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Extra! Extra! Read all about it!

Artists manipulate the newspaper!

100-year history traced in "Shock of the News"

On view at the National Gallery of Art, Washington

September 23, 2012–January 27, 2013



Semen Fridliand

Die käufliche Presse (The Venal Press), 1929

halftone reproduction

National Gallery of Art Library, David K.E. Bruce Fund

Washington, DC—Since 1909, major artists from nearly every art movement have co-opted, mimicked, defused, undermined, memorialized, and rewritten newspapers.

Shock of the News will examine the myriad manifestations of the "newspaper phenomenon" through 65 collages, paintings, drawings, sculptures, artists' newspapers, prints, and photographs by European and American artists, from F. T. Marinetti and Pablo Picasso to the Guerrilla Girls and Robert Gober. On view at the

National Gallery of Art, Washington, East Building, from September 23, 2012, through January 27, 2013, the exhibition will also include the large-scale multimedia installation *To Mallarmé* (2003) by Mario Merz. With two exceptions, the 60 artists in the exhibition will each be represented by one exemplary work.

"Artists pursuing various agendas have transformed the disposable daily paper into compelling works of art. ***Shock of the News*** promises to shape our understanding of modern artists' responses to the newspaper," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art, Washington. "Although a handful of recent exhibitions have explored the topic, this is the first to offer a systematic examination of the newspaper as both a material and subject in modern and contemporary art over the course of a century."

Exhibition Organization and Support

The exhibition was organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington.

The exhibition is made possible through the generous support of The Leonard and Evelyn Lauder Foundation. It is also supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

The Exhibition

Arranged chronologically, ***Shock of the News*** traces the development of the newspaper phenomenon from 1909 to 2009 and demonstrates its remarkable ability to adapt to and shift with the times while remaining vital to the present.

On February 20, 1909, Marinetti's futurist manifesto appeared on the front page of *Le Figaro*, and soon after this Picasso included a fragment of real newspaper into the collage *Guitar, Sheet Music, and Glass* (1912) (widely considered the first self-consciously modern work of art to incorporate newspaper). While the aims of Marinetti and Picasso were poles apart, their seminal efforts marked the beginning of a trend: visual artists began to think about the newspaper more broadly—as a means of political critique, a collection of ready-made news to appropriate and manipulate, a source of language and images, a typographical grab bag, and more.

The exhibition opens with the two key pieces by Marinetti and Picasso. Other works in

this room attest to how quickly the trend spread, encompassing both Europe and the United States. These include works by leading artists from early avant-garde movements such as cubism, futurism, and Dada, such as a superb cubist still life by Juan Gris, a militant work by the futurist Carlo Carrà, and an early Dada collage by Man Ray.

Also on view will be a striking photomontage by Hannah Höch, *Von Oben (From Above)* (1926), Arthur Dove's renowned *The Critic* (1925), and John Heartfield's scornful photomontage, reproduced in a Berlin illustrated newspaper in 1930, showing a lumpish man with his head wrapped in pages from *Vorwärts*, the Social Democratic Party's official paper, and *Tempo*, a mass-market tabloid. Heartfield's criticism was targeted both at the party and the press, and his message—spelled out in a boldface caption—could not have been more explicit: "Whoever reads bourgeois newspapers goes blind and deaf."

Spanning World War II to the 1980s, many of the works in the second room use the newspaper to report on events and convey political messages. In a 16-foot-long scroll-like painting, *Stalingrad (Victory in the East)* (1943–1944), Hans Richter incorporated actual news articles to trace the Battle of Stalingrad from onset to conclusion. Jean Dubuffet's cryptic *Message: La clef est sous le volet (Message: The key is under the shutter)* (1944), with words scrawled on a piece of scrap newspaper, evokes a sense of urgency, and was made while France was still under German occupation. Emory Douglas' *All Power to the People* (1969) depicts a young boy hawking Black Panther newspapers. Laurie Anderson literally wove together front pages of the *New York Times* and *China Times* in 1976, calling attention to Sino-American relations. This room also features outstanding artists' newspapers, including Salvador Dalí's *Dali News* (1945), a newspaper with items devoted entirely to Dalí, and Yves Klein's *Dimanche—Le journal d'un seul jour (Sunday—The newspaper for a single day)* (1960).

Robert Rauschenberg, renowned for his use of non-traditional materials, first incorporated newspaper into paintings while at Black Mountain College in North Carolina. There he began a series of so-called black paintings that typically include newspaper—either totally obscuring it or allowing some legibility—as seen in *Untitled*

(*Asheville Citizen*) (c. 1952).

Room three of the exhibition highlights the variety of approaches that artists have taken in recent decades. Sarah Charlesworth's *Modern History: April 21, 1978* (1978) tracks a single photograph of the kidnapped former Italian prime minister, Aldo Moro, on the front page of 45 different newspapers. Eliminating all headlines, captions, and articles, Charlesworth presents visual proof that newspapers construct different "pictures" of the same event. For *Eninka 22* (1986) John Cage ran burning newspapers and a blank sheet of paper through a printing press; all that remains of the burned newsprint are incomprehensible letters and words that offset onto the blank sheet.

In works from 1991 and 1992, Robert Gober tampered with images and texts published in the *New York Times*, testing the viewer's ability to discern fact from fiction. For Felix Gonzalez-Torres' conceptual work "*Untitled*" (1991), identical prints, each featuring excerpts from two *New York Times* articles will be stacked on the floor for visitors to take. The excerpts, which present contradictory views on the practice of law enforcement profiling, are printed separately on the front and back of each sheet, much like a newspaper, where an opinion on one side of a page might contradict another on its reverse.

Spanning nearly 24 feet, *To Mallarmé* (2003), a late signature work by Mario Merz, is installed on the Mezzanine near the entrance to the exhibition. The artist, a member of the Italian Arte Povera movement, lined up stacks of Italian and Arabic dailies from March 2003, when President George W. Bush issued an ultimatum before the invasion of Iraq. On top of the stacks, in blue neon light, the title of an 1897 poem by Stéphane Mallarmé unfolds: "Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard," which is translated "a throw of the dice never will abolish chance."

In *The Good News / Al Arab Al Yawm, 8/6/2008* (2008–2009) Jim Hodges coated every page of a newspaper published in Amman, Jordan, with 24k gold. Though this practice may seem contradictory, it is in keeping with Picasso's elevation of the lowly newspaper into the realm of high art in 1912.

Exhibition Curator, Catalogue, and Related Activities

The exhibition was conceived by Judith Brodie, curator and head of the department of modern prints and drawings at the National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Published by the National Gallery of Art in association with Lund Humphries, the 208-page fully illustrated exhibition catalogue includes essays by Brodie; Sarah Boxer, critic, *Artforum*, *Slate*, *New York Times*, and *New York Review of Books*; Janine Mileaf, art historian and director, Arts Club of Chicago; Christine Poggi, professor of modern and contemporary art and criticism, University of Pennsylvania; and Matthew Witkovsky, curator and chair of the department of photography, at the Art Institute of Chicago. The catalogue will be available in September for purchase in the Gallery Shops in hardcover. To order, please visit our website at www.nga.gov/shop (<http://www.nga.gov/shop>) ; call (800) 697-9350 or (202) 842-6002; fax (202) 789-3047; or e-mail mailorder@nga.gov.

The catalogue has been made possible, in part, by the Corinne H. Buck Charitable Lead Trust.

Judith Brodie will present two lectures on the exhibition: *"Mme Lesbos was run over by a tourist omnibus drawn by six horses. It happened in Versailles": Artists and the Modern Newspaper* on September 10, at 12:10 and 1:10 p.m.; and *Introduction to the Exhibition—"Shock of the News"* on Sunday, September 23 at 2:00 p.m.

In addition to the full-color exhibition catalogue, the Gallery Shops will feature a selection of titles about many of the artists featured in ***Shock of the News***. The Shops will also offer gift items that incorporate newsprint, including a variety of totes, stationery, and a laptop case.

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General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets along Constitution Avenue NW and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. With the exception of the atrium and library, the galleries in the East Building will be closing gradually beginning in July 2013 and will remain closed for approximately three years for Master Facilities Plan and renovations. For specific updates on gallery closings, visit www.nga.gov/renovation (<http://www.nga.gov/renovation>) .

For information call (202) 737-4215 or the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (202) 842-6176, or visit the Gallery's website at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on [Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt) at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt and on [Twitter](http://twitter.com/ngadc) at twitter.com/ngadc.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

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