

This major exhibition is part of the Barbican's Season **Dancing around Duchamp**

The Bride and the Bachelors Duchamp with Cage, Cunningham, Rauschenberg and Johns

Barbican Art Gallery, London

14 February – 9 June 2013

Media View, Wednesday 13 February, 10am – 1pm

The exhibition is supported by The Henry Moore Foundation, the Fluxus fund with the support of the Institut français, and The Idlewild Trust with in-kind support from Yamaha and Markson Pianos.

Examining one of the most important chapters in the history of contemporary art, ***The Bride and the Bachelors*** is the first exhibition to explore **Marcel Duchamp's** (1887–1968) impact on four great modern artists – composer **John Cage** (1912–1992); dancer and choreographer **Merce Cunningham** (1919–2009) and visual artists **Robert Rauschenberg** (1925–2008) and **Jasper Johns** (born 1930). Tracing their creative exchanges and collaborations the exhibition features twenty-five works by Duchamp, and more than thirty by Johns and Rauschenberg, as well music by Cage and live dance performances of Cunningham choreography. ***The Bride and the Bachelors: Duchamp with Cage, Cunningham, Rauschenberg and Johns*** is organised by the Philadelphia Museum of Art in association with Barbican Art Gallery.

The exhibition is curated by Carlos Basualdo in collaboration with Erica F. Battle. International contemporary artist Philippe Parreno has devised the exhibition's *mis en scène*, activating time and movement within the exhibition to create a vital way of experiencing the work of the five featured artists – invoking the notion of the ghost, existing between presence and absence. The varied sequence of Parreno's subtle orchestration of live and pre-recorded sound, arranged in concert with live dance performances, enables the exhibition to change over time. ***The Bride and the Bachelors*** opens 14 February 2013.

Encountering Duchamp and his work in New York during the early stages of their own careers, each of the younger American artists embraced key elements of his ideas and practice, creating a seismic shift in the direction of art in the late 1950s and 60s, which still resonates today. Often cited as being the father of conceptual art, Duchamp radically altered what we think of as art – employing chance and humour, questioning the tastemakers and perhaps most radically of all, creating works of art from everyday objects.

Jane Alison, Senior Curator, Barbican Art Gallery, said: *"We are delighted to be working alongside Philadelphia Museum of Art to present this important exhibition that includes such a rich selection of influential works by Duchamp, Rauschenberg and Johns – many of them never shown in the UK before – alongside music by Cage and live Cunningham dance performances within a mis en scène developed by contemporary artist, Philippe Parreno. 'The Bride and the Bachelors' builds on Barbican Art Gallery's critically acclaimed 2011 exhibition 'Laurie Anderson, Trisha Brown, Gordon Matta-Clark: Pioneers of the Downtown Scene, New York 1970s' which saw dancers turn our vast downstairs space into a living sculpture. In art historical terms, the exhibition follows on from our recent 'Bauhaus: Art as Life' show; Cage, Cunningham and Rauschenberg first met at Black Mountain College, where the influential Bauhaus teacher Josef Albers continued his radical pedagogic legacy.*

.../...

The Barbican also has a long standing relationship with the former Merce Cunningham Dance Company and the John Cage Trust and so it is with enormous pleasure that we can reassess their work afresh in a gallery context."

The Bride and the Bachelors includes Duchamp's legendary masterpiece *Nude Descending a Staircase (No. 2)*, 1912, which caused uproar exactly 100 years ago at the New York Armory Show. His first 'readymade', a bicycle wheel mounted on a stool was realised that same year in his Paris studio and a replica version is presented alongside other 'readymades' such as *Fountain*, 1950 (the earliest replica of the 1917 original) and *Bottlerack*, 1960 (this version a present to Robert Rauschenberg).

Also on show are eighteen works by Rauschenberg, mostly from the 1950s and early 60s – the majority never, and others rarely shown in London before, including two influential *White Paintings* from 1951 and 1952, which parallel Cage's most famous work, *4' 33"*, 1952. Johns is represented by seventeen works, including paintings *No.*, 1961 and *M.*, 1962. This is the largest showing of Johns' work in the UK since the early 1990s and of Rauschenberg's in the last 30 years.

At the centre of *The Bride and the Bachelors* is an exploration of Duchamp's enigmatic 'Bride', featuring the painting *Bride*, 1912 and the iconic *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (The Large Glass)*, 1991–92 replica of the 1915–23 original. In her orbit are major early works by Rauschenberg and Johns; most crucially, Rauschenberg's *Bride's Folly*, 1959 – never previously shown in England and Johns and Cunningham's homage to Duchamp, *Walkaround Time*, 1968, based on *The Large Glass*. Also shown on the lower level gallery are Rauschenberg's painting *Express*, 1963 and stage set *Tantric Geography* designed for Cunningham's *Travelogue*, 1977; again, neither of which have been shown in this country before.

At the weekends and on Thursday evenings, the 'Bride's' domain will be animated by Cunningham choreographies; staged in association with London Contemporary Dance School and Richard Alston Dance Company. Often considered the dance versions of Duchamp's 'readymades' these performances will be made up of sections taken from repertory pieces drawn from collaborations with Duchamp, Johns, Cage and Rauschenberg. The live dance component of the exhibition is curated by former Merce Cunningham Dance Company dancer and rehearsal assistant, Jeannie Steele, and is presented in association with The Place with the assistance of Richard Alston Dance Company and London Contemporary Dance School, and the generous support of the Merce Cunningham Trust. 'Ghost dancers' – recordings of the dancers performing Cunningham pieces – can be heard through the rest of the week as part of Parreno's soundscape to the exhibition. In addition, on five afternoons visitors have the rare opportunity to listen to live Cage music played by contemporary pianist and interpreter of Cage, Eliza McCarthy.

On the upper level, further sections include those devoted to chess, chance and the 'readymade'. Highlights include: Duchamp's *Bicycle Wheel* (1964 replica of 1913 original) and *With Hidden Noise*, 1916 shown alongside Johns' seminal *Painted Bronze (Ale Cans)*, 1960, Rauschenberg's *Music Box*, c.1953 and his first stage set for the Cunningham Dance Company, *Minutiae*, 1976 (replica of 1954 original).

The exhibition has been developed with the full co-operation of Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, John Cage Trust, Merce Cunningham Trust and Association Marcel Duchamp. Special ticketed dance events taking place in the gallery setting include Cunningham's *RainForest*, 1968, presented by Rambert Dance Company and Richard Alston Dance Company performing a Cunningham 'Event'. Both are followed by a Q&A with Mark Baldwin and Richard Alston respectively.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Press Information

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Public Information

Barbican Art Gallery, London, 0845 120 7550, www.barbican.org.uk/artgallery

Daily 11am–8pm, Wed 11am–6pm, every Thurs LATE until 10pm

Tickets: Standard £10 online/£12 on the door, Concessions £7 online/£8 on the door

Exhibition Catalogue

A fully illustrated book published by Philadelphia Museum of Art and Yale University Press accompanies the exhibition. It includes an introduction by Carlos Basualdo, The Keith L. and Katherine Sachs Curator of Contemporary Art, and Erica F. Battle, Project Curatorial Assistant, Modern and Contemporary Art; a new essay by Calvin Tomkins, critic for the New Yorker; and profiles of the artists on view. It also features an anthology of reprinted articles, critical essays, excerpts, correspondence, and interviews that map the artists' relationships and are selected by Reinaldo Laddaga, musician and Associate Professor of Romance Languages at the University of Pennsylvania; and, the first-ever chronology detailing the lives and interactions of all five artists by Paul B. Franklin, Editor in Chief of the annual journal *Étant donné Marcel Duchamp*. Price: £35. ISBN: 9780876332429.

Special Events

An events strand, including live Cage performances in the gallery, a major discussion and a cabaret event, which focuses on the legacy of Duchamp, explores the humour and playfulness of the artist's ideas, and provokes questions about how they relate to contemporary art today. Following on from the successful Arts School Lab 2012, a number of 'Lab' events offer participants the opportunity to explore the creative practices of artists that make up this dynamic season, including the significant influence of the Black Mountain College. Free online learning resources designed to encourage audiences to make meaningful connections across the *Dancing around Duchamp* season and inspire further debate and enquiry. And in celebration of Duchamp's love of chess, games will be popping up all over the Centre.

DANCING AROUND DUCHAMP

Major Season of Events at the Barbican, February – June 2013

Featuring **Richard Alston Dance Company | Samuel Beckett | John Cage | Cheek by Jowl | Merce Cunningham | Marcel Duchamp | Geoffrey Farmer | Eugène Ionesco | Alfred Jarry | Jasper Johns | Philippe Parreno | Rambert Dance Company | Robert Rauschenberg | Théâtre de la Ville | Robert Wilson**

Dancing around Duchamp is a major multi-disciplinary season of events across visual art, dance, theatre, film and music. The season orbits around the legendary figure of Marcel Duchamp and the Art Gallery's major new exhibition *The Bride and the Bachelors: Duchamp with Cage, Cunningham, Rauschenberg and Johns* organised by the Philadelphia Museum of Art and in association with Barbican Art Gallery. A uniquely Barbican offering, it brings together key figures of the avant-garde with a shared Dadaist or absurdist sensibility who changed the course of 20th-century art: Samuel Beckett, John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Marcel Duchamp, Eugène Ionesco, Alfred Jarry, Jasper Johns, and Robert Rauschenberg, along with a host of contemporary practitioners that continue their radical legacy. Showcasing work by different generations of artists and performers – precursors, collaborators and artists either inspired by or with a clear affinity to Duchamp's work – the season allows audiences to explore the many threads that connect them and to journey among the absurd, the subversive, the provocative and the darkly humorous. .../...

Next Exhibition in The Curve opens Spring 2013

Geoffrey Farmer

26th March – 28th July 2013

For his installation for The Curve, the work of Vancouver-based artist Geoffrey Farmer draws on the sculptural, collage and assemblage traditions of Hannah Höch and Robert Rauschenberg as well as the element of chance, employed by Cage, Cunningham and Duchamp. Details about Geoffrey Farmer's new project for The Curve will be announced shortly.

Barbican Art Gallery

One of the leading art spaces in the UK, Barbican Art Gallery presents the best of international visual art with a dynamic mix of art, architecture, design, fashion and photography. From acclaimed architects to Turner prize-winning artists, the Gallery exhibits innovators of the 20th and 21st centuries: key players who have shaped developments and stimulated change. The Curve is dedicated to a vibrant programme of new commissions, created by leading international artists in direct response to this distinctive gallery space.

Barbican Newsroom

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About the Barbican

A world-class arts and learning organisation, the [Barbican](#) pushes the boundaries of all major art forms including dance, film, music, theatre and visual arts. Its creative learning programme further underpins everything it does. Over 1.5 million people pass through the Barbican's doors annually, hundreds of artists and performers are featured, and more than 300 [staff](#) work onsite. The architecturally renowned centre opened in 1982 and comprises the Barbican Hall, the Barbican Theatre, the Pit, Cinemas One, Two and Three, Barbican Art Gallery, a second gallery The Curve, foyers and public spaces, a library, Lakeside Terrace, [a glasshouse conservatory](#), conference facilities and three restaurants. The City of London Corporation is the founder and principal funder of the Barbican Centre.

The Barbican is home to Resident Orchestra, [London Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Orchestra, [BBC Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Ensembles the [Academy of Ancient Music](#) and [Britten Sinfonia](#), and Associate Producer [Serious](#). Our Artistic Associates include [Boy Blue Entertainment](#), [Cheek by Jowl](#) and [Michael Clark Company](#). International Associates are [Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam](#), [New York Philharmonic](#), [Los Angeles Philharmonic](#), [Gewandhaus Orchestra Leipzig](#) and [Jazz at Lincoln Center](#).

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