

Nasher Sculpture Center Announces *The Nature of Arp*

The first major North American museum exhibition dedicated to Jean (Hans) Arp in three decades, with works rarely seen in the U.S.; exhibition will travel to the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice in 2019

DALLAS, Texas (May 29, 2018)— The Nasher Sculpture Center announces *The Nature of Arp*, a long-overdue look at the achievements of Jean (Hans) Arp (1886-1966), one of the most important and multifaceted artists of the modern era. The exhibition will be on view September 15, 2018 – January 6, 2019.

The Nature of Arp will present a compelling new look at an artist whose experimental approach to creation, radical rethinking of traditional art forms, and collaborative proclivities resonate with the wide-ranging character of art today. Over a career spanning more than six decades, Arp produced a remarkably influential body of work in a rich variety of materials and formats. A founder of the Dada movement and pioneer of abstraction, he developed a vocabulary of curving, organic forms that moved fluidly between abstraction and representation and became a common point of reference for several generations of artists.

Bringing together more than 80 objects, including sculptures in plaster, wood, bronze, and stone, painted wood reliefs, collages, drawings, textiles, and illustrated books, *The Nature of Arp* will include works drawn from prominent U.S. and European museums, foundations, and private collections. Significant loans include the earliest documented Dada relief, *Plant-Hammer* (1917; Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, Netherlands); all three of the artist's surviving multipart works of the early 1930s, innovative reconceptions of sculptural form that rejected the pedestal and encouraged viewers to interact with movable elements (from the collections of Tate Modern, London; the Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Strasbourg; and the Museum Jorn, Silkeborg); and a group of works made in collaboration with his wife, the artist Sophie Taeuber-Arp, including their joint wood sculpture, *Marital Sculpture* (1937; Stiftung Arp, Berlin/Rolandswerth).

"It is with keen enthusiasm that we present this in-depth reappraisal of the extraordinary work of Jean (Hans) Arp, one of the key figures of the modern era," says Director Jeremy Strick. "Celebrating his contributions to notions of artistic flexibility, invention, and conceptual rigor is sure to prompt reflection on the legacy of his talent, as well as encourage fresh thinking about what it means to lead a creative life at this moment."

According to the exhibition's curator, Nasher Sculpture Center Curator Catherine Craft, "It's a tremendous privilege to present Arp's astoundingly inventive and varied works. Often, people know one aspect of his art—his achievements as a sculptor, or his participation in a movement like Dada or Surrealism—but experiencing the full range of his achievements reveals an artist of protean creativity. Art of the last century is unthinkable without him, and his commitment to moving between different languages, cultures, and communities today appears more timely than ever."

The title *The Nature of Arp* reflects in part the special role accorded to nature in Arp's work. Disillusioned by the destructiveness of World War I, Arp rejected traditional approaches to making art—especially art that claimed to imitate the appearance of nature—and instead sought creative strategies analogous to processes found in nature, such as growth, gravity, decay, and chance. In nature, Arp saw a force wiser and more constructive than the human arrogance that was so frequently the target of his absurdist humor.

The Nature of Arp also reflects the nature of Arp himself. In response to the butchery of World War I, Arp fled at the age of 28 to neutral Switzerland, where in 1916 he became one of the founders of Dada, an experimental, iconoclastic artistic and literary movement whose rejection of the established order reinforced Arp's own inclinations. Born in Strasbourg, Alsace, at a time when the region was subject to an extended struggle for control between France and Germany—one of the very factors that had contributed to the war—Arp responded with an adamant rejection of militarism and nationalism, along with an energetic, lifelong exploration of practices common in today's global art world. Switching easily between Alsatian dialect, French, and German (signaled by the dual Jean/Hans of his name), Arp deftly negotiated boundaries between cultures, movements, and mediums, at ease being identified as a Dadaist, a Surrealist, or an abstractionist, a painter or a sculptor, an artist or a poet. Defying the sectarian currents that would fuel two world wars, he befriended and worked with a stunning range of artists and writers of many different nationalities and sensibilities, evidenced in *The Nature of Arp* by a selection of collaborative projects, including books, magazines, and works on paper.

Arp occupies a position of special importance in the Nasher Sculpture Center's collection. In 1967 Patsy Nasher selected his 1961 bronze *Torso with Buds* as a birthday present for her husband, Raymond. With its graceful branching of bud-like modular units, simultaneously suggesting a plant, a human figure, and a column, *Torso with Buds* became the founding work of the Nashers' collection of modern and contemporary sculpture, occupying the threshold of their home for many years.

Organized by the Nasher Sculpture Center, the exhibition will travel to the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, where it will be on view April 12–September 2, 2019 and will be their central exhibition on view during the 58th Venice Biennale (May 11–November 24, 2019).

The Nature of Arp will be accompanied by a richly illustrated catalogue with a central essay by the curator of the exhibition, Nasher Curator Catherine Craft, an introduction to the list of works that details the current state of Arp research, a detailed chronology, and additional essays by established and emerging scholars: Lewis Kachur, professor of art history at Kean University, Union, New Jersey, and pioneer in the analysis of artists as curators and exhibition-makers; Walburga Krupp, a research associate at Zürcher Hochschule der Künste, Zurich, co-editor of a collection of Sophie Taeuber-Arp's correspondence and co-curator of a forthcoming Taeuber-Arp retrospective; and Tessa Paneth-Pollak, assistant professor of art history at Michigan State University, who is writing a book on cut-outs in modern art.

About Jean (Hans) Arp

Born in Strasbourg (today a part of France), Jean (Hans) Arp (1886-1966) studied art in Strasbourg, Weimar, and Paris. With the outbreak of World War I, he fled to Zurich, Switzerland, where he became a founding member of the Dada movement. After the war and throughout the 1930s, he associated with both abstract artists and the Surrealists. Working in a range of materials and formats, he pioneered an influential visual language of curving, organic forms; he was also highly respected as a poet in both German and French. After World War II, he became especially celebrated for his sculptures, for which he won the sculpture prize of the 1954 Venice Biennale. Arp died on June 7, 1966, in Basel.

A symposium with catalogue authors addressing the themes within *The Nature of Arp* will take place as part of the Nasher's 360 Speaker Series on Saturday, September 15, 2018 at 1 p.m.

Nasher Sculpture Center

PRESS RELEASE

The Nature of Arp is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts and Swiss Arts Council ProHelvetia. Additional support provided by Nancy A. Nasher and David J. Haemisegger, Charlene and Tom Marsh, and the Ruthie and Jay Pack Family Foundation.

For high resolution images, please follow this link:

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About the Nasher Sculpture Center:

Located in the heart of the Dallas Arts District, the Nasher Sculpture Center is home to the Raymond and Patsy Nasher Collection, one of the finest collections of modern and contemporary sculpture in the world, featuring more than 300 masterpieces by Calder, de Kooning, di Suvero, Giacometti, Gormley, Hepworth, Kelly, Matisse, Miró, Moore, Picasso, Rodin, Serra, and Shapiro, among others. The Nasher Sculpture Center is open Tuesday through Sunday from 11 am to 5 pm, and from 10 am to 5 pm on the first Saturday of each month. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$7 for seniors, \$5 for students, and free for children 12 and under and members, and includes access to special exhibitions.

For more information, visit www.NasherSculptureCenter.org.

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