

# The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 245-3200 Cable: Modernart

No. 118

Monday, November 18, 1968  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## TWO NEW BOOKS ON JEAN DUBUFFET AVAILABLE FROM THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Jean Dubuffet, the versatile French painter, sculptor, draftsman, and visionary, is the subject of two new books from The Museum of Modern Art. Jean Dubuffet: Drawings by Virginia Allen surveys this prolific and vital aspect of his work in 39 drawings, dating from 1944 to 1961, which have been given to the Museum by Mr. and Mrs. Lester Francis Avnet and were recently exhibited in a major retrospective show at the Museum in October. It is distributed to the trade by New York Graphic Society Ltd. \$2.50.

Dubuffet Edifices, published in France by the artist in a special edition for the Museum's exhibition, presents the artist's recent monumental architectural projects. His fanciful towers, castles, and public gardens - large, brightly-painted structures - are illustrated with drawings and photomontages, accompanied by the artist's descriptions and floor plans. It is available only at the Museum bookstore or by mail from the Museum for \$2.95 plus 50 cents postage.

Dubuffet has continued to draw throughout his career, observes Virginia Allen, who is Assistant to the Director of the Museum's Department of Drawings and Prints and author of the recently published book, Jim Dine designs for "A Midsummer Night's Dream." "No sequence of drawings is without its counterpart in another medium, and generally all media coincide and interact. Dubuffet moves from drawing to painting, from lithography to sculpture and back again, with the insatiable appetite of one whose total absorption is too great to be contained within the confines of any one medium. He makes no distinction between media on the basis of importance, and recognizes no limitations other than the changes in approach dictated by the materials themselves." Thus the reader gains insight into his total oeuvre, not merely one part of it. Dubuffet has said that his paintings and drawings alike are "usually

(more)

done in the same spirit of research and experimentation...."

The drawings reflect the wide range of the artist's interests:

"The subject matter is as varied as Dubuffet's treatment of it, traversing man, his machines, and his activities; nature, from grandiose to microscopic; and animals."

Jean Dubuffet: Drawings is identical in format to Etchings by Matisse and The Sculptor's Studio: Etchings by Picasso, published by the Museum. The plates were made directly from the works of art to attain excellent quality of reproduction.

The artist has always worked in series, devoting a year or more to explorations in all media of his favorite themes: people, buildings, animals, landscapes, and women. His most recent series is "L'Hourloupe," a word he made up, in which large forms are broken up into areas of blue, red, white, and gray, divided by black lines almost like stained glass, suggesting a figural content. It is this period which has produced the monumental structures of cast polyester resin and vinyl paint. The model for his most ambitious project, Tour aux Figures, a tower that would stand almost 90 feet high, was exhibited for the first time during the Museum's exhibition. This and other similarly enormous architectural schemes are profusely illustrated in Edifices.

After visiting Dubuffet's atelier, Bates Lowry, Director of The Museum of Modern Art, observed that "Dubuffet has begun to create the setting for an entirely new world... a setting for the new social order, not... a new look for the establishment." In Edifices, the photomontages suggest how these witty and colorful structures could be adapted into the existing cityscape.

Jean Dubuffet was born in 1901 in Le Havre of a family of successful wine merchants. He alternated for many years between painting and a business career before devoting himself exclusively to art in 1942. His style and approach have often generated controversy, as have his articulate, passionate, and challenging statements on the nature of art and beauty. "The idea that there are beautiful objects and ugly objects, people endowed with beauty and others who cannot claim it, has surely no other foundation than convention - old poppycock - and I declare that convention unhealthy.... I would

(more)

like people to look at my work as an enterprise for the rehabilitation of scorned values."

"Dubuffet's evolution as an artist has been consistent, even methodical," states William S. Lieberman, Director of the Museum's Department of Drawings and Prints, who selected the Museum's recent exhibition. "It has been nourished by sincerity, single-mindedness, controversy, and deep concern for man in our time. It has also been irritated, in stimulating dialogue, by a conflict between what is intellectually considered and calculated and what is directly and emotionally expressed."

In 1962 The Museum of Modern Art presented a large retrospective for which it published a monograph on the artist by Peter Selz, which is still in print.

DETAILS:

Jean Dubuffet: Drawings with an introduction by Virginia Allen. 48 pages; 39 illustrations. Paperbound, \$2.50. Published by The Museum of Modern Art; distributed to the trade by New York Graphic Society Ltd.

Dubuffet Edifices by Jean Dubuffet. 50 pages; 37 illustrations (12 with color). Published by the artist for The Museum of Modern Art. Paperbound, \$2.95 plus 50 cents postage from The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N. Y. 10019.

\*\*\*\*\*

Review copies, photographs, and additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information, and Patricia D. Bauman, Coordinator of Press Services, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N. Y. 10019. 245-3200.