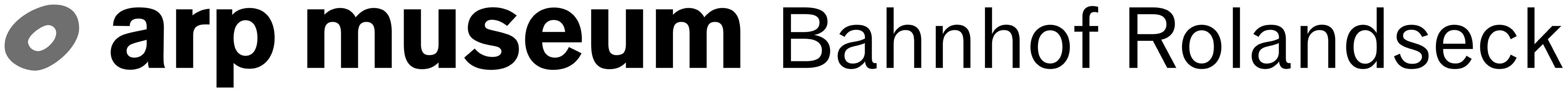
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Rolandseck, 10 February 2016

**Press Release**

»Dada is beautiful like the night, who cradles the young day in her arms.«

(Jean Arp)

**100 Years of Dada: The Great Celebration of Cultivated Nonsense**

**»Genesis Dada. 100 Years of Dada Zurich« (14 February to 10 July 2016): The Arp Museum celebrates the great Dada anniversary 2016 with a multi-faceted and substantial exhibition that vividly traces the early history of this art movement that is so important for the history of modernism.**

A central contribution to the Dada anniversary that is being celebrated throughout Europe this year is the large-scale exhibition »Genesis Dada. 100 Years of Dada Zurich« at the Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck, which was organised in cooperation with the director of the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich, Adrian Notz.

»How a revolutionary international art movement grew from an artistic whim and what role Hugo Ball and Jean Arp, the two artists associated with the state of Rhineland-Palatinate play, can be very pleasurably experienced in this comprehensive exhibition,« states **Walter Schumacher, the state secretary for culture of the state of Rhineland-Palatinate**.

Founded on 5 February 1916 by Hugo Ball, Emmy Hennings, Marcel Janco, Tristan Tzara, and Jean Arp at the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich, Dada would become one of the central movements in 20th-century art. On the occasion of this anniversary, the Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck attends to the early years of Dada an brings it’s two important birthplaces back to life: the legendary artist’s pub »Cabaret Voltaire« and the rather bourgeois »Galerie Dada«.

The Apollonian gallery was constituted as a counterbalance to the Dionysian cabaret. It was solely through these two components - the ›Cabaret Voltaire‹ and the ›Galerie Dada‹ that Dada’s equilibrium could be maintained,« notes **Adrian Notz**.

**The Rejection of War and the Discovery of Nothingness**

The spirit of Dada developed in the interplay between the two contrasting birthplaces in the extremely cosmopolitan atmosphere of Zurich in 1916 – one of Europe’s refugee metropolises.

A major starting point was the strictly pacifist attitude of the Dada’s protagonists. Even the artists who initially were not able to completely evade the omnipresent martial rage ultimately rejected it and attempted to suppress the events occurring on the other side of the seemingly secure mountain range. At the same time it was the horrors of war that called everything into question – and elevated nothingness to the new deity.

**The Great Revolt against Tradition and Convention – without Political Ideology**

Bourgeois culture and its conventional canon of values which brought about World War I were simultaneously declared to be the target of artistic protest. Established art, as a part of this society, was rejected as reactionary and obsolete. The Dadaists sought new forms of expression instead, both in the performing and the fine arts.

At the legendary soirees in the »Cabaret Voltaire« the artists read poems, sang, danced while wearing masks and paid tribute to the anarchic forces of body and soul. The occasionally absurd Dadaist performance was by all means more than just a farcical entertainment, and yet it was not a decisive act of political protest. The Dadaists refused to clearly align themselves with a specific political approach. It was rather the forces of reason and its supposed strategies that were now declared to be the source of all collective criminal acts. The artists thus administered logic a radical rejection.

**The Liberation of Language and the Praise of the Archaic as well as the Mystic Relationship with Nature**

The denial of the ruling powers and their propaganda led to new forms of the sensual, but also intellectual use of language. The Dadaists sought to overcome the boundaries of reasonable thought in simultaneous and sound poems. The subconscious serves as the sources of immediate creativeness in mystic practices, whereby contemporary theories and scholarly psychoanalytic writings, for example by C. G. Jung, provided important impulses.

In their search for pre-lingual, primordial forms of expression and a longing for the pre-civilizational, the Dadaists reflected an aspect of the contemporary zeitgeist. The members of the life reform movement and the nudists who lived in harmony with nature at the same time on Monte Verità near the Swiss town of Ascona and who had close contacts with Dada artists are exemplary in this regard.

The great interest in African art shared with the so-called »Primitivists« also played an important role here. Shaped by clichés, so-called »Negro Art« was celebrated in European exhibitions and the attempt was made to adapt its formal vocabulary. The exotic rhythms, in turn, supplied the inspiration for theatrical performances and masked dances in which one strived to achieve the directness, spontaneity, and uncontrollability associated with the cultural practices of »primitive« peoples.

**From the Cabaret in Zurich to an International Movement**

The »wild« phase of initiation in the »Cabaret Voltaire« was continued in the neighbouring »Galerie Dada«. But a certain increase in professionalism accompanied the move to the new venue. Guided tours for the public and contacts to journalists were intended as a means of targeting an audience with an affinity for art. Along with the soirees, exhibitions were now shown at the Galerie also featuring works by prominent international avant-garde artists. The rejection of established art by the Dadaists was transformed here into the attempt to come into contact with the international art scene through connections with Surrealism, Futurism, or Cubism. The Dadaist manifestos and writings published by Hugo Ball and his comrades-in-arms served as a means of disseminating their message. Dada centres developed in Hannover, Berlin and Cologne, but also in Paris and New York, enabling Dada to revolutionise the art world within a brief period of time.

**Dada – Not a Style but Rather…**

The exhibition sheds a light on the contemporary intellectual and scholarly backdrop against which Dada emerged. Themes such as the Mystic, Psychology, Revolt, Philosophy, and Literature closely interacted with diverse artistic forms and practices that developed in a completely new direction through the influence of the Dadaists – from dance, theatre, poetry, and new music to masks and costumes, collages, objects, paintings, and prints.

Of great significance in this regard is the conclusion offered in the exhibition catalogue by the Dada specialist Tobia Bezzola, namely that Dadaism cannot be reduced to a style. Unlike the other »Isms« of the modernist avant-garde, Dada is not recognisable by specific forms.

As a proclaimed artistic »zero hour«, Dada thus represents a break with a chronologically comprehensive stylistic development as construed by art history from the modern to the post-modern era. As such, the Dada movement became a test case for such subsequent movements as Fluxus or performance art.

**From the Dada passage to the Staging of Space**

The exhibition presents works from the inner circle of the Zurich Dadaists (Jean Arp, Hans Richter, Marcel Janco etc.) in their artistic environment (Arthur Segal, Max Oppenheimer, Adya and Otto van Rees etc.). They are supplemented by paintings and prints by such artists belonging to the international avant-garde as Heinrich Campendonk, Giorgio de Chirico, Paul Klee, August Macke, Elie Nadelman, Pablo Picasso, and Hilla von Rebay, who were also shown at the historical Dada exhibitions. Lenders include such renowned collections as the Guggenheim Museum and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Kunsthaus Zurich, the Folkwang Museum in Essen, and many others.

The artworks are embedded in a multi-media staging: Before the visitors enter the exhibition, they traverse an image und sound collage, the so-called »Dada passage« that extends from the subterranean tunnel via the lift to the first floor of the Richard Meier Building. The spatial situation of the »Cabaret Voltaire« and the »Galerie Dada« are reconstructed in two exhibition cubes to convey an experience of the divergent atmosphere in the two venues. Various thematic fields are grouped around these two centres that make the origins of Dada tangible based on numerous artworks and contemporary documents. The presentation is supplemented by the film »Dada in Nuce« and the diagrams conceived by Adrian Notz which, like the »Firmament Dada« shed light on the movement’s international networks. **The multi-faceted show has been curated by Adrian Notz (Cabaret Voltaire, Zurich) and Astrid von Asten with assistance of Sylvie Kyeck (both Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck).**

The exhibition is accompanied by an extensive **catalogue** (German/English, Verlag Scheidegger & Spiess), in which the role of Jean Arp in the genesis of Dada is also expounded. »The patron of our museum – Jean – Arp was one of the founding members of the artistic movement which, with Zurich as its starting point in 1916, would sustainably alter the history of global art within a brief period of time,« says **Dr. Oliver Kornhoff, director of the Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck and artistic head of the Rhineland-Palatinate Artist Residence Schloss Balmoral**. »With the exhibitions ›Genesis Dada‹ and ›Seahorses and Flying Fish‹ that is being shown in parallel as well as in our museum’s other exhibitions this year, we would like to convey to the museum’s public how Dadaist ideas manifested themselves in the Zurich period and how they affected subsequent generations of artists up to the present day.«

**Dada was yesterday! Is Dada today?**

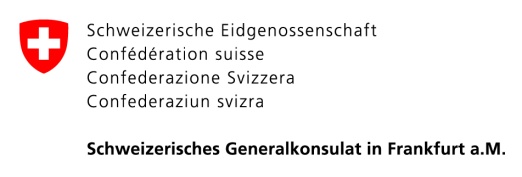
The question regarding the relevance of Dada is also posed in the »Genesis Dada« exhibition. The presentation of the grant holders at the Artists’ Residence of the State of Rhineland-Palatinate Schloss Balmoral in Bad Ems in 2015 try to provide some answers. International artist guests spent three to six months there, working on the theme of Dada. Their works are presented at the Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck in the historical exhibition spaces of the railway station parallel to the »Genesis Dada« exhibition under the title **»Seahorses and Flying Fish. Fellowship Holders of the Artists’ Residence Schloss Balmoral and the State of Rhineland-Palatinate 2015.«**

**The exhibition is a cooperation with**

**The project was made possible thanks to the generous support of**

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**The complete program can be found at:** [www.arpmuseum.org](http://www.arpmuseum.org)

**Facebook**: [www.facebook.com/arpmuseumbahnhofrolandseck](http://www.facebook.com/arpmuseumbahnhofrolandseck)

**Twitter (**[#arpmuseum](https://twitter.com/#!/arpmuseum)**)**

**Opening times**: Tuesday to Sunday and on holidays 11 a.m. to 18 p.m.

**Admission**: 9 Euros (reduced 7 Euros); only Bahnhof Rolandseck 4 Euros (reduced 2 Euro)