Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin: Société Anonyme

Deadline: Aug 30, 2019

Frauke V. Josenhans

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Société Anonyme, Inc., the Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin, an annual scholarly journal published by the Yale University Art Gallery, will dedicate a special issue to new research on the Société's collection, artists, and artworks, to be published in December 2020.

Founded in 1920 by Katherine S. Dreier, Marcel Duchamp, and Man Ray, the Société Anonyme, Inc., set out to introduce modern art to the United States by amassing an important collection of artworks that was shown across the country. In its desire to promote cutting-edge artistic movements, the project was ambitious, but it was also original, as the selection of objects was made by artists. Bringing together works by the international avant-garde—notably Josef Albers, Jean Arp, Giorgio de Chirico, Marthe Donas, Duchamp, Max Ernst, Juan Gris, Marsden Hartley, Jacoba van Heemskerck, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, El Lissitzky, Kasimir Malevich, Roberto Matta Echaurren, Joan Miró, Piet Mondrian, Francis Picabia, Kurt Schwitters, and Joseph Stella—the Société Anonyme organized numerous exhibitions across the country and gave several of these artists their first monographic show in the United States. Presenting the movements of the day through these exhibitions as well as artists' talks, symposia, and publications, the Société Anonyme set a precedent for and inspired various other institutions.

Dreier and Duchamp created an extensive network around the Société Anonyme and, in addition to mounting exhibitions and programs, solicited gifts from artists whom they thought were essential in presenting a broad array of modern art movements, thus forming a large collection. Many of the artists were either friends of one of the founders or became close associates and supporters over the years. Spanning styles as varied as Abstraction, Constructivism, Cubism, Dada, Expressionism, Futurism, Neoplasticism, and Surrealism, the Société Anonyme Collection is a unique testimony to artistic production in the first half of the 20th century due to both its depth and the variety of artists represented. Dreier included in the collection not only renowned names but also numerous lesser-known artists such as Louis M. Eilshemius, Angelika Hoerle, Ragnhild Keyser, Erika Giovanna Klien, Liubov Popova, Victor Servranckx, and Nadezhda Udaltsova, thus fulfilling the Société Anonyme's mandate to display a comprehensive overview of modern art.

The bulk of the Société Anonyme Collection was given to Yale University in 1941. It has since become a central part of the Yale University Art Gallery's holdings of modern art and has inspired artists, students, and visitors for decades. The collection has triggered intensive research on both its artists and founders, as well as the role that it has played in American modern art. Numerous exhibitions, catalogues, and scholarly publications have focused on artists or movements repre-

sented in the collection; a catalogue raisonné, published by Robert L. Herbert in 1984, made a fundamental contribution to scholarship by drawing from the Société Anonyme Archive and the Katherine S. Dreier Papers; and in 2006 the Gallery organized the traveling exhibition The Société Anonyme: Modernism for America, curated by Jennifer Gross (with accompanying catalogue). Approaching the centennial anniversary of the Société Anonyme in 2020, the collection and its artists are ripe for reconsideration.

For the 2020 Bulletin, we invite proposals for articles that focus on various aspects of the Société Anonyme Collection and its founders. Proposals may address, but are not limited to:
- a specific artist or artwork in the collection, especially female artists and South American or Eastern European artists;
- the European networks of Dreier and Duchamp and their contacts with galleries and art dealers in cities such as Berlin, Munich, or Paris;
- the various traveling exhibitions of the collection during the early years of its existence.

Please submit an abstract of up to 300 words, in English, along with a short CV (1–2 pages, as a PDF) by August 30, 2019, to the guest editor of the volume, Frauke V. Josenhans, at frauke.josenhans@yale.edu. Authors of accepted proposals will be notified in September. Completed manuscripts (2,500 words; 4–5 illustrations) will be due by February 1, 2020. If necessary, accepted articles will be translated.

Reference:

CFP: Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin: Société Anonyme. In: ArtHist.net, Jun 28, 2019 (accessed Nov 21, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/21171>.