DADA in Zurich and Berlin

1916-1920

Marcel Janco, Cabaret Voltaire, 1916
Lithograph based on an oil on canvas (now lost)
Hugo Ball performing “Karawane” at Club Voltaire, 1916

KARAWANE
jolifanto bambla ô falli bambla
grossiga m'pfa habla horem
égiga goramen
higo bloiko russula huju
hollaka hollala
anlogo bung
blago bung
bosso fataka
ü üü ü
schampa wulla wussa ólobo
hej tatta görem
eschige zünbada
wulubu ssbudu uluw ssbudu
tumba ba- umf
kusagauma
ba - umf
“An international word. Just a word, and the word a movement. Very easy to understand. Quite terribly simple. To make of it an artistic tendency must mean that one is anticipating complications…”

From “Dada Manifesto” by Hugo Ball, read at the first public Dada soiree on July 14, 1916.
Hugo Ball

- German
- Studied German moral philosophy, Russian anarchism, psychoanalysis and early Christian and Indian mysticism in Munich
- From 1910-1913, worked in theater and published poems and criticism
- Attempted to enlist in 1914
- Private trip to Belgium revealed to him the horrors of war
- Moved to Zurich with Emmy Hemmings in 1915

Left: Emmy Hennings with a puppet she made and performed with at Cabaret Voltaire, Zurich, 1916. Right: Hugo Ball performing “Karawane” at Cabaret Voltaire, Zurich, 1916.
Richard Huelsenbeck

- German
- Met Ball in Munich in 1911-1912, joined him in Berlin in 1915, and Zurich in 1916
- Served in the military for less than a year before being released on medical grounds for neuralgia.
- Staged anti-war events in Berlin and aggressive performances in Zurich.
Hans (Jean) Arp

- German-French
- Studied art in Strasbourg, Weimar, and Paris
- In 1910, began to travel widely and established relationships with artists and galleries in Munich, Berlin, and Paris
- Fled to Paris to evade the draft in Germany, before French police forced him to leave France for Switzerland. There, he successfully faked insanity.
- Met Sophie Taeuber, his artistic partner and eventual wife in 1915

Sophie Taeuber and Hans Arp with marionettes designed by Taeuber, circa 1918
Sophie Taeuber

- Swiss-German
- Studied decorative arts and textiles in Munich beginning in 1910.
- Moved to Zurich after the outbreak of war and took a job teaching textile design at the School of Applied Arts.
- Met Hans Arp in 1915 and began collaboration.
- Studied modern dance with Rudolf von Laban from 1916 and improvised dance performances at the Cabaret Voltaire.

Sophie Taeuber with *Dada Head*, 1920. Photo by Nic Aluf.
Tristan Tzara and Marcel Janco

- Romanian Jewish
- Tzara and Janco met in high school in Bucharest
- Janco arrived in Zurich in 1914 to attend university, Tzara followed in 1915.
- Avoided military service when Romania entered the war in 1916
- Attended opening night of Cabaret Voltaire on Feb. 5, 1916, and quickly became part of Dada’s inner circle.

*Untitled (Portrait of Tzara)*, Marcel Janco, 1919.
Tristan Tzara, score for “L'amiral cherche une maison a louer,” as published in the journal *Cabaret Voltaire*, 1916.
Right: Marcel Janco, *Cabaret Voltaire*, 1916
“The highest art will be one...which allows itself to be noticeably shattered by last week’s explosions, which is forever trying to collect itself after the shock of recent days. The best and most challenging artists will be those who every hour snatch the tatters of their bodies out of the turbulent whirl of life, who, with bleeding hands and hearts, hold fast to the intelligence of their time.”

Richard Huelsenbeck, “First Dada Speech in Germany,” 1918
Above: George Grosz, A Victim of Society, 1919.
Left: George Grosz, Republican Automatons, 1920.
Above: Raoul Hausmann and Hannah Hoch at the First International Dada Fair, 1920
Left: Hannah Hoch, *Cut With the Kitchen Knife Dada Through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch in Germany*, 1919-1920.
Above: Otto Dix, *War Cripples [45% Fit for Service]*, 1920
Right: Otto Dix, *The Skat Players*, 1920
“How can we get rid of everything that smacks of journalism, worms, everything nice and right, blinkered, moralistic, europeanized, enervated?”

“By saying Dada.”