

Dada and Beyond, i: Dada Discourses

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Dada and Beyond, I: Dada Discourses. Edited by ELZA ADAMOWICZ and ERIC ROBERTSON. (Avant-garde Critical Studies, 26). Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011. 246 pp., ill.

This collective volume, which privileges in-depth textual analysis of the Dada canon, is representative of a more general recent shift away from historically based approaches. The eighteen essays are grouped into five themes, bringing together established and newer names in Dada research and offering a well-rounded approach to a heterogeneous movement. Through alignment with artistic strains beyond Surrealism, the book supports Dada's continuing academic importance. Furthermore, the text draws on Dada's philosophical and theoretical relevance, critical to a deeper understanding of a movement that still tends to be associated primarily with meaninglessness. Henri Béhar begins the theme of 'Dada Politics, Dada Poetics' by analysing the movement's association with ideological structures, especially alongside Surrealism's distinctly more engaged approach. Anna Katharina Schaffner delves into Dada's complex relationship with language, drawing on both aesthetic and political aspects, while Marc Décimo addresses the relationship of language to technology (especially sound technology). Timo Kaitaro contrasts irresponsibility and responsibility in Dada and Surrealism. The essays in 'Dada Objects' explore the enduring appeal of Dada's approach to experimentation and collaboration. Mary Ann Caws posits the object as both thing and goal, arguing that Dada embraces an 'energizing ambivalence'. Eric Robertson focuses on 'object-language', underlining Arp's ability to query the links between objects and their linguistic description. Nina Parish discusses the dissolution of artistic boundaries in the *livre d'artiste*. In 'Dada Tactics', Raluca Lupu-Onet, Ruth Hemus, and Vincent Antoine tackle, respectively, denial, the manifesto, and madness through three Dada personalities: Paul Nougé, Céline Arnaud, and Johannes Baader. Though not de facto Dada, Nougé embodies the ephemeral 'effets Dada' that characterized the movement's Belgian heritage. Hemus highlights Arnaud as an undervalued female Dada and emphasizes the importance of her manifestos. Antoine depicts Baader's very personal identification with Dada 'madness'. In 'Dada Portraits and Identities', Raihan Kadri assesses Dada, Nietzsche, and nihilism in relation to bodily identity. Walburga Krupp explores Taeuber and Arp's dual artistic identity and their collaboration as one of Zurich Dada's critical visual art contributions. Aurélie Verdier considers Picabia's engagement with non-representative portraiture, as well as the relationship between Paris and New York Dada. Elza Adamowicz addresses hybrid identity and its visual counterpart, photomontage, in the work of Hannah Höch. Converting hybrid identity into plural identity through internationalism, Andreas Kramer opens 'Dada Languages' with a discussion of the *Lautgedichte* as destabilizing and decentering linguistic devices. Andrew Rothwell and David Christoffel discuss Picabia's work in relation to the Surrealist *Les Champs magnétiques*, and to music, painting, and poetry. Bernard Noël concludes with a poetic discussion of Dada as a creative, provocative identity. Overall, increasing the word-limit of individual chapters would have provided even greater scope for exploiting the volume's ambitious range of contributors and topics, and the use of a single language might have benefited the collection's coherence. Nevertheless, the editors present a series of high-quality contributions that, while not always located quite firmly enough within their respective contexts, offer an excellent blend of primary textual analysis and broader historical/theoretical relevance, and this is both valuable and appealing to a broad academic readership.

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