

The Unexamined/Unauthorized Marcel Broodthaers (Ghent/Princeton 2024)

Ghent, Princeton

Deadline: May 15, 2023

Stefaan Vervoort & Joe Scanlan

The Unexamined / Unauthorized Marcel Broodthaers: A Request for Papers, Performances, and New Artworks in Honor of his Centennial (Ghent University & Princeton University, 2024)

What do we know about Marcel Broodthaers (1924-1976)? Perusing the publications dedicated to the artist, including more than twenty separate museum monographs, the answer would seem to be both a lot and a little. Beyond the well-worn themes of Institutional Critique, word and image, art world role playing, and nationalism, the canon, as it were, has barely scratched the surface of the more oblique aspects of Broodthaers' oeuvre.

In response, the Broodthaers Society of America, in collaboration with the research group KB45 (Art in Belgium since 1945), Ghent University, and Princeton University, is pleased to announce a Request for Proposals of new scholarship and artworks that address the more oblique aspects of Marcel Broodthaers' work. Our aim is to encourage fresh insights and uncover new perspectives on his work that expand upon the already impressive depth of scholarship devoted to this great Belgian artist. Proposals are welcome from scholars and artists at any stage in their postgraduate careers. Accepted proposals will be developed (including honoraria) and be unveiled as part of transatlantic events currently being organized for 2024.

If we take a different look at Broodthaers' work there are many examples of latent themes: his use of strict tonal binaries as poetic devices (white and black, light and shadow); his gendered performances of masculinity and reproduction; his faith and lack of faith in art; and his love of slapstick and Les Pieds Nickelés-type comedy. One of the most fertile of these unexamined aspects, however, is Broodthaers' relationship to America, a place he often referenced and even fantasized about, in part because he never set foot on either continent, North or South.

While the examples cited above and the list below are not exhaustive, we are interested in contributors taking up any one or combination of these themes in relation to Marcel Broodthaers' oeuvre:

- a) race
- b) class
- c) feminism
- d) science fiction
- e) social media
- f) America

- g) the city
- h) humor
- i) violence
- j) death

Proposals can take any written form (abstract, prose, script, film synopses) not to exceed 300 words; or any visual form (sketches, photo-documents, storyboards, film clips) in a single file that does not exceed 10MB. Submissions should include a brief introduction, a two-page CV, and be emailed to the Selection Committee (broodthaersusa@gmail.com) by Monday, 15 May 2023, 22:59 GMT, after which all submissions will be peer reviewed. Applicants will be notified of acceptance by Friday, June 2nd. Please contact the Broodthaers Society (member@broodthaers.us) if you would like to access its archive or request pdfs. For general questions about the application process, contact Stefaan Vervoort (stefaan.vervoort@ugent.be) or Joe Scanlan (joe@broodthaers.us) directly. A network of conferences, exhibitions, and seminars will take place throughout 2024 in Belgium and the United States.

The Unexamined / Unauthorized Marcel Broodthaers is being organized by Stefaan Vervoort (post-doctoral researcher) and Wouter Davidts (professor) of KB45 (Ghent University), and Joe Scanlan (professor) at Princeton University and founding director of the Broodthaers Society of America, with the support of their respective institutions.

The Broodthaers Society of America provides a forum in which the United States might contemplate itself through the life and work of Marcel Broodthaers. When Broodthaers died at the relatively young age of fifty-two, he left behind many unfinished ideas on such themes as open letters, laziness, and manifest light. The Broodthaers Society periodically mounts exhibitions and events that expand on these ideas; houses an extensive archive of Broodthaers related material; and maintains a growing mailing list of scholars and enthusiasts. Most recently we have converted our parlor floor into MBnb, a short-term New York City accommodation available to artists, critics, historians, and curators the world over.

KB45 (Kunst in België sinds 1945 / Art in Belgium since 1945) is a multidisciplinary research group established in 2019 at Ghent University within the Department of Art History, Musicology and Theatre Studies on the one hand and the Department of Architecture & Urban Planning on the other. KB45 aims to map the situation of the living arts in Belgium since 1945 and to contextualize it within the larger artistic culture in the country's postwar era, from a both local and international perspective. The approach is at once art historical, critical and social-institutional, with a focus on artist's careers and oeuvres, exhibition histories, institutional histories, and architectural conditions and frameworks in relation to cultural policy and the larger political context in Belgium.

Reference:

CFP: The Unexamined/Unauthorized Marcel Broodthaers (Ghent/Princeton 2024). In: ArtHist.net, Mar 24, 2023 (accessed May 13, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/38869>>.