MARCEL BROODTHAERS

VERITABLEMENT

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MANUEL J. BORJA-VÍBEL     CHRISTOPHE CHERIX

With contributions by
Benjamin H. D. Buchloh
Catherine Chalifue
Jean-François Chevrier
Kim Conaty
Thierry de Duve
Rafael García
Doris Krystof
Christian Rattemeyer
Sam Sackeroff
Teresa Velázquez
Francesca Wilmott

MARCEL BROODTHAERS
A RETROSPECTIVE

The Museum of Modern Art, New York
Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid
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Marcel Broodthaers is an artist’s artist. Although he is not generally widely known, he has had a profound influence on the generations of artists that have followed, and any museum committed to contemporary art crosses paths with his legacy at some point. Tacita Dean, Cerith Wyn Evans, Rachel Graham, Rirkrit Tiravanija, and Kelley Walker are among the many artists working today who regularly refer to Broodthaers in their work.

Broodthaers can also be thought of as a curator’s curator. Throughout his career, he questioned the form that an exhibition could take and the idea of what a museum might be. His exhibitions, in particular his final retrospectives, were artworks in and of themselves, and his museum—the Musée d’Art Moderne, Département des Aigles (Museum of modern art, Department of eagles)—was his masterpiece.

Our three museums have joined forces for this retrospective of Broodthaers’s work, long awaited by artists who have been eager to see his oeuvre as a whole, and the first to be presented in New York. The Museum of Modern Art holds a remarkable collection of the artist’s works, in a large part thanks to its acquisition of the Daled Collection and Archive in 2011. The Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia has devoted particular attention to Broodthaers since its founding: in 1992 it presented a retrospective organized by the Galerie nationale du Jeu de Paume, in Paris, and since then has regularly included his work in its galleries and programs. Düsseldorf, where Broodthaers lived from 1969 to 1972 and where he conceived large parts of his Musée, is also a fitting location for this retrospective, at the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, now home to his Section Publicité.

We extend our sincere appreciation to all of the lenders to this exhibition for trusting us with works that are often extremely fragile, and to those who have generously funded this project. At The Museum of Modern Art we thank the following donors to the exhibition: Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis; Anna Marie and Robert F. Shapiro; The Junior Associates; The International Council; and Jill and Peter Kraus; and for supporting the Broodthaers Seminar, MoMA’s Wallis Annenberg Fund for Innovation in Contemporary Art through the Annenberg Foundation. In Madrid we especially thank the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport and the Fundación Museo Reina Sofia; and in Düsseldorf we are grateful to all of those who generously made the exhibition tour possible.

Above all we express our immense gratitude to Maria Gilissen Broodthaers for her constant support. Maria, who met the artist in 1961 and remains his living memory, gave our team access to a rich trove of works and information that have greatly benefited our project. Her daughter, Marie-Puck Broodthaers, has guided the curators through the many complexities of her father’s work with equal generosity. We are profoundly in their debt.

Glenn D. Lowry
Director
The Museum of Modern Art,
New York

Manuel J. Borja-Villel
Director
Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia,
Madrid

Marion Ackermann
Artistic Director
Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen,
Düsseldorf
In 1948 the twenty-four-year-old Marcel Broodthaers published a brief text titled “Projet pour un film” (Project for a film; p. 56) in the short-lived magazine *Le Surréalisme révolutionnaire* in the same issue that contained “Le Coup du faux dilemme” (The trick of the false dilemma), an editorial by the poet, painter, and magazine cofounder Christian Dotremont.1 Dotremont cautions readers not to automatically discard views expressed by enemies of communism, and he defends cinema as a medium that should be recaptured by progressive forces—declarations that are particularly revealing in light of Broodthaers’s text. In “Projet pour un film” Broodthaers describes, with words rather than a camera, a fly that enters an “immobile landscape,” almost magically setting it into motion. Almost twenty years before he made *Le Corbeau et le Renard* (The crow and the fox), a film shot over truncated sentences borrowed from fabulist Jean de La Fontaine, Broodthaers had already identified the medium of film as “an extension of language.”2

His first film, *La Clef de l'horloge* (The key to the clock; pp. 62–64), was screened in 1958, ten years after the publication of “Projet pour un film.” It had been filmed two years earlier, in 1956, at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, on the occasion of a touring retrospective of the work of the German artist Kurt Schwitters.3 The seven-and-half-minute “cinematic poem in honor of Kurt Schwitters” is composed of a succession of shots showing fragments of at least ten of the exhibited works.4 Its main characters are not the compositions on the wall, however, but the different objects—wheels, springs, mesh, ropes—attached to each work. Broodthaers filmed it as “a kind of documentary” with the help of museum staff outside of regular viewing hours.5 During the filming, he privileged odd angles extremely close to the works’ surfaces while employing various makeshift special effects (using a flashlight and a mirror, for example). One of the most dramatic moments occurs when a wheel attached to one of Schwitters’s masterpieces, *Merzbild 29 A. Bild mit Drehrad* (Merzpicture 29 A. Picture with Turning Wheel), seems to start rotating on its own, as if Broodthaers were making good on a promise made ten years earlier in “Projet pour un film,” when he wrote, “Abruptly the mill-wheel started turning again.”6

In the late 1950s and early 1960s the work of Schwitters, who had died in 1948, became more widely accessible both in Europe and the United States, and it exerted a profound influence on an emerging generation of artists, from Arman to Edward Ruscha, whose art often made use of readymade objects or found expressions. The editing of the footage, shot with a borrowed camera on donated filmstock spliced together, took Broodthaers a year and a half. During that time a soundtrack composed of a collage of everyday phrases, mostly read by the artist, was added. *La Clé de l’horloge*, also called *La Clé de l’amour* (The key of love) in the film, is Broodthaers’s homage to Schwitters, and in it, as Benjamin H. D. Buchloh has noted, painting, poetry, and film are for the first time intertexted “in a precarious triangulation, one that will determine all of Broodthaers’s subsequent projects.”7

Broodthaers opened his first gallery exhibition, at Galerie Saint Laurent in Brussels, six years later, in 1964, with a declaration of intent displayed on the gallery’s storefront, in which he, a poet turned visual artist, professed his lack of sincerity in the making of the work therein (pp. 80–81). In a tongue-in-cheek reference to Schwitters, the text of this declaration was printed on pages taken from popular magazines, thus stressing the relationship between art and commerce and ending on the assertion that artworks were just objects. The works in the exhibition, produced over a few months, were indeed made of objects assembled together, either hung on the walls or freestanding in the space. A number of them intertexted texts: *Le Problème noir en Belgique* (The black problem in Belgium; p. 84), with an issue of a newspaper bearing headlines on the war in Congo nailed to it; *Pour un haut devenir du comportement artistique* (For a lofty future of the artistic comportment; p. 108), showing the cover of a recently published anti–Pop art pamphlet by the critic Michel Tapié screwed onto a piece of wood; and *Pense-Bête* (Memory aid; p. 83), with copies of Broodthaers’s eponymous poetry book encased in plaster. The three works addressed various forms of failure head-on: the failure of a country to deal with its colonial past, the failure of an art critic to recognize the art of his time, and, finally, the artist’s
one. This all-embracing aspect is only superficial, however, both a particular macrogenre and the venue in which it is the artist’s own work.8 Although Broodthaers did not define himself as a filmmaker (or more than as a painter or a sculptor), he used his film practice as a medium in which the thin line between art and minimally within the context of the exhibition. The combination of language and visual tools runs contrary to the discourse (quite the contrary) of Richard Hamilton, an artist who unambiguously described himself as a figurative painter.12 Broodthaers’s constant reaction practice was hindered by nostalgia for his past, linked as it was to the nobility of the fine arts and its struggle to occupy a dominant space, worked from literature but stayed outside the literary world and institutions.” The combination of language and visual tools runs contrary to the discourse (quite the contrary) of Richard Hamilton, an artist who unambiguously described himself as a figurative painter.12 Broodthaers’s constant reaction practice was hindered by nostalgia for his past, linked as it was to the nobility of the fine arts and its struggle to occupy a dominant space, worked from literature but stayed outside the literary world and institutions.” The combination of language and visual tools runs contrary to the discourse (quite the contrary) of Richard Hamilton, an artist who unambiguously described himself as a figurative painter.12 Broodthaers’s constant reaction practice was hindered by nostalgia for his past, linked as it was to the nobility of the fine arts and its struggle to occupy a dominant space, worked from literature but stayed outside the literary world and institutions.” The combination of language and visual tools runs contrary to the discourse (quite the contrary) of Richard Hamilton, an artist who unambiguously described himself as a figurative painter.12 Broodthaers’s constant reaction practice was hindered by nostalgia for his past, linked as it was to the nobility of the fine arts and its struggle to occupy a dominant space, worked from literature but stayed outside the literary world and institutions.” The combination of language and visual tools runs contrary to the discourse (quite the contrary) of Richard Hamilton, an artist who unambiguously described himself as a figurative painter.12 Broodthaers’s constant reaction practice was hindered by nostalgia for his past, linked as it was to the nobility of the fine arts and its struggle to occupy a dominant space, worked from literature but stayed outside the literary world and institutions.” The combination of language and visual tools runs contrary to the discourse (quite the contrary) of Richard Hamilton, an artist who unambiguously described himself as a figurative painter.12 Broodthaers’s constant reaction practice was hindered by nostalgia for his past, linked as it was to the nobility of the fine arts and its struggle to occupy a dominant space, worked from literature but stayed outside the literary world and institutions.” The combination of language and visual tools runs contrary to the discourse (quite the contrary) of Richard Hamilton, an artist who unambiguously described himself as a figurative painter.12 Broodthaers’s constant reaction practice was hindered by nostalgia for his past, linked as it was to the nobility of the fine arts and its struggle to occupy a dominant space, worked from literature but stayed outside the literary world and institutions.” The combination of language and visual tools runs contrary to the discourse (quite the contrary) of Richard Hamilton, an artist who unambiguously described himself as a figurative painter.12 Broodthaers’s constant reaction practice was hindered by nostalgia for his past, linked as it was to the nobility of the fine arts and its struggle to occupy a dominant space, worked from literature but stayed outside the literary world and institutions.” The combination of language and visual tools runs contrary to the discourse (quite the contrary) of Richard Hamilton, an artist who unambiguously described himself as a figurative painter.12
contemporary but remains a strategy for questioning the very notion of authorship. His film Rêveau-voir (with Jacques Offenbach, 1972; p. 296)—a montage of past films—functions as a reminder of the scrupulous care with which it is necessary to approach Broodthaers as an "author." In one of the films, Une série d'images (D'après un idéa de Charles Baudelaire) (A second of eternity [After an idea by Charles Baudelaire], 1970, p. 261), the continuous appearance and disappearance of the letters "MB," however, mocks the stability traditionally ascribed to authorship: this dual game of concealment and transparency, of negativity and trust, are at the heart of Broodthaers's discourse, and this fact poses a special challenge to institutions that house, care for, or exhibit his work.

From the filming of La Clé de l'horloge at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in 1956, to the arrangement of his fifth and final retrospective (L'Angélus de Daumier, at the Fondation Rothschild, in Paris) in 1975, a few months before his death, his work never ceased to cast doubt on the museum as an institution or on what it meant to be an artist in a society where "artistic and commercial values have become superimposed." The previous summer, the heart of Broodthaers's discourse, and this fact poses a special challenge to institutions that house, care for, or exhibit his work. This dual game of concealment and transparency, of negativity and trust, are at the heart of Broodthaers's discourse, and this fact poses a special challenge to institutions that house, care for, or exhibit his work.

"Je n'ai rien, rien découvert, pas même l'Amérique. Je fais le choix de considérer l'art comme un travail inutile, apolitique et peu moral. Une ignoble inspiration me poussant, je ne cacherai pas que si les torts sont de mon côté, je ne cacherai pas que si les torts sont de mon côté, je ne cacherai pas que si les torts sont de mon côté, je ne cacherai pas que si les torts sont de mon côté, je ne cacherai pas que si les torts sont de mon côté, je ne cacherai pas que si les torts sont de mon côté, je ne cacherai pas que si les torts sont de mon côté, je ne cacherai pas que si les torts sont de mon côté, je ne cacherai pas que si les torts sont de mon côté, je ne cacherai pas que si les torts sont de mon côté, je ne cacherai pas que si les torts sont de mon côté, je ne cacherai pas that had characterized his work from its outset.

I discovered nothing, nothing, not even America. I choose to consider Art useless labor, apolitical, and scarcely moral. Urged on by an ignoble inspiration, I will not conceal that if the error is on my side, I will take a sort of pleasure in it. Guilty pleasure, since it would be contingent on victims—those who believed that I was right.14

NOTES
3. The Kurt Schwitter retrospective originated at the Kunsthalle Hannover and was presented in five other venues during the year 1956.
4. The ten works that we have been able to identify in Le Clé d'hôpital are (with their catalogue raisonné numbers): Merzbild 9 du prix (MBH / Merzbild 7) (1919), no. 481; Merzbild 10 du prix (MBH / Merzbild 6) (1919), no. 480; Der Arschbildsch (1919), no. 491; Die Rosen (formerly titled Wilkommen) (1919), no. 448; Die Tristesse (1918), no. 487; Merzbild 23 du prix (MBH / Merzbild 23) (1920), no. 598; Merzbild 29 A du prix (1920/1930) no. 600; Merzbild Gunntitt (1920), no. 601; Sprengel Museum (1920), no. 605; and Neues Merzbild (1920), no. 600). See Kari Orchard and Isabel Schulz, eds., Kurt Schwitter: Catalogue raisonné (Hannover: Germanische Staatliche Kunsthalle, 2000). Broodthaers also used the lettering of the word merz in a merz Kabe de jouissance. Jouissance coupable puisqu'elle dépendrait des victimes—ceux qui ont cru que j'avais raison. "Broodthaers, "Étre bien pensant ou ne pas penser. Étre étrange," 1975. First English translation as "To Be a Straight Thinker or Not to Be. To Be Blind," in Le Privilege de l'art (Château: Musée d'Art Moderne, 1975). This translation is from Collected Writings, trans. Charles Penwarden, p. 609.
Visitors entering Marcel Broodthaers’s first solo exhibition, at Galerie Saint Laurent in Brussels in April 1964, encountered his artist’s statement on an invitation posted on the front door (pp. 80–82). Printed in bold type on the recto and verso of a glossy magazine page, it read,

“Its, I too, wondered whether I could not sell something and succeed in life. For some time I have been good for nothing. I am forty years old. . . .”7

As both a gallery and a bookstore, Galerie Saint Laurent was an apt setting for this show, on which he had hand stamped the titles of the works. And then came upon musicians from the Caribbean and presented art as something “insincere crossed my mind . . . nothing. I am forty years old. . . .”8

In “Pour un haut devenir du comportement artistique,” Broodthaers bolted the front and back covers of the eponymous book by the French art critic Michel Tapie onto a plaster panel. In his text—published in January 1964—Tapie railed against the new generation of artists who identified with Nouveau Réalisme, Neo-Dada, “punk style,” and Pop art. “I refuse pretentiously clumsy ‘bricolage’ as proof of artistic creation and poetry reduced to surrealistic fairy-tale imitations.”9

Broodthaers’s understanding of the center of the performance was an object wrapped in tissus, which Broodthaers erroneously unveiled during the performance to reveal a chair partially painted yellow, red, and black, with eggshells on its seat. La Broussailles, the Belgian national anthem, played as he unreeled. He afterward read aloud a recent news article about the commercialization of art. Broodthaers presented Expédition sa- priale, a spontaneous performative work, two months later, in September 1964. In the Parc du Mont des Arts, in Brussels, he came upon musicians from the Caribbean or South America playing steel drums, and he asked if they would wait for him to return with his friends. With the help of several young artists and poets he brought back various objects, including the space-helmet box from his 1963 work Monuments public no. 4 and an umbrella and a helmet that closely resembled the objects from La Valise belge. There in the park Broodthaers staged an impromptu exhibition accompanied by steel drum music. In both Sophisticated Happening and Expédition sa-priale, he moved beyond a purely object-based practice and presented his artworks as performance props. Although Broodthaers had written about Pop art as early as 1963, it was with the objects and performances of 1964, such as Sophisticated Happening, that he began to address the movement more overtly. He explained this lag in time as a changed perspective: “In the beginning, I thought it was pathetic, elementary. I even wrote an article opposing Pop, made in U.S.A. I had contended Pop Art with American jazz-box. Afterward I went back to take another

“La Valise belge (The Belgian suitcase, 1964; p. 85), another work at Galerie Saint Laurent, consisted of a suitcase—containing an umbrella handle, a helmet, and a folded canvas painted red, yellow, and black, the colors of the Belgian flag—along with two related wall panels. These components were displayed across the gallery. On one panel Broodthaers mounted mussel shells and another umbrella handle; on the other he attached manufactured eggshells and the top of the umbrella. The black umbrella recalls a common motif in the paintings of René Magritte, an artist with whom he was personally acquainted and whose own image would soon become part of his collection of Belgian symbols.”

In 1965, perhaps looking back at La Valise belge, Broodthaers wrote, “My old love for such things as a hat, an apple, an umbrella is now over. I used to use them for making objects. Nowadays I eat the apple, wear the hat and carry the umbrella on my arm.”10 A few objects from the Galerie Saint Laurent show suggest a performative quality, even if they were not actually functional. Papine à masque (Music stand, 1964; pp. 90–91)—which Magritte saw in the exhibition and praised in a letter to the Belgian poet Marcel Lecomte—was a part of a group of musical instruments to which Broodthaers added plaster and mussel shells. “Music would play an important role in Broodthaers’s exhibitions in the years ahead and would often be performed at openings. Although his artist’s statement encouraged visitors to believe that the exhibition was just a collection of objects, in fact he comprehensively introduced the diverse modes that he would develop in subsequent exhibitions and performances.”

On the evening of July 23, 1964, Broodthaers gave his first public performance, Sophisticated Happening by Marcel Broodthaers: Painters sculpture masque nature critique poisse incoerent instar Dada. Pop trap-up, at Galerie Smith, in Brussels. As he had for the Galerie Saint Laurent show, he printed his announcement for the event on preexisting text, in this case taken from a telephone book. A poster

In the parvis Mont des Arts, in Brussels, he came upon musicians from the Caribbean or South America playing steel drums, and he asked if they would wait for him to return with his friends. With the help of several young artists and poets he brought back various objects, including the space-helmet box from his 1963 work Monuments public no. 4 and an umbrella and a helmet that closely resembled the objects from La Valise belge. There in the park Broodthaers staged an impromptu exhibition accompanied by steel drum music. In both Sophisticated Happening and Expédition sa-priale, he moved beyond a purely object-based practice and presented his artworks as performance props. Although Broodthaers had written about Pop art as early as 1963, it was with the objects and performances of 1964, such as Sophisticated Happening, that he began to address the movement more overtly. He explained this lag in time as a changed perspective: “In the beginning, I thought it was pathetic, elementary. I even wrote an article opposing Pop, made in U.S.A. I had contended Pop Art with American jazz-box. Afterward I went back to take another

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look and I accepted it.”10 From February 5 to March 1, 1965, Broodthaers concluded his participation in the exhibition Pop Art, Nouveau Réalisme, etc. . . . at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, along with American artists including Jim Dine, Roy Lichtenstein, and George Segal and the European artists Arnulf Rainer, Stéphane Mallarmé, Yves Klein, and even Marcel Duchamp.

Broodthaers’s contribution to the show was Le Banque (The bank, 1964–68; pp. 94–95), a large bank counter salvaged from the Banque de Bruxelles, that he displayed on two platforms. The object was made up of multiple interlocking panels, and between 1964 and 1968 he made numerous alterations to it. In the Palais des Beaux-Arts presentation, the front of the counter was painted gold with black-and-white accents, and the silhouette of a woman was painted on one of the windows. The back was painted mostly green, with some black-and-white additions, and included a series of stencilled letters, a stencilled number two, and the hand-painted words poèmes and pirel, the latter referring to a popular laundry detergent manufactured in Germany.

Le Banque also featured an interactive dimension. Photographs from Pop Art, Nouveau Réalisme, etc. . . . show the art critic Jean Dyrpé in peering out from behind one of its windows, and during other presentations Broodthaers asked some friends to stand behind the counter at the teller windows and recite advertising slogans and their own poems, while other presentations Broodthaers asked at the teller windows and recite advertisements Broodthaers asked to participate in this manner. Photographs from Pop Art also showed an event titled Une fête de naissance à la banque in 1965, where Broodthaers participated. He organized an event titled Une fête de naissance at the teller windows, and during other presentations Broodthaers asked to participate in this manner.

Nouveau Réalisme, etc. . . . was painted on one of the windows. The exhibition received mixed reviews, but since 1965 they were still being sold in Belgium. The focus of the exhibition was on the placement of mussels inside everyday objects, and poems and objects, in both the catalog and exhibition, were meant to new reference to a poem in Pense-Bête by Michel Butor, as a reference to a poem in Pense-Bête by Michel Butor. Pop Art, Nouveau Réalisme, etc. . . . New reference to a poem in Pense-Bête by Michel Butor.

In 1966 Broodthaers mounted Musée d'Art Frére Paule Charlot (Mussels egg pots coal) at Wide White Space Gallery, which was painted on one of the windows. This was a reference to a poem in Pense-Bête by Michel Butor. Pop Art, Nouveau Réalisme, etc. . . . New reference to a poem in Pense-Bête by Michel Butor.

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I, too, wondered whether I could not sell something and succeed in life. For some time I have been good for nothing. I am forty years old . . . / Finally the idea of inventing something insincere crossed my mind and I set to work straightaway. At the end of three months I showed what I had produced to Ph. Edouard Toussaint, the owner of the Galerie Saint Laurent. / But it is art, he said / and I will willingly exhibit all of it. / Agreed, I replied. If I sell something, he takes 30% . / It seems these are the usual conditions, some galleries take 75% . / What is it? In fact, objects.
Above: Pense-Bête (Memory aid), 1964. Books, paper, plaster, and plastic balls on wooden base, without base: 11 13/16 × 33 1/4 × 16 15/16 in. (30 × 84.5 × 43 cm)

Opposite top: Brochure at Galerie Saint Laurent, Brussels, April 1964. Photograph by Georges Thiry.

Bottom: Exhibition view of Mi aussi, je me suis demandé si je ne pouvais pas vendre quelque chose et réussir dans la vie . . . , Galerie Saint Laurent, Brussels, April 1964. With copies of the Pense-Bête poetry book on the shelves and the Pense-Bête sculpture at bottom right. Photograph by Georges Thiry.
Above: Le Problème noir en Belgique (The black problem in Belgium), 1963–64. Newspaper (Le Soir, Brussels, January 19–20, 1964); manufactured eggs, paint, and nail on found decorative-paper board, 19 1/4 × 15 1/8 × 2 1/4 in. (48.1 × 38.1 × 6.4 cm)

Opposite: La Valise belge (The Belgian suitcase), 1964. Painted panel with painted manufactured eggs and fragment of umbrella, 29 15/16 × 21 7/8 × 4 3/4 in. (76 × 55.5 × 12 cm); painted oilcloth suitcase containing painted umbrella handle, folded painted canvas, painted helmet, and mussel shells on painted wooden base, 16 13/16 × 15 1/4 × 19 1/8 in. (42.5 × 39.1 × 48.5 cm)
Above: Les Jambes rouges (The red legs). 1964. Plastic tray, wood, plastic paint, doll’s legs, and eggshells on wooden base, 195/8 × 8 × 16 (49.8 × 21.6 × 27.3 cm).

Opposite, top: Le Cycle de la vie (The cycle of life). 1964. Plastic eggs containing plastic toys, hair, cotton, and hourglass on painted wooden shelf, 213/16 × 1911/16 × 33/8 (7.5 × 50 × 9.5 cm).


bottom: Exhibition view of Moi aussi, je me suis demandé si je ne pouvais pas vendre quelque chose et réussir dans la vie . . ., Galerie Saint Laurent, Brussels, April 1964. Photograph by Georges Thiry
Above: *La Grand-mère* (The grandmother). 1964. Eggshells, mussel shell, cup, bicycle pump, brush, plastic ball, hemp, and porcelain figure encased in plaster with frame, 31 1/2 x 15 3/4 x 5 7/8 in. (80 x 40 x 15 cm)

Opposite: *Papa*. 1963/1966. Painted beveled mirror with paint, chalk, and rope, 19 5/16 in. (49 cm) diam.; painted eggshells on painted half of a chair, 35 1/4 x 16 9/16 x 13 9/16 in. (89.5 x 42 x 34.5 cm)
Above: Broodthaers with Pupitre à musique, Galerie Saint Laurent, Brussels, April 1964. Photograph by Georges Thié.

Opposite: Pupitre à musique (Music stand), 1964. Mussel shells, plaster, and paint on wooden music stand. 55 1/8 × 40 3/16 × 20 7/8 in. (140 × 102 × 53 cm)
Above: Triomphe de moule (Triumph of mussel I). 1965. Painted pot, mussel shells, and tinted resin, 18\(\frac{3}{4}\) × 19\(\frac{5}{8}\) × 15 in. (47.6 × 49.8 × 38.1 cm)

Opposite: Moules sauce blanche (Mussels with white sauce). 1967. Painted pot, mussel shells, paint, and tinted resin, 14\(\frac{3}{4}\) in. (37.5 cm) diam; 19\(\frac{1}{8}\) in. (48.5 cm) high
Top: Exhibition view of Pop Art, Nouveau Réalisme, etc., Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, February 5–March 1, 1965, with La Banque. Photograph by Maria Gilissen

Bottom: 100/100% Ordres de bourse, La Banque (100/100% stock orders, The bank), 1967. Painted photographic canvas on two cut-out panels, each (one irreg.): 41 3⁄4 × 43 5⁄16 × 13 15⁄16 in. (106 × 110 × 3 cm)

La Banque (The bank), 1964–68. Painted wood with glass (front and back shown), 38 17⁄32 in. × 9 ft 10 1⁄2 in. × 11 13⁄16 in. (90 × 300 × 30 cm)
§ Evolution or The Egg Film A more beautiful form than the eggshell? No. If so, the mussel shell. The hull. The hull. Two complete forms, balanced, roaming with germs. Two egalitarian forms. But we leave the mussels behind for another thread. / The sea. Map of waves. Sun (painted on ecru). The evening. Nocturnal landscape. Stars. Objects. / Objects formed with the aid of shells, egg objects represent the world and the stars. (painting? building? working?) / References to the engravings of Bosch, of Breughel and to the paintings of Magritte. These straddled eggs, these inhabited eggs, these eggs that deceive the eye and delight the poets cursed by nature. / Everything is eggs. The world is egg. The world was born of the great yolks, the sun. Our mother, the moon, is scaly. And the belly of a wave of water is white. The egg is scaly, white. / Egg dust, the stars. Objects formed with shells, egg objects represent the world and the stars. (painting? building? working?) / Financial questions aside and this iceberg inquiry that has the shape of shell and check-mate. Ah, of long voyages, long waits, the full egg and the finite brain so finite that it’s tragic. Ah, fool! / The sea, snow, but seen again with artifice. The sea in the water, nothing but color such that it goes flat like the screen. So then, no waves, but slabs of marble. And then, entire eggs that one watches with special glasses, of red and white glass, I believe, that give the illusion of emptiness.

Made BROODTHAERS.
Above left: *Panneau de moules* (Panel of mussels). 1966. Mussel shells with tinted resin on painted panel, 45 3⁄4 × 48 × 5 1⁄2 in. (116.2 × 121.9 × 14 cm);

right: *Panneau de moules* (Panel of mussels). 1968. Mussel shells with tinted resin on painted panel, 48 7⁄16 × 25 3⁄8 × 3 15⁄16 in. (123 × 64.5 × 10 cm)

Above: Untitled (Oval with painted and numbered eggs and saucer). 1966. Paint, eggshells, and saucer on panel, 31 7/8 × 21 1/4 × 5 7/8 in. (81 × 54 × 15 cm)

Catalogue for Moules Œufs Frites Pots Charbon (Mussels, eggs, fries, pots, coal), Wide White Space Gallery, Antwerp, May 26–June 26, 1966. Offset lithograph, twelve pages (including cover; cover and three pages shown), page: 7\(\times\)\(\frac{7}{8}\) × 5\(\frac{7}{16}\) in. (20 × 13.8 cm)

§ My Rhetoric
Me I say I Me I say I / The King of Mussels Me You say You / I tautologue. I conserve. I sociologue. / I manifest manifestly. At the sea-level / of mussels, I have lost the lost time. / I say, I, the King of Mussels. the word / of Mussels.

§ Poem
Everything is eggs. The world is egg. Our mother, the moon, is scally. The egg’s crushed scales, the moon. Egg dust, the stars. Everything, eggs dead and lost. Despite the guards, this world—sun, this moon, stars of entire trains. Emptiness.

§ Theorems
1. A mussel hides a mould and vice-versa. / 2. The pipe of Magritte is the mould of smoke. A factory is the antique mould of smoke. / 3. Every object is a victim of its nature, even in a transparent painting the color hides the canvas, and the moulding, the frame. / 4. An object is invisible when its form is perfect. Examples: the egg, the mussel, fries.
Above: Casiers (Compartments). 1967. Wood, eggshells, and paint, 34 1/4 x 30 7/8 x 6 5/16 in. (87 x 78.5 x 16 cm)

Opposite: Le Feu (The Fire). 1966. Cauldron with painted wood on painted wooden pedestal with coal and cut gelatin silver prints, base: 9 13/16 x 9 13/16 x 9 13/16 in. (25 x 25 x 25 cm); pot: 15 3/4 in. (40 cm) diam.; 10 5/8 in. (27 cm) high
Above: Je retourne à la matière, je retrouve la tradition des primitifs, peinture à l’œuf, peinture à l’œuf (I return to matter, I rediscover the tradition of the primitives, painting with egg, painting with egg). 1966. Wooden box containing eggshell fragments (some painted) and invitations, box (open): 12 5/16 × 10 13/16 × 10 3/16 in. (31.3 × 27.5 × 25.8 cm)

Opposite, top: Invitation to Je retourne à la matière, peinture à l’œuf, peinture à l’œuf, Galerie Cogeime, Brussels, September 27–October 9, 1966. Offset lithograph on perforated, adhesive-backed paper, 6 3/10 × 9 4/10 in. (16.9 × 25 cm); bottom: Broodthaers with chicken cages outside Galerie Cogeime, Brussels, 1966. Photograph by Henri Kessels
Above, top: Pour un haut devenir du comportement artistique (For a lofty future of the artistic comportment). 1964. Printed book cover, metal screws, eggshells, and plaster on panel, 11 15/16 × 27 9/16 × 1 7/8 in. (30 × 70 × 15 cm).

Bottom: Opening reception of Je retourne à la matière, je retrouve la tradition des primitifs, peinture à l’œuf, peinture à l’œuf, Galerie Cugnon, Brussels, September 27, 1966. Photograph by Henri Kassola.

Opposite: Maria. 1966. Dress, hanger, and printed shopping bag with eggshells on primed canvas, 44 7/8 × 39 3/8 × 4 in. (113 × 100 × 12 cm).
Untitled (Triptych). 1965–66. Eggshells on three painted canvases, each canvas: 39 3/8 × 27 9/16 × 3 15/16 in. (100 × 70 × 10 cm)
Above: Pool. 1966. Two painted wooden barrels (one with chalk) and eggshells, each barrel:
9 13/16 in. (25 cm) diam.; 13 in. (33 cm) high.

Opposite: Tableau et tabouret avec œufs (Panel and stool with eggs). 1966. Painted canvas and painted wooden stool with eggshells; canvas: 8 ft. 5 3/4 in. × 6 ft. 7 3/4 in. × 2 3/4 in. (258.5 × 187.6 × 7 cm); stool: 36 × 17 11/16 × 13 3/4 in. (91.5 × 45 × 35 cm)
Above: Fémur d’homme belge (Femur of a Belgian man). 1964–65. Painted human thighbone, $3\frac{1}{8} \times 10\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{15}{16}$ in. (8 × 47 × 10 cm)

Opposite: Fémur d’une femme française (Femur of a French woman). 1965. Painted human thighbone, $3\frac{9}{16} \times 17 \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ in. (9.1 × 43.2 × 8.9 cm)
ARThNKwOrKs

Joos Brabaghem (Père-Josse Bourgignone) on writing, 1943: 340
Poetry book. Pen, pen page with plastic cover Page 85% × 34 in. (210 × 16.5 cm)

Patricia maternidade, emenda (Paternity, maternity, childhood), 1963: Page 97
Printed book cover, metal eggshell, and plaster on panel 11 × 34 × 34 in. (28 × 10 × 10 cm) Partial collection. Courtesy Hauser & Wirth Page 83

L’Érain à la moitié de l’art contemporain (For a little half of the artistic corpus), 1967: Printed book. Intaglio 15 × 19 × 34 in. (38.1 × 48.3 × 34.9 cm) Inscribed on recto: “MB / 4-12-63”

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The titles of Broodthaers’s works are French, with English translations following. An unambiguous title indicates a name by which it is commonly known but that, to our best knowledge, Broodthaers did not directly assign. This checklist is organized chronologically and thematically. Page numbers beneath the entries refer to Broodthaers did not directly assign. This checklist is organized chronologically and thematically. Page numbers beneath the entries refer to

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**The Belgian lion.**

1968

Carte du monde poétique

1968

Canvas: 44 sheets

Le Corbeau et le Renard

Mussel shells with tinted resin in painted pot

Pot of mussels. 1968

Oil on canvas

Il n’y a pas de structures primaires (Beyond ancient calculus . . .). 1968

Projection on crate.

Panel of mussels. 1968

Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht

Page 203

**En langue française (Série de neuf peintures pour un jardin).** 1972

Ink and pencil on printed paper

Four photographs of nineteenth-century etchings, one photograph of a football match.

Installation with wood, bronze, painted vacuum-formed plastic plate, vitrines, slide projections, recovered objects, and Fluxus objects.

Musée d’Art moderne et contemporain, Strasbourg

Page 21

**Le Retour de la peinture**

1973

Gelatin silver prints, chromogenic color prints, and acrylic paint on canvas.

Museum–Museum

Page 320–21

**Invisible (Bouh).** 1974

Painted lips, printed wood, stencils, and walnuts.

Speck Collection, Cologne

Page 321

**Six photographs of nineteenth-century staircase, objects, and furniture: three neatly printed panels, 10mm film projected on screen.

Dimensions variable

Estates Marcel Broodthaers

Unfolded

Three photographs of nineteenth-century staircase, objects, and furniture: three neatly printed panels, 10mm film projected on screen.

Dimensions variable

Estates Marcel Broodthaers

Untitled.

Decalcomania and ink on paper

Page 312

**Éloge du sujet** (In praise of the subject).

Objects and printed labels in display case, framed print, and paint box

Large canvas: 57% × 38% in. (142.7 × 96.5 cm)

Installation with wood, bronze, painted vacuum-formed plastic plate, vitrines, slide projections, wall murals, airborne and flame-throwing objects, curio cabinet.

107% × 106% × 90% in. (272.4 × 269.2 × 228.6 cm)

Museum–Museum, Cologne

Page 322

**Quelle est la valeur de la valeur?** 1974

Dimensions variable

Estates Marcel Broodthaers

Unfolded

Decalcomania, and ink on paper

Page 312

**Six photographs of nineteenth-century staircase, objects, and furniture: three neatly printed panels, 10mm film projected on screen.

Dimensions variable

Estates Marcel Broodthaers

Unfolded

Decalcomania, and ink on paper

Page 312

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Decalcomania, and ink on paper

Page 312

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Dimensions variable

Estates Marcel Broodthaers

Unfolded

Decalcomania, and ink on paper

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Puzzle (Energie)

Estate Marcel Broodthaers
Dimensions variable

Page 326

12 ft. 9 in. formerly in the Visser collection
Dimensions variable
Mixed-medium installation
Décor: A Conquest by Marcel Broodthaers
Each canvas: 63 × 39 7⁄8 × 20 in. (160 × 100 cm)
8 in. (80 × 100 cm)
2 in. (84.5 cm)


Couvreur, Jan, ed. Marcel Broodthaers: The Complete Projects and Sources of Inspiration, Brussels: Lannoo, 2015.


Auch un dix jamais n’aurait de l’abeille (A throw of the dice will never abolish chance). 1969

Acquired through the generosity of Howard B. John and Rosalind G. Castrén (1 copy edition of 90)


Le Corbeau et le renard (The crow and the fox). 1946

Photographic canvas on wood: 22 3⁄4 × 30 3⁄4 in. (58 × 78 × 5 cm) Two offset lithographs, one with cut and collaged chromo- genic color prints, each: 21 3⁄4 × 29 1⁄2 in. (54.3 × 74.9 cm) Cutting photographic canvas on float: 20 × 15 1⁄2 in. (50.8 × 40 cm) Two photographic canvases mounted on wood, each: 215 × 135 3⁄4 in. (55 × 4 cm)

One copy exhibited: The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Poster print in the David Collection and partial purchase through the generosity of King Baudouin of Belgium and the King Baudouin Foundation. Page 143–47

One copy of each volume exhibited: The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The David Collection and partial purchase through the generosity of King Baudouin of Belgium and the King Baudouin Foundation. Page 234 (on regular page) and 90 (on transpare- ncy paper)

Auch un dix jamais n’aurait de l’abeille (A throw of the dice will never abolish chance). 1969

Acquired through the generosity of Howard B. John and Rosalind G. Castrén (1 copy edition of 90)


Un livre d’ogre (My ogre book). 1969

Poetry book. Letterpress, forty-four pages, with line block frontispiece by Serge Vanderplancke
Page: 8 3⁄4 × 15 3⁄4 in.

Edition: 75


Three sheets mounted on wood, each: 27 3⁄4 × 21 3⁄4 in.

Two-sided photographic canvas: 29 1⁄4 × 21 1⁄2 in. (74.5 × 54.6 cm) Projection screen. Photographic canvas on wood panel: 21 1⁄2 × 15 1⁄2 in. (54.6 × 39.4 cm)

Metal canister: 7 1⁄2 × 6 1⁄8 × 8 in. (19 × 15.5 × 20 cm)

Three copies exhibited: The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Poster print in the David Collection and partial purchase through the generosity of King Baudouin of Belgium and the King Baudouin Foundation. Page 169–70

Mechanical engraving and paint on twelve aluminum panels
Each: 23 1⁄8 × 19 1⁄8 in. (59.2 × 48.7 × 0.3 cm)

Publisher: Wide White Space Gallery, Antwerp

Two offset lithographs, one with cut and collaged chromogenic color prints, each: 21 1⁄2 × 29 1⁄2 in. (54.3 × 74.9 cm)

Photographic canvas on wood: 22 3⁄4 × 30 3⁄4 in. (58 × 78 × 5 cm) Two offset lithographs, one with cut and collaged chromogenic color prints, each: 21 1⁄2 × 29 1⁄2 in. (54.3 × 74.9 cm)

Cutter photographic canvas on float: 20 × 15 1⁄2 in. (50.8 × 40 cm) Two photographic canvases mounted on wood, each: 215 × 135 3⁄4 in. (55 × 4 cm)

Boitier noir: un œil de tigre (The black beast). 1961

Painted vacuum-formed plastic plate
Each plate: 76 1⁄16 × 16 × 47 1⁄16 in. (193 × 128.7 × 11.8 cm) Two painted vacuum-formed plastic plates


Knokke-le-Zoute, Nuyens, Marie-Claire....


For further information, particularly the edition size and other details, please refer to the following catalogues...


POETY, PRINTS BOOKS, AND ARTISTS BOOKS

The works below are listed in chronological order. For further information, particularly the edition size details, please refer to the following catalogues...
Published in conjunction with the exhibition Marcel Broodthaers: A Retrospective, organized by The Museum of Modern Art, New York; and the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid. The exhibition was organized by Christophe Cherix, The Robert Lehman Chief Curator of Drawings and Prints, The Museum of Modern Art, New York; and Manuel J. Borja-Villel, Director, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; with Francesca Wilmott, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Drawings and Prints, The Museum of Modern Art New York.


Major support for the exhibition is provided by The International Council of The Museum of Modern Art, Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis, Anna Marie and Robert F. Shapiro, The Junior Associates of The Museum of Modern Art, and Jill and Peter Kraus.

Additional support is provided by the MoMA Annual Exhibition Fund.

Support for the publication is provided by the Jo Carole Lauder Publications Fund of The International Council of The Museum of Modern Art.

The accompanying seminar was made possible by MoMA's Wallis Annenberg Fund for Innovation in Contemporary Art through the Annenberg Foundation.

Produced by the Department of Publications The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Christopher Hudson, Publisher
Chul R. Kim, Associate Publisher
David Frankel, Editorial Director
Marc Sapir, Production Director

Edited by Emily Hall, with Karen Jacobson
Designed by Joseph Logan and Rachel Hudson
Production by Marc Sapir
Lithography by T’ink Studio, Brussels
Technical coordination by Marot, Brussels
Printed and bound by Graphius, Belgium

The book is typeset in Bauer Bodoni, Akzidenz, and Garamond. The paper is 150 gsm Magno Matt.

Manuel J. Borja-Villel’s contribution to the essay “I Am Not a Filmmaker” was translated from the Spanish by Nuria Rodriguez.

Marcel Broodthaers’s writings on the following pages and Maria Gilissen Broodthaers’s preface were translated from the French by Elizabeth Zuba: back cover, pp. 56, 57, 59, 61, 68, 74, 96, 102, 145, 178, 215, 238 (The Politics of Experience), 261, 298; the following translations were taken from Marcel Broodthaers: Collected Writings, ed. Gloria Moure (Barcelona: Ediciones Polígrafa, 2012); pp. 65, 71, 76, 81, 120–21, 122, 152–53, 180, 225, 226, 227, 228, 238 (“Mon cher Clara”), 258, 274; the following translation was taken from Manuel J. Borja-Villel and Michael Compton, eds., Marcel Broodthaers: Cinéma (Barcelona: Fundació Antoni Tapiés, 1997): p. 236. Some translations have been modified by Christophe Cherix, Cerise Fontaine, and Maria Gilissen Broodthaers.

Jean-François Chevrier’s essay was translated from the French by Jeanine Herman.

Doris Krystof’s essay was translated from the German by Russell Stockman.


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www.artbook.com

Distributed outside the United States and Canada by Thames & Hudson Ltd.
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www.thamesandhudson.com

Library of Congress Control Number: 2015956796
ISBN: 978-0-87070-962-3

Printed in Belgium


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