

Waddington Galleries

PRESS RELEASE

JEAN DUBUFFET

"Late Paintings" and "Works on Paper from 1943 to 1985"

Exhibition dates: 6 September – 30 September 2000
Exhibition hours: Monday – Friday 10am – 5.30pm, Saturday 10am – 1pm

Art must make you laugh a little and make you a little afraid. Anything as long as it doesn't bore.
Jean Dubuffet

Waddington Galleries presents works by the French artist Jean Dubuffet, widely regarded to be among the most important post-war European artists. The two exhibitions, which will run concurrently, show works on paper from throughout Dubuffet's career, and paintings from the last two decades of his life.

The works exhibited represent the diversity of his practice as a non-conformist whose career was subject to constant re-invention. The human figure, landscape and the mundane object are the recurrent themes of his work. Dubuffet's images of people are expressionless characters, figures seemingly without identities. Throughout his career he was preoccupied with the exploration of the direct language of materials. A range of media such as paint, charcoal, crayon, biro and felt-tip pen shaped and formed the process of mark making on two-dimensional surfaces. For Dubuffet, material was as important as form.

Dubuffet relentlessly questioned the possibilities of art practice. He did not consider beauty or visual pleasure to be valid objectives for an artist. Rather, art was 'a language, an instrument of knowledge and an instrument of expression' that 'addresses itself to the mind, not to the eyes'. Dubuffet was driven by a desire to create works that challenged assumptions and accepted ideas about art. He was the foremost proponent of 'art brut' or 'raw art'; the art of children and the insane, believing that their innocent or untutored outlook gave them the most direct access to their emotions, making their art more 'honest'.

Dubuffet was born in Le Havre in 1901. He moved to Paris in 1918 where he briefly studied art at the Académie Julian. In 1925, he began working in the wine trade but painted periodically until 1942 after which he devoted himself to painting full time. His first solo exhibition was in 1944 in Paris. His first solo exhibition in New York was held in 1947. During his lifetime, major exhibitions of his work included: Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris (1960 - 61), Museum of Modern Art, New York (1962), Tate Gallery, London (1966), Guggenheim Museum, New York (1973), Akademie der Künste, Berlin (1980). Since Dubuffet's death in 1985, his work has continued to be exhibited worldwide. Major retrospectives have included: Galerie nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris (1991), Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington DC (1993) and Saarland Museum, Saarbrücken, Germany (1999).

A fully illustrated catalogue accompanies both exhibitions. For further information or photographs please contact Elisabeth Rackham at:

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