

Screen shot 2013-10-15 at 13.25.13

olothek toevoegen Recensie schrijven

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JC: Well, actually I've done that also on tape, in making the piece called *Williams Mix* . . . where the sounds are recorded and then scratched, and then changed—

October 21-23, 1991/Cage and Retallack 93

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manually changed. There're lots of such correspondences. It's only natural, think. I'm still attracted, even at this point in technology, I'm attracted to the idea of cutting things up and putting them together. I think that the principle of collage is very important in all aspects of the century, hmmm? . . . in our hearing. One of the troubles with some technology is that it makes it almost impossible to use collage. It makes it so easy to produce an effect with a blurring-over.

JR: Yes. I think that's true. It smooths out all—

JC: —Smooths out all the difficulties. So that you get your finished work before you've even begun. (laughter)



COLLAGE

Fr.: collage; Ger.: Collage; Sp.: collage.

A painting term introduced by the Cubists, then the Futurists and Surrealists to designate the practice of juxtaposing two heterogeneous elements or materials, or artistic objects with real objects.

1. Collage is a reaction against the aesthetics of a visual work of art made of a single material and containing elements which are harmoniously melded within a specific form or frame. It uses all kinds of materials, thematizes the poetic act of fashioning them, entertains itself with daring and provocative juxtapositions.

Collage plays on the work's signifiers, on its materiality. The presence of common or unexpected materials guarantees a meaningful openness* of the work and makes it impossible to find an order or logic within it. (Montage, on the other hand, compares

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JC: It's very difficult to say . . . what happens. I think listeners' reactions according to the experience of the original arias, but then, by heart, if they're chestnuts, then when things overlap it as an obstruction or as a change having some effect. It might be of thing that we associate with the word "meaning," of bringing things that are not together . . . bringing them together. Or, really have that was possibly meaningful. Now in my case, where I can't remember one—or very few—I wasn't troubled by any of that I did do was to pulverize, you might say, the instruments. No changes in the arias.

Verbal collage: Collections of scraps of conversations or sounds (for example, R. WILSON in his *Letter to Queen Victoria*), the theatre of the *absurd** as it skips from one theme to another, a collage of social stereotypes in Joël DRAGUTIN's *La Baie de Naples*.

Collage in stage design: Pictorial technique of

"Collage...is direct quotation, literal repetition or citation and reassembling of these fragments of meanings, in questioning of the notion of representation as finding out of old, to connect what may appear dissimilar in general (theory, process, classification etc.)" (Shanks)



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AG: [Reading]: Please tell us about **Brion Gysin** [painter and Burroughs collaborator]. How was the cutup technique created? What was Mr. Burroughs intention in creating this technique? How did the collab—

WSB: I did not create it. It was created by Brion Gysin. It's really a painter's technique, an extension of the collage technique, which was pretty old hat in painting at that time. It is closer really to the process of human perception. You see, should I stand in front of a landscape and paint it, I'm completely ignoring the factor of time. While I am painting it, it's changing, clouds are changing, all sorts of things. So there's the myth there of someone creating in a timeless vacuum. Now, so I say, take a walk around the block, come back, and put what you have seen on canvas. What have you seen? You have seen fragments. You've seen a man cut in half by a car, you've seen reflections in the shop windows.

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I have said this too many times to make it interesting even to myself, but the principle of collage is one of the central principles of art in this century and it seems also to me to be one of the central principles of literature.

- "A Symposium on Fiction", p. 76

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A word is a word is a collage

Transcript of a roundtable discussion with Donald Barthelme, William S. Burroughs, John Cage and Marcel Duchamp

Donald Barthelme I'm only beginning the discussion because yesterday there was a colloquium on collage at which Mr. Duchamp and Mr. Cage talked about various issues at insufficient length and I had at that time a 44-part question which I did not get an opportunity to ask and I'll give you a short form of that this morning. The issue yesterday, unless I've misperceived it, was what kind of knowing is peculiar to collage. The question is for John Cage and it is "What knowledge does a collage put forward?"

John Cage It's very difficult to say ... what happens.

Marcel Duchamp That was it.

JC ... It might have, oh the sort of thing that we associate with the word "meaning", of bringing two things that are not together ... bringing them together. Or, really have the effect of collage that was possibly meaningful.

DB I was probably wrong, or too general. You pointed out however that New York City is or can be regarded as collage, as opposed to, say, a tribal village in which all of the huts (or yurts, or whatever) are the same hut, duplicated. The point of collage is that unlike things are stuck together to make, in the best case, may be or imply a comment on the other reality from which it came, and may be also much else. It's an *itself*: if it's successful.

MD What made me say things like that was because it was necessary to get rid of its conventional usage and to obtain another opening onto other landscapes, so to speak.

JC Well, actually I've done that also on tape, in making the piece called *Williams Mix*... where the sounds are recorded and then scratched, and then changed – manually changed. There're lots of such correspondences. It's only natural, I think. I'm still attracted, even at this point in technology, I'm attracted to the idea of cutting things up and putting them together. I think that the principle of collage is very important in all aspects of the century, hmm? in our hearts. One of the troubles with some technology is that it makes it almost impossible to use collage. It makes it so easy to produce an effect with a blurring-over.

William S. Burroughs Word falling, photo falling.

[Laughter]

JC That's off in limbo. If it happened, though, it would be interesting.

WSB Oh absolutely, absolutely ...

[...]

DB I've been told by a neurologist that writing comes from the left brain in right-handed people and painting from the right brain, so I'm glad our brains may be getting together. I think there is an analogy. I have said this too many times to make it interesting even to myself, but the principle of collage is one of the central principles of art in this century and it seems also to me to be one of the central principles in literature. *Finnegans Wake* and *Ulysses* are obviously the chief cases in point, Joyce is the great collagist, literary collagist, of the century.

WSB Yeah. You see the random factor in life every time you look out the window or walk down the street. Your consciousness is being continually cut by random factors. I try to make this explicit by taking words and cutting them up. That's what happens all the time anyway...

MD Exactly, because the other side, which is important, is description – the literary part, if you prefer it. The description of the visual part is the literary part. That is why I say welding; the welding of the two sources is very important.

WSB I expect to see the formation of an ideographic language.

DB Yes, yes ...

DB It's a phenomenon the classic example of which is [Sergei] Eisenstein's discussion of montage, where he juxtaposed different pictures, or the same pictures in different ways, and got different responses from the viewers. One of the beautiful things about words is that you can put words together which in isolation mean nothing, or mean only what the dictionary says they mean, and you put them together and you get extraordinary effects.

[...]

WSB ... So I am a public agent and don't know who I work for, get my instructions from street signs, newspapers, and pieces of conversation I snap out of the air ...

MD That was the pun, the visual pun – that when you picked it up, you understood it was marble rather than sugar.

[...]

Composed and edited by Niekolaas Johannes Lekkerkerk on the occasion of the exhibition *All the Pieces, Back Together* with Elena Damiani and Frauke Dannert at Selma Feriani Gallery, London, 28 November 2013 – 18 January 2014.