondation Beyeler, Riehen; Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck, 2020, p. 108.

20 Daria Mille: “Negative Space in the Art of Hans Arp,” in: *Hans Arp & Other Masters of 20th Century Sculpture* (ed. by Elisa Tamaschke, Jana Teuscher, and Loretta Würtenberger) Berlin 2020, pp. 22–23.

21 Hartog 2012, p. 23.

22 Giulio Carlo Argan: *Arte Moderna*, São Paulo 1992, p. 363.

23 “In 1930 I went back to the activity which the Germans so eloquently call Hauerei (hewing). I engaged in sculpture and modeled in plaster. The first products were two torsos.” Hans Arp 1958, p. 14.

24 As considered by some Brazilian critics, such as Ronaldo Brito and Paulo Venâncio Filho.

25 Ronaldo Brito: “Para uma urgente reflexão,” in idem.: *Experiência Crítica*, São Paulo 2005, p. 317.

26 With the exception of his early sculptures, Camargo’s works do not have proper titles, but instead nicknames, mostly relating to nature, such as the large black pieces that are called “whales,” or the small pieces dedicated to his daughters, “turtle” and “owl.” All of these names refer to massive, solid animals.

27 Camargo in Camargo and de Freitas (eds.) 2010, pp. 48–49.

28 Ibid., p. 29.

29 “The word perfection means not only the fullness of life but also its end, its completion, its finish, and the word ‘accident’ implies not only chance, fortuitous combination, but also what happens to us, what befalls us.” Hans Arp 1958, p. 15.

30 As several scholars have pointed out, Arp’s work from the Dada period was constructed far more consciously than his later statements would suggest. Eric Robertson mentions a “combination of chance and conscious control.” See Robertson 2006, p. 48.

31 Arp writes about “the limpid calm that developed from the vertical and horizontal compositions created by Sophie Taeuber [...] the exclusive use of horizontal and vertical rectangular planes in the work of art, this extreme simplification, exerted on my work a decisive influence.” In Hans Arp, “Jalons,” (1951) in Dachy 2005, p. 42. Translated from the French by the author.

32 Hans Arp: “Dadaland,” in: idem. *On My Way, Poetry and Essays 1912–1947* (ed. by Robert Motherwell), New York 1948 (*Documents of Modern Art*, Vol. 6), p. 40.

33 Briony Fer: “Dada–Constructivism,” in: *Dada Constructivism: The Janus Face of the Twenties*, London 1984, p. 37.

34 “The official belief in the infallibility of reason, logic and causality seemed to us senseless–as senseless as the destruction of the world and the systematic elimination of every particle of human feeling. This was the reason why we were forced for something which would re-establish our humanity. What we needed to find was a ‘balance between heaven and hell,’ a new unity combining chance and design.” Hans Richter: *Dada Art and Antiart* (1964), New York 1997, p. 58.

35 The critic Mário Pedrosa, who visited Arp in 1958, recognizes him as one of the greatest sculptors of the twentieth century. See Mário Pedrosa: “As pedras de Arp,” in: *Jornal do Brasil*, Rio de Janeiro, May 17, 1958. A supporter of abstract art in Brazil from its beginnings, Pedrosa delivered a lecture on art and vitality in 1947, presenting the idea of art as a non-mimetic activity that seems in tune with Arp’s work: “Art would be realized by the same principles that govern the incessant creation of the universe and its functional mechanism. It does not repeat itself or copy nature; it obeys the same laws as this; it transposes them into the plan of conscious creation, that is, human.” See Mário Pedrosa: “Arte, necessidade vital,” in: *Mário Pedrosa Arte Ensaios* (ed. by Lorenzo Mammi), São Paulo 2015, pp. 48–67.

36 Lorenzo Mammi: “Encalhes e desmanches: ruínas do modernismo na arte contemporânea brasileira,” in: idem.: *O que resta–arte e crítica de arte*, São Paulo 2012, pp. 218–219.

37 Brito 2000, p. 47.

38 Note by Camargo, in Camargo and de Freitas 2010, p. 157

39 “Fortunately, there are no bachelors in art, and those who want to be, no one credits. Yes, there are the crazy derivatives who have undertaken and continue the wild and certain adventure of knowing, who worked the fervor they did not know, to find the poetry that belonged to all. Kurt Schwitters, all Dadas, Picasso [...]” Sergio Camargo: “Pensar Mondrian,” in Camargo and de Freitas 2010, p. 107. It is worth noting Ronaldo Brito’s observation that Dadaism “continues to germinate in Camargo, despite its classic appearance [...] there is the tireless learning of asymmetric balance, the daily practice of fragment intelligence, the intimacy with the rules of chance and dispersion.” Brito 2000, p. 35. Translated from the Portuguese by the author. Broadly speaking, we understand that Arp’s production, with its combination of Dadaism and Constructivism, has made an important contribution to contemporary Brazilian art. In Camargo’s generation, Neo-Concretes like Lygia Clark took a progressive approach toward Dadaism in the development of their practices. See Heloisa Espada: “‘Cher Maître’: Lygia Clark and Hans Arp’s Concept of Concrete Art,” in: *The Art of Hans Arp* (ed. by Jana Teuscher and Loretta Würtenberger Berlin 2018), pp. 80–87. Later, artists like Ernesto Neto (1964) and José Damasceno (1968) openly recognized the significance of Arp for their work. An exhibition of Neto’s work titled *Ernesto Neto. Haux Haux* was held at the Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck in 2014/15. In a conversation with the author, Damasceno, who has books and a print by Arp, affirmed his love for the artist.



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Hans Arp's Monumental Sculptural Commissions: Synthesis of the Arts at Harvard (1950), Caracas (1953), and Paris (1958) in the Historical Context of the 1950s

Vincenza Benedettino

In the 1950s, Hans Arp received commissions for three monumental works of art for the modernist building complexes in Cambridge, Caracas, and Paris. These were ambitious architectural projects: the Harvard Graduate Center, University City in Caracas, and the UNESCO headquarters in Paris. Earlier, the Alsace-born artist had participated in commissions related to architecture: Between 1926 and 1928, he created the murals for the Café de l'Aubette in Strasbourg in collaboration with his wife, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, and Theo van Doesburg.

The commissions of the 1950s involved integrating two reliefs and a sculpture within new buildings. The reliefs for Harvard (*Constellations II*) and Paris (*Constellation UNESCO*) bear similar titles and are variations on the same theme, which Arp had initially developed in smaller-format wood reliefs during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. By contrast, the work for Caracas, titled *Cloud Shepherd*, is a monumental version of the sculpture *Forme de lutin* of 1949. Arp also created the aluminum relief *Siluetas en relieve* (1956) for University City.

This research project is dedicated to Arp's works in the context of their architectural surroundings as well as their origination, which have much in common, despite their divergent national, historical, and political contexts. Indeed, they were expressions of the utopian concept of forming a synthesis between architecture



Fig. 1 Hans Arp: *Constellations*, c. 1950. Harkness Commons Dining Room, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. Photo: D. H. Wright, Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth

and the visual arts, in the spirit of Le Corbusier and the Bauhaus. During the 1950s, this concept experienced a resurgence, as illustrated, for example, by the extraordinary first international symposium of the Association de la critique d'art (AICA), which was organized in Brazil at the suggestion of Mário Pedrosa. For three weeks, architects such as Lucio Costa, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and André Bloc, as well as art historians and architecture critics, including Herbert Read, James Johnson Sweeney, and Sigfried Giedion, collaborated on the theme "The New City: Synthesis of the Arts." Furthermore, to achieve aesthetic coherence, Arp's works were not only closely related to the buildings themselves, but also to the other commissioned artworks, which were primarily realized by abstract painters and sculptors from the United States and Western Europe.

The goal of the research project is, therefore, to consider both the development of Arp's works in their individual artistic and architectonic contexts as well as to illuminate the three undertakings as expressions of the cultural and political values associated with modernist architecture and abstract art in the 1950s. To be sure,

the artists selected for the three projects also implicitly illustrates the triumph of Western modernism as an internationally recognized lingua franca.

In 1948, Harvard University commissioned the Harvard Graduate Center's building complex, with seven dorms and a student center, from the Architects Collaborative, the architectural firm led by Walter Gropius (1883–1969). The complex was Gropius's first large building project in the United States, where the former Bauhaus professor had been director of the architecture department at the Graduate School of Design at Harvard since 1938. His commission was to forever change the traditional architectural face of one of the most prestigious universities in the United States. During the McCarthy-era of the early 1950s, which was marked by conservatism and anticommunism, this concept would not necessarily garner approval. Thus, from the very beginning, Gropius sought to secure additional funding for works of art. The paintings and sculptures Gropius envisioned were to be realized by artists such as Josef Albers, Herbert Bayer, and Joan Miró. Sigfried Giedion recommended Arp to Gropius, as the two did not know



Fig. 2 Hans Arp: *Cloud Shepherd*, 1953. Bronze, 320 × 123 × 220 cm, University City of Caracas, Universidad Central de Venezuela

each other personally, whereas Arp and Giedion had prepared a questionnaire on the integration of the arts at CIAM 6 in 1947. Although the commission was for a site-specific work for the recreation room, Arp designed it in his Paris studio. Dissatisfied with the result, he undertook a journey at his own expense in 1950, to examine the surroundings and explore the design possibilities on site. On this occasion, Arp, Gropius, and Giedion decided to move *Constellation* to the cafeteria wall, near the works by Miró and Bayer (fig. 1).¹ After only a few years, the work was found to be damaged, leading to Arp's second trip to Harvard in 1957. Against the wishes of Gropius, who wanted to introduce as few changes to the space as possible, Arp modified the relief, painting the newly titled *Constellation II* in color and seeking out its new location.

University City in Caracas was financed by state profits from the oil industry.² President Isaías Medina Angarita commissioned the construction of University City from the architect Carlos Raúl Villanueva (1900–1975) in 1943.³ The use of a modernist style exemplified the wish for modernity in Venezuela and was to be expressed distinctly in the architecture.

Modeled after North American campuses, University City of Caracas was meant to be a safe, green space for the academic community. In 1952 and 1953, Villanueva realized the core of the university campus with the administration building and cultural center, where the integration of the arts, the ideas of Le Corbusier, and the expression of Roberto Burle Marx's landscape architecture are particularly evident. Villanueva's modernist architecture dealt with the particularities of the tropical surroundings and the conventions of colonial architecture, such as terraces, patios, and corridors, in order to modernize them. Like Gropius, he thought that the ultimate goal of fine art was the integration with architecture. Believing that abstract art would best achieve this, he turned to well-known European and North American artists. Between 1950 and 1954, 64 works of art were designed by Hans Arp, Fernand Léger, Antoine Pevsner, Victor Vasarely, Henri Laurens, Alexander Calder, and Wifredo Lam, among others. Together with Laurens's *Amphion*, Arp's *Cloud Shepherd* of 1953 (fig. 2) was given a prominent place: Situated in the public space along the covered walkways, they can be admired by numerous passersby every day. His relief *Siluetas en re-*

lieve was designed to be shown alongside the ceramic mural *Sonoridad* (1955, after a design by Sophie Taeuber-Arp, who died in 1943) for a space outside the psychology department's library (fig. 3). With the construction of University City and the employment of an architectural language originally from Europe, as well as abstract works by artists from Western Europe and North America, the country hoped to acquire a modern standing. The dictator was, in fact, suspicious of this modernity, accepting it only because it lent the nation the veneer of cultural standing and progressivism.

From the outset, the UNESCO headquarters in Paris was intended to represent a synthesis of artistic and architectural expression and the reawakened postwar commitment to architects such as Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius, and André Bloc. From 1952, Gropius; the three commissioned architects Bernard Zehruss (1911–1966), Marcel Breuer (1902–1981), and Pier Luigi Nervi (1819–1979); and UNESCO Director-General Jaime Torres Bodet (1903–1974) intensively discussed the challenge of integrating the arts in the UNESCO building. It was difficult to agree on a concept of the synthesis of architecture and the arts and to find individuals who would be responsible for selecting the works. The art for the interior and exterior was to be acquired both

through direct commissions from noted artists as well as gifts from UNESCO member nations. In any case, all of the works had to be approved by the Comité pour l'Architecture et les oeuvres d'art, which was founded in 1954, and whose members were international architects and art historians. Gropius played an important role in selecting the committee chairs, who together with Breuer advocated for the participation of James Johnson Sweeney (1900–1986), Herbert Read (1893–1968), and Sigfried Giedion and Carola Giedion-Welcker (1893–1979). The English art critic Herbert Read and the French curator Georges Salles (1889–1966), both staunch supporters of modern art, were included in the Comité. Read was friends with numerous artists, including Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, and Ben Nicholson, and was convinced that art was the expression of individual freedom. Likewise, Georges Salles had befriended artists such as Pablo Picasso and Joan Miró and had extensive experience commissioning monumental works from contemporary artists. The decisions, which were not always easy, reveal the committee's intent to maintain a coherent and common expression of modernism throughout the enterprise. Although UNESCO presented itself as a neutral and international forum, the result was to be the manifestation of ex-



Fig. 3 Hans Arp: *Siluetas en relieve*, 1956 (right) and after Sophie Taeuber-Arp: *Sonoridad*, 1955 (left), Photo: Luis Chacín, University City of Caracas, 2016

clusively western, liberal values and abstract modernist aesthetics. A limited selection of artworks was included in the architectural plans for the main building starting in 1955, and from then on, the project was hailed as the complete realization of all forms of artistic expression by the members of the Comité. The proposed artists were older, established painters and sculptors from the United States and Western Europe. They included Picasso, Moore, Arp, Calder, and Miró, whose work exemplified different approaches to non-representational art. Among the proposals discussed in 1955, Arp was considered for the library's exterior wall, along with Constantino Nivola and Isamu Noguchi (fig. 4). During the 1970s, *Constellation UNESCO* was installed on the wall of the executive council's vestibule, where it remains to this day (fig. 5).⁴



Fig. 4 Hans Arp with his relief at UNESCO, Paris, 1958.
Photo: Báblen, Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth

1 Melissa Venator and Madeline Corona: “Focus on Arp’s *Constellations II*,” January 3, 2019, Harvard Museum, www.harvardartmuseums.org/article/focus-on-hans-arp-s-em-constellations-ii-em (Accessed January 18, 2022).

2 Even during the dictatorship of Antonio Guzmán Blanco, foreign investments were welcomed, and firms were given permission to extract oil.

3 Villanueva was born in London and grew up in Paris, where he studied at the École des Beaux-Arts. In 1928, he returned to Venezuela.

4 The research project supported by the Stiftung Arp e.V. is the extension of a project that grew out of research on the history of the creation of the university cities of Caracas and Mexico City and their artistic decoration entitled “Universitätsstadt von Caracas (Universidad Central de Venezuela) und Universitätsstadt von Mexiko-Stadt (Universidad Autónoma de México) – Zwei UNESCO-Weltkulturerbe im Vergleich” (University City of Caracas (Universidad Central de Venezuela) and University City of Mexico City (Universidad Autónoma de México): Two UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Comparison). I carried out this project in 2016 as part of the master’s seminar UNESCO-Weltkulturerbe der Karibik (UNESCO-World Cultural Heritage of the Caribbean) at the University of Heidelberg. The bibliographic research undertaken at the library of the Ibero-American Institute in Berlin was later augmented by research at the UNESCO archives in Paris, where I specifically examined the meeting minutes of the Comité pour l’Architecture et les œuvres d’art, the committee responsible for selecting the works of art.



Fig. 5 Hans Arp: *Constellation UNESCO*, 1958,
Photo: Vincenza Benedettino, 2019, UNESCO, Paris



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Hans Arp’s Early Market.

The Artist’s Relationships with his first Parisian Dealers: Jacques Viot and Camille Goemans

Alice Ensabella

Introduction

The present research aims to investigate the circulation and the reception of Hans Arp’s work on the Parisian and Belgian art markets in the late 1920s. The delicate relationship between Surrealism and the market has been recently demonstrated by many academic projects and research.¹ These studies show that following the publication of the *Manifeste* in 1924, the Surrealists, strengthened by their independent, avant-garde position, also attempted to be independent and autonomous in the commercialization of their art. Creating a promotional model specific to the movement, the Surrealists were able to enter official market institutions and dynamically exploit their skills. Without counting on the support of a dealer, some members of the group began to support the first generation of Surrealist artists, giving them formal contracts or organizing solo and group exhibitions in art galleries.

The case of Hans Arp is a perfect example of this dynamic, as the German-French artist was represented in the late 1920s by two members of the Surrealist group, the French Jacques Viot (between 1925 and 1926) and the Belgian Camille Goemans (between 1927 and 1930).

Jacques Viot: Hans Arp’s first Agent

In 1925, soon after his arrival in the French capital, Arp met his first Parisian agent and dealer, Jacques Viot, who was a member of the Surrealist group. He

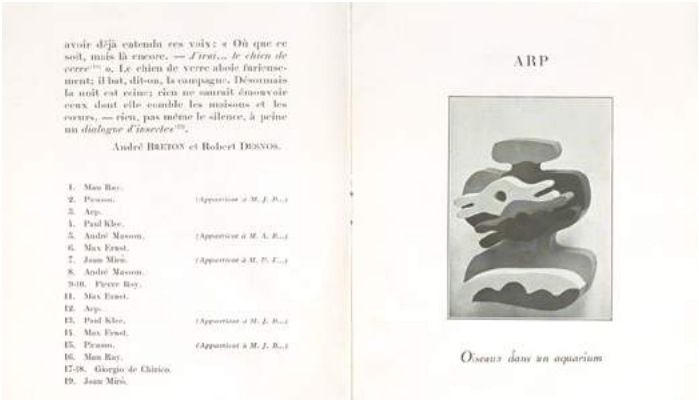


Fig. 1 Exhibition catalogue of the surrealist painting show at the Galerie Pierre, Paris, November 1925, with a reproduction of Hans Arp’s *Oiseaux dans un aquarium*, 1924–1925

also worked at the Galerie Pierre, the gallery directed by Pierre Loeb that hosted the famous first show of Surrealist painting in November 1925, where Arp exhibited two works (fig. 1).² Although Jacques Viot had no previous experience as a dealer or artists’ agent, he decided to promote a few Surrealist artists in parallel to his position at the Galerie Pierre. In 1925, Viot signed agreements with three artists from the group: Max Ernst, Joan Miró, and Hans Arp, who moved to Paris in March of the same year. As Pierre Loeb recalled in his memoirs:

[...] Il resta un an à la Galerie et me quitta ensuite pour faire du courtage à son compte, se faisant confier un peu partout des tableaux à vendre. Il eut le mérite de s’occuper, le premier, des œuvres ‘surréalistes’ de Miró, Arp, Max Ernst, et sut trouver des amateurs pour cette peinture difficile.³

It seems that Arp and Viot met through Max Ernst, who suggested that his friend get in touch with his agent. At the time, Viot lived in an atelier at the Villa des Fusains, on the rue Tourlaque, where he also rented two ateliers for Miró and Ernst. As mentioned in a letter from Ernst to Arp,⁴ the Surrealist dealer also rented an atelier for his new protégé, and thus began their collaboration.

A few months later, a letter from Viot to Tristan Tzara from the end of 1925 indicates that Viot was already trying to sell some of Arp’s work:

[...] Miró m’a dit que vous vouliez voir ses dernières toiles. Elles sont chez moi, rue Tourlaque, Atelier 7, ainsi que des Arp.⁵

If the relationship between Viot, Miró, and Ernst is quite well documented, we cannot say the same for the one between Viot and Arp. The other two Surrealist artists certainly had a formal agreement with Viot, who assured each of them a salary of 1,500 francs per month.⁶ Unfortunately, no records have been found concerning the terms of a potential agreement with Arp.

Even if Viot did not organize solo exhibitions for the artist, however, the presence of Arp’s works in the first exhibition of Surrealist painting and in the stock of the Galerie Pierre is certainly due to his initiative. Looking at the few known records, it seems clear that Viot struggled to sell Arp’s works. The market for Surrealist art in Paris was just beginning to ascend and Arp’s wood reliefs did not easily find buyers.

Viot remembers the difficulties in trading these artworks:

[...] En 1925 je m’occupais de Miró, Max Ernst et Arp, ce n’était pas mal choisi mais c’était trop tôt. J’en donnais, on me les refusait.⁷

Nevertheless, Viot managed to sell some works. In his text *Le magicien*, Arp recalls the first sale of a relief to a collector in 1926 for 500 FF. As Maike Steinkamp notes, even if the artist described this sale as a remark-

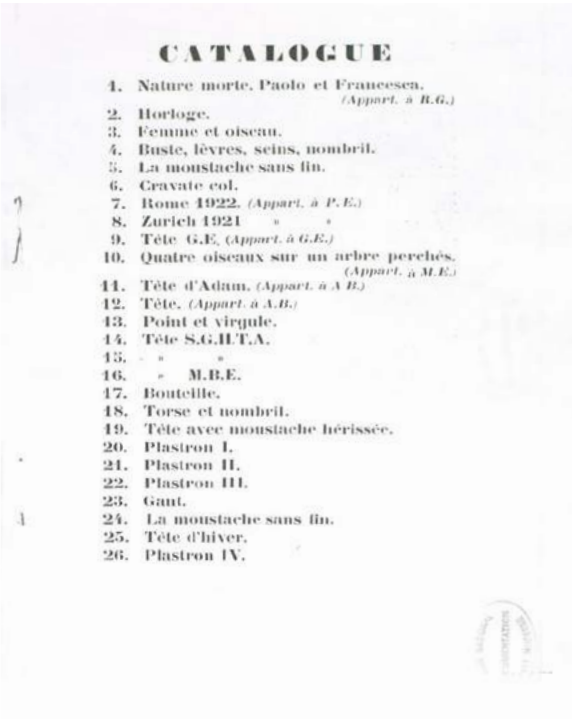


Fig. 2 Exhibition catalogue of the Arp show at the Galerie Surréaliste, Paris, November–December 1927

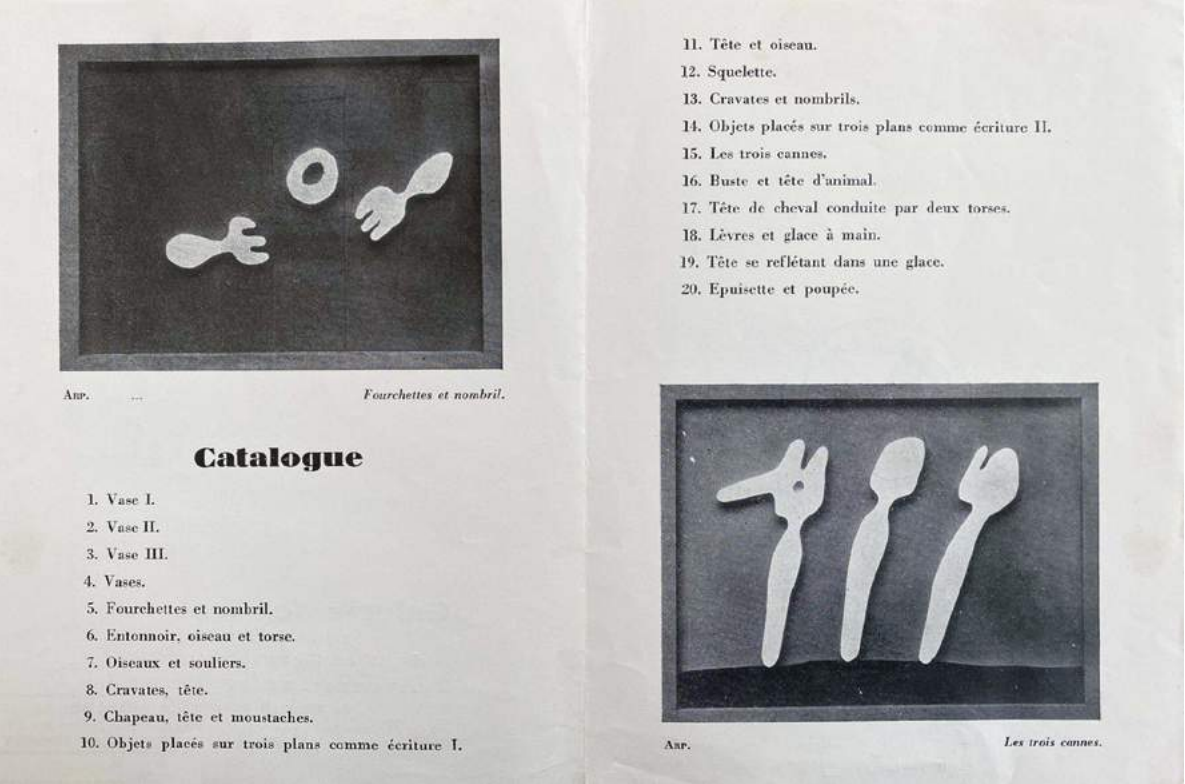


Fig. 3 Exhibition catalogue of the Arp show at the Galerie Le Centaure, Brussels, November 1928

able commercial achievement for a first work sold, he also acknowledges how hard it was for his dealer to place his works on the market.⁸

Viot's risky choice to promote three emerging artists quickly led to financial issues. Within only a few months, he accumulated steady debts to other dealers, foremost to Pierre Loeb,⁹ but also to his artists. For these reasons, he left France in the summer of 1926 and embarked upon a three-year trip to Tahiti. As Max Ernst states in a letter to Camille Goemans:

[...] Viot est, depuis une huitaine de jours, disparu, après avoir escroqué peu plus de 100 000 frs à divers endroits, entre 27.000 à Éluard et 3.000 à moi.¹⁰

It is well known that during the same period Sophie Tauber-Arp received the important commission for the decoration of the Aubette restaurant from the Horn brothers. The payment she and Arp received for this work allowed them to build their home and studio in Meudon (near Paris) the following year. However, from summer 1926, Hans Arp could not count on any dealer to promote his art.

The Surrealist Gallery and the Jeanne Bucher's Support

After Jacques Viot's departure, Pierre Loeb took his place in promoting the work of Miró, but he did not do the same for that of Ernst and Arp. While Ernst was able to count on the support of the Galerie Van Leer and the Galerie Jeanne Bucher soon after, Arp seemed to struggle a bit more in finding a gallery to display and sell his work in 1927.

Of course, since the opening of the Galerie surréaliste in March 1926, Arp's reliefs were on permanent display and in the stock of the movement's official gallery on the rue Jacques Callot. As Sophie Tauber-Arp writes in a letter to her sister Erika in 1926, some works were sold at the Galerie surréaliste,¹¹ which also hosted the artist's first solo exhibition in November–December 1927.

The exhibition catalogue lists works in private collections, all of which belonged to members of the Parisian Surrealist group. This confirms that in late 1927, Arp's market was limited to the Surrealist milieu and that the Surrealists themselves can, therefore, be considered the very first collectors of his work (fig. 2).¹²

In 1927 and 1928, some of Arp's works were displayed in group exhibitions in two other Parisian galleries; at the Galerie Jeanne Bucher in the exhibition *Lurçat, Arp, Ernst* (November–December 1927), and the Galerie Sacre du Printemps in the exhibition *La peinture surréaliste existe-elle?* (April 1928).

Jeanne Bucher showed an interest in Arp's work, having offered him the possibility of keeping some of his works in her stock for sale since 1926. The gallery registers confirm that the artist contributed at least three reliefs (*Grand oiseau gris blanc sur fond gris*, *Figure humaine découpée*, and *Envol dans le ciel*) to the gallery stock.¹³ These works did not find any buyers and were later retired by the artist himself, once again revealing his struggle in finding collectors for his work in Paris.¹⁴

For this reason, Camille Goemans's arrival in Paris and his connections to the Belgian market became essential for Arp's economic success.

Camille Goemans: A New Dealer in Paris and the Bridge to the Belgian art market

Camille Goemans, one of the founders of the Belgian Surrealist group, moved to Paris in 1925. Besides actively participating in Surrealist group meetings, he seems to have been involved in the management of the Galerie surréaliste between March 1926 and April 1928. As the recently found correspondence between Goemans and the Belgian collector Pierre Janlet shows,¹⁵ Goemans decided to launch his career as an artists' agent in 1927. Specializing in modern French art and catering to Belgian collectors, he also became the exclusive agent of a few Surrealist artists—including Hans Arp. As was the case for Arp and Viot, the atelier in the rue Tourlaque was a crucial place in the history of Arp's relationship with his new dealer. In fact, Goemans also lived for a time at the Villa des Fusains (first hosted by Max Ernst, and then renting his own atelier), where the two certainly met for the first time.

The letters to Janlet—the main source for retracing the terms of Arp and Goemans's collaboration—also demonstrate the central role Goemans played in the circulation of Surrealist artworks between Paris and Brussels. Additionally, they reveal that the Belgian market was, since the late 1920s, much more open to Surrealist art than the Parisian one.

Arp's two solo exhibitions in the Belgian capital in fall 1928 confirm both this trend as well as the significant role Goemans played in promoting Arp in Brussels at a moment when the Parisian market was not as fertile for him. The first exhibition took place at the Galerie L'Époque in October, and the second was held in November at the Galerie Le Centaure (fig. 3). Both exhibitions, which primarily featured Arp's wood reliefs, resulted in sales to important collectors, including Pierre Janlet, Fernand Graindorge, Gustave Van Hecke, and Maja Hoffmann-Stehlin and Emanuel Hoffmann, the latter of whom would become two of the artist's most engaged patrons.¹⁶

This success can be attributed to the fact that some of Arp's works had already been circulating in Brussels since 1927. Some of Goemans's letters to Janlet reveal that during the same year, he sold three paper reliefs to Hoffman,¹⁷ two to Janlet himself.¹⁸ He expanded his network and sold additional works in 1928. Janlet began as a collector of Arp's work, but he soon became Goemans's partner in brokering work by some of his artists, including that of Arp, and took part in the sales profit.¹⁹ In a letter from February 1928, Goemans mentions for the first time aspects of the agreement he had with Arp:

[...] Arp va me revenir bientôt avec sa production d'octobre, de novembre, de décembre et de janvier. Je vous laisserais pour les trois premiers mois de cette énumération, la moitié de sa production, avec le premier choix sur cette moitié. Il m'annonce des œuvres particulièrement intéressantes. Le tout vous reviendrait à 3500frs. À son arrivée, je vous enverrais un télégramme, et vous viendriez choisir, car le temps pressera: quatre ou cinq personnes attendent déjà la nouvelle production.²⁰

This letter is interesting in several respects. We learn that Arp and Goemans had an exclusive contract, which stipulated that the artist had to provide his monthly production to his dealer for 2,000 FF per month.²¹ When these terms likely became too onerous for Goemans, Janlet proposed to help by paying half of the artist's salary. A letter from February 2, 1929, confirms that in exchange for this financial contribution, Goemans would allow the Belgian collector the right to the *première vue* of half of his production. Janlet's participation lasted for more than two years, ending in September 1929.²²



Fig. 4 Interior of the Galerie Goemans during the exhibition *La peinture au défi. Exposition de collages*, Paris, March 1930. Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth



Fig. 5 The display window at the Galerie Goemans during the Arp exhibition, Paris, November 1929. Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth

Although Goemans seems to have run a brisk business in Belgium, it is clear that the profits were insufficient to cover the costs of the agreement. Yet this did not discourage him in the least, as he took the risk of opening his own gallery, sure it would strengthen his business. The Galerie Goemans opened in fall 1929 in the heart of the Parisian *rive gauche*, in a space that symbolically took the place of the previous Surrealist gallery.

Hans Arp and Sophie Taeuber-Arp²³ played a central role in the conception and launch of this gallery, although the venture lasted only a few months (the gallery opened in fall 1929 and closed only a few months later, in winter/spring 1930). The first documented show organized by Goemans was in fact a solo exhibition dedicated to Arp (the only artist he had under contract), November 4–17, 1929, which showcased twenty-two of his recent works. A subsequent group exhibition at the gallery also included Arp (figs. 4–5).

Unfortunately, it is impossible to know if Arp's show was a financial success, as Goemans's letters to Janlet tapered off during this period. It is certain, however, that the business relationship between the two began to sour. Furthermore, soon after the gallery's opening, Goemans ran into serious financial issues that led him to close it only a couple of months later. In spring 1930, Goemans left Paris to move back to Brussels, abandoning his career as dealer and breaking his contract with Arp.

Conclusion

This research has demonstrated that Viot and Goemans faced real challenges in fostering Hans Arp's art between 1925 and 1929. On the one hand, the market for Surrealist art was not yet developed. On the other, Viot and Goemans likely paid for their lack of experience as modern art dealers, which led them to focus entirely on an emerging avant-garde. Although Arp's contracts with these dealers were short, both Viot and Goemans helped the artist to develop his first network of collectors and patrons. They also ensured his works were presented by important modern art galleries, both in Paris (Pierre, Bucher) and Brussels (L'Époque, Le Centaure). The significance of their support and their efforts in promoting Arp's work would be confirmed in the following years, during which Arp gained international fame and recognition.

1 See *Ricerche di Storia dell'Arte. Il sistema dell'arte nella Parigi dei surrealisti: mercanti, galleristi, collezionisti*, XLI, n. 121, 2017; Julia Drost, Fabrice Flahutez, and Anne Helmreich (eds.): *Networking Surrealism in the USA: Agents, Artists and the Market*, Heidelberg, arthistoricum.net, 2019 (Passages online, Vol. 3). www.doi.org/10.11588/arthistoricum.485; Julia Drost, Fabrice Flahutez, and Martin Schieder (eds.): *Le Surréalisme et l'argent*, Heidelberg, arthistoricum.net, 2021 (Passages online, Vol. 4). www.doi.org/10.11588/arthistoricum.612.

2 *La peinture surréaliste*, Paris: Galerie Pierre, 14–25 November 1925.

3 Pierre Loeb: *Voyages à travers la peinture*, Paris, Bordas, 1946, p. 108.

4 Agnès De la Beaumelle (ed.): *Joan Miró, 1917–1934. La naissance du monde*, ex. cat., Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris, 2004, pp. 329–332.

5 Victoria Combalia: “Viot et Miró,” in: *Le rêve d'une ville: Nantes et le surréalisme*, ex. cat., Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nantes, Paris: RMN, 1994, p. 331.

6 De la Beaumelle 2004, p. 319.

7 Patrice Allain: “Jacques Viot,” in: *Le rêve d'une ville: Nantes et le surréalisme*, ex. cat., Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nantes, Paris, 1994, p. 304.

8 Maike Steinkamp: “‘Le point se révolte. Jean Arp et le marché de l'art surréaliste’,” in: *Le surréalisme et l'argent*, 2021, p. 59.

9 The gallery registers from December 1926 list an amount of 38,000 francs due by Jacques Viot. *Journal*, Archives Galerie Pierre, Archives 140–carton 1, Paris: Bibliothèque de l'Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art.

10 Combalia 1994, pp. 332–333.

11 Steinkamp 2021, p. 59.

12 *Arp*, Paris: Galerie surréaliste, 21 November–9 December, 1927. The exhibition catalogue lists some of the collectors by their initials: A.B. (André Breton), P.E. (Paul Éluard), G.E. (Gala Éluard), M.E. (Max Ernst), R.G. (René Gaffé).

13 The Jeanne Bucher gallery registers are still held at the Galerie Jeanne Bucher Jaeger. My gratitude to Emmanuel Jaeger, who gave me access to these documents.

14 Later on, Jeanne Bucher would become involved in promoting Arp, displaying his *papiers déchirés* for the first time in 1930.

15 Fonds Pierre Janlet, Correspondence, Goemans (27 letters). Brussels: Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts.

16 Steinkamp 2021, pp. 51–52. Janlet did not buy the works exhibited at the Galerie L'Époque, he certainly loaned them to the gallery as he bought them from Goemans the previous year.

17 Goemans to Janlet, August 31, 1927.

18 Goemans to Janlet, November 17, 1927.

19 Goemans to Janlet, November 25, 1927.

20 Goemans to Janlet, February 17, 1928.

21 Unfortunately, the correspondence does not indicate the number of works per month stipulated by the agreement.

22 Goemans to Janlet, September 17, 1929.

23 Sophie Taeuber-Arp designed the gallery interior furnishings project with Marcel-Eugène Cahen. See Renaud Ego: “Costruire l’espace. Sophie Taeuber-Arp et l’architecture,” in: *Atelier Jean Arp et Sophie Taeuber Arp*, Paris and Clamart, 2012, p. 143.

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An (Intimate) History of Twentieth-Century Art: The Private Collections of Hans Arp and Sophie Taeuber-Arp

Gwendoline Corthier-Hardoin

Collections in Question

Studying an artist’s private collection is always a difficult task. Far from the wealthy amateurs who tend to promote their collection to institutions, artist collectors remain relatively unknown. Several factors come into play, from the dichotomy between the world of collectors and that of artists (buyers vs. producers) to the impression that the artworks collected do not really constitute a collection in the strict sense of the word—because they are made up of exchanges or gifts, i.e., obtained outside the market. However, not only do the collected artworks constitute a collection, namely “a group of artworks maintained temporarily or permanently outside the circuit of economic activity” in the words of Krzysztof Pomian,¹ but they also make it possible to account for an art history from a personal point of view.

A central difficulty, however, characterizes the private collections of Hans Arp and Sophie Taeuber-Arp, in that we must distinguish between the collections of the two individual artists, of the artist couple, and then of the second couple of Arp and Marguerite Hagenbach, herself a collector. These collections are intertwined, and there is still much to be learned about the exact provenance of certain artworks. My work is, therefore, based on those about which we have been able to gather information from the following sources: the gifts made to Arp and Hagenbach during their lives,² the artworks held at the Fondazione Marguerite Arp in Locarno, and the correspondence Arp maintained with numerous artists after the Second World War, held in the Stiftung Arp e.V.’s Berlin archive.³

Collaborations and Influences (1910s–1920s)

The earliest artworks preserved by Arp date from the 1910s. They reflect the artist's encounters and moments of sharing, particularly in Germany and Switzerland. From his studies with Wassily Kandinsky to his involvement in the Cabaret Voltaire network and his experiments with collage alongside his Dadaist friends, the Arp collection was built up in parallel with the artistic and social issues he faced.

In the early 1910s, Arp was at a turning point in his career. He moved away from the artistic norms taught by art schools and drew closer to artists who also sought freedom, such as Wassily Kandinsky. Arp participated in the exhibitions of the Der Blaue Reiter group, cofounded by Kandinsky, which advocated for an art based on interiority and the expression of pure form and colours. A major work by Kandinsky, *Improvisation 35* (1914, Kunstmuseum, Basel), which Arp preserved, dates from this period.

The acquisition of this artwork (fig. 1) exemplifies two key aspects of Arp's collection practice: friendship and plastic innovation. During the 1910s, the artist was able to develop these two dimensions at the Cabaret Voltaire. This network allowed the artists to encourage each other in their respective practices and to fight together against societal norms, which were challenged even more strongly by the war.⁴

Several difficulties, however, surround the transactions of the Dadaists, whose claims to anonymity and rejection of commercialism⁵ leave few traces available to the researcher; to this must be added a tendency to destroy their artworks. It is nevertheless through this practice of self-destruction that we know that Tristan Tzara came into possession of artworks by Arp early on. The latter wrote: "The few pieces that are still preserved owe it to my brother and my friends, who refused to hand them over to me to be destroyed. I even stole a collage from the room my friend Tzara occupied in the hotel to tear it up."⁶ In addition to serving as evidence of the artists' destruction of artworks, this statement shows that works likely circulated from hand to hand, allowing Arp to come into possession of artworks by his friends. The pieces he acquired, dated between 1916 and 1918, indeed correspond to the social and artistic relationships he developed through the Dada network, but above all to his research on collage and abstraction at the time.

For example, Arp obtained *Matschappij* from Otto Van Rees (fig. 2), a drawing in India ink on cardboard, enriched with a collage and dated 1915 (MNAM, Paris). It was at this time that the artist developed his first collages and met Arp. The two men came into regular contact and exhibited together at the Tanner Gallery in Zurich at the end of 1915. Arp did not show any collages there, unlike Van Rees, who had been using the process since the beginning of the year. It was only after a year's gradual progress that Arp adopted this technique, moving not only from relative to complete abstraction, but also from painting to collage. One can assume that the acquisition of *Matschappij* is directly linked to his artistic preoccupations, at a key moment of change in his practice. The art historian Herbert Henkels points out that Arp's contact with Van Rees's collages facilitated his production of the more liberated geometric abstract compositions made from scraps of paper in the first half of 1916,⁷ as in *Untitled* (Collage with Squares Arranged according to the Law of Chance) (1916–1917, MoMA, New York). The same applies to a *Relief au miroir* (1916–1917, MNAM, Paris) by Marcel Janco that Arp obtained. This oil on plaster with pieces of mirror (fig. 3) is the first work in a series begun at the end of 1916 in Zurich. It echoes works that Arp and Taeuber-Arp produced in the same period related to their experimentation with abstract art and the integration of art into life.

Artistic collaborations are, therefore, a central element to understanding Arp's collection. Around 1920, for example, the artist had a particularly close relationship with Max Ernst, owning a total of some twenty of his artworks.⁸ Among them are several *Fatagaga*, a series of collages made together while they were in Cologne. Art historian Julia Drost explains:

Their collaboration is that of two like-minded artists. Both are driven by similar artistic concerns. They called themselves "true Dada[s]" and fought against the classical hierarchy of art disciplines. During this period, collage became their preferred artistic process, which later had a decisive influence on their work.⁹

The presence of at least three of these collages¹⁰ in Arp's collection reveals several motivations of both a plastic and social nature. Like the works of Janco and Van



Fig. 1 Wassily Kandinsky: *Improvisation 35*, 1914. Oil on canvas, 110.3 × 120.3 cm, Kunstmuseum Basel, inv. G 1966.11



Fig. 2 Otto van Rees: *Matschappij*, 1915. Indian ink and paper pasted on cardboard, 18.5 × 17.5 cm, Musée national d'art moderne, Paris, inv. AM 1973–12

Rees, Ernst's collages are evidence of joint artistic experimentation while simultaneously serving as artistic stimulation within the Dadaist network.

Between Surrealism and Abstraction (the 1930s)

During the 1930s, Surrealism was increasingly successful both artistically and commercially. In this context, the private collection of Arp and Taeuber-Arp is particularly interesting. It shows how the couple integrated themselves into this growing network, while at the same time continuing to collaborate regularly with their fel-

low abstract artists. "Surrealism supported me, but did not change me. It may have accentuated the poetic associative side of my work,"¹¹ Arp explained in retrospect. Above all, Surrealism gave him visibility in Paris. In 1930, Arp showed his collages in Camille Goemans's gallery alongside Max Ernst, Salvador Dalí, Marcel Duchamp, Pablo Picasso, and Yves Tanguy. In the same year, Arp exhibited his artworks alongside Miró and Dalí at Studio 28, for the public presentation of the film *L'âge d'or*. Such integration into the Surrealist network naturally favors acquisitions. Arp and/or Taeuber-Arp thus came into possession of a *Dessin surréaliste* (1934, MNAM, Paris) by the Danish painter Vilhelm Bjerke-

Petersen, who organized the international exhibition *Kubism-Surrealism* in Copenhagen in 1935, which included work by Arp. In addition, the latter and/or Taeuber-Arp acquired two other Surrealist pieces produced in 1936. The first is entitled *Le simulateur* (The Simulator, 1936, MNAM, Paris) and was produced by Dora Maar; the second is *Le vertige d'où naquirent les voûtes...* (The vertigo from which the vaults were born..., 1936, MNAM, Paris) by Georges Hugnet. Arp and Taeuber-Arp exhibited with both artists, for example, at the 1938 International Surrealist Exhibition at the Galerie des Beaux-Arts in Paris.

Parallel to these Surrealist events, Arp and Taeuber-Arp actively participated in the development of abstraction. In the 1920s, Arp collaborated with the proponents of Neoplasticism—as in the *Aubette*—and joined several groups of abstract artists: Cercle et Carré (founded in 1929), Art Concret (founded in 1930 by van Doesburg, an artist from whom Arp obtained *Composition in Half Tones*, 1928, Kunstmuseum, Basel), and Abstraction-Création (established in 1931). It was probably through these networks, and their joint projects, that artworks circulated between Arp and/or Taeuber-Arp. The couple came into possession of a *Composition* (1935, MNAM, Paris) by Moholy-Nagy, who, like them, was a member of Cercle et Carré and Abstraction-Création, as well as another *Composition* (1937, MNAM, Paris) by Freundlich, dedicated "Otto Freundlich/Paris 1937, f/to my friend and comrade Hans Arp." In the second half of the 1930s, the couple obtained several works by Kurt Schwitters. In 1936, on the occasion of his final stay in Paris, Schwitters gave one of his collages to Taeuber-Arp: *MZ 1926,2. Selbst oben* (1926, MNAM, Paris), dedicated "Mz 1926,2./selbst oben/für Janssen 1936//Kurt Schwitters 1926."¹² This gift was followed by another likely gift from him in 1938: *Contra punkt (Counterpoint)* (MNAM, Paris), upon which Arp's name is affixed alongside that of "Merz," a concept that Schwitters developed independently, and about which Arp was repeatedly complimentary.¹³ During the 1930s, therefore, Arp and Taeuber-Arp multiplied their acquisitions through their networks, not only because they participated in the same events, but also because the artworks of their colleagues, whether Surrealists or abstract, corresponded to their aspirations. In 1966, Arp declared: "Some works by Duchamp, Man Ray, Masson, Miró, Ernst and several 'surrealist objects' are also concrete works."¹⁴

Against the Grain of the Market? Arp's Acquisitions after the Second World War

Following Taeuber-Arp's death, the end of Second World War, and especially from the mid-1950s onwards, Arp's collection focused mainly on his earlier friendships. The artist then enjoyed great renown and substantial financial resources. In 1954, he won the Grand Prize for Sculpture at the Venice Biennale. Monumental artworks were commissioned in France, Switzerland, the United States, and Germany. This validation allowed him to enjoy material prosperity. Although Arp had considerable financial means, however, the artworks that entered his collection during the 1950s and 1960s—a period of strong speculation on the market that Raymonde Moulin has gone so far as to call a "picomania"¹⁵—were mostly acquired through donations and exchanges, i.e., outside of the market.

The recourse to the non-market system is mainly explained by the friendly relations that Arp maintained throughout the twentieth century with his fellow artists. Indeed, in a non-market exchange, friendship takes precedence over the exchange relationship, as anthropologist Alain Testart explains.¹⁶ On January 1, 1955, for example, his Dada friend Marcel Janco sent him and Marguerite Hagenbach-Arp a watercolor: "Dearest Great Dada Arp, dearest Mrs Hagenbach, [...] With a small watercolor: *Jaffa in War*, which I am sending separately, we wish you a happy, inspired, solid, and prolific New Year."¹⁷ Arp's friends often expressed a deep admiration for him, which explains some of their gifts. In 1956, for example, the painter Leone Minassian wrote to him:

I would have liked to write to you to thank you once again for your act, which not only testifies so highly to your exquisite sensitivity, but also represents a token of your generous attachment to your admirer and, I hope, a sign of your esteem. If this is truly so, how many setbacks your touching and deeply human gesture consoles me for! I do not insist on the honor you have done me, for it is all too obvious! It would be sweet to learn that, if you happen to glance at my drawing from time to time, it will not have disappointed you too much...¹⁸



Fig. 3 Marcel Janco: *Relief au miroir*, 1916–1917. Oil on plaster, incorporation of pieces of mirror, 48.7 × 36.7 × 4.5 cm, Musée national d'art moderne, Paris, inv. AM 1693 S

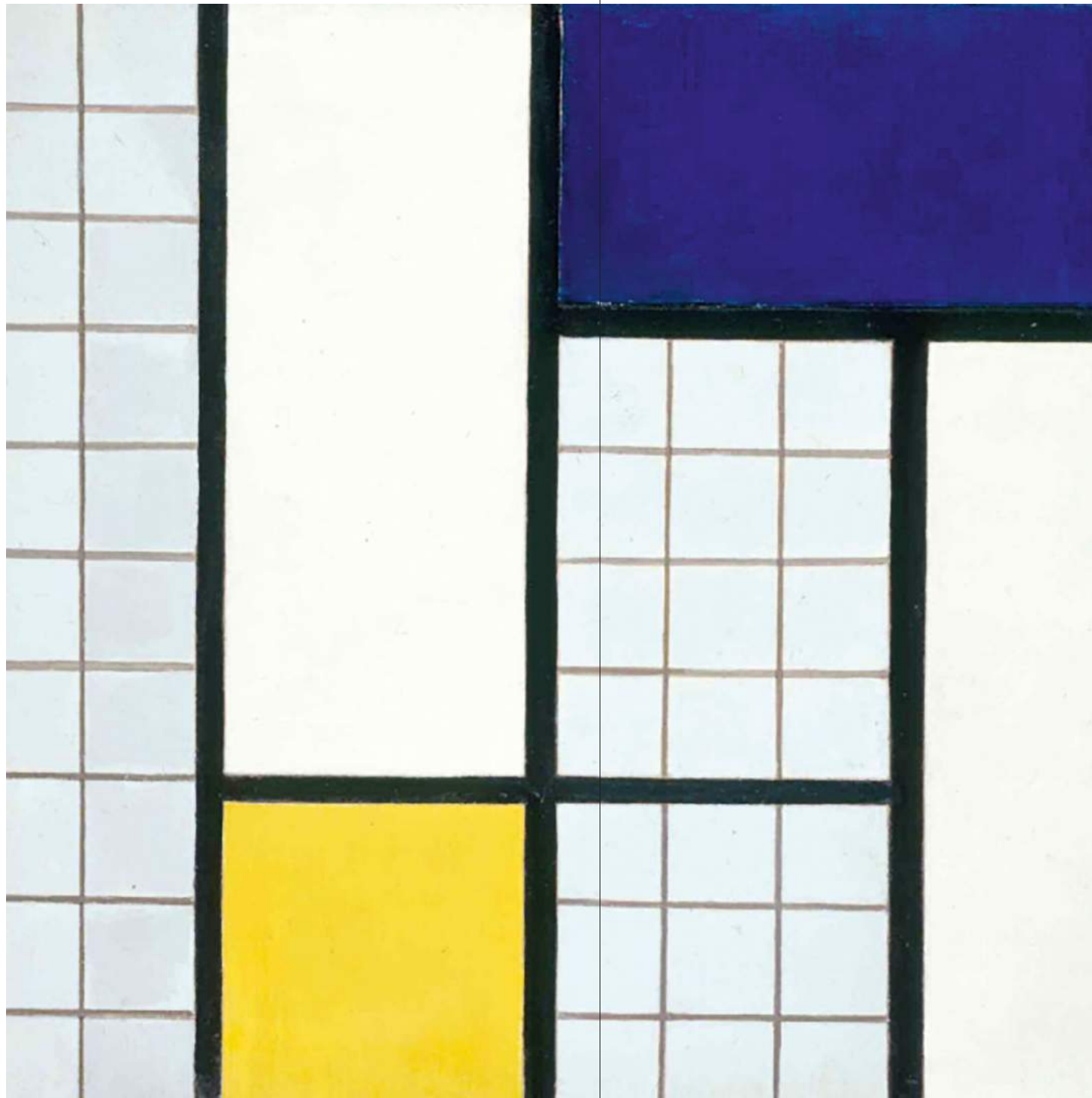


Fig. 4 Theo van Doesburg: *Composition in Half Tones*, 1928. Oil on canvas, 50 × 50 cm, Kunstmuseum, Basel, inv. G 1966.10

We understand from this letter that the two artists gave each other their artworks as gifts, a practice that aligns with Marcel Mauss's early twentieth-century concept of gift and counter-gift theorized. In his *Essai sur le don*, the sociologist highlighted a social paradigm, called the triple obligation to give, receive, and return, which explains why an individual generally tends to make a gift in return for a first gift.¹⁹

This practice is highly prevalent among artists, and of particular interest with respect to Arp, insofar as the artist did not hesitate to give away his artworks, that is, to circulate them outside the commercial circuit, even though he was fully integrated within it. Thus, between 1954 and 1965, Arp gave his works to or exchanged them with numerous artists, the majority of whom were not as well recognized as he: Leone Minassian, Hans Richter, Marcel Janco, Victor Vasarely, Frederic Kiesler, Paule Vezelay, Alberto Magnelli, François Stahly, Marcel Jean, Hansjörg Gisiger, Raoul Hausmann, and Hannah Höch. This mode of acquisition is part of the collection's social dimension. In this sense, when Arp was moved by questions of a plastic nature, he seemed to favor purchases. In August 1957, for example, he was interested in buying a painting by Jean Gorin, estimated by the latter at 100,000 old francs (1,000 new francs).²⁰ A year later, in July 1958, Arp again approached the artist for another painting, valued at 150,000 old francs (1,500 new francs).²¹

Although these purchases were made directly from the artists, Arp also used the dealer network to obtain certain pieces. Those of Marcelle Cahn, an artist with whom he had exhibited since 1930 with the Cercle et Carré group, were bought in galleries. In March 1960, Simone Heller sold him a panel for 400 new francs,²² and the following year a collage for 500 new francs.²³ During the 1960s, Arp also bought several pieces by Vikking Eggeling from the Bern art dealer Klipstein and Kornfeld.²⁴ At the same time, he and his wife continued to buy artworks directly from artists, such as a drawing by the Alsatian landscape painter Georges Ritleng. It is noteworthy that while Ritleng had estimated this piece at 200 new francs according to his latest sales,²⁵ Arp paid more for it, sending a check for 500 new francs.²⁶ As Ritleng's drawings were "not being fixed by a market value,"²⁷ as he put it, Arp chose to increase their value. His collection thus crossed financial and sentimental values, sometimes against the grain of the market.

The purchase of this drawing at more than twice its estimate is symptomatic of Arp and his wife’s philanthropic nature. The couple’s generosity is evident in many of the letters they wrote to their contemporaries. Sums of money were regularly given or loaned, to Michel Seuphor for example, but also to Raoul Hausmann. The couple’s help led artists to offer their artworks in gratitude. Hausmann, for example, gave them two of his engravings in 1957, followed by a copy of *Courrier dada* accompanied by a gouache in 1958, another gouache in 1959 as a wedding present, as well as eight drawings for Arp’s birthday, and a collage in 1963 (as a counter-donation of a relief Arp had given to Hausmann). All these works entered Arp’s and Hagenbach’s collection in return for their gestures of generosity. Likewise, in 1962, the kinetic artist Victor Vasarely gave the couple one of his artworks as a gift to thank them for a loan.²⁸ Separately, Willy Anthoons asked Arp and Hagenbach to buy a piece from him when he was experiencing great difficulties.²⁹

Conclusion

The Arp collection, and to a lesser extent the Taeuber-Arp collection, which is ripe for further research, is a significant example of the practice of collecting among artists. Artistic, social, and economic issues are intertwined, with multiple modes of acquisition spanning gifts, exchanges, and purchases. The artworks circulate as a means for mutual artistic stimulation, while at the same time testifying to the various networks in which the two artists participated, including Dadaism, Surrealism, and abstraction. This collection, in addition to constituting a trace of the friendships and artistic collaborations of Arp and Taeuber-Arp, reveals itself to be an intimate mirror of the evolution of the field of twentieth-century art.

1 Krzysztof Pomian: *Collectionneurs, amateurs et curieux. Paris, Venise: XVIe–XVIIIe siècle*, Collection Bibliothèque des Histoires, Paris, 1987, p. 18.

2 In particular at the Basel Kunstmuseum in 1966 and at the Musée National d’Art Moderne in Paris between 1967 and 1973.

3 For this research, I consulted almost 1,600 letters exchanged between Hans Arp and the following artists: Anni and Josef Albers, Willy Anthoons, Willi Baumeister, Hans Bellmer, Max Bill, Marcelle Cahn, Sonia Delaunay, César Domela, Piero Dorazio, Max Ernst, Jean Gorin, Hans Hartung, Ivo Hauptmann, Raoul Hausmann, Jean Hélion, Hannah Höch, Georges Hugnet, Marcel Janco, Marcel Jean, Joseph Jarema, Frederic Kiesler, Jean Legros, Leo Leuppi, Alexander Liberman, Alberto Magnelli, Leone Minassian, Antoine Poncet, Hans Richter, Georges Ritleng, Christian Roeckenschuss, Kurt Schwitters, Michel Seuphor, François Stahly, Victor Vasarely, and Paule Vézelay.

4 Giovanni Lista: *Dada: libertin & libertaire*, Paris, 2005.

5 On this subject, see the interview with Hans Richter in Philippe Sers and Hans Richter: *Sur Dada. Entretiens avec Hans Richter: essai sur l’expérience dadaïste de l’image*, Nîmes, 1997, p. 93.

6 Jean Arp: *Jours effeuillés: poèmes, essais, souvenirs (1920–1965)*, Paris, 1966, p. 357.

7 Herbert Henkels and F. C. Nagels: “The Beginning of Dadaism: Arp and van Rees in Zürich 1915,” in: *Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art*, 23 (1972), pp. 373–390.

8 From a letter from Marguerite Hagenbach-Arp to Günter Metken, February 12, 1971, Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.

9 Julia Drost: “Le secret des Fatagaga–Hans Jean Arp et Max Ernst,” in: Isabelle Ewig and Emmanuel Guigon (eds.), *Art is Arp: dessins, collages, reliefs, sculptures, poésie*, exh. cat., Musées de Strasbourg, 2009, p. 191.

10 One of these is *Hier ist noch alles in der schwebe* or *Steam and Fish* (1920, Museum of Modern Art, New York). For a detailed description of this work, see *Dada in the Collection of the Museum of Modern Art*, New York, 2008, pp. 157–162.

11 Quoted in Palais des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles, *Jean Arp: l’invention de la forme*, exh. cat. Palais des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles, Brussels, 2004, p. 183.

12 “Janssen” is the nickname Schwitters gave to Taeuber-Arp, while the phrase “Selbst oben” [Yourself upstairs] is said to refer to his studio on the upper floor of his house in Clamart.

13 Arp 1966, p. 333.

14 Ibid.

15 Raymonde Moulin: *Le marché de la peinture en France*, Paris, 1967, p. 468.

16 Alain Testart: “Échange marchand, échange non marchand,” in: *Revue française de sociologie*, 42/4 (2001), p. 736.

17 Letter from Marcel Janco to Hans Arp and Marguerite Hagenbach, January 1, 1955, Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.

18 Letter from Leone Minassian to Hans Arp and Marguerite Hagenbach-Arp, October 9, 1956, Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.

19 Marcel Mauss: *Essai sur le don: forme et raison de l’échange dans les sociétés archaïques* (1925), Paris, 2007 (*Quadrige*).

20 Letter from Jean Gorin to Hans Arp, August 6, 1957, Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.

21 Letter from Jean Gorin to Hans Arp, July 16, 1958, Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.

22 Letter from Simone Heller to Marguerite and Hans Arp, March 11, 1960, Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.

23 Letter from Simone Heller to Marguerite and Hans Arp, October 4, 1961, Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.

24 Louise O’Konor: *Viking Eggeling, 1880–1925, Artist and Film-Maker. Life and Work*, Stockholm, 1971.

25 Letter from Georges Ritleng to Hans Arp, March 12, 1964, Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.

26 Letter from Marguerite Hagenbach to Georges Ritleng, March 14, 1964, Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.

27 Letter from Georges Ritleng to Hans Arp, March 12, 1964, Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.

28 Letter from Victor Vasarely to Hans Arp and Marguerite Hagenbach, September 27, 1962, Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.

29 The couple responded favorably to Anthoons’s request and sent him a check for 2,000 francs “to tide him over a little,” as Marguerite put it. See letter from Marguerite Hagenbach to Willy Anthoons, November 6, 1964, Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.



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“The Quartet of my Swiss Friends” – Hans Arp and His Early Swiss Collectors Maja Sacher and Emanuel Hoffmann, Clara and Emil Friedrich-Jezler, and Annie and Oskar Müller-Widmann. Early Patronage and Lifelong Friendships

Nicole Hartje-Grave

For Hans Arp, Switzerland provided the focal point of his life, an artistic stage, and a place of refuge during the Second World War. However, Switzerland was also the country where three important husband-and-wife pairs of collectors had already begun purchasing his works in the early 1930s: Maja Sacher and Emanuel Hoffmann, Annie and Oskar Müller-Widmann, and Clara and Emil Friedrich-Jezler. Long before other collectors—from France and the United States, for example—would recognize Arp’s importance, these three Swiss couples were purchasing his works (mostly reliefs, initially), providing him and his wife Sophie Taeuber-Arp with financial support, and offering him a secure place to live after he fled from occupied France. Who were these collectors and why was it precisely Arp’s work that they acquired for their collections? And how is this connected with the artistically open-minded attitude of Basel’s museum directors? What role did the art critic and author Carola Giedion-Welcker play in the early marketing of Arp?

A research project undertaken at the Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth explored these and other questions related to early Swiss modern art.¹ As its starting point, the project took the many works by Arp from the former private collection of Wilfried and



Fig. 1 Hans Arp: *Feuille (Leaf) “Meudon”* (also *Feuille d’une femme*), 1935. Relief in oak, 48 x 40 cm. Kunstmuseum Bonn, Loan of Professor Dr. med. Wilfried and Gisela Fitting Stiftung (former collection Müller-Widmann)

Gisela Fitting in Cologne. The provenances of many of these pieces, which are now on long-term loan to the Kunstmuseum Bonn, lead back to precisely these Swiss collectors and the enterprising Basel gallerist Marie-Suzanne Feigel.² The rear sides of what are perhaps the most beautiful early reliefs, the *Feuille Meudon* (fig. 1) and *Feuille Seine-et-Oise* (fig. 2) of 1935, still contain labels from a 1962 exhibition at London’s Tate Gallery, which identify Oskar Müller-Widmann as their owner. Many other works from the Fitting collection feature labels from the Galerie d’art moderne Bâle, suggesting that each of these pieces was sold through Feigel’s gallery—an excellent resource for their purchasers, because the gallerist was good friends with Arp and received most of her works from the artist personally.

Hans Arp and Switzerland

From the beginning of his career, Arp had close ties to Switzerland. Born in Strasbourg in 1886, he and his family would already move to the community of Weggis on Lake Lucerne in 1907. Beginning in 1915, he alternated between Ticino and Zurich, where he initi-



Fig. 2 Hans Arp: *Feuille (Leaf) “Seine-et-Oise”* (also *Feuille d’un homme*), 1935. Relief in oak, 42 x 50.6 cm. Kunstmuseum Bonn, Loan of Professor Dr. med. Wilfried and Gisela Fitting Stiftung (former collection Müller-Widmann)

ated the Swiss Dada movement—together with Tristan Tzara, Hugo Ball, Richard Huelsenbeck, and Emmy Hennings.³ Zurich is also where Arp was able to exhibit his work for the first time, in 1915 and 1917. In the 1920s Hans Arp and his wife Sophie Taeuber-Arp lived in Berlin and Paris, but also in Zurich, where he participated in the pioneering exhibition *Abstrakte und Surrealistische Malerei und Plastik* (Abstract and Surrealist Painting and Sculpture), initiated by Sigfried Giedion at the Kunsthaus Zürich.⁴ The first purchases made by Emanuel Hoffmann and Emil Friedrich-Jezler are documented for the years 1928 and 1931. The first important group exhibition featuring numerous works by Arp was presented at the Kunstmuseum Basel in 1932. The third Swiss collector, Oskar Müller-Widmann, acquired his first work by Arp from this exhibition. After the outbreak of the Second World War and spending the early years of the war in what was then still unoccupied southern France, Arp and Taeuber-Arp fled to Switzerland in 1942. The growing recognition of his work by Swiss collectors and museums as well as his friendship—and later marriage—with Marguerite Hagenbach led Arp to live primarily in Switzerland from then on. He died in Basel on June 7, 1966.

The Early Discovery of Arp in Brussels: Emanuel and Maja Hoffmann-Stehlin

The first Swiss Arp collectors were Maja Hoffmann-Stehlin (1896–1989), known as Maja Sacher after her second marriage, and her husband Emanuel Hoffmann (1896–1932). Emanuel Hoffmann was the elder son of Fritz Hoffmann-La Roche, founder of the international company of that name. In 1921 he married Maja Stehlin, who belonged to a family of architects from Basel and had studied sculpture in Paris. Together with their three children Andreas (1922–1933), Lukas (b. 1923), and Vera (1924–2003), the couple (fig. 3) initially lived in Paris and then later in Brussels, where Hoffmann was head of the family business's Belgian branch from 1925 to 1930. They were committed supporters of modern art in both Paris and Brussels, visiting gallery exhibitions and acquiring their first works of art by the avant-garde of that period.

The family's apartment in Brussels was right next to the gallery Le Centaure on the Avenue Louise.⁵ Walter Schwarzenberg (1885–1964), the art dealer who headed the gallery, had decided to specialize in contemporary art from Belgium and France; in doing so, he shaped the taste of the young pair of collectors. During the period they spent in Brussels, the gallery's program inspired the Hoffmanns to acquire works by the Flemish expressionists Fritz van den Berghe, Gustave de Smet, and Edgard Tytgat (all of whom were little known at that time), but also major works by the Ostend painter James Ensor as well as Pablo Picasso, Marc Chagall, Georges Braque, Henri Rousseau, Paul Klee, Heinrich Campendonck, and Max Ernst. Their collection's focus on Expression-



Fig. 3 Emanuel and Maja Hoffmann, c. 1925. Photograph published in: *Future Present: Die Sammlung der Emanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung*, 2015, p. 20

ist, Cubist, and Surrealist art was unusual and bold within the context of the Swiss couple's social and cultural background. Decades later, their granddaughter Maja Oeri stated that, in "these circles—if any art was collected at all—then it was established and traditional. It was unusual and radical to concentrate entirely on collecting the art of living artists, who had not yet been granted art historical 'approval.' My grandparents evidently found a shared passion in this."⁶

In November 1928 the gallery Le Centaure presented an exhibition of Arp's current work.⁷ When the Hoffmanns purchased the relief *Configuration (nombri, chemise et nombri, chemise, tête)* (fig. 4) from this exhibition, it not only formed the prelude to a rapidly accumulated collection of works by Arp—it also marked the beginning of a friendship with the artist, which continued for years and is documented by an extensive correspondence.⁸ Prior to shedding light on their relationship with and early support of Arp, the personalities of these two collectors will first be discussed. How did the industrialist's son Emanuel Hoffmann arrive at art and what role did his wife play?

The Founding of the Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation and the Role of Maja Hoffmann

In 1930 the Hoffmanns returned to Basel with their children, because Emanuel Hoffmann had been made deputy director at the company's headquarters.⁹ The family's home, the "Lilienhof" in Gellert, became a gathering place for young artists and writers, and Emanuel Hoffmann would already be elected president of the arts association in 1931. However, he had little time to make his mark there. He passed away on October 3, 1932, at the age of just 36, succumbing to his severe injuries from the preceding evening, when his car collided with a train at an unattended railroad crossing. Five days later, an exhibition was set to open at the Kunsthalle Basel, presenting works from various private collections in the city, including that of Emanuel Hoffmann. The show was cancelled, and it was replaced by a memorial exhibition organized in his honor, which exhibited 120 major works from the Hoffmanns' collection in November of that year.¹⁰ It brought together works by the Flemish Expressionists already mentioned as well as the Frenchmen Georges Rouault, Henri Rous-



Fig. 4 Hans Arp: *Configuration (nombri, chemise et tête/Navel, Shirt, and Head)* 1927/1928, Rau 139. Painted wooden relief, 149 × 119.5 × 3.5 cm. Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation, Gift of the founder Maja Hoffmann-Stehlin 1933, on permanent loan to the Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel, Photo: Bisig & Bayer, Basel

seau, Georges Braque, and André Derain, but also pieces by younger Swiss artists, including Serge Brignoni, Karl Hindelang, J.J. Lüscher, and Hans Rudolf Schiess. For Georg Schmidt (1896–1965), the future head of the Kunstmuseum Basel, who was still young at that time, this collection was, "[...] in terms of its scope and audacity, without peer in all Switzerland."¹¹

However, Emanuel Hoffmann had not been solely responsible for assembling the collection; Maja Hoffmann also decisively shaped its appearance. For example, she was the one who had already purchased Picasso's early Cubist painting *Mademoiselle Léonie* in 1927 and had advocated acquiring many of the works by Braque. She is to be admired for not persisting all too long in her mourning after her husband's death; instead, she would already found the Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation in 1933, in order to "be able to continue the most important part of my husband's work."¹² It was in this sense that she wrote to the art dealer Alfred Flechtheim following the shocking news in 1932: "With all of my

strength, I will endeavor to keep the flame burning that my husband kindled in the artistic life of Basel during the short time he headed the Kunstverein. Someone with enthusiasm for the cause is needed for this. And I have more of that today than ever before."¹³ Her great service was to build on her husband's initiative in diverse ways.

In the Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation she also found an opportunity to play the active part in public life that had been denied to her as an architect and sculptor. Maja Stehlin would have liked to follow in her father's footsteps and become an architect, but prior to the First World War, there was a lack of opportunities for young women to train in this profession.¹⁴ In the summer of 1934 she married the conductor Paul Sacher and moved with him and her daughter Vera to the Schönenberg estate outside of Pratteln, which was converted into a stately manor according to her plans. Maja Sacher, as she was called from that time on, subsequently not only controlled the fate of the foundation but also made a substantial contribution to the collection's expansion by making purchases with a dependable instinct for quality.¹⁵ She often purchased works at a time when their creators were still entirely unknown, and she provided financial support to an equally large number of artists. "I actually never wanted to accumulate a collection," she wrote, "and all perfectionism is foreign to me. I always began with the individual work and I bought every single work with my heart."¹⁶

Maja Sacher and Hans Arp: Joint Book Projects and Support in Times of Crisis

In November 1928, when Arp had a solo exhibition at the Brussels gallery Le Centaure and the Hoffmanns purchased their first relief there, Hans Arp and his wife Sophie Taeuber-Arp personally met these two collectors. This encounter would prove consequential: the Hoffmanns were immediately pleased with Arp's abstract Surrealist art and would purchase another fifteen works by 1932, including such well-known reliefs as *Paolo and Francesca* (1918, Rau 24), *Bird, Nose, Lip* (1928, Rau 162), and *Constellation According to the Laws of Chance* (1929, Rau 185). The fact that the Hoffmanns had already begun building up their Arp collection early on can be surmised from a letter by Arp dated August 9, 1932: "Last week, I was in Bern and was preparing

our exhibition with brignoni and *seligmann*. i asked the director of the kunsthalle [Bern], dr. huggler, to send you the catalogue and the poster i had designed. it seems as though the kunsthalle basel did not know precisely which works you had selected. [...] in bern i once again indicated exactly what was to be sent to you at the end of the exhibition. by all means, if the shipment is not right, i ask that you send me news of it.”¹⁷ Not without pride, he goes on to report that the art critic Carola Giedion-Welcker discussed the exhibition and particularly his works in a very positive manner in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. He additionally thanked Emanuel Hoffmann for his speech at the exhibition’s opening, which remained the “most pleasant memory” for him.

In the fall of 1930, the Hoffmanns visited Arp at his studio in Meudon. In the following year, they accepted his suggestion that they support him through monthly payments in return for having their collection supplemented with more recent works.¹⁸ Besides additional purchases, such as the wooden relief *Free Form with Two Holes* (1935, Rau 284), Maja Sacher also advocated for a monograph on Arp in 1936: it was to include texts by Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia, Tristan Tzara, and Raoul Hausmann and to be released by Gualtieri di San Lazzaro, publisher of the journal *XXe Siècle*. Arp felt honored and promptly responded to her suggestions: “I completely approve of the size of the book with the number of copies with the edition de luxe with an original drawing and with the price. The disposition of the essays and reproductions is generally exactly as i imagined it. We will only have to change a few minor individual details.”¹⁹ Sacher and Arp wrote many letters to each other about this project; he designed illustrations specifically for it and Taeuber-Arp designed its layout. The monograph expanded more and more as they made these plans. However, when all of the images and texts were finally ready for printing in 1940 and Sacher had committed to financing it, the circumstances of the Second World War prevented the book’s publication.²⁰

From 1937, at the latest, Arp’s letters to Sacher become poignant testaments to his increasingly ominous situation. In occupied Paris, scarcely any opportunities to work or earn money remained to the artist couple and they were seriously afraid for their lives as the fighting shifted in their direction: “If things go on like this, german nature—apparently fated to denature the world—will sink down onto paris in the form of

bombs, gases, and poisons. i am not eager to get a taste of german ingenuity and diligence. paris is being evacuated. i don’t know what will happen to me.”²¹ Arp and Taeuber-Arp left the city on June 14, 1940, before it was taken by the Germans. They then took shelter with Gabrielle Picabia and César Domela in Nérac in Dordogne, but they could not stay there. By September they had already moved on to live briefly with Peggy Guggenheim in Annecy before fleeing further to Grasse, where their friends Alberto Magnelli and Susi Gerson lived. In the empty Château Folie, owned by an industrialist who had already fled, they finally found a longer-term dwelling in December. Even if Arp and Taeuber-Arp now had a secure place to stay, they lacked necessities: brushes, canvasses, and wood, but especially food and coal. Sacher and Emil Friedrich-Jezler had been providing them with financial support since 1938, at the latest. On April 30 of that year, Arp wrote to Sacher: “Thank you for your letter and the check from czechoslovakia, which you rounded off so cordially. Welcome vile mammon i cried, for me you are heavenly manna.”²² He thanked her by regularly sending her his poems and reliefs, although this letter unfortunately does not indicate which works this involved.²³

Arp’s letters to Sacher now became more and more melancholy, describing, as they do, his depressing life in exile. On July 14, 1940, he wrote to her about his impressions on the French national holiday: “c’est un bien triste 14 juillet. Personne en France n’a envie de danser. La vie poétique est détruite. La machine a vaincu l’homme. Ce peuple qui était trop humain paye un prix effrayant pour son insouciance.”²⁴ Almost a year later, he poignantly describes the scarcity of food, but also the personal isolation of those years: “Notre vie n’a pas grandement change. Par manque de nourriture nous etions assez affaiblis et nous avions des troubles d’estomacs. Mais lengement on s’habitue a ces tristes conditions d’existence. C’est une chasse continuelle pour trouver les aliments les plus neccessaires. [...] Mais ce qui est pire c’est le manque de toute activite spirituelle. Que la vie etait profonde et joyeuse a Paris.”²⁵

Reading other letters, it becomes clear that Arp and Taeuber-Arp made multiple attempts to emigrate to America. And they also nearly succeeded in 1941: the director of the Museum of Modern Art was prepared to pay for their journey, and their ship was to embark from Lisbon on November 14 of that year. When Arp

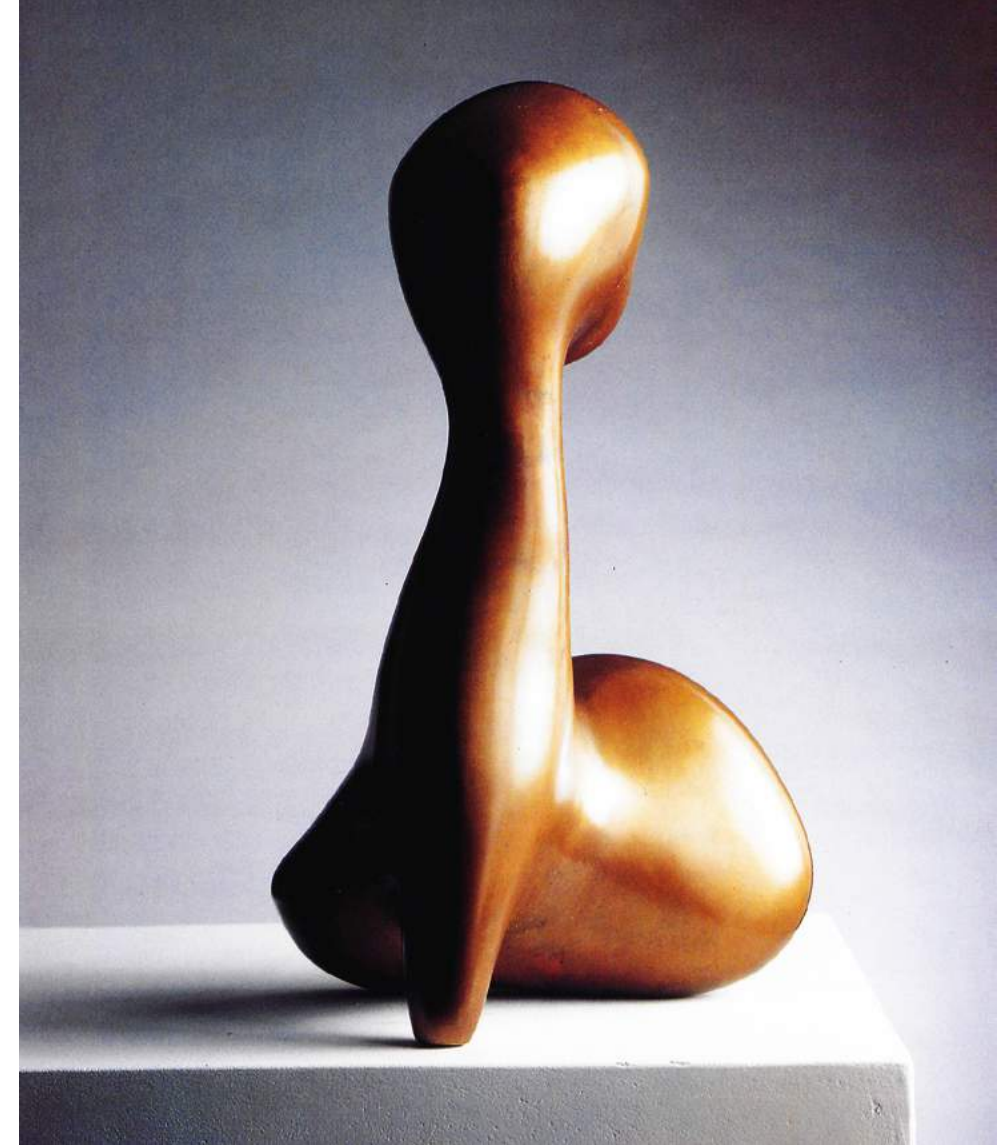


Fig. 5 Hans Arp: *Animal de rêve* (*Dream animal*), 0/5, 1974. Bronze, 39 × 25 × 20 cm, Fondazione Marguerite Arp, Locarno (An enlarged version belonged to the collection of Maja Sacher, Pratteln)

was denied entry in spite of his intense efforts, Sacher was the first person with whom he discussed it, on November 5, 1941: “I’ve wanted to write you for weeks. I’ve gone through an excruciating period. I was extremely concerned about Sophie. While she was tidying up our works and our house a little, news arrived that our journey to the united states would be financed by the museum of modern art [...]. But because we have relatives in the occupied area and the new, stricter regulations dictate that entry permits are only very rarely to be granted in this case, we have to wait for an answer from washington and let our little ship sail on its own. [...] we’ve decided to go away, because i can’t earn anything here and because the food is getting more and more scarce. [...] we’re starting to go hungry. I’m not joking. My dear friends, could you raise my monthly

pension? Didn’t you hint at something of that kind in pratteln?”²⁶ Sacher did not make him keep asking for long, and she increased the payments he mentioned. She continued to feel affection for the couple and admired their art, but she also remembered Arp as a person plagued by doubts and anxiety: “He was an uneasy person who experienced his fate as an artist as difficult.”²⁷

Arp’s uncertainty concerning the whereabouts of the works from his studio in Meudon led him to hide himself in the trunk of a car to cross the demarcation line and reach Paris in early 1942. Having arrived, he sorted through his works and met with artist friends, such as Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Eluard, but also Robert Delaunay and Georges Vantongerloo, whose works he emphatically recommended to Sacher: “his [Vantongerloo’s] new works are particularly bold. he is surely

one of the last great discoverers in the plastic arts. I recommend that you purchase one of his most recent works for the Hoffmann Foundation.²⁸ Back in Grasse, his renewed efforts to emigrate to the United States failed again. Finally, the Arps obtained temporary visas for neutral Switzerland and travelled to Zurich on November 14, 1942. While Arp was able to live with Max Bill, Taeuber-Arp stayed with her sister Erika Schlegel. What followed was an odyssey through various points in Switzerland, including the home of the Friedrich-Jezlers in Arosa, until catastrophe struck on January 12, 1943. Unfortunate circumstances led Sophie to also spend the night at Bill's house, where she was asphyxiated in the night due to carbon monoxide gas from the coal oven. Arp was in complete despair and ceased creating sculpture; it would take years—and the help of his second wife, Marguerite Hagenbach—before he would take up his work again.

**Confidante, Collector, and Provider of Loans:
Maja Sacher and Hans Arp in the 1950s**

Not only did Sacher provide Arp with financial support for years, but she was also his most important Swiss collector—alongside the Müller-Widmanns. In addition to fourteen reliefs, most of which she bought in the year of their creation, her Arp collection included six free-standing sculptures, drawings, and volumes of poetry. Beyond this, she was his most important confidante for many decades, and he depended upon her moral support during his early years, which were defined by insecurity and doubt. When she did not contact him for a longer period, it troubled him, and he wrote her the following letter in 1934: “I have such an urgent need for the few people who understand my work. A lot has been written about my work recently, but this is no longer of much value to me. I need genuine interest in my work. Don't misunderstand me. I will always remember you and Mr. Hoffmann with the greatest gratitude. But it pains me that you seem to have forgotten me.”²⁹

When their correspondence from the fifties and early sixties is taken into consideration, it becomes clear that Sacher felt a personal regard for the artist, who was also her friend, and that she continued to purchase his art when he enjoyed international recog-

nition.³⁰ Thus, in 1950, Arp wrote her about a new attempt to emigrate to the United States: “Lately, I've been occupied with key problems. One of these is related to my emigration to America. America is the only country where my work is selling right now, and it is where I have the most friends of my art. There are practically no French collectors of my art at all. Nor does Germany provide any serious prospects for the near future and, while my Swiss collectors are very fond of me, they've been buying very, very little recently. In America, there are lots of museums and private collectors, and my recent meeting with Max Ernst [...] has confirmed my thinking about this.”³¹ Arp recorded these thoughts after his first trip to New York, where he had been invited for a solo exhibition at Curt Valentin's gallery.³² Shortly after his second stay there, he described his impressions to Sacher: “New York really impressed me during my second visit. It is a mighty, natural city, where the high-rises shoot up as though they were part of a grand tropical vegetation. The interaction among the artists in America seems much more sympathetic than here in Europe. Here the French intrigue had already set in within the first eight days.”³³

The letters of the thirties and, particularly, those of the fifties also indicate how decisive a role Sacher played in the development of Arp's free-standing sculptures. Thus, she ordered the two works *L'animal de rêve* (Dream Animal), 1947 (fig. 5) and *Étoile* (Star), 1939, from Arp in early 1950, and he informed her of their final completion and prices on March 12, 1950: “‘L'animal de rêve’ in bronze with a green patina and the bronze star mounted on a stone pedestal each cost 100,000 francs. You promised to inform me whom I should give them to for shipping. [...] The prices I've set for you for the two sculptures are special prices for a friend.”³⁴ Sacher purchased the two sculptures for the prices indicated and thanked Arp—not without also writing him about the impressions Berlin made on her: “I finally have the two beautiful sculptures in my possession and am completely delighted. They are really very beautiful. [...] Recently we were in Berlin and had a strange feeling on this island in the ‘red sea.’ But the optimism that is to be found there is amazing, and much of what we don't like about this people is currently having a positive effect, because it is a question of obsessively hard work and courage.”³⁵ In the fifties, Arp enjoyed a great deal of recognition in

the United States, in particular. In addition to his gallery exhibitions with Curt Valentin and Sidney Janis in New York, in 1950 he was commissioned to create a gigantic relief to decorate the dining hall of the Harvard Graduate Center, which had been built by Walter Gropius. In 1958, when James Thrall Soby was planning a spectacular exhibition of his work for the Museum of Modern Art, Arp told Sacher about a visit leading up to this honor: “I was recently visited by Director Barr from the Museum of Modern Art and Nelson Rockefeller. I have rarely met anyone as plain and clear as this Rockefeller. He additionally bought my large sculpture ‘Configuration aux mouvement de serpents.’”³⁶ Arp's relationship with Sacher became more and more familiar as time passed, and he was not afraid to criticize the placement of his works in her house: “During my last visit to Schönenberg, we talked with each other about your collection. [...] I find it very regrettable that the important works of mine that you own are no longer presented to such advantage as before. You wanted to seek a solution for that?”³⁷ Sacher took his request to heart and answered him one week later: “Yes, the question of room and space is still by no means solved. Nonetheless, I have at least placed some of your larger pictures, whose hanging was so poor, in Lukas's room, where they have a magnificent effect.”³⁸

In the years that followed, the letters were often about requests for loans of his works for exhibitions in New York, Brussels, and Paris. Sacher had a largely critical attitude toward such requests and usually asked Arp for advice beforehand. In 1958, when the retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art was being planned and she was asked for two loans, she told him: “As you know, it is always a tremendous sacrifice for me to send artworks out on a journey and I will only agree if you absolutely feel that the two works should be in the exhibition. In that case, I will turn them over with a tear in my eye. The works in question are *Arranged According to the Laws of Chance*, 1929, and *Hand-Fruit*, 1930. Before answering, I will wait to hear what you have to say.”³⁹ By that time, Marguerite Hagenbach had taken over responsibility for Arp's correspondence and answered Sacher in his name on May 24, 1958: “It's very important to Arp that you loan the two works by him to New York. He therefore asks you to please make the sacrifice with two tears in your eye. ‘Hand-Fruit’ is one of the few works that shows the transition

from relief to sculpture and is thus exceedingly important in historical terms. Arp views *Arranged According to the Laws of Chance*, of 1929, as the most beautiful relief of that epoch. In contrast to loans sent to Germany, I have so far had good experiences with loans sent to the U.S., and I thus hope your loans will be returned back to you in an undamaged state.”⁴⁰ In 1961 Sacher was once again asked to lend works—this time by the Musée d'art moderne in Paris—but she turned them down: “Thus, if you can get by without me, you would be doing me a great service. It would be so incongruous if I now said yes.”⁴¹

Particularly during the early years of his work, around 1930, it is almost impossible to overstate the significance of collectors like Sacher for Arp. Aside from the financial support provided for years and the many early purchases, she enabled him to realize his sculptures in the mid-thirties and thus provided him with the opportunity to continue to develop his work in the direction of free-standing sculpture. In 1934 he wrote to her: “whether the new art can persist or will perish depends on the love of a dozen people.” Later, when he had also achieved international success, he recalled her support and thanked “the quartet of my Swiss friends, in which you played first violin. I don't know how Sophie and I could have succeeded in our work without your help.”⁴²

**Arp's Collector Friends in Zurich:
Emil and Clara Friedrich-Jezler**

The collection of Emil and Clara Friedrich-Jezler was another Swiss address that was equally important for Arp.⁴³ This daughter of a factory owner from Schaffhausen and this Zurich banker owned an extensive group of paintings that was among the best collections of modern art in the twenties and thirties—and that in a city like Zurich, where respectable taste still yearned for the old days of Impressionism and where there were no progressive-minded museum professionals like Georg Schmidt.⁴⁴ The vision and courage with which Emil and Clara Friedrich-Jezler gathered together a collection of Cubist, Surrealist, and abstract art between 1926 and 1955 is thus all the more astounding. Developed over the course of thirty years, it brought together works by Pablo Picasso, Georges

Braque, Juan Gris, Fernand Léger, Jacques Lipchitz, Paul Klee, Henri Laurens, Piet Mondrian, Theo van Doesburg, and—above all—Hans Arp. It is impossible to explain precisely what moved the Friedrich-Jezlers to create their collection. However, it is certain that the 1926 visit to Paris by Raoul La Roche (1889–1965), a friend and business partner of Emil Friedrich, provided the initial impulse and that his collection initially served as a model. La Roche lived in a house built by Le Corbusier and surrounded himself with a magnificent collection of Cubist painting.⁴⁵

From Cubism to Abstract Art: On the Creation of the Friedrich-Jezler's Collection

The history of the creation of the Friedrich-Jezler's collection can be divided into three phases defined by different sources of inspiration and changing preferences.⁴⁶ The first phase, which lasted until the end of the thirties, was heavily influenced by the impression made by La Roche's collection. Inspired and advised by him, they purchased their first works around 1927 at Léonce Rosenberg's gallery *L'effort moderne*. Like La Roche before them, the Friedrich-Jezlers additionally bought works from the holdings of the famous German-French art dealer Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, whom the French government had been pressuring into selling his collection since at least 1921. In contrast to La Roche, they also established personal contact with the artists—including Picasso, Léger, Laurens, Klee, Mondrian, and Arp—and purchased their works directly from their studios. The initial phase of the collection's development featured Cubist works by Picasso, Gris, and Braque, but also rare early works by Léger, who was represented through important pieces like *Balcon and Nature morte* of 1914 and his *Deux femmes et nature morte* of 1920.⁴⁷ These key pictures were complemented by three of Jacques Lipchitz's works, including a rare painting. In contrast to La Roche, the Friedrich-Jezlers were also interested in abstract art, in the most recent Surrealist works by Max Ernst, and the works of Swiss-born artist Paul Klee. Their early purchases of reliefs and stone sculptures by Arp belong to this initial phase. Together with a painting by Wassily Kandinsky from his period at the Bauhaus, these testify to their understanding of the development of abstract art. This first and most impor-

tant phase ended with the outbreak of the Second World War, when its events led to a loss of contact with "their" artists in Paris.

At the end of 1940, the Friedrich-Jezlers had a number of important works transferred to a secure storage facility located far from Zurich. In an accident unconnected with any fighting, the truck carrying this precious freight caught fire and burned in the Brünig Pass, leading to the loss of ten valuable paintings. As Carola Giedion-Welcker would later write, Clara Friedrich took the news calmly: "While her husband was stationed on active duty at the border, she travelled to the site of the accident next to the Brünig [Pass] to witness for herself the heap of ashes of the burnt paintings, and she then returned home with the firm resolve to refill the major gap that had emerged."⁴⁸ Accordingly, the years that followed were defined by efforts made to compensate for this loss by purchasing similar works. That same year, for example, she succeeded in securing three pictures by Gris from the collection of Gottlieb Friedrich Reber.⁴⁹ She also tracked down paintings by Picasso and Braque that fit in with her collection. With an early work by van Doesburg, a final picture, which represented the rigorous line of Constructivism, made its way into the collection. During the war, these were also joined by three reliefs, two sculptures, and many works on paper by Arp. The incorporation of these new works was based on the Friedrich-Jezlers' friendship with the artist and his wife. The fact that Taeuber-Arp is represented only by a single, small drawing is surprising since she was close friends with Clara Friedrich.⁵⁰ Like Maja Sacher before them, the Zurich collectors also bought remarkably few works by representatives of the Swiss avant-garde, including only Serge Brignoni, Diogo Graf, and Leo Leuppi, although these individuals worked in the Allianz artists group in their hometown of Zurich.

In the postwar period, the Friedrich-Jezlers continued to expand their collection, albeit on a markedly smaller scale. Besides an early example of Delaunay's window paintings, they bought sculptures from Laurens and Arp, a ceramic piece from Picasso, and a wall-sized tapestry from Le Corbusier. After they had provided financial support to Pevsner during the war years, he gave them a sculpture as a gift. In the early fifties, when the last works found their way into the collection, the body of art that had come together had begun with Cubism, but—unlike La Roche's collection—it had not

remained stuck there and its conception had continued to be developed further in the direction of formally radical modern art. As a whole, the collection evinces a preference for clear, classic forms and for constructive and harmonious works.⁵¹

The Painting Factory Owner's Daughter and the Music-Loving Banker

The Friedrich-Jezlers' collection had begun with a visit to Raoul La Roche. The fact that the resulting impression would not remain without consequence and that their own collection was developed according to a persistently rigorous logic was primarily the result of Clara Friedrich's artistic talent.⁵² She was the daughter of a well-known Schaffhausen manufacturer of silver, and this background meant she brought a keen eye for the composition of form and quality craftsmanship. Following a stay in Paris to practice her French, she would familiarize herself with French culture early in her life. Encouraged and guided by artists with whom she was friends, particularly Adolf Hölzel in Stuttgart and Amedée Ozenfant in Paris, she began painting in the early thirties. Working within the seclusion of an

intimate circle, she created oil paintings, wooden reliefs, and pastel drawings on paper that unmistakably reveal her affinity with Arp's work.⁵³ Even if she never took her own work completely seriously, she used it to hone her understanding of art and she became the driving force behind the collection's development.⁵⁴ Because she and her husband had no children, she transferred her energy to providing hospitality in her home as well as staying in touch with Arp, Léger, and Picasso and making the collecting of modern art her life's work. As her friend Carola Giedion-Welcker wrote in a eulogy, "Clara Friedrich had an especially fine sensibility for art, and this allowed her to discover new and unknown artistic talents."⁵⁵

After completing his law degree, her husband Emil Friedrich initially worked as secretary of health care in Winterthur before transferring to Bern, where he was employed by the Association of the Swiss Shoe Industry. In 1925 he founded the Bankhaus Friedrich in Zurich and then served as its sole director until 1950. Friedrich had a love for classical music and was proficient enough on the violin that he sometimes played with Winterthur's town orchestra. When it became known in Zurich that he and his wife were collecting art, he was invited to join the board of the Zurich Arts Association, and he occasionally purchased works that had



Fig. 6 Emil and Clara Friedrich-Jezler with Hans Arp in front of their house in Zurich, 1950s (Photographer unknown). Photograph published in Birgit Blass and Rudolf Koella: *Eine Pioniersammlung moderner Kunst: Das Legat Clara und Emil Friedrich-Jezler im Kunstmuseum Winterthur*, Zurich, 1985, p. 10

been sent to be viewed by the Kunsthau Zurich for his own collection. Emil Friedrich was a level-headed and approachable person who provided not just Arp, but also other artists and musicians with generous financial support. In the early years, the couple's shared interest in art and good taste was decisively influenced by Sigfried and Carola Giedion-Welcker, who lived very close to them: "Thanks to their good relationship with the Giedions," writes Alfred Roth, "Clara and Emil Friedrich were well informed about events not just in the area of modern art but also modern architecture, and they demonstrated an avid interest."⁵⁶ Besides the Giedions, the painters Leuppi and Bill as well as the architects E.F. and Elsa Burckhardt also belonged to the Friedrichs' circle of friends, who met regularly in the villa they had designed for themselves on Attenhoferstrasse (fig. 6).

Early Reliefs and a Taste for Sculpture: The Friedrich-Jezlers' Arp Collection

Among the many artists with whom they were friends, the Friedrich-Jezlers maintained the closest personal contact with Arp. It is uncertain how this connection came about, but much evidence suggests that Carola Giedion-Welcker, who had been occupying herself with Arp's work since the mid-twenties and had already published her first monograph in 1930, introduced the couple from Zurich to the artist.⁵⁷ Not just the collectors' visit to Meudon but also their first purchase of a work by Arp are documented for the same year that Giedion-Welcker published *Hans Arp—Dichter und Maler* (Hans Arp—Poet and Painter). As Arp wrote to Giedion-Welcker in 1930: "friedrichs were here. They bought a beautiful sculpture by lipchitz. I would have also liked to show them mondrians and brancusis in their studios. Unfortunately, their time here was too brief."⁵⁸ In a letter to Giedion-Welcker dated only shortly before that, he reports the sale of a work to Emil Friedrich: "I am deeply moved and thankful for the speed with which you sold my picture and sought out friedrich. Friedrich has already sent the money."⁵⁹ The work involved here, which Arp refers to as a "picture," is the 1927 wooden relief *Le squelette* (*Skeleton*) (fig. 7), which playfully combines a moustache and skeleton.⁶⁰

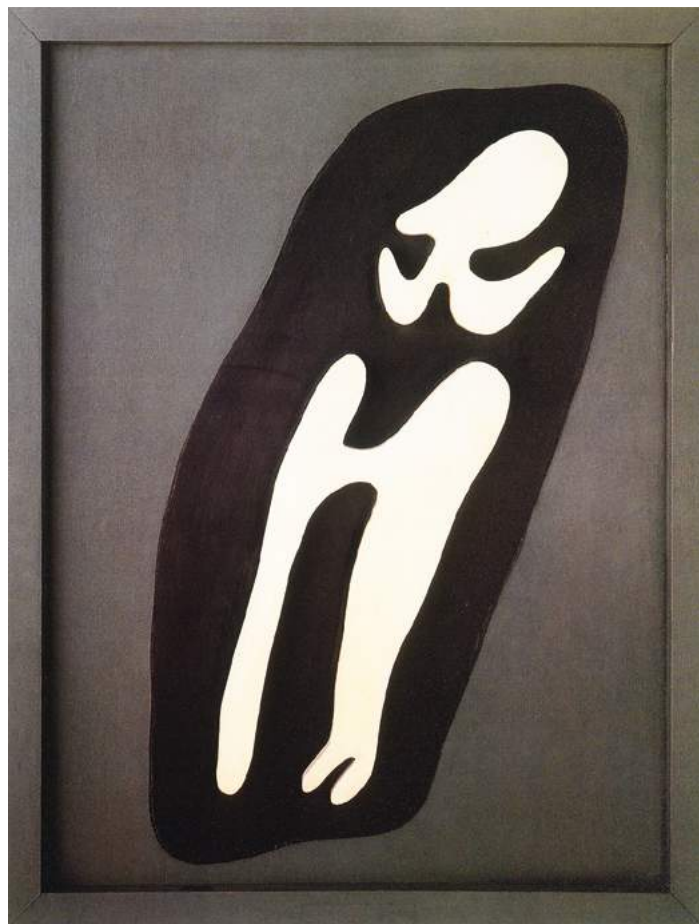


Fig. 7 Hans Arp: *Le squelette* (*Skeleton*), 1927, Rau 130. Painted wooden relief, 145 × 113.5 cm. Kunstmuseum Winterthur, bequest of Clara and Emil Friedrich-Jezler

This relief was only the beginning of a collection of works by Arp consisting of around twelve pieces acquired before or, in most cases, after the Second World War.⁶¹ The late thirties were also *the* period in which Emil Friedrich supported the artist couple through financial assistance. Full of gratitude, Arp wrote on January 6, 1936: "dear mr. friedrich. my heartfelt thanks for your renewed help, which has given me the courage to continue working again. another friend of my work, mr. müller, has joined with you and thus i at least have the barest essentials for existence. books journals and exhibitions are presenting my works to the public, but material success [...] has scarcely emerged."⁶² In spite of his difficult situation in exile, he inquired about Clara Friedrich's artistic progress: "[...] has your wife started new works again?" Arp was one of the few people whom Clara Friedrich would let into her studio and who took her seriously as an artist.

After purchasing two recent limestone sculptures by Arp—*Sculpture concrète à l'entaille* and *Coquille se*

dénouant—in addition to *Rélief Tithémique* (Rau 315) in the late thirties and forties, the Friedrich-Jezlers concentrated entirely on his sculptures after the war ended.⁶³ In 1950 they bought the white-marble sculpture *Forme de lutin*, created the previous year, and finally, in 1955, they purchased the small bronze *Geometric-Ageometric* (fig. 8), from 1940. An exchange of letters provides information about the selection of this work and the negotiation of its price. As Hagenbach wrote on August 31, 1955, the Friedrich-Jezlers had specifically selected this sculpture for their collection: "The small bronze 'géométrique-agéométrique,' which you selected at that time has finally returned to Meudon from its many exhibitions. At that time, Arp had named 200,000 French francs as a special price for a friend, and this remains the case. May we send it to you? Is it alright with you if this is done through Lefèvre-Foinet, Paris? [...] At the moment it is in the studio, where Arp has set up his bed right now, and his many visitors have particularly admired it."⁶⁴ The postscript is characteristic of Arp: "Please excuse Arp that he is not writing to you himself, but he composes a letter like a poem and it sometimes takes weeks."⁶⁵ They did not have to wait long for Emil Friedrich's answer: "It would suit us very well if the little bronze finds its way to Zurich soon. As suggested, you can have it shipped through Lefèvre-Foinet. [...] I additionally ask that you tell me where and perhaps to which bank in France the sum should be transferred through the clearing house."⁶⁶ This bronze is a particularly important work to the extent that it is the first time Arp linked biomorphic forms with rational-geometric views.⁶⁷ It was also one of the Friedrich-Jezlers' last acquisitions and possesses a symbolic significance for the entire collection. There is scarcely another work contained in it that so embodies the harmonious reconciliation of different formal orders.

Support and Lifelong Friendship: Annie and Oskar Müller-Widmann in Basel

In Basel in the early thirties, Arp was able to gain the interest of two important and prominent pairs of collectors at once. In addition to Maja Hoffmann (later Sacher), Annie and Oskar Müller-Widmann were also committed to supporting contemporary art and, in over twenty-five years, they brought together what might be the most beautiful and largest collection of Concrete



Fig. 8 Hans Arp: *Géométrique-Agéométrique* (*Geometric-Ageometric*), 1942 (1940), GW 76. Bronze (2/5), 30 × 28.5 × 16.5 cm. Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Bequest of Clara and Emil Friedrich-Jezler

and Constructivist works in Switzerland.⁶⁸ As Arp collectors, they deserve to be featured in a prominent role: they owned twenty-two major works, including sixteen reliefs and three sculptures.⁶⁹ Thus, with the exception of Arp's partner Marguerite Hagenbach, they possessed the largest private group of works by Arp in Switzerland. The driving force behind the development of this collection was Annie Müller-Widmann (1893–1964), who initially engaged in a vigorous correspondence primarily with Taeuber-Arp and then, following her death in 1943, was also linked by a friendship with Arp.⁷⁰

An Enthusiastic and Methodical Pair of Married Art Collectors

Annie Müller-Widmann (fig. 9) came from a culturally creative family and married Oskar Müller in 1914.⁷¹ She was the granddaughter of writer and critic Josef Viktor Widmann, the niece of painter Fritz Widmann, and the sister of the well-known actress Ellen Widmann. Having grown up surrounded by literature, art, and the theater, for the rest of her life she experienced a personal involvement in the latest developments of the art world, travelled to the studios in Paris, played her part



Fig. 9 Maria Netter: The collector Annie Müller-Widmann, 1955. SIK-ISEA, Courtesy Fotostiftung Schweiz

in exhibitions by providing works on loan, and—similarly to Maja Sacher and Clara Friedrich—always also sought contact with “her” artists, such as Arp, but also Bill, Mondrian, and Schwitters. After studying dentistry and receiving his doctorate in Bern, Oskar Müller (1887–1956) initially worked as an untenured lecturer there and later became a professor. In 1924 he moved to Basel, where he simultaneously served as a professor of dentistry at the university and practiced as a dentist. If we are to believe the words spoken by Georg Schmidt on the occasion of Oskar Müller-Widmann’s death, then he saw science and art not as “separate spheres,” but as certainly possessing common elements linked through the aspect of craftsmanship: “When you sat next to Oskar Müller on the dentist’s chair, you knew what had drawn him specifically to visual art: his eminent talent as a craftsman.”⁷² Reading their letters and looking at the photos of their house, it becomes clear that these two collectors were evidently in unison in terms of their taste, their predilections, and their willingness to take risks. At that time there was scarcely another private home in Switzerland where the architecture, furniture, light-

ing, and artworks were as perfectly harmonized as at the Müller-Widmanns’.⁷³

How did the two collectors arrive at art and when did they purchase their first works? The history of the Müller-Widmanns’ collection begins with the family’s relocation to Basel in 1924.⁷⁴ There, while searching for an apartment, they met the still-young art historian Schmidt, who familiarized them with the painters of the group “Rot-Blau” (Red-Blue), who were influenced by Ernst-Ludwig Kirchner. However, they did not make the decisive step toward contemporary art until they attended the exhibition *Abstrakte und Surrealistische Malerei und Plastik* (Abstract and Surrealist Painting and Sculpture) in Zurich in 1929, and it opened their eyes to Constructivist art. The initial spark that set off their collecting activity was the group show *Hans Arp. Serge Brignoni. Kurt Seligman. Jacques Düblin*, initiated by Emil Hoffmann in Basel in the early summer of 1932. From that moment on, they collected Constructivist, Surrealist, and abstract works very zealously and methodically and brought together a considerable group of works within a few years. The list of artists in the collection reads like a “who’s who” of European Constructivism: László Moholy-Nagy, El Lissitzky, Antoine Pevsner, Max Bill, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Hans Rudolf Schiess, Georges Vantongerloo, Piet Mondrian, and Theo van Doesburg.⁷⁵ This direction in art was joined with selected Surrealists, including Max Ernst and the early work of Joan Miró and, later, Paul Klee. However, they had a particular predilection for the work of Arp, from whom they purchased early wooden reliefs and, in *Torso*, one of his first sculptures as well. Owning all these works, it is hardly surprising that the Müller-Widmanns became the most important lenders for the 1937 Constructivist exhibition in Basel, from which they purchased Taeuber-Arp’s 1936 relief *Cellule de relief*.⁷⁶ This logically led to Oskar Müller-Widmann’s election to the board of the Kunsthalle Basel in 1937, where he advocated for the exhibition *Neue Kunst in der Schweiz* (Modern Art in Switzerland), which a conservative public proved reluctant to visit. Oskar Müller-Widmann even responded to art historian Peter Meyer’s derogatory critique of abstract art with a written protest.⁷⁷

At the same time, Annie and Oskar Müller-Widmann did not just see themselves as collectors, they also maintained contact with the artists, whom they supported in various ways. Besides purchasing their works at a

time when they had yet to gain recognition, they also offered them direct financial support, organized lecture evenings at their house, invited them to their vacation home at Lake Sempach, and placed them in contact with friends and acquaintances. In contrast to the collections of Maja Sacher and the Friedrich-Jezlers, the Müller-Widmanns’ collection remained in the family after the couple’s death and was initially inherited by their two daughters, Elisabeth Grigoleit-Müller and Aja Petzold. In 1965 they donated three central works from their parents’ collection to the Kunstmuseum Basel, including Arp’s *Arrow Cloud*.⁷⁸ A small handful of works, such as the two wooden reliefs mentioned at the outset, were sold on the art market.

The Arp Association Exhibition of 1932: The Beginning of a Twenty-Five-Year Friendship

Twenty-two outstanding, mostly early works by Arp formed the heart of the Müller-Widmanns’ collection.⁷⁹ Together with Vantongerloo (eight pieces), Taeuber-Arp (seven pieces), and Klee (five pieces), Arp formed a pillar of the collection. Although they had already noted his work at the Zurich exhibition in 1929, it was not until the group exhibition in 1932, where he was represented by thirty-one works, that they became truly enthusiastic about it.⁸⁰ They spontaneously bought the early wooden relief *Tête-moustache; Moustaches et Masque* (Head-Moustache; Moustaches and Mask) (1928, Rau 145) and met the artist and his wife in person. In the summer of that same year, Arp brought them to Mondrian’s studio in Paris, where they bought *Composition B, with Double Line and Yellow and Gray* (1932) instead of *Composition A, with Red and Blue* (1932)—the work which they had originally selected—since the Friedrich-Jezlers had gotten to it before them.⁸¹ That year also saw Arp arrange the acquisition of an early picture from Max Ernst’s *Forêt* series for them, with Taeuber-Arp congratulating Annie Müller-Widmann in a letter: “I believe you made a very good purchase and, moreover, Max Ernst was very happy about it.”⁸² It quickly became apparent that Arp would not only seek to sell his own works but also take up a generous role as an intermediary between the Müller-Widmanns and his artist friends by arranging works for them to purchase or, as in the case of a Miró picture, even presenting them as gifts.

After acquiring *Tête-moustache; Moustaches et Masque* (Head-Moustache; Moustaches and Mask) (1928, Rau 145) the Müller-Widmanns purchased additional works by Arp in quick succession: these included the reliefs *Figure interprétée (Modification)* (1926; Rau 86), *Brins (Branching)* (1934; Rau 273), *Tête-coquille et cravate (Shell Head and Tie)* (1935; Rau 286, fig. 10), and the three white wooden works *Trois constellations à partir de mêmes formes (thèmes et deux variations)* (Three constellations of the same shape) (1942; Rau 333). In terms of sculptures, these were joined by the marble works *Torso* (1932, GW 8) and *Sculpture concrète, dite »Pierre formée par une main humaine«* (Concrete Sculpture, also called Stone Formed by Human Hand) (1934, GW 20) as well as the bronze *Evocation d’une forme humaine lunaire spectrale (Human Lunar Spectral)* (1950, GW 100). With the purchase of these works, they secured important early wooden reliefs for themselves and simultaneously helped Arp and Taeuber-Arp in the anxiety-filled period before the Second World War. From April 1933 onward, they supported the couple with financial assistance, and Taeuber-Arp thanked them for this in her many letters.

The thirties were also defined by projects undertaken together, for example, the previously mentioned preparations for the major Constructivist exhibition in Basel in 1937.⁸³ While Arp and Taeuber-Arp discussed the selection of works and organized the loans from Paris with Lucas Lichtenhan and Georg Schmidt, the Müller-Widmanns were the most important providers of loans for the show. They invited the participating artists to a dinner at their house following the opening.⁸⁴ Looking back at this period, Annie Müller-Widmann emphasizes the role played by the artists in terms of her understanding of this art: “[...] we were right in the midst of building up a collection—arp, mondrian, vantongerloo, sophie taeuber, kandinsky, and others—and it was primarily our own experience that guided us in this. However, they [the artists] taught us [...] to understand the laws or, rather, the language of these new creative conceptions [...]”⁸⁵

After the Nazis took power in Germany in 1933, Arp and Taeuber-Arp were more dependent than ever upon their Swiss friends. When it became clear to Taeuber-Arp that she could no longer realize her art without being obstructed and no commissions were forthcoming, she wrote to Annie Müller-Wiedman in April 1933: “We are very tormented by the events in Germany, after all,

it was the country that had the most understanding for genuinely creative art [...].⁸⁶ Their situation was rapidly becoming more critical and, in June 1940, they saw themselves forced to flee to the unoccupied south of France. The letters to Annie Müller-Widmann from this period become more and more personal, describing the circumstances under which they fled to Nérac, their lack of materials and food, and the illnesses caused by their hardships. Their lives now depended on the financial support provided each month: “We are very worried about the future and do not really know what to do; we have to find a solution to be able to begin working again. [...] Marguerite wrote to us that Oskar would send us the monthly payment: we haven’t received it and I hope it hasn’t gotten lost on the way.”⁸⁷ Faced with this devastating situation, in November 1942 they resolved to go to neutral Switzerland. “We went back and forth a great deal and are still considering leaving for America, but it’s entirely out of the question that we could sell or do something; the situation is becoming more and more difficult, we even lack materials to work with. We spend everything that’s available to us in order to keep ourselves fed, at least to some extent [...]. We’ve had some very difficult months and next winter will be catastrophic.”⁸⁸ Taeuber-Arp’s last letter, which once again provides a shocking description of the two artists’ hunger, is from June 26, 1942, just six months before her death.

The sudden loss of his wife plunged Arp into a deep crisis. Only after withdrawing for a number of years was he once more in a position to take up his work and to participate in social life. Aside from the increasing recognition for his work—for example, through exhibitions in Zurich, Paris, and New York—and the publication of his poems, his new partner Marguerite Hagenbach and his Swiss collectors helped him to put this period behind him.⁸⁹ In the fifties and sixties, it was also Annie Müller-Widmann who maintained her connection with Arp by congratulating him each year on his birthday, September 16, and voicing her admiration for him in a way that was almost unparalleled: “Around 25 years ago, I encountered you and your art for the first time, and it was one of the happiest days of my life. I was surprised and simultaneously touched deep inside—so strangely moved, as though I had already been waiting for years for what revealed itself to me there. It was like long-harbored knowledge and simultaneously completely uncharted territory, perhaps dreamt of, but

never seen—in short, the world that disclosed itself to me there would become a spiritual experience, that is, the purest delight.”⁹⁰ However, the letters do not just contain positive aspects. For example, in June 1956, works by Arp that had been loaned to an exhibition in Bern came back damaged.⁹¹ When Oskar Müller-Widmann asked Arp about their restoration, he responded on June 1, 1956: “How much trouble I’ve already had with exhibition objects. [...] For now, I recommend that you wash the marble sculpture with lukewarm, soapy water. I’ll immediately take care of restoring your damaged pictures during my next stay in Basel.”⁹² In the spring of 1962, Paris’s Musée national d’art moderne presented the first Arp retrospective in France.⁹³ The exhibition had been prepared by Jean Cassou and was also presented in modified form in Copenhagen, Stockholm, London, and Basel; the foreword for the Basel catalogue was provided by none other than Carola Giedion-Welcker. Annie Müller-Widmann had visited the exhibition as one of its lenders and was utterly delighted: “I already told you that this exhibition is the biggest event of my life; I constantly see it before my eyes and can scarcely grasp that one person alone could have created such a body of work. The perfection and the depiction of what must surely be almost every possibility of intuition and spiritual knowledge is simply phenomenal [...]. You have given the world the gift of a new world.”⁹⁴ This connection did not end after Annie Müller-Widmann passed away in 1965. Soon her daughters had also begun corresponding with the artist. In 1967 Elisabeth Grigoleit-Müller found herself forced to sell the sculpture *Human Lunar Spectral*. Writing to Marguerite Hagenbach, she asked whether the price suggested by Kornfeld was appropriate: “I offered it to Kornfeld for his auction in June. He would like to take it and suggested an estimated price of 75,000 francs [...]” Hagenbach immediately responded to confirm that the price was appropriate.⁹⁵

Comparing these three private Arp collections in Basel and Zurich, common as well as distinct points of focus and preferences become apparent. While the collection of Emanuel Hoffmann and Maja Sacher was already intended for a public audience early on and was also expanded in keeping with this, the Müller-Widmanns’ collection was accumulated on the basis of very personal considerations. The Müller-Widmanns lived with their art and revealed a deep understanding of it. “For



Fig. 10 Hans Arp: *Tête-coquille et cravate* (Clam Head and Tie), 1935 (Rau 286). Wood, 34 × 35.5 cm, Private collection, Basel, former collection of Oskar Müller-Widmann

twenty-six years i’ve lived with the pictures and sculptures of concrete and constructive art,” wrote Annie Müller-Widmann in the late 1950s. “They cause me to breathe freely and deeply, their absolute harmony and their spiritual power generate balance, purity and calm; their rhythms encompass, divide, and construct spaces, thus generating relationships in an ever-changing, surprising, clear, timeless beauty.”⁹⁶ However, all of the collectors shared courage and a willingness to take risks when it came to new, still-unestablished art. While museums were still hesitating or forced to wait for the approval of their commissions, they were able to make decisions freely, according to their taste and predilections.

Hans Arp as a Crystallization Point of the Swiss Avant-Garde

Through the interaction of all these factors—the openness of Basel’s museum directors with their exhibitions of modern art, the public activity of Emanuel Hoffmann in Basel in 1931, and the effective publicity of Carola Giedion-Welcker’s texts—Basel and Zurich developed into important centers for contemporary art in the Switzerland of the 1930s and 1940s. Only in a climate like this could Maja Sacher, Clara and Emil Friedrich-Jezler, and Annie and Oskar Müller-Widmann have assembled their pioneering collections of modern art and provided support to an artist like Arp. Using many letters held by



Fig. 11 Hans Arp with Annie Müller-Widmann, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Paul Sacher, and Maja Sacher in front of the house (and Bela Bartok in the entrance hall) in Pratteln near Basel, January 23, 1937 (Photographer unknown), Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth

the Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth, it has been possible to show that these three Swiss patrons provided him and (initially) his wife with the opportunity to continue developing their work as artists. They guaranteed a financial basis for Arp so that he could progress from two-dimensional reliefs to the free-standing sculptures on which his fame is founded.

However, Arp's Swiss patrons did not just support him in a material sense. When he lost his beloved wife and companion Sophie in January 1943, they also stood by him in his grief: "Arp, who lived in the Doldertal for 4 weeks, is now in Basel with Mrs. Sacher, who recently came over for tea and looked at out pictures," wrote Giedion-Welcker in 1943.⁹⁷ This letter also states: "He will be setting up camp either in Basel or Zurich. Friedrichs, Sachers, Müllers all want to pay for a studio." Apparently, the three husband-and-wife pairs of collectors knew each other, regarded one another, and were united in their commitment to support Arp. "All of us hope that he can get back on his feet. [...] His refinement and wonderful culture make him incredibly stimulating and edifying."⁹⁸

1 This text was written in connection with a two-month research project at the Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth. During my time at the Arp foundation in Berlin, I examined the letters of the collectors and Carola Giedion-Welcker in the archive there as well as the secondary literature. I thank Dr. Jana Teuscher and Dr. Elisa Tamaschke for their valuable advice.

2 An overview of the Fitting Collection, which features thirty-one works by Arp, is provided by the catalogue *Von Max Ernst bis Eduardo Chillida: Die Sammlung Wilfried und Gisela Fitting* (comp. by Nicole Hartje-Grave, ed. by Kunstmuseum Bonn and Professor Dr. med. Wilfried und Gisela Fitting Stiftung), Cologne, 2020, pp. 74–110, 339–348.

3 Extensive biographies of Arp illustrated with numerous photographs can be found in the monograph by Rudolf Suter: *Hans Arp: Das Lob der Unvernunft; Eine Biografie*, Zurich, 2016, and in the catalogues *Arp 1886–1966* (ed. and comp. by Jane Hancock and Stefanie Poley), exh. cat. Württembergischer Kunstverein et al., Ostfildern, 1986, pp. 281–299, and *Hans Arp: Die Natur der Dinge* (ed. by Klaus Gallwitz) exh. cat. Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck, Düsseldorf, 2007, pp. 212–223.

4 The 1928 exhibition *Abstrakte und surrealistische Malerei und Plastik* at the Kunsthau Zürich was an unusually early presentation of that period's abstract and modern painting in Switzerland.

5 The gallery La Centaure was one of the avant-garde galleries in Brussels that familiarized the Belgian public with French and Belgian modern art during the period between the two world wars. It featured, for example, exhibitions of Magritte, Jespers, Permeke, Derain, Dufy, Max Ernst, and de Smet.

6 Cited in *Future Present: Die Sammlung der Emanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung*, ed. by Laurenz-Stiftung und Schaulager Basel, Basel, 2015, p. 25.

7 *Arp*, exhibition at the gallery La Centaure (Brussels, 1928).

8 Hans Arp: *Configuration; nombril, chemise, tête*, 1927/28, painted wooden relief, 149 × 119.5 × 3.5 cm. By the time of the Emanuel Hoffman memorial exhibition in 1932, Maja and Emanuel Hoffmann had acquired another ten reliefs and five drawings by Arp. Additional reliefs and, in particular, early sculptures followed in the ensuing years.

9 For Emanuel and Maja Hoffmann, see the publication *Leben mit Zeitgenossen: Die Sammlung der Emanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung*, comp. by Erika Billeter, Basel, 1980, and *Emanuel Hoffmann Stiftung*, comp. by Jean-Christophe Amman, Basel, 1991, esp. pp. 9–11.

10 *Gedächtnis-Ausstellung Sammlung Emanuel Hoffmann*, exh. cat. Kunsthalle Basel, Basel, 1932.

11 Cited in exh. cat. Basel 1991, p. 10 (see note 6). Hoffman was particularly fond of Ernst's work, and he had already acquired sixteen of these early on.

12 Cited in exh. cat. Basel 1991, p. 11 (see note 6).

13 Cited in Billeter 1980, p. 11 (see note 9).

14 For the biography of Maja Hoffmann, I follow Christian Geelhaar's text "Bejahung der Gegenwart und Zuversicht auf die Zukunft," in exh. cat. Basel 1991, p. 12 (see note 6).

15 A good overview of the entire collection is provided by Erika Billeter's catalogue *Leben mit Zeitgenossen* (see note 9), but also by the volumes *Die Sammlung der Emanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung* (ed. by Franz Meyer), Kunstmuseum Basel, 1970; *Emanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung Basel: Die Sammlung Hoffmann* (comp. by Maja Oeri and Theodora Vischer), Basel, Stuttgart, and Vienna, 1991; and exh. cat. Basel 1991 (see note 6).

16 Cited in Billeter 1980, p. 8 (see note 9).

17 Hans Arp in a letter to Maja and Emanuel Hoffmann, August 9, 1932, cited in Billeter 1980, p. 25 (see note 9). At this important early exhibition, which was presented from May 28 to June 19, 1932, Arp was able to present 31 current works, six of which were already in the Hoffmann's collection at that time. The Friedrichs' collection was also represented by one loan.

18 In the thirties Arp had also made agreements of this type with other collectors: Giedion-Welcker and the Friedrich-Jezlers in Zurich and the Müller-Widmanns in Basel.

19 Hans Arp in a letter to Maja Hoffmann (Sacher), December 6, 1936, cited in Billeter 1980, p. 27 (see note 9).

20 The maquette for this unpublished book is now preserved at the Fondation Arp.

21 Hans Arp in a letter to Maja Hoffmann (Sacher), September 29, 1932, cited in Billeter 1980, p. 31 (see note 9).

22 Hans Arp in a letter to Maja Hoffmann (Sacher), April 30, 1938, cited in Billeter 1980, p. 29 (see note 9).

23 Arp writes in a letter from April 30, 1938, that "your reliefs will be sent to you this week by Ieron-dell to the kunsthalle basel. I had to paint over the gray and black relief again": this means the given works could perhaps be identified by means of their colors.

24 Hans Arp in a letter to Maja Hoffmann (Sacher), July 14, 1940, cited in Billeter 1980, p. 48 (see note 9).

25 Hans Arp in a letter to Maja Hoffmann (Sacher), April 1, 1941, cited in Billeter 1980, p. 35 (see note 9).

26 Hans Arp in a letter to Maja Hoffmann (Sacher), November 5, 1941, cited in Billeter 1980, p. 37 (see note 9).

27 Cited in Billeter 1980, p. 46 (see note 9).

28 Hans Arp in a letter to Maja Hoffmann (Sacher), August 19, 1942, cited in Billeter 1980, p. 39 (see note 9). Maja Sacher followed this recommendation and, in 1942, she purchased the silvered sculpture Raumplastik (1935; inv. no. H 1942.3) from Vantongerloo.

29 Cited in Billeter 1980, p. 44 (see note 9).

30 Copies of the correspondence between Hans Arp and Maja Sacher from the fifties and sixties can be found at the Archive Arp Stiftung e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth. I very cordially thank Dr. Jana Teuscher for being able to examine them.

31 Cited in Billeter 1980, p. 49 (see note 9).

32 The exhibition was shown at two locations in the United States: *Jean Arp*, exhibition at the Buchholz Gallery–Curt Valentin, New York, and the Cincinnati Modern Art Society. In New York, Arp also met back up with his friends Richard Huelsenbeck, Max Ernst, and Hans Richter, who had fled from the Nazis. They would meet at the bookstore of Wittenborn and Schultz, for whom the American painter Robert Motherwell was working on the book *The Dada Painters and Poets: An Anthology*.

33 Hans Arp in a letter to Maja Sacher, June 12, 1950. This and the following letters are from a group of written materials written by and to Maja Hoffmann, Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.

34 Arp to Maja Sacher, March 12, 1950, Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth. In Arie Hartog and Kai Fischer's catalogue of Arp's sculptures, the works mentioned here can be found under nos. 84 and 61.

35 Maja Sacher to Arp, May 4, 1950, Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.

36 Arp to Maja Sacher, July 27, 1955, Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.

37 Arp to Maja Sacher, July 27, 1955, Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.

38 Maja Sacher to Arp, August 9, 1955, Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.

39 Maja Sacher to Arp, May 21, 1958, Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.

40 Marguerite Hagenbach to Maja Sacher, May 24, 1958, Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth. In 1958 the exhibition Arp at the Museum of Modern Art became his first show outside of a private gallery in the United States. Featuring 113 works of all types, it presented the enormous breadth of his oeuvre.

41 Maja Sacher to Arp and Marguerite Hagenbach, November 3, 1961, Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth. Earlier in the letter, she writes that she was also asked for loans of Braque's works, which she likewise rejected. The Parisian exhibition was *Arp*, exhibition at the Musée national d'art moderne, comp. Jean Cassou, (Paris, 1962).

42 Arp to Maja Sacher, September 24, 1957. Cited in *Schwitters/Arp* (comp. by Gottfried Boehm), exh. cat. Kunstmuseum Basel, 2004, p. 52. It is impossible to clarify exactly whom Arp meant by this “quartet of his Swiss collectors”; he may have also been including Marguerite Hagenbach.

43 For the Friedrich-Jezlers’ collection, see the fundamental work Birgit Blass and Rudolf Koella: *Eine Pioniersammlung moderner Kunst: Das Legat Clara und Emil Friedrich-Jezler im Kunstmuseum Winterthur*, Zurich, 1985, and Dieter Schwarz: “Clara und Emil Friedrich-Jezler und ihre Sammlung,” in: Eva Frosch, Clara Friedrich, Zurich, 2004, pp. 7–14, as well as, in the same volume, Alfred Roth: “Erinnerungen an zwei grosse Freunde der modernen Kunst,” pp. 128–130.

44 With the exception of the Giedion-Welckers, almost no one in Zurich and Winterthur was committed to embracing modern art. This included the museums, where abstract art was to be seen only at exhibitions, if at all. At the beginning of her activity as a collector, Clara Friedrich found herself exposed to ridicule and resentment.

45 For La Roche’s collection, see Katharina Schmidt and Hartwig Fischer (eds.): *Ein Haus für den Kubismus: Die Sammlung Raoul La Roche*, Kunstmuseum Basel (Ostfildern-Ruit, 1998).

46 This overview of the collection’s development follows the discussion by Dieter Schwarz in Frosch 2004, pp. 7–16 (see note 43).

47 For the collection’s most important works, see Blass and Koella 1985 and the catalogue texts beginning on p. 22 (see note 43).

48 Blass and Koella 1985, pp. 15–16 (see note 43).

49 See “Gottlieb Reber,” accessed March 25, 2022, www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gottlieb_Reber.

50 As Eva Frosch writes in her monograph, this may have been due to the fact that Friedrich saw Taeuber-Arp as an artist who, like her, was working solely within a private context. In doing so, she failed to recognize the independent nature of her artistic expression and her efforts to gain recognition. Frosch 2004, p. 11 (see note 43).

51 For example, it is indicative that she did not buy any Dada pieces or works of anecdotal Surrealism. On the other hand, Schwitters and early works by Miró are missing.

52 A monograph on the artist and collector Clara Friedrich was published in 2004: Eva Frosch: *Clara Friedrich: Künstlerin und Sammlerin*, Zurich, 2004 (see note 43).

53 Particularly in the initial years of her oeuvre, biomorphic forms and her choice of materials testify to her creative engagement with the befriended artist. Arp was also one of the few people whom she permitted to look at what was in her studio.

54 When Picasso offered to personally instruct her one day, she is supposed to have answered in her characteristically open manner: “Picasso, je trouve cela ridicule.” Cited in Blass and Koella 1985, p. 13 (see note 43).

55 Cited in Blass and Koella 1985, p. 13 (see note 43). Carola Giedion-Welcker was a close friend and adviser to her.

56 Cited in Alfred Roth: “Clara und Emil Friedrich: Erinnerungen an zwei große Freunde der modernen Kunst,” in: Frosch 2004, p. 129 (see note 43).

57 Giedion-Welcker had known Arp since around 1924 and had already published a text on him in 1930: *Hans Arp–Dichter und Maler*. For Giedion-Welcker’s life and numerous publications, see Iris Bruderer-Oswald: *Das neue Sehen: Carola Giedion-Welcker und die Sprache der Moderne*, Zurich, 2008, and Carola Giedion-Welcker: *Schriften 1926–1971*, Cologne, 1973.

58 Arp to Carola Giedion-Welcker, July 29, 1930. Cited in Frosch 2004, p. 36 (see note 43).

59 Arp to Carola Giedion-Welcker, June 12, 1930, from Meudon.

60 For an extensive interpretation of this early relief, see Blass and Koella 1985, p. 82 (see note 43). The relief had already been shown at the 1928 exhibition of Arp’s work at the Brussels gallery Le Centaure, and it was later sent as a loan of the Friedrichs to the aforementioned group exhibition at the Kunsthalle Basel in 1932 (as *Gestalt*, dated 1928, no. 9).

61 It has been impossible to determine the precise extent of the Friedrich-Jezlers’ Arp collection. Because I know with certainty that the relief *Formes élémentaires* (1938, Rau 307), from the Friedrich-Jezlers’ collection, was sold to the Fittings—a couple in Cologne—via the Galerie Ziegler and Annely Juda Fine Art, London, it could be that not all of the works were bequeathed to the Kunstmuseum Winterthur. Evidently, works were also sold in the intervening period. See coll. cat. Bonn 2020, pp. 341–342, DLG Fitting P 6 (see note 1).

62 Cited in Blass and Koella 1985, p. 9 (see note 43).

63 For the Arp works that entered the collection of the Kunstmuseum Winterthur as bequests, see the catalogue Blass and Koella 1985, pp. 82–93 (see note 43).

64 Marguerite Hagenbach to Clara Friedrich, August 31, 1955, Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.

65 Marguerite Hagenbach to Clara Friedrich, August 31, 1955, Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.

66 Emil Friedrich to Arp, September 3, 1955, Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.

67 The maquette and plaster model are from 1940, when Arp was working together with Alberto Mag-nelli in Grasse. The sculpture was cast for the first time in 1940; the present version is from the 1954 casting. Blass and Koella 1985, p. 90 (see note 43).

68 Few texts have been published on the Müller-Widmanns’ collection: Georg Schmidt: *In Memoriam Oskar Müller-Widmann 1887–1956*, Basel, 1956, and Miklòs von Bartha, Dominique Lüthy-Petzold, Raymond Petzold, and Franziska Boerlin-Petzold: *Erinnerungen an ein offenes Haus der Künste: Das Sammlerehepaar Annie und Oskar Müller-Widmann*, Basel, 2016. The original manuscript belongs to the Paul Sacher-Stiftung, Fonds Annie Müller-Widmann.

69 Before individual works from the Müller-Widmanns’ collection made their way onto the art market—for example, the two reliefs *Feuille Meudon* and *Feuille Seine-et-Oise*—they were completely catalogued by Georg Schmidt. See the appended list in Schmidt 1956 (see note 68), n. p.

70 The correspondence between Taeuber-Arp and Annie Müller-Widmann has been published in a richly illustrated volume: *Briefe von Sophie Taeuber-Arp an Annie und Oskar Müller-Widmann* (ed. by Fondazione Marguerite Arp, with commentary and an essay by Walburga Krupp), Zurich, 2021. I also owe thanks to Dr. Walburga Krupp for numerous pieces of information about the Müller-Widmanns’ collection. The correspondence between Hans Arp and Annie Müller-Widmann began in 1954, at the latest. I viewed these letters at the Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.

71 The biographical information about the two collectors is drawn from Gerhard Schaub: *Kurt Schwitters und die “andere Schweiz”*: *Unveröffentlichte Briefe aus dem Exil*, Berlin, 1998, pp. 102–104.

72 Cited in Schmidt 1956, p. 3 (n.p.; see note 68).

73 See the photographs of the interior design and art in von Bartha et al. 2016 (see note 68).

74 For the history of the collection, I have followed the presentation by Walburga Krupp in *Briefe von Sophie Taeuber-Arp an Annie und Oskar Müller-Widmann* 2021, pp. 13–21 (see note 70) and Schaub 1998, pp. 103–106 (see note 71).

75 With the exception of Moholy-Nagy and Lissitzky, all of the Constructivists mentioned were members of the three artist groups Cercle et Carré, Art Concret, and Abstraction-Création, which had been established in Paris in 1930/31. Arp was a key and integrative figure in these groups. See Schaub 1998, p. 104 (see note 71).

76 *Konstruktivisten*, exhibition at the Kunsthalle Basel, January 16–February 14, 1937. She owned a total of seven works by Sophie Taeuber-Arp, including paintings, reliefs, and drawings, and she played a pioneering role among the Swiss collectors in this regard.

77 Oskar Müller: “Moderne Kunst in der Schweiz–Ein Protest,” in: *Das Werk: Architektur und Kunst* 25/5 (1938), pp. 159–160.

78 Franz Meyer: “Die Schenkung zur Erinnerung an Annie und Oskar Müller-Widmann,” in: *Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel, Jahresberichte* 26 (1964–1966), pp. 163–166.

79 A complete list of the Müller-Widmanns’ works by Arp can be found in Georg Schmidt’s brochure: Schmidt 1956 (n.p.; see note 68).

80 The Müller-Widmanns bought Sophie Taeuber-Arp’s painting *Equilibre* (1931) from the Zurich exhibition and offered to have her build their future house on Fringelistrasse. Delighted with this commission, she made a design, but—to her annoyance—it was carried out by Basel architect Hans von der Mühll. Following this unfortunate constellation, the Müller-Widmanns decided to support her and Arp with monthly payments. For the architectural designs, see Krupp 2021, pp. 15–17 (see note 70).

81 Sophie Taeuber-Arp to Annie Müller-Widmann, April 1933, see Krupp 2021, p. 17 (see note 70).

82 Sophie Taeuber-Arp to Annie Müller-Widmann, December 28, 1932, cited in Krupp 2021, p. 27 (see note 70). The Ernst painting was *Forêt, peinture à l’huile frottage*, 1936 (oil on canvas, 54 × 45 cm).

83 *Konstruktivisten*, exhibition at the Kunsthalle Basel, January 16–February 14, 1937. For this exhibition, see *Die Geschichte des Basler Kunstvereins und der Kunsthalle Basel 1839–1988* (ed. by Basler Kunstverein, comp. by Lukas Gloor), Basel, 1989, p. 194.

84 Taeuber-Arp was represented by a remarkable quantity of works at this exhibition and was able to make sales to important collectors from Basel. These also included Marguerite Hagenbach, who was the Müller-Widmanns’ former neighbor.

85 Cited in Meyer 1964–1966, p. 166 (see note 78).

86 Taeuber-Arp to Annie Müller-Widmann, April 13, 1933, cited in Krupp 2021, p. 30 (see note 70).

87 Taeuber-Arp to Annie Müller-Widmann, July 26, 1940, cited in Krupp 2021, p. 93 (see note 70).

88 Taeuber-Arp to Annie Müller-Widmann, June 8, 1941, cited in Krupp 2021, p. 108 (see note 70).

89 In 1949 there were exhibitions at the Buchholz Gallery–Curt Valentin in New York and the Galerie Maeght in Paris, in 1950 at Denise René in Paris and Sidney Janis in New York, and in 1951 Arp was able to participate in an exhibition at the Galleria Nazionale in Rome. See the list of his important exhibitions in exh. cat. Stuttgart et al. 1986–1988, pp. 311–312.

90 Annie Müller-Widmann to Arp in an undated letter (prob. ca. 1955–60), Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.

91 At the Kunsthalle Bern, Franz Meyer organized an exhibition that juxtaposed the work of Arp and Schwitters: *Hans Arp–Kurt Schwitters*, exhibition at the Kunsthalle Bern, April 7–May 5, 1956 (Bern, 1956).

92 Arp to Oskar Müller-Widmann, June 1, 1956, Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.

93 *Arp* (comp. by Jean Cassou), exh. cat. Musée national d’art moderne Paris, 1962. The exhibition presented the entire spectrum of his art. The Müller-Widmanns’ collection was represented by eleven loans. Unlike Sacher, they opted for discretion in the catalogue, where they had themselves referred to solely as “Collection particulière, Bâle.”

94 Annie Müller-Widmann to Arp and Marguerite Hagenbach, February 23, 1962. Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.

95 Elisabeth Grigoleit-Müller to Marguerite Hagenbach, March 10, 1967. Her handwritten response can be found on the carbon copy of the letter. Archive Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth.

96 Cited in Meyer 1966, p. 166 (see note 78). It was not possible to ascertain the precise date of the quotation.

97 Cited in Bruderer-Oswald 2007, p. 200 (see note 57).

98 Cited in Bruderer-Oswald 2007, p. 200 (see note 57).



After her studies and doctorate at the University of Bonn on the Caravaggio follower Bartolomeo Manfredi, **Nicole Hartje-Grave** completed her training at the Hamburger Bahnhof, the Gemäldegalerie, and the Alte Nationalgalerie, all of which are part of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. She then worked at the Von der Heydt-Museum in Wuppertal and the Museum Kunstpalast in Düsseldorf. Her last long-term project was to catalogue and publish the former private collection of the Cologne couple Wilfried and Gisela Fitting, now held at the Kunstmuseum Bonn, which included thirty-one works by Hans Arp. Apart from cataloguing the works by Arp, she also worked separately on the provenance of the reliefs.

“It’s Okay to Dada.”

Report on Fabian Knöbl and Brigitte Kovacs’s research trip *Dadawalk 21*

“The rhythm of walking generates a kind of rhythm of thinking, and the passage through a landscape echoes or stimulates the passage through a series of thoughts. This creates an odd consonance between internal and external passage, one that suggests that the mind is also a landscape of sorts and that walking is one way to traverse it.”¹

Rebecca Solnit

Following Solnit, who was one of the first theorists to address the significance of walking in contemporary art, the artistic research project *Dadawalk 21* is based on walking as a method of generating knowledge and on artistic fieldwork. A search for traces on foot, the project involved a rapprochement with Hans Arp and Sophie Taeuber-Arp’s artistic and cultural milieu (fig. 2). Dadaism provided the artist couple with the conceptual framework for experimenting with new materials and forms of aesthetic expression, which significantly shaped their practice.

As an active member of the Dada movement Hans Arp helped conceive the Grande Saison Dada, which was proclaimed in Paris in 1921 and opened with an excursion to the little-known church of St. Julien-le-Pauvre (fig. 3).² Set in the public sphere, apart from traditional art venues, such as galleries and museums, it was a place where art and life could come together. Alongside other actions, such as a reading, the primary focus was audience participation, the creation of (accidental) situations and encounters as artistic interventions in urban structures, and the exploration of public space as an urban sphere of action. In this context, walking was understood as a form of aesthetic expression and, therefore, a new path toward an (anti-)art (without material form) was taken, which paved the way for the development of many contemporary art forms and movements, such as art in public space and Walking Art.

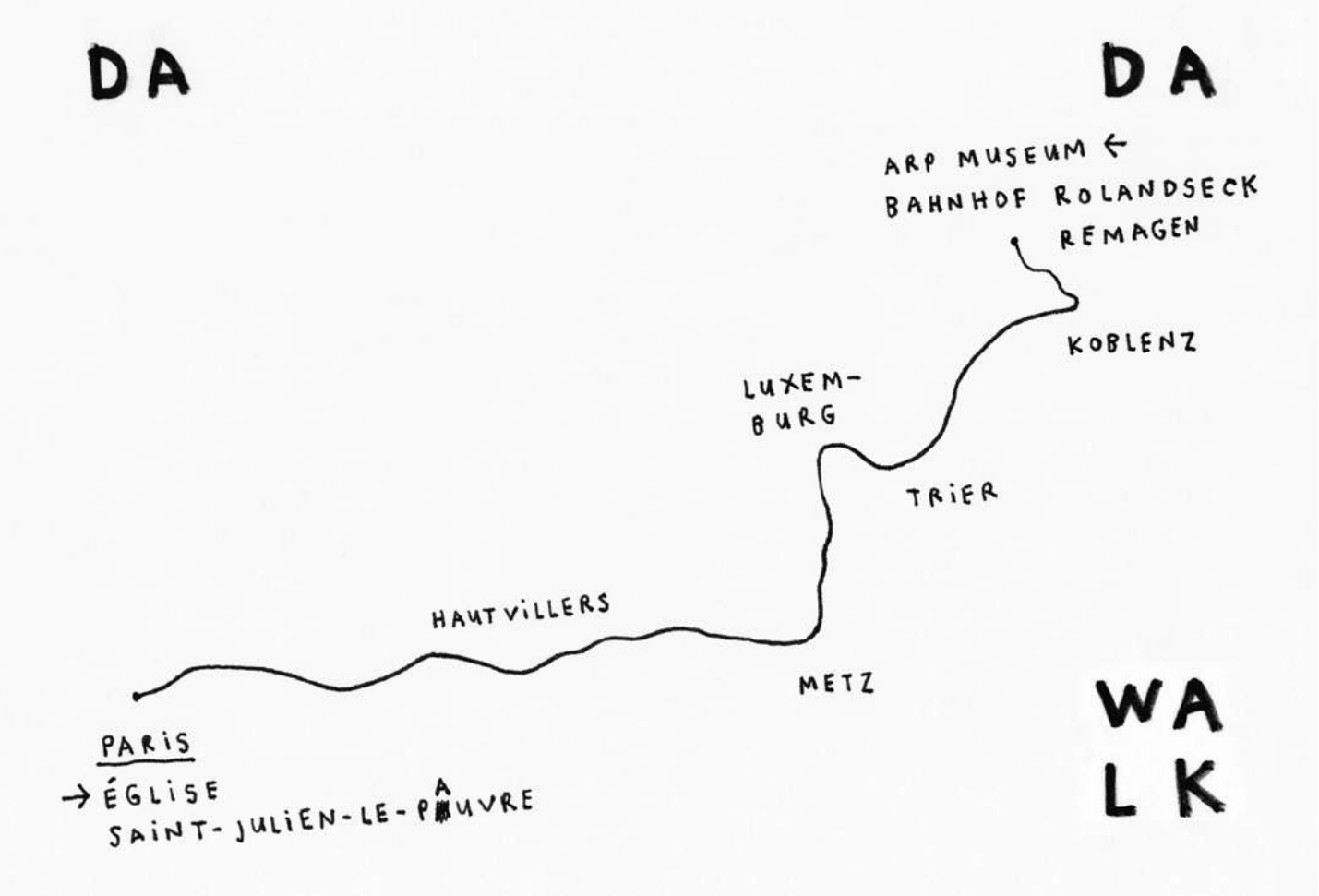


Fig. 1 The route

The term Walking Art, coined by the English artist Hamish Fulton to distinguish it from Land Art, encompasses a range of artistic practices in which walking is inherent.³ However, specific and binding criteria for walking as an art form have not yet been established. With respect to the field of urban studies, in the 1980s, the Swiss sociologist Lucius Burckhardt and his wife, Annemarie Burckhardt, founded the science of strolling, also referred to as strollology, which defined walking as a method of cultural and aesthetic perception.

Following the Footsteps of the Dadaists

In reference to the aforementioned developments and in order to commemorate the significance of the 1921 Dada excursion for the Surrealist *déambulation*, the Situationist *dérive*, as well as the twentieth- and twenty-first-century art walks that built upon it, we—Fabian Knöbl and Brigitte Kovacs—undertook a walk from the church of St. Julien-le-Pauvre in Paris to the Arp Museum in Remagen exactly 100 years later. At the same

time, our walk represented a reevaluation of walking in times of increasing digitalization, disembodiment and acceleration, global migration, climate change, encroachment upon nature, and pandemic-related restrictions. This resulted in the conjunction of historical and contemporary contexts. Walking became a method of exploration, encounter, locomotion, and reflection as well as artmaking. Driven by a longing to be in the world, in the sense that Merleau Ponty coined, and a curiosity to learn more about the original Paris action through our own bodies, our search began.

Creating a New Dada (Pilgrimage) Route

Our journey was planned like a pilgrimage. Reflecting the achievements of the Dadaists, its starting point was the site of the original Dada excursion, the church of St. Julien-le-Pauvre in Paris. The destination was a museum that serves as a holy shrine of art. In the case of the Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck, it also created references to the Arps’ artistic production. Furthermore, in its



Fig. 2 In Search of Hans and Sophie



Fig. 3 Original invitation to *Excursions & Visites DADA*



Fig. 4 Placing the stone plaque at the church of St. Julien-le-Pauvre in Paris



Fig. 5 Paris



Fig. 6 It's Okay to DADA



Fig. 7 Verdun



Fig. 8 Luxemburg



Fig. 9 Dada Excursion to St. Julien-Le-Pauvre in Paris in 1921



Fig. 10 Walking in the wind and rain



Fig. 11 Flooding on the path



Fig. 12 Pathways



Fig. 13 Backpack



Fig. 14 Installing the signs



Fig. 15 Installing the signs



Fig. 16 Passersby look at a DADA sign.



Fig. 17 View of Notre Dame



Fig. 18 Putting up a sign in the garden of the church of St. Julien-Le-Pauvre in Paris



Fig. 19 On the path



Fig. 20 Flooding



Fig. 21 Blocked paths



Fig. 22 Diseased grapevines



Fig. 23 Taped rib



Fig. 24 Metz



Fig. 25 Moselsteig trail



Fig. 26 Industrial complex



Fig. 27 Pathways



Fig. 28 Underpass



Fig. 29 Waterways



Fig. 30 DA-Flags



Fig. 31 DA-Flags



Fig. 32 Multifunctional tool—the cell phone



Fig. 33 Arrival at the Arp Museum



Fig. 34 Installing the stone plaque in front of the museum's entrance

Photos by Aldona Gritzmann (4, 5, 17, 18), Fabian Knöbl (1, 10, 23, 30, 36–38), Brigitte Kovacs (2, 6–8, 11–16, 19–22, 24–29, 31–33, 35), Eckhard Faul, Hugo-Ball-Gesellschaft (3), Helmut Reinelt (34), Association Atelier André Breton (9)

function as a train station, it referred to the nomadic nature of the (contemporary) art world.

At the beginning and end points of the journey, we installed screen-printed stone plaques (fig. 4), which referred to both the historic and current actions, and with them, 100 years of walking as an artistic practice.

The pilgrimage itself, however, took place along the way, through the act of walking, which was characterized by effort and hardship and through which we hoped for experience, knowledge, and change. It was, therefore, a situated and embodied knowledge as defined by Donna Haraway,⁴ which was generated by reenacting the avant-garde excursion in Paris and continuing the walk through three countries as a contemporary deambulation. In three weeks, we covered about 500 kilometers, which would have taken only a few hours by plane, train, or car (fig. 1). In what was at times cumbersome slowness, we moved from predetermined stations through Champagne, Lorraine, Luxembourg, and over the Eifel region to the Rhenish Riviera in Germany. We passed through idyllic landscapes and overwhelming industrial areas, traumatized cities (Verdun) and futuristic ones (Luxemburg) (figs. 7 and 8). We marched in rain, heat, and wind on busy highways, mud-encrusted country roads, asphalt bike paths, along waterways and on trails, as well as through rough terrain (figs. 10–12). The backpacks, weighing more than 20 kilograms, carried the street signs produced beforehand as well as tools for their installation (fig. 13); these were permanently affixed at prominent points along the way. Although some of these were art or cultural institutions, such as the City Museum of Trier, most were spontaneously chosen locations in the landscape or in the cities we passed through (figs. 14 and 15). The signs were designed in blue, white, and yellow: color combinations borrowed from prints by Hans Arp.⁵ Two arrows, each flanked by a DA (“there” in German), show the way and, as a play on words, simultaneously referred to the Dada art movement, which itself experimented with language. In the chapter of his work *The Practice of Everyday Life* entitled “Walking in the City,” the French philosopher Michel de Certeau notes, “In the framework of enunciation, the walker constitutes, in relation to his position, both a near and a far, a *here* and a *there*.”⁶ In reference to de Certeau, we put ourselves in relation to the places we passed along the route by marking the way, with

the DA simultaneously referring to the beginning and end points of our journey. Thus, it was not only our walking that inscribed itself onto the landscape in the process of Site-Writing. Permanently affixing signs to signposts, poles, trees, etc., resulted in the unauthorized appropriation of the space traversed.

More than that, the signposts should also be seen as an invitation to follow us on our pilgrimage and awaken the interest of the local population (fig. 16).

Material Manifestations of the Journey

The journey could also be followed in virtual space. Stickers with a QR-code connected those interested with the Instagram channel *Dadawalk 21*, where every day we uploaded new photos and videos of the landscape and architecture that we passed by as a kind of digital footprint, to enable a symbolic retracing of our path. But the journey could also be followed in real time on the Stiftung Arp e.V.’s Instagram channel.

What remained of the art journey were not only stone plaques at the route’s beginning and end points, signs in the landscape, and photos or videos. The findings were as varied as the questions themselves. They flowed into a publication that, as a travel guide in art book format, addresses the mediation of the ephemeral act of walking as an artistic mode of exploring space and time. However, some of the central experiences are presented here in condensed form as a field report.

The Journey as Experience

In the context of the historical action, it can be noted that the church of St. Julien-le-Pauvre’s garden still exists and is cared for by the city of Paris. It no longer seems to represent unknown territory for locals and tourists, as many seeking respite found their way to the garden benches. The view of Notre Dame from the garden captured in the Dada group’s historic photo remains unobstructed, although the Paris landmark itself was altered by the 2019 fire (fig. 17).

The garden is now fenced off and only accessible during specified opening hours. Symptomatic of the post-9/11 era, a park guard is now stationed at the site, and the whole area is under video surveillance. An unan-

nounced intervention was, therefore, more difficult to carry out today than 100 years ago. Nevertheless, we were able to install the stone plaques, which were screen printed by hand at a size of 20 × 30 cm, as well as some signs in the park, which (long overdue) refer to the historical (as well as the current) action (fig. 18).⁷ Our attempt to re-enact and update the original Dadaist excursion failed, as it did 100 years ago, because of rain that discouraged many of the invited artists, architects, philosophers, and theoreticians from participating (fig. 9). And yet, a few interested people accompanied us, bringing with them new perspectives on the historical action as well as the artistic production of the Arps, which initiated a deeper discussion.

Our journey from the city to the country began at the same time as the big rainstorm. For days, we were completely soaked by the pouring rain, thereby experiencing the effects of climate change firsthand (fig. 19). The heavy, monsoon-like downpours caused flood-like inundation along our route (fig. 20). In particular, the regions around Trier and the Ahre River Valley were declared disaster zones. Due to the floods, many of the routes planned in advanced were blocked (fig. 21). For

that reason, we had to switch to heavily trafficked back roads without sidewalks. We did not come across others traveling on foot. Instead, walking at the edge of the road in pouring rain earned us a lot of headshaking from drivers. Small animals, such as mice, lay drowned at the roadside while fallen trees blocked the way.

In Champagne, we learned from locals that the excessive rain had resulted in a fungus on the grapevines, making organic farming difficult and unprofitable (fig. 22). The people, who primarily live from champagne production, worried about this year’s income. No one here doubted climate change anymore. Flooded fields, diseased plants, and mud-encrusted paths painted a picture of natural disaster. Later, from Trier and Koblenz to the district of Ahrweiler, we saw and felt the catastrophic effects of the floods even more plainly. In the shelters and hostels, we met people every day who had lost their homes and belongings.

Fatigue, exhaustion, dizziness, aching bones, and cramped muscles led us feel our bodies as we rarely had before. Despite training beforehand, the unaccustomed movement and heavy load took their toll. A cracked rib, taped knees, a rash of sweat, and disc problems preoc-

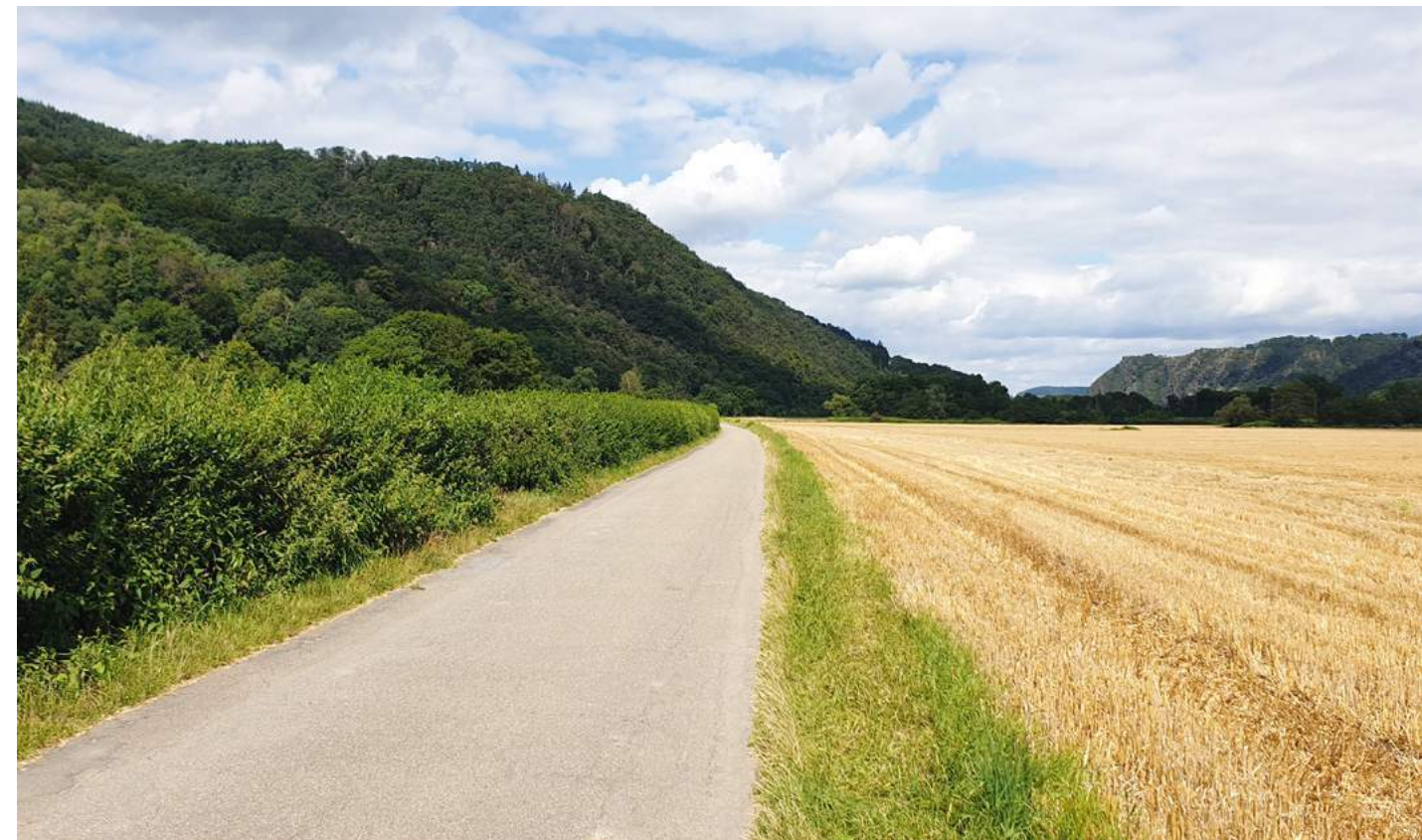


Fig. 35 Path

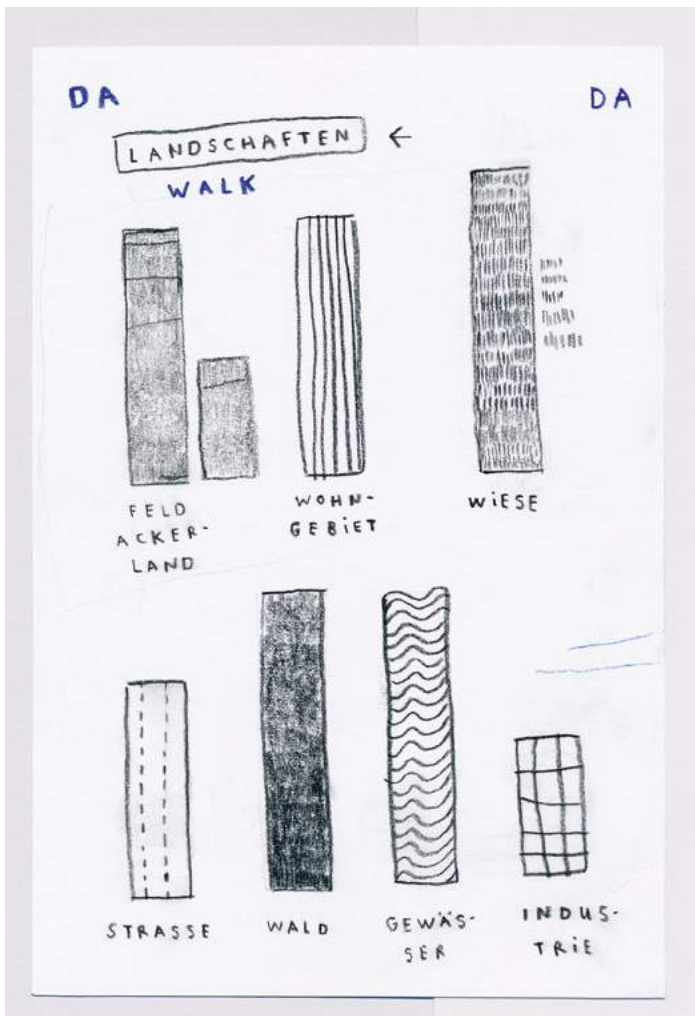


Fig. 36 Landscapes

cupied us throughout the journey (fig. 23). The exhaustion and physical weakness grew from day to day. If there was not a bench nearby—and there rarely was (as was the case for trash cans)—we took a rest at the side of the road. In the evenings, we were usually too tired even to go buy water—especially when the nearest supermarket was six kilometers away (as in Hautvillers) and no one was willing to drive us due to Corona. But some evenings, even the supermarket across the street seemed too far away and the stairs from the second floor of our accommodations too tedious to descend after a long day. In this way, we tested our individual physical limits anew each day.

We were regularly asked if we were walking the Camino de Santiago, whose dense network of trails extends throughout Europe and intersected with our path in France as well as in Germany. After all, who else would set out on a trip through three countries

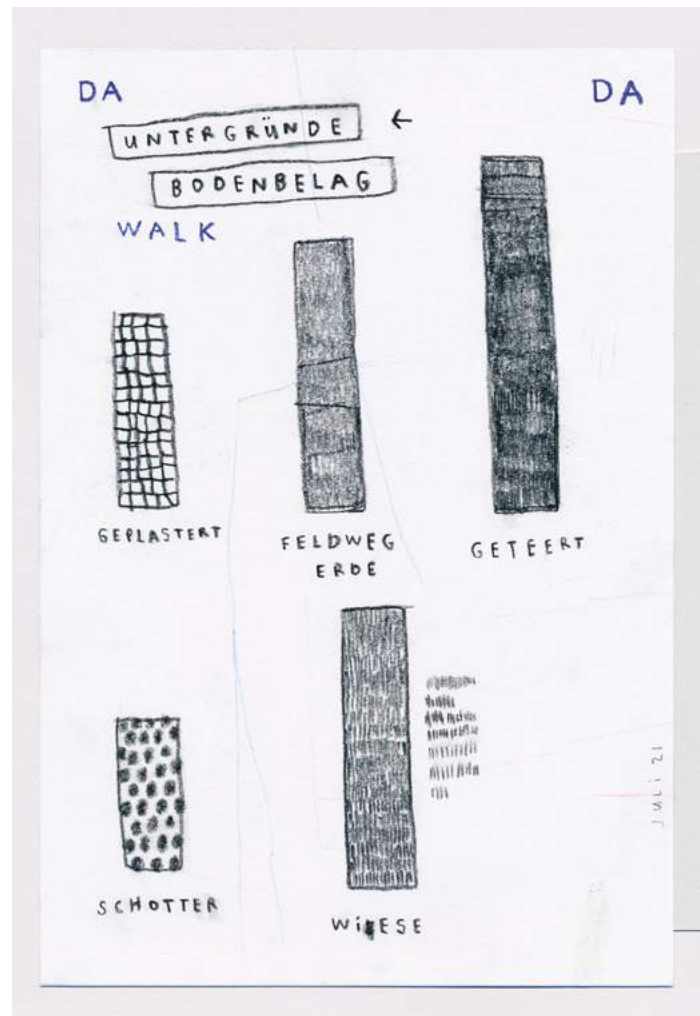


Fig. 37 Substrates

without a car? Churches that were supposed to provide shelter were mostly locked. Resting in a dry space was, therefore, often denied to us. As we learned, the French church does not have enough money to keep the rarely frequented rural churches open. The keys are kept in the municipal office. When we stayed one night with the mayor of a small village, he unlocked the church for us in the evening and we discovered fascinating sgraffiti on the walls that we never would have seen otherwise.

Our navigation was mostly over cell phone GPS and, occasionally, the maps we had brought along. Sometimes we also asked passerbys to show us the way and were, in rare instances, led astray, as on the Moselsteig trail, where we got lost deep in the woods and where no GPS seemed to work anymore (fig. 25). Kilometers of detours that especially hurt in the legs and wore away at our motivation.

The landscape continually changed and yet seemed to have merged into a great whole. Uninhabited landscape was rare. The idyllic Champagne region with its vineyards was followed by war-traumatized Verdun, with its battlefields and cemeteries, and then the gigantic industrial zones surrounding Hayange near the border with Luxembourg (fig. 26). On our way, we passed by villages and places we never would have visited otherwise—unspectacular sites where tourists rarely stray—but that still reveal the prevailing mood of the region and gave us a sense of the terrain’s psychogeographical contours (figs. 27 and 28).

At this point in the pandemic (July 2021), crossing borders was not an issue for us as Europeans. At the same time, we became painfully aware of the plight of countless refugees at Europe’s borders and those fleeing on foot across continents, and we were overcome by a guilty conscience as well as compassion and sadness about their difficult circumstances. Their journeys on foot are so different, without adequate equipment (like our Deuter backpacks) and financial means, and with far greater obstacles on the way.

Once we arrived in Luxembourg, public transportation throughout the country was free for everyone. Although this is a wonderful offer to the inhabitants in terms of climate protection, we nevertheless encountered many cars and very few walkers here as well.

In Germany, we once again primarily oriented ourselves along waterways: Flanerie autour de l’eau, as one of our previous French trails was called. After the Marne, we once again walked along the Mosel, until we came to the Rhine (fig. 29). The passing ships inspired us to create flags with DA-DA written on them. As we continued our journey, we fastened fluttering scarves, each one emblazoned with a large blue DA, to our backpacks (figs. 30 and 31).

We always walked as a pair, adapting ourselves to the rhythm of the other. Only rarely did one lead the way, with the other following at a distance. Perhaps it gave us a sense of a security to stay together in an unfamiliar environment that changed every day, despite occasional differences in opinion. Would it have made a difference to make this journey alone as a woman, even here in Central Europe?

With the help of our cell phones, we counted our daily steps; tracked and navigated our route; and we photographed, filmed, and uploaded our documenta-

tion to Instagram (fig. 32). Using a telephone app, we also communicated with different hosts every day. If we arrived at our accommodations after sunset, then we used our cell phones as flashlights. As such, the cell phone was the most important multi-functional tool on the trip. This made us clearly aware that even on a hike—an analog activity—it is no longer possible to imagine life without the digital.

DA (Here), but the Movement of Thought Continues

After three weeks of walking, we reached Remagen (figs. 33 and 34). Three weeks, in which walking became a means of artistic production and the road our studio (figs. 35 and 36). In this way, we fulfilled the Dadaist demand to merge art and life under the motto of “travel as the art of living.” For it is only through travel that the individual is united with the realities surrounding them. In the process of locomotion, new connections were made across space (Paris–Remagen), people (Hans & Sophie Taeuber-Arp and us), and times (1921–2021). Our bodies became seismographs for change, be it technological, social, or even ecological. We experienced knowledge in embodied form, which also changed us in the process of the journey.

Reenacting the original action on site allowed us to better understand the spatial conditions that are closely linked to the revolutionary first Dada excursion, that had a great impact on the development of various artistic movements in the 20th and 21st century. Our long-term performance, which involved intense encounters as well as confrontations (not least with oneself), thus built a bridge between past and present, focusing on both exploring space and highlighting current social challenges. On the one hand, there were parallels to Dadaism, which was largely about using art to question a society that was apparently coming apart at the seams during World War I, and the Spanish flu, and our everyday reality shaped by the pandemic. On the other, significant differences that are directly linked to the changes over the last 100 years—whether due to technological developments or ecological changes—were also revealed.

And although we arrived at our journey’s predetermined destination on time, it can still only be regarded as a stopover in a longer engagement with the path-

breaking achievements of the Dadaists for contemporary art, and here in particular, for walking as an artistic practice.

A project by Fabian Knöbl and Brigitte Kovacs
Text by Brigitte Kovacs

1 Rebecca Solnit: *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*. London, 2001, Verso, pp. 5–6.

2 Although Hans Arp participated in the conception of the Dada excursion, neither he nor Sophie Taeuber-Arp were present during the original action. In this sense, the contemporary continuation of the action was conducted “In Search of Hans and Sophie.”

3 Fulton, Hamish (2016): *Walking, Sitting and Standing: A talk with Hamish Fulton in three stages*. An interview by Brigitte Kovacs on November 29, 2016. In: Kovacs, Brigitte (2018): *Übergänge. Annäherungen an das Gehen als künstlerische Praxis zwischen Geh-Akt und Artefakt*. Salzburg, p. 236.

4 Donna Haraway: “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partia Perspective,” in: *Feminist Studies*, 14/3 (Autumn, 1988), pp. 575–599, published by: *Feminist Studies*, Inc., www.jstor.org/journal/feministstudies [www.doi.org/10.2307/3178066](https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066).

5 Hans Arp: *Cinq lunes sur fond bleu*, 1966; *Cueillette*, 1965; *Non loin du soleil, de la lune et des étoiles*, c. 1962–1963; *Sans titre* (maquette pour affiche Moderna Museet), 1962.

6 Michel De Certeau: *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven F. Rendall. Berkeley, 2011: p. 99. The author consulted the German translation: Michel de Certeau: *Kunst des Handelns* (1980), trans. by Ronald Voullié. Berlin, 1988, p. 191.

7 See the video *Dada Walk 21* here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=saAikFj9TQ4



Fig. 38 Take a walk

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Alongside his work as graphic designer, **Fabian Knöbl** is active as visual artist, with exhibitions and projects in Germany and abroad. His works are based on drawings as well as installations. By these means, he questions the supposed static nature of traditional sculpture.

Interlude. Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Hans Arp, and Their Contemporaries. Research by the Arp Fellows

Stiftung Arp e.V. Magazine, Vol. 1, 2022

Edited by Jana Teuscher

Cover: Sophie Taeuber-Arp: *Vertical-Horizontal Composition on White Ground*, 1915–16. Gouache and pencil on paper, 29.5 × 28 cm. Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin (detail)–Full view p. 20; Inner Cover: Guests at Sophie Taeuber-Arp and Hans Arp’s home in Clamart: Meret Oppenheim, Marie-Berthe Aurenche, Max Ernst, James Joyce, and others, c. 1932 (Photographer unknown). Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin/Rolandswerth

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