



CHAISSAC

Chaissac, Dubuffet, and Paulhan: From Proletarian Literature to *Écrits Bruts**



1. Gaston Chaissac, *Untitled*, 1957, oil on canvas, 91.7 cm x 65 cm, private collection. Reproduced in: D. Semin (ed.), *Gaston Chaissac, Poète rustique et peinture modern*, Paris 2009, p. 205.

Gaston Chaissac is extensively renowned for his art brut, but less known are his writings that arose from a pre-war proletarian public sphere and were absorbed into *écrits bruts*. By means of an examination of the reception of his texts by contemporaries, especially Jean Dubuffet and Jean Paulhan, Kent Minturn considers the overlooked literary history of art brut as well as the latent presence of 'a graphic turn in French thought' within it.

Il est vrai que l'art brut, c'est justement le pôle opposé à celui des belles-lettres.

– Jean Dubuffet, letter to Florence Gould, September 28, 1948.¹

Gaston Chaissac (1910-1964), a cobbler by trade who lived most of his adult life in Sainte-Florence-de-l'Oie, a small village near the Atlantic coast is, along with Ferdinand Cheval (1836-1924), one of France's most well-known *artistes bruts*. Indeed, his whimsical, colourful, strongly delineated figures, collages and totemic sculptures have become synonymous with art brut itself (fig. 1). Less known is the fact that Chaissac was also a prolific and highly inventive writer and epistolaire.² The story of how his writings emerged from a wider pre-war 'proletarian public sphere,' were détourned and put into the service of 'uncommitted literature,' and ultimately, were excluded from the canon of *écrits bruts*, can help us better understand the perennially overlooked *literary* genealogy of art brut, its position within the post-war *épuration* (or purge) of writers and intellectuals in France, and its continuing conceptual legacy today.³

Art brut's Surrealist literary precedents have been adequately traced by scholar Bruno Montpiéd and others.⁴ Although Jean Dubuffet (1901-1985), a perpetual individualist and staunch anti-Freudian, never officially joined the movement, he ran in close proximity to several of its most important members. In the late 1920s and 30s, through his lifelong friend and fellow Le Havrian, Georges Limbour, Dubuffet mingled with 'dissident' Surrealists associated with *Documents* and André Masson's Rue Blomet studio. Accordingly, he was fully cognizant of the Surrealist's pre-war interest in *les écrits fous* and alternative forms of literature. Of these Surrealist predecessors, the three most important for Dubuffet were arguably Paul Éluard, André Breton and Raymond Queneau. In 1924, Éluard, who was responsible for discovering the proto-art brut artist Auguste Forestier, published 'le Génie sans miroir,' followed by 'Poèmes de fous,' in *Les Feuilles libres*, and later, with Benjamin Péret, and Robert Desnos, *152 proverbes mis au goût du jour*. In the late 1930s Breton's interest in *écriture automatique* gave way to a fascination with overlooked and whimsical writings which existed already within the French modernist literary canon. To this end he



2. Cover of the review *Centres* 3 (February 1946).



3. Cover of the review *Maintenant* 4 (March 1946). Both are reproduced in: *Gaston Chaissac: Homme de lettres*, Paris 2006, p. 31.

edited and published, in 1940, the *Anthology of Black Humor*. In the 1930s Queneau, who, like Limbour, originated from Le Havre and was a former schoolmate of Dubuffet's, collected writings produced by cultural outsiders, iso-

lated visionaries and institutionalized individuals for his *Encyclopédie des sciences inexactes* [Encyclopedia of Inexact Sciences]. Although this project never saw the light of day parts of it were eventually published in the form of a novel, *Les Enfants du limon* (1938).⁵ These interwar literary projects evince a burgeoning interest in the 'extraordinary everyday' and perhaps foreshadow a larger sea-change in twentieth-century French thought and culture exemplified by, among other things, the opening of the *Musée national des Arts et Traditions populaires* in the Museum of Ethnography at the Trocadéro (subsequently renamed the Museum of Man).⁶ In the post-war period, Dubuffet collaborated with Éluard (shortly after he joined the Parti communiste français) on a book project – *Quelques mots rassemblés pour Monsieur Dubuffet* (1944) – and invited Breton and Queneau to join his first and second art brut campaigns, respectively.⁷

Unfortunately, less attention has been devoted to Dubuffet's pre-war interest in popular, non-professional, anti-bourgeois, and 'proletarian' forms of literature, which was apparently piqued when, in 1923, while serving in the military and working as a meteorologist atop the Eiffel Tower, Dubuffet met Madame Clémentine Ripoché, a factory worker and self-taught artist, who liked to draw pictures of clouds.⁸ Smitten by her unschooled writings, Dubuffet typed out Ripoché's letters in hopes of one day publishing them.⁹ Later in the 1930s, Dubuffet attempted to learn 'bas-Latin,' and to translate a classical French text, 'l'Histoire des Francs de Grégoire de Tours,' into vernacular, or spoken French, as well as 'une comédie de Térence' into popular language, an 'argot, more or less'.¹⁰ At this time Dubuffet also started writing a series of biographies of common folk and 'non-illustrious' men, which share stylistic similarities with his post-war biographical-based entries on individual artists bruts.¹¹ In 1939 Dubuffet defected from the French army, after being conscripted for a second time, and befriended Ludovic Massé in Céret, France.¹² Massé was associated with the *Groupe des écrivains prolétariens de langue française* [The Proletarian Literature Movement], founded in 1932 by Henry Poulaille. The movement's collective



4. Jean Dubuffet, *Chaissac* (July-August 1947). Reproduced in: *Catalogue des travaux de Jean Dubuffet, III, Plus beaux qu'ils croient (Portraits)*, nouvelle édition, Paris 2003, p. 96.

goal was to establish a realist genre of literature that, in opposition to Maupassant or Zola, authentically transmitted the proletarian experience. It was not attached to a specific political agenda, but rather originated as a grassroots answer to Lenin's hope, outlined in *What is to be Done?* (1902), for the emergence of working class literature open to all forms of expression.¹³

In the mid-1930s Chaissac began to paint and show his work, and had his first two one-man exhibitions at the *Maison des Intellectuels* in 1943 and the *Salon des Indépendants* in 1944. However, when Chaissac resurfaced in the immediate post-war period it was in most part thanks to his writings, not his art. In 1945, his 'Oasis fleuries', a poem at once childish, oneiric, and bucolic, was published in the review *Pierre à Feu*:

Blossoming oases, chased, remorselessly pursued, the red bird from a golden cage, after that comes the moon. And then the thunderstorm. On one side a plum opposite the green star, two caresses with a pond. The water sings as it rocks its child and the blue mouse smiles from a respectful distance at this horrible burial. On the right someone passes for a moment along the holy lake. The magician's house appears dark, distant, wrapped in mystery, in oak trees, in the spirit of darkness [...].¹⁴

In February of 1946, editor René Rougerie published a selection of Chaissac's texts, including a personal manifesto titled, 'Peinture rustique moderne', in number 3 of *Centres*, a journal dedicated to unprofessional, 'littérature vivant'. Shortly thereafter several of Chaissac's letters appeared in issue 4 (March 1946) of *Maintenant*, Poulaille's journal of proletarian literature (fig. 2, 3).¹⁵ Additional texts by Chaissac followed in *Cahiers du Peuple* (1946-1947), a working-class review published by the polymath art and architectural historian, Michel Ragon. Ragon also included Chaissac in his first book, *Les écrivains du peuple* in 1947, as well as in *Art brut, naïvisme, et littérature prolétarienne*, a show he organized at the galerie Portes de France on March 13, 1948 in Paris. In many articles and books since, Ragon has made a strong case for the obvious influence proletarian literature (and the 'anarchist literature' of L-F Céline and Max Stirner) had on Dubuffet's conceptualization of art brut.¹⁶ Dubuffet was well aware of Ragon's *Cahiers du Peuple* and other similar publications. For example, in early 1947, Dubuffet wrote a celebratory review of the poet Jean L'Anselme's journal of proletarian literature, *Peuple et Poésie*, with which Chaissac was involved. Dubuffet intended to include



5 Gaston Chaissac, poster (unused) for his exhibition at the Galerie de L'Arc-en-ciel, Paris, June 11 1947 – July 15, 1947, ink on paper, 22.5 cm x 15 cm, Zurich, collection of Dr. Peter Nathan. Reproduced in: C. Allemand-Cosneau (ed.), *Gaston Chaissac 1910-1964*, Paris 1998, p. 59.



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EXPOSITION

des peintures et dessins

Gaston Chaissac

(natif d'Avallon)

dit le Dubuffet

en sabots

Vernissage le 11 juin

jusqu'au 5 Juillet 47



6. Gaston Chaissac, *Untitled ('Lisez les Cahiers de la Pléiade ...')*, 1947, 36 cm x 17.5 cm, Private collection. Reproduced in: *Chaissac*, Paris 2000, exh. cat. Galerie Nationale du Jeu du Paume, p. 40.

this review in the first part of his proposed *Almanach de l'Art Brut*.

It seems logical then that proletarian literature and art brut would have co-existed harmoniously in the post-war period, especially considering that just before he came up with the rubric of 'art brut' Dubuffet was calling for an art 'more modest', modelled on the easy-going expressions of 'l'homme du commun' [the common man] or 'l'homme dans la rue' [the man in the street] – 'the guys in the barbershop at Chaville, the fireman, the butcher or the postman [...]'.¹⁷ However, in the end Dubuffet could not tolerate this dual existence, and instead sought to absorb proletarian literature, and by extension Chaissac, into art brut completely. With hindsight, there are three main reasons for this: first, for Dubuffet, art brut was above all an art without a history, without precedents, anti-Oedipal by definition; second, he wanted to be the sole author

of (and authority on) its history, and finally, because he sided with Paulhan and tacitly agreed that proletarian literature, once absorbed by art brut, could be used to promote anti-Sartrean 'uncommitted' literature.

Dubuffet's friendship, circumscription and authorial control of Chaissac began in November of 1946 when he wrote to the artist and offered to buy one of his paintings.¹⁸ Then, on December 10th of that year, he sent him a copy of his first book, *Prospectus aux amateurs de tout genre* (1946), and later gave him a harmonium, money for art supplies, and a washing machine. Sometime in the summer of 1947 Dubuffet sketched a portrait of Chaissac, which was included in the former's famous *Portraits* show in October at the Galerie René Drouin, Paris (fig. 4). Dubuffet began to absorb Chaissac's writing style as well; his 'Causette' written for the *Portraits* exhibition (and other texts from this time, for example 'Letter to a Scorpion Portraitist') clearly mimic the bucolic metaphors and similes found in Chaissac's 1945 'Oasis fleuries' and 'Ode à l'Orgre' of 1946. Dubuffet's art was likewise affected by Chaissac's prose and poetry; in a letter dated June 25, 1947, Dubuffet explains that he wants to 'use paint as Chaissac uses words'.¹⁹

While still travelling in North Africa, Dubuffet contacted Chaissac and volunteered to write a preface to the catalogue of his upcoming show at Galerie de L'Arc-en-Ciel, Paris (fig. 5). In this preface Dubuffet compares Chaissac to Yahia, a Bedouin camel driver and amateur flautist:

No need for art critics to bother with [Chaissac]. Tough luck for Chaissac as far as the School of Paris critics go. It would be like asking busy musicographers to listen to Yahia playing the flute, it's just not the same language. Imagine our art lecturers, our excellent missionaries of art, those magisterial worthies, in front of Chaissac's painting [...]. It's like a novelist who specializes in hunting scenes being stuck nose to nose with a lion. Or an astronomer pushed onto a shooting star. They would have to give up a lot, all their pet theories and pet explanations.²⁰

ALPHABET UNILIGNE

signe fermotitudo	Le Français	signe ouvertitudo	signe fermotitudo	Le Français	signe ouvertitudo	signe fermotitudo	Le Français	signe ouvertitudo
A	A	⌒	H	H	⌒	U	U	⌒
À	À	⌒	I	I	⌒	Û	Û	⌒
Â	Â	⌒	Î	Î	⌒	Û	Û	⌒
B	B	⌒	J	J	⌒	V	V	⌒
C	C	⌒	K	K	⌒	W	W	⌒
Ç	Ç	⌒	L	L	⌒	X	X	⌒
D	D	⌒	M	M	⌒	Y	Y	⌒
E	E	⌒	N	N	⌒	Z	Z	⌒
É	É	⌒	O	O	⌒			
Ê	Ê	⌒	Ô	Ô	⌒			
Ë	Ë	⌒	P	P	⌒			
F	F	⌒	Q	Q	⌒			
G	G	⌒	R	R	⌒			
			S	S	⌒			
			T	T	⌒			

Les deux alphabets : « Ouvertitudo, Fermotitudo ».

7. Francis Palanc, *Invented Alphabets*, n.d., reproduced in: *L'Art Brut*, Fascicule 1 (Paris 1964) p. 30.

Initially enthusiastic about the piece, Chaissac quickly soured and told Dubuffet that it was 'archi-idiote'.²¹ Chaissac also complained to Ragon about Dubuffet's over-exaggeration of the fact that he was of Arab descent: 'I regret that Dubuffet, with all his talent, confines himself to [discovering] guys under the pretext of Arab flutes [...]'.²² Writer Louis Cattiaux, who visited the show had this to say in a letter to Chaissac written afterwards: 'Your "friend" Dubuffet's preface is a pretentious plagiarization of your writing style, just as his works are a plagiarization of your paintings.'²³ After the show's opening Dubuffet contacted Chaissac on June 6, 1947, and informed him that he would like to publish his letters.²⁴ Initially these were to be included in Dubuffet's first round of *Les Cahiers de l'Art Brut*, published by Gallimard, France's most important publishing house. Gaston Gallimard, however, pulled funding from the project after the first issue appeared in 1947. Dubuffet then consid-

ered publishing them, as well as Chaissac's commentary on L'Anselme's writings, in a future 'Almanac of Art Brut', which eventually fell through as well. Ultimately, Chaissac's letters would find a home in Jean Paulhan's *Les Cahiers de la Pléiade*, a new post-war journal published by Gallimard.

In 1946, Paulhan, a linguist and former editor of *La Nouvelle Revue Française* (1925-1940), founded *Les Cahiers de la Pléiade* in direct opposition to Jean-Paul Sartre's *Les Temps Modernes* and the philosopher's call for *littérature engagée* – i.e, transparent, politically-engaged, journalistic reportage, which chronicled history-in-the-making. Paulhan had been part of the National Committee of Writers responsible for the *épuration*, but then resigned, made a swift volte-face, and began arguing for the writer's fundamental 'right to error'. The inaugural issue of *Les Cahiers de la Pléiade* included a 'présentation' by Paulhan, translated as 'Three Cheers for Uncommitted



La graphie pour rien...

8. Ronald Barthes, 'Writing for nothing...' from: *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes*, Paris 1975, p. 187.

Literature', in which he justifies the publication of 'curious' and 'apparently useless' texts by 'unknown' authors.²⁵ He writes: 'As will be apparent, *Les Cahiers de la Pléiade* deal, as unobtrusively as possible, with issues far more serious than the great social and national conflicts that people have lately tended to bore us with.' A few lines after this, he reminds readers: 'it can easily happen that children or madmen or totally naïve or uneducated people will hit the bull's-eye with their first shot or arrive straightaway at the sort of visionary work that we find so enchanting.'²⁶

'Uncommitted literature' and art brut went hand in hand for Paulhan; indeed, we might even go so far as to say that they were both literary inventions of his. Dubuffet might have coined the term 'art brut' in a letter to René Auberjonois in 1945, but it was Paulhan who made it public in his 'Guide d'un petit voyage en Suisse au mois de juillet 1945' [Guide to a Little Trip to Switzerland in the Month of July 1945], a fanciful, faux-naïve travel essay published in the inaugural (April 1946) issue of *Les Cahiers de la Pléiade*. Paulhan's tale was based on an actual trip he had taken with Dubuffet and Le Corbusier to Switzerland in July of 1945, at the invitation of Dubuffet's friend Paul Baudry, then the Cul-

tural Ambassador of French-Swiss Tourism. In it Paulhan explains that Dubuffet (under the pseudonym Limérique) 'was searching for an unpracticed, immediate art – an art brut'.²⁷ This inaugural issue also contained an article written by Dubuffet, a preface for his friend René de Solier's prose poem, 'Court traité des graffitis' [Short Treatise on Graffiti] (1945), which celebrates the materiality of 'drawn words', 'the supports of graphisms', 'the trace' and 'the scratch', over the transparency of traditional forms of literature.²⁸ Dubuffet's introduction is a frivolous, rambling piece of writing, which serves as a prime example of uncommitted literature. In the initial issue of *Les Cahiers de Pléiade* Dubuffet is presented as the first collector of art brut, and as the first *écrivain brut* – a term that Dubuffet liked to use when referring to Chassac in his letters to Paulhan.²⁹

Many of the texts originally scheduled to appear in Dubuffet's *Les Cahiers de l'Art Brut* and *Almanach de l'Art Brut* eventually ended up in *Les Cahiers de la Pléiade*.³⁰ From 1947 to 1950 Dubuffet took on an increasingly active editorial role and in his letters to Paulhan often referred to *Les Cahiers de la Pléiade* as 'our journal'. In the winter 1948 issue they published a selection of Chassac's letters in a

subsection of the journal dedicated to ‘Sunday Poetry’.³¹ (Chaissac was keenly aware of what was going on, and accepted his absorption into *Les Cahiers de la Pléiade* with his tongue-in-cheek. In one of his drawings from this period he humorously suggests that his art had become nothing more than an advertisement for the journal) (fig. 6). Paulhan, it is worth noting, will use the same description – ‘Sunday’ – to introduce Dubuffet’s first text in jargon, *Ler dla campagne* [Air of the Countryside, spelled phonetically], in a subsequent issue of *Les Cahiers*, which suggests that, for him, both Dubuffet and Chaissac were writers of the same ilk. Here Paulhan claims that Dubuffet’s ‘living, pleasurable language’ is a special species of prose that:

begins by tricking words, tricking thought [...] [it] is to practical language, what Sunday is to the other days of the week, it is, simply stated: the language of celebration. One feels it existing, from time to time, in a pun, in an etymology, in an advertisement, in an insult, in a poster and at other times in sales pitches, all of which are devoid of reason. They flash by in a fleeting manner. And anyone who wants to go further with this, finds himself purposefully choosing—spelling mistakes in French, small flourishes, simple whims: sacrileges—everything that dead languages and social taboos ban [...].³²

Before Barthes’ *Writing Degree Zero* (1953) there was, it seems, a ‘Sunday’ of French literature which represented the end of something old and the beginning of something new; a fleeting moment outside of time (and history). The idea held cultural currency at least until Queneau’s publication of *Dimanche de la vie* [The Sunday of Life] (1951), a novel about a naïve ex-private named Valetin Brû, a sort of Hegelian philosopher brut, who spends his time trying to figure out the absurdities of the Parisian Metro system. This tale is not far from Paulhan and Dubuffet’s collaborative book project *La Metromanie* (1950).³³

In 1949 Dubuffet published a book of phonetic poetry ‘anlonerd gaztonchesac’ [In Honor of Gaston Chaissac],³⁴ and included

him in his massive *L’art brut préféré aux arts culturels* show in October 1949 at Galerie René Drouin. After this Dubuffet took on the role of Chaissac’s editor, organizing and painstakingly typing out more of his letters, which he published as *Hippobosque au bocage* [Hippogrove in the Copse] (1951).³⁵ A year later Dubuffet wrote the preface for Chaissac’s next book, *Histoires d’un vacher*:

Here is Chaissac and his stunning tricks [...] In a time like ours, poisoned by ancient creations, where works do not strive for a new brilliance, but rather seek to reflect or to revive the productions of past, he (and he’s the only one, I think) does not at all want the usual poetic material, the tired subjects, the fine language; this after all is too easy – and not truly effective. What is he going to serve us? Nothing but the most trivial, objects and facts borrowed from daily life, the most insignificant, the most common talk, empty words—ramblings! [...] Very magic.³⁶

Dubuffet had become, in essence, Chaissac’s number one fan, collector, financier, curator, publicist, and agent.

However, just as Dubuffet accomplishes his mission of fully circumscribing Chaissac he paradoxically loses his authorial control over him. There is, at this time, a broader dispersal of Chaissac’s writings; for example, they are included in Camille Bryen and Alain Gheerbrant’s *Anthologie de la poésie naturelle*, and one of his letters appears in CoBra’s sixth issue of its review.³⁷ Beginning in 1953, Chaissac contributes a regular column, ‘Chronique de l’Oie’ to the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, under Paulhan’s guidance. Dubuffet likely felt some jealousy towards Paulhan for, editorially speaking, stealing Chaissac away from him, and for increasing his popularity among French literati.

In 1956, Chaissac saw Dubuffet in person for the last time in Vence, when the latter, spurred on by gallery owner Alphonse Chave, was experiencing a resurgent interest in collecting, promoting, and publishing catalogues on art brut. In 1964 Dubuffet formed the Second Company of Art Brut (with some all-new

members including Asger Jorn, Noël Arnaud and Queneau) and started publishing a series of 'fascicules' of *L'Art Brut*, personally editing the first nine volumes. In his introductory note to these, Dubuffet makes one subtle but important change; he begins to refer to the artists as 'authors'.³⁸ By this time Dubuffet's interest in art brut had moved to a more theoretical plane.

Chaissac does not appear in these publications, nor is he included in the huge exhibition of art brut that Dubuffet organized at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, in 1967. Today, a few of Chaissac's works remain in the Collection de L'Art Brut in Lausanne, Switzerland, but they have been moved to the limbo world of the Annex Collection (renamed the 'Neuve Invention' Collection in 1982), because, as Dubuffet explained, Chaissac had too many connections to 'cultural', intellectual and artistic circles in Paris – which, ironically, he had helped him establish with the publication of *Hippobosque au bocage*.³⁹ Chaissac lived the rest of his life in relative poverty and obscurity. In the end he felt that he had been 'fleeced' by Dubuffet's art brut enterprise.⁴⁰

Elsewhere I have described the essence of Dubuffet's later definition of the work of art brut as something similar to Claude Lévi-Strauss' *mana* – a shifting sign without signifier, inherently indecipherable – and the art brut artist as someone who shares a propinquity to Roman Jakobson's *idiolect*, an individual who speaks his own idiosyncratic language, or, in Dubuffet's words, an artist who is a 'closed-circuit'.⁴¹ Accordingly, in the first nine *Fascicules de L'Art Brut* Dubuffet focuses on artists whose work included illegible writing, opaque graphic elements, or 'pseudo-graphismes'; his publications become vehicles for promoting his own ideas about the non-transparency and inherent incommunicability of language.

Dubuffet's first volume of *Fascicules de L'Art Brut* (1964) sets the stage for what is to come. It begins with an article on 'Francis Palanc l'Écrituriste', the 'writerist', who invented idiosyncratic alphabets (fig. 7):

It was before his one-year military service around the age of 19 years, when he first

took to making jagged inscriptions [...] inspired by reproductions of Egyptian or Chinese texts seen by chance. He began to systematize invented writing, in order to better fix signs, and to establish an alphabet [...] What interests him is only the word; it is, he says, the purity of the word, the sign. Palanc's mind is filled with pure concepts and very abstract notions, which are never perfectly clarified [...] Palanc's obsession has to do with the transformation of words into forms or, to follow more exactly his thought, the discovery of the shape that belongs to them and from which they are likely to take on new life and meaning.⁴²

The rest of Dubuffet's entries follow suit. In 'Haut art d'Aloïse' (1966 nr. 7) Dubuffet spends most of his time talking about Aloïse's writings, which give evidence of her ability to create new worlds through the process of *nominalisme*, that is, by giving things new names. Further, according to Dubuffet, Aloïse's writings are performative and 'présentiste' in the sense that her *graphismes* emerge 'spontaneously' and 'immediately' from her imagination and have no relation whatsoever with past forms of writing or history itself.⁴³ Further on, after discussing 'Le Lambris de Clément', an artist 'who could not read or write but nonetheless made graphic inscriptions',⁴⁴ Dubuffet devotes a long article to the 'Double vie de Laure' in volume 6, in which he writes: 'The work of Laure [...] is not destined for anyone's gaze except her own [...] [it] is very incompatible with critical discourse'.⁴⁵ And finally, in his most developed entry after 'Palanc l'Écrituriste', Dubuffet has this to say about 'L'Écrit du Comte du Bon Sauveur':

Writing has two faces, one has to do with its contents, or properly stated, its enunciations, and the other one has to do with the scription itself, or we could say the graphisms that are drawn by the hand of their author. [...] As far as writing is an art and is ignored as such, it remains after all an activity very close to drawing; it is even a mode, and maybe the one that demonstrates drawing in the purest state, the most liberated, the most exempt from constraints

[...] Are we not greatly mistaken to believe that the virtue of writing is dependent on its contents?⁴⁶

In summary, Dubuffet likes all of these art brut artists/writers for the same reason: they opacify language, stress the materiality of the signifier over the signified, disregard precise meanings and definitions, destroy categories, play with nominalism, and separate words from things. In short, because they render writing abstract.

Michel Thévoz, Dubuffet's most important and carefully chosen disciple, who served as the Director of *La Collection de l'Art Brut* in Lausanne, Switzerland (1975-2001), dedicated himself to carrying on the literary and conceptual side of Dubuffet's art brut enterprise. First and foremost, he did this by publishing two books on the subject of *écrits bruts*: *Le Langage de la rupture* (1978), and *Écrits Bruts* (1979). Interestingly enough, Dubuffet's writings are included in these two anthologies, whereas Chaissac's are not. Immediately following the publication of Dubuffet's *Fascicules de L'Art Brut*, and Thévoz's two books, there was an increased critical and scholarly interest in the subject of *écriture brute* and *écrits bruts* in France.⁴⁷ There was not, however, an equivalent resurgent interest in proletarian literature.

Dubuffet's second round of art brut publications can be seen as playing an important role in what Denis Hollier has called the 'graphic turn in postwar French thought' which encompasses the more recent theorization of 'mad' writings, the rethinking of the relationship between image and text (the *visible* and the *lisible*), and the postmodern, poststructuralist critique of logocentrism.⁴⁸ It was not until 2005 that academic and museum communities finally admitted that Dubuffet's visual art might have been inspired by art brut.⁴⁹ It now seems necessary, following scholar Allen S. Weiss's lead in *Shattered Forms: Art Brut, Phantasms, Modernism* (1992), to more fully investigate the influence that artists like Chaissac had on Dubuffet's writings and more experimental texts.⁵⁰ By May of 1968, Dubuffet had fully absorbed proletarian writing into his official anti-cultural agenda.

In his pamphlet-cum-manifesto, *Asphyxiating Culture* (a thinly-veiled diatribe against Malraux's state-sponsored cultural programs), Dubuffet writes:

Students in my re-educative workshops will have to deal with stimulating examples; instead of sterile aesthetic writings, they will read texts in which whim take precedence over meaning proper: sailors' letters, personal notes, private messages from uneducated people. Next to the texts recommended by culture, these writings, in which the flavor of the accent and the brut expression remain free of any desire to be correct, will reveal that what culture considers to be good writing is precisely what should be avoided, just as our politicians' speeches are exactly what should be considered mute, ridiculous speech.⁵¹

If proletarian writing persists in Dubuffet's overall project, it is precisely because it is communicative, and can be used as a didactic tool. *Écrits bruts*, unreadable visual texts, and pseudo-writing on the other hand, remain to his mind secret and sacred, the authentic marks of individual expression. They continue to inform Dubuffet's personal artistic practice, specifically his 1962-1974 *Hourloupe* series, which Thévoz has rightly described as an impenetrable, 'absolute argot'.⁵²

But perhaps all of this is secondary to a larger, more over-arching question that needs to be broached. Just as Serge Guilbaut seeks to understand how politicized, Marxist-inspired figurative pre-war painting evolved into depoliticized abstract post-war painting, or 'art for art's sake', in his *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art* (1983),⁵³ we need to similarly ask how and why populist pre-war proletarian literature turned into post-war *écrits bruts* and paved the way for what was to come, what Barthes will call *contre-écriture*, or 'la graphie pour rien ...'[writing for nothing] (Fig. 8).⁵⁴ The origin of this shift towards the opacification of French literature, and the post-war avant-garde's increasing focus on the transformation of words and letters into forms (which not only runs through art brut, but also through Artaud, Dubuffet and Michaux's oeuvres,

Lettrism, Dotremont's logograms, and certain Oulipian experiments) appears in 1947, at the same moment that the Parti communiste français declares abstract painting insignificant, and calls instead for Socialist Realism, art that must be taken *à la lettre*.⁵⁵ ●

Biography

Kent Minturn received his Ph.D. in Art History from Columbia University, and earned his M.A. in Art History at the University of Chicago. Minturn lives with his wife and son in New York City, and is currently completing a monograph on Dubuffet.

Notes

- * An earlier version of this paper, 'Chaissac, Dubuffet, Paulhan et le destin de la littérature prolétarienne dans la France d'après-guerre', was delivered at the *Michel Ragon, critique d'art et d'architecture* symposium organized by Serge Guilbaut and Richard Leeman, at the *Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art* (INHA), Paris, France, June 3 May, 2010. I thank Michel Ragon and the organizers of the symposium for inviting me to participate, and Sophie Berribi, Hubert Damisch, and Sophie Weibel for their helpful comments afterwards.
- 1 Dubuffet's letter to Gould is reprinted in: N. Prévot and J. Zacchi (eds.), *Par le don de Florence Gould*, Paris 1988, p. 38.
- 2 With the notable exceptions of Jean-Pierre Verheggen's 'Chaissac, épistopoète (a propos de Chaissac écrivain)', in: C. Allemand-Cosneau, (ed.), *Gaston Chaissac 1910-1964*, Paris 1998, pp. 122-132; H.C. Cousseau and G. Haffner (eds.), *Gaston Chaissac: Homme de lettres*, Paris 2006; G. Faucher (ed.), 'Introduction', *Je cherche mon éditeur: lettres, contes, documents*, Paris 1998, pp. 7-19; J. Kober, 'Gaston Chaissac, l'écrivain', *Gaston Chaissac: Lettres à Jacques Kober*, Paris 1988, pp. 9-13; S. Fauchereau, 'Gaston Chaissac, poète épistolier', *Gaston Chaissac: Correspondances*, Musée de L'Abbaye Sainte-Croix Les Sables D'Olonne, 2004, pp. 7-9; J. Sacré, *Gaston Chaissac: Vous écrit encore*, Paris 2000; *Gaston Chaissac, Les Sables d'Olonne* 1993; C. Delacampagne, 'Chaissac: un savant en sabots', *Outsiders: fous, naïfs, et voyants dans la peinture moderne (1880-1960)*, Paris, 1989, pp. 106-119; H. C. Cousseau, 'Introduction', *L'Oeuvre Graphique de Gaston Chaissac, 1910-1964*, Paris 1981, pp. 5-32.
- 3 I offer a more expanded analysis of this subject in: 'On Art Brut as a Literary Project', chapter 3 of my doctoral dissertation, *Contre-Histoire: The Postwar Art and Writings of Jean Dubuffet*, New York 2007, pp. 167-206. Here, I borrow the term 'proletarian public sphere' from scholar Michael Moon, who, following Jürgen Habermas, Alexander Kluge, Oskar Negt and Miriam Hansen, has applied it to Henry Darger's art. See: Moon 'Abduction, Adoption, Appropriation: Darger and the Early Newspaper Comic Strip'; or, 'Reading Around the Ruins of a Proletarian Public Sphere' chapter 3 of *Darger's Resources*, Durham/London 2012, pp. 79-100.
- 4 B. Montpied, 'Outsider Art, the Situationist Utopia: A Parallel', *The Southern Quarterly* 39 (2000/2001) 1-2, pp. 19-46; 'Quelques notes sur les origines de l'art brut', *SURR* 3 (1999), pp. 69-71; 'D'où vient l'art brut? Esquisses pour un généalogie de l'art brut', *Ligeia* 17 (2004) 53/54/55/56, pp. 155-164; A. Cape, 'De l'aliénisme à la littérature d'avant-garde ou les ambiguïtés d'une consécration: petite histoire des écrits de fous', *Romantisme* 141 (2008), pp. 65-78; L. Peiry, *Art Brut and the Origins of Outsider Art*, Paris, 2001; W. Spies, 'L'art brut avant 1967', *Revue de l'art* 1-2 (1968), pp. 123-126; M. Thévoz, 'The Art of the Stream', *Focus on Minotaure: The Animal Headed Review*, Geneva 1989, pp. 187-199; J. Freeman, 'The Dada and Surrealist Word-Image and Its Legacy', *Art and Design* 5 (1989) 11, pp. 19-28.
- 5 The early work of Jacques Lacan, an occasional Surrealist and acquaintance of Dubuffet's, deserves to be mentioned here as well, especially his 1931 article on 'Écrits inspirés: Schizographie', co-authored with J. Lévy-Valensi and P. Migault, and published in *Annales Médico-Psychologiques*, s.l. 1931, s.p. Ostensibly, Dubuffet was obsessed with archiving the intellectual history of the phenomenon of 'écrits fous' and worked on establishing a library related to art brut's intellectual pre-history, which was to house his own collection of books on psychology and

- linguistics, including P. Chaslin's *Y figurent Éléments de sémiologie et de clinique mentale*, s.l. 1912; M. Cenac's *De certains langages créés par des aliénés – Contribution à l'étude des glossolalies*, s.l. 1925; and J. Lacan's *De la psychose paranoïaque dans ses rapports avec la personnalité*, s.l. 1932. For more on this see: M. Jakobi, 'Les lectures d'un peintre "ennemi" de la culture: La bibliothèque de Jean Dubuffet', *Les Cahiers du Musée national d'art moderne 77* (2001), pp. 92-122; and 'Penser, classer, éditer: l'Art Brut et la question de la bibliothèque', *Les bibliothèques d'artistes au XXe siècle*, Paris 2010, pp. 129-142.
- 6 Dubuffet's acquaintance, Michel Leiris, whose work exemplifies the shift from ethnography proper to the common and quotidian, wrote an important article on this titled, 'Du Musée d'Ethnographie au musée de l'Homme', *La Nouvelle Revue Française* (1938), pp. 344-345. See also Leiris's *L'homme sans honneur: notes pour le sacré dans la vie quotidienne*, Paris 1994, and his celebration of the 'quotidian marvelous' in his 'Preface' to an exhibition of paintings by Elie Lascaux, Galerie de la Pléiade, June 29-July 20, 1945, translated as 'Elie Lascaux', in *Broken Branches*, San Francisco 1989, pp. 82-83.
- 7 P. Eluard, *Quelques mots rassemblés pour Monsieur Dubuffet*, Paris, 1944. In 1948 Breton was invited by Dubuffet to become one of the founding members of the Company of Art Brut, and he wrote an article for Dubuffet's proposed *Almanach de l'Art Brut* on, 'L'art des fous, la clé des champs' (translated by S. W. Taylor, as, 'The Art of The Insane: Freedom to Roam Abroad', in: Breton, *Surrealism and Painting*, New York 1972, pp. 313-316) which first appeared in *Les Cahiers de la Pléiade* 6 (1948 - 1949), pp. 99-100. The two artists later broke relations over the issue of whether art brut was the same as the *art des fous*. Breton said yes, Dubuffet demurred. 'There is no such thing as the art of the insane', he famously argued: 'just as there is no such thing as the art of dyspeptics or those with knee problems'. Queneau joined the Second Company of Art Brut in 1962, around the same time that Dubuffet became a member of the College de Pataphysics. The interesting question is whether Queneau ultimately considered Dubuffet to be one of his literary 'fous'. See Queneau's 'Dubuffet le magnifique', *L'Oeil* 221-222 (1973), pp. 14-15; and 'Quelques citations choisies dans le corpus des écrits de Jean Dubuffet', *L'Herne* 22 (1973), pp. 372-76.
- 8 For more on this see, Georges Limbour's book, *Tableau bon levain a vous cuire la pate, l'art brut de Jean Dubuffet*, Paris 1953.
- 9 L. Peiry, *Jean Dubuffet and the Origins of Art Brut*, Paris 2001, p. 38.
- 10 J. Dubuffet, in: H. Damisch (ed.), *Prospectus et tous écrits suivants* vol. IV, Paris 1995, p. 481, 653.
- 11 Idem, in: H. Damisch (ed.), *Prospectus et tous écrits suivants* vol. III, Paris 1995 pp. 175-185. Dubuffet's post-war biographical entries for the first art brut publications are a continuation of his pre-war 'biographies'. However, in the post-war period they take on new meaning vis-à-vis Sartre's series of *Vies*, or 'Lives' of common people, which appeared in *Les Temps modernes*, starting in March, 1946. Sartre's goal is to show how these lives are part of history, while Dubuffet's biographies emphasize a-historicity and disconnectedness. I have further addressed this topic in my dissertation and in 'Dubuffet's Biographies', a paper presented at the *Culture in Context* symposium, American Folk Art Museum, New York, April 27, 2007.
- 12 Idem, *Biographie*, s.l. s.a., p. 7. Later Dubuffet invited Massé to write an entry on an artist named Nataska for *L'Art brut* 9 (1973), pp. 35-39. Massé also penned a homage to Dubuffet for *Les Cahiers l'Herne* 22 (1973), and his final unfinished work was called 'Dubuffet Z to A', published posthumously at the end of *Jean Dubuffet – Ludovic Massé: Correspondance croisée 1940-1981* (1999), s.p. Dubuffet in turn wrote a homage to Massé, published in Damisch (ed.), op. cit. (note 11), pp. 271-272.
- 13 See, H. Poullaille, *Nouvel age littéraire*, s.l. 1930; R. Garguilo, *Henry Poullaille et la littérature prolétarienne en France de 1920 à 1940*, Paris 1989; and, P. A. Loffler, *Chronique de la littérature prolétarienne française de 1930 à 1939*, Rodez 1967. Also see, D. Farbre (ed.), *Écritures ordinaires*, Paris 1993. For a critical take on the very possibility of proletarian literature see A. Breton, 'On the Proletarian Literature Contest Sponsored by l'Humanité' (1933), in: *Break of Day*, translated by M. Polizzotti and M. A. Caws, Lincoln/London 1999, pp. 78-87.
- 14 G. Chaissac, 'Oasis fleuries', *Pierre à Feu*, (1945), trans. Barbara Nathan-Neher, in: Chaissac (cursief), London 1987.
- 15 Chaissac apparently had a long-standing interest in writing of this sort. He owned a copy of populist poems by Léon Lemonnier (1931), and readily admitted his 'avidité' for 'écrivains populaires'. See: H. C. Cousseau and G. Hafner (eds.), *Gaston Chaissac: Homme de lettres*, Paris 2006.
- 16 All following titles M. Ragon: *Histoire de la littérature ouvrière*, Paris 1953; *Histoire de la littérature prolétarienne de langue française*, Paris 1974; *Dubuffet*, New York 1959; 'Jean Dubuffet théoricien de l'Art Brut', *Le Jardin des Arts*, 1968, pp. 76-85; *L'Année Céline 1990*, Paris 1991, pp. 109-110; 'Jean Dubuffet, sa relation aux écrivains libertaires', in: H. Damisch (ed.), *Dubuffet: conférences & colloques*, Paris 1992, pp. 36-42; 'Céline et Dubuffet', in: *L'Année Céline 1992*, Paris 1993, pp. 33-44; *Le Regard et la Mémoire: Portraits-souvenirs de Atlan, Poliakov, Dubuffet, Chaissac, Fautrier, Hartung*, Paris 1998; 'Poullaille, Dubuffet, Céline, Approches et Variations Anarchistes', *Littérature et Anarchie*, Toulouse 1998, pp. 113-121; 'Le Reclus de Meudon', *Télérama Hors-Série – Dubuffet*, Paris 2001, p. 87.
- 17 J. Dubuffet, 'Plus Modest', 1946, translated by J. Neugroschel and published as 'More Modest', in: *Tracks: A Journal of Artists' Writings* 1 (1975), pp. 26-29. For more on Dubuffet's idea's about the 'common man', likely influenced by Paulhan, see his opening lines in: *Prospectus aux amateurs de tout genre*, Paris 1946, 'It's not being an exceptional man that is so marvelous, it's being a man'; P. Seghers, *L'Homme du commun ou Jean Dubuffet, Poésie* 44, Paris 1944; R. Lew, 'Jean Dubuffet, Portrait du brut en héros', *La Part de L'Oeil* 5 (1989), pp. 132-139; S. Ungar, 'Penser Dubuffet: Propos sur l'ordinaire et le quotidien', in: M. Chefodor and D. Krauss (eds.), *Regard d'écrivain, parole de peintre*, Nantes 1994, pp. 47-61; and C. Garaud, 'Déshabitude et banalité: Jean Paulhan, Jean Dubuffet et l'homme du commun', *Jean Paulhan: le clair et l'obscur*, Paris 1999, pp. 321-341.
- 18 Letter from J. Dubuffet to G. Chaissac, s.l. 1946.
- 19 Letter from J. Dubuffet to G. Chaissac, s.l. June 25 1947. See H. Damisch (ed.), *Prospectus et tous écrits suivants* vol. II, Paris 1967, pp. 254-255.
- 20 Letter from J. Dubuffet to G. Chaissac, s.l. July 8 1947. Dubuffet's preface was eventually published for the show's catalogue and has since been translated into English by Sarah Wilson in *Gaston Chaissac 1910-1964*, London: Fischer Fine Art Ltd., 1986, p. 14.
- 21 Chaissac's letter was written on May 16 and quoted in: F. Bonnefoy, S. Clément (eds.) *Chaissac*, Paris, 2000, catalogue Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, p. 320. On

- Wednesday May 21, 1947, Dubuffet wrote a response, as if to have the last word, admitting that his preface was 'bien idiot', but rightly so. See Damisch (ed.), op.cit. (note 19), p. 249.
- 22 Letter from G. Chaissac to M. Ragon, May 16 1947.
- 23 Letter from L. Cattiaux to G. Chaissac quoted in: F. Bonnefoy, S. Clément, op.cit. (note 21), p. 323.
- 24 Dubuffet, op.cit. (note 19), p. 250, 504.
- 25 J. Paulhan, 'Three Cheers for Uncommitted Literature: Presenting *Les Cahiers de la Pléiade*' in: D. Hollier and J. Mehlman (eds.), *Literary Debate: Texts and Contexts*, New York 1999.
- 26 Idem, pp. 49-51.
- 27 L. Paulhan, 'Guide d'un petit voyage en Suisse au mois de juillet 1945', *Les Cahiers de la Pléiade* 1, 1946, pp. 197-216.
- 28 See, J. Dubuffet, 'Préface à l'édition de Londres d'un Court Traité des graffitis de René de Solier', reprinted in Damisch, op. cit. (note 19), pp. 9-18; and R. de Solier, 'Court traité des graffitis', *Les Cahiers de la Pléiade* 1 (1946), s.p.
- 29 Letter from Dubuffet to Paulhan, November 17 1948, in: *Jean Dubuffet – Jean Paulhan Correspondance 1944-1968*, Paris 2007, p. 563.
- 30 In addition to Chaissac's letters, which appeared under the title 'Poésie du Dimanche' in *Les Cahiers de la Pléiade* 3 (1948), pp. 83-96, the fourth issue of *Les Cahiers de la Pléiade* (1948) contained an essay by G. Falzoni on 'La vie comme aventure', pp. 94-98. Number 5 (1948) contained a biographical piece by Dubuffet on 'Les silex de Juva', pp. 149-156; Issue 6 (1948-1949), which was almost entirely dedicated to art brut, included Breton's important and widely-read essay, 'L'art des fous, la clé des champs', pp. 101-104, and was immediately followed by Dubuffet's essay on the art brut artist Miguel Hernandez in issue 7 (1949), pp. 104-109, and Dubuffet's first 'text en jargon', *Ler dla campagne*, pp. 141-156, which was printed in an original typographic font made to look handwritten. *Les Cahiers de la Pléiade's* commitment to publishing texts about and by art brut artists waned around the same time that Dubuffet decided to move his art brut collection to the United States in 1951.
- 31 See G. Chaissac's letters, 'Poésie du Dimanche', *Les Cahiers de la Pléiade* 3 (1948), pp. 83-96.
- 32 J. Paulhan, 'Dimanche', *Les Cahiers de la Pléiade* 7 (1949). Reprinted in Damisch (ed.), op. cit. (note 19), s.p.
- 33 Interestingly, Chaissac wrote a short review of this book. See Chaissac's 'À propos de la "Metromanie"' in: *Le Limousin littéraire*, s.l., 1951, s.p.
- 34 J. Dubuffet, *Anvouaiage par in ninbesil avec de zimaje* [On A Trip, by an Imbicile, with Images], Paris 1949.
- 35 G. Chaissac, *Hippobosque au bocage* [Hippogrove in the Copse], Paris 1951 (published as part of *Metamorphosis*, the same series in which Dubuffet's first book *Prospectus aux amateurs de tout genre* appeared, in 1946).
- 36 J. Dubuffet, 'Préface' for G. Chaissac, *Histoires d'un vacher*, Paris 1952.
- 37 A. Gheerbrant and C. Bryen (eds.), *Anthologie de la poésie naturelle*, Paris 1949.
- 38 J. Dubuffet, 'Introductory Note For or the Publication of *Les Catalogues de l'Art Brut*, 1963', in: H. Damisch (ed.), *Prospectus et tous écrits suivants* vol. I, Paris 1967, pp. 516-518.
- 39 See Dubuffet's commentary in D. A. Michaud, *Gaston Chaissac, puzzle pour un homme seul*, Paris 1974; J.P. Verheggen, 'Chaissac, Épistopoete (A Propos de Chaisac Ecrivain)', in: C. Allemand-Cosneau (ed.), *Gaston Chaissac 1910-1964*, Paris 1998, pp. 123-132; D. Semin, 'Chaissac et Dubuffet', Paris 1992, exh. cat. Jeu de Paume; and C. Delacampagne, 'Chaissac: un savant en sabots', *Outsiders: fous, naïfs, et voyants dans la peinture moderne (1880-1960)*, Paris 1989, pp. 106-119.
- 40 Chaissac's letters from 1962, in: Michaud, op. cit. (note 39), p. 72, 196.
- 41 K. Minturn, 'Dubuffet, Levi-Strauss and the Idea of Art Brut', *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 46 (2004), pp. 247-258.
- 42 J. Dubuffet, 'Francis Palanc l'Écrituriste', in: Damisch (ed.), *Prospectus et tous écrits suivants* vol. I, Paris 1967, pp. 227-237.
- 43 Idem, 'Haut art D'Aloïse', in: Damisch (ed.), op. cit. (note 42), pp. 303-318 (312-314).
- 44 Idem, 'Le Lambris de Clément', in: Damisch (ed.), op. cit. (note 42), pp. 244-261.
- 45 Idem, 'La Double vie de Laure', in: Damisch (ed.), op. cit. (note 42), pp. 385-398.
- 46 Idem, 'L'Écrit du Comte du Bon Sauveur' [The Writings of Count Good Savior] in: Damisch (ed.), op. cit. (note 10), s.p.
- 47 Idem, 'Project pour un petit texte liminaire introduisant les publications de "L'art brut dans l'écrire" (1969)', in: M. Thévoz (ed.), *Le Langage de la rupture*, Paris 1978, pp. 229-230; 'L'écriture brute, qu'est-ce que c'est?', *La Quinzaine Littéraire* 285 (1978) 1-15, p. 10; H.C. Tauxe, 'Les écrits bruts', *24 Heures*, (1979), s.p.; P. Enkell, 'Je ne parviens pointement à m'exprimer', *Nouvelles littéraires* (1979), s.p.
- 48 See D. Hollier, 'Premises, Premises: Sketches in Remembrance of a Recent Graphic Turn in French Thought', in: B. Blistène, A. M. Gingeras, A. Guiheux (eds.) *Premises: Invested Spaces in Visual Arts, Architecture, and Design from France 1958-1998*, New York 1998, pp. 48-65. To list a few examples: L. Wolfson, *Le schizo et les langages*, preface by G. Deleuze (1970); L. Irigaray, *Le langage des déments* (1973) and 'Le schizophrène et la question du signe', (1974); C. Delacampagne, 'L'écriture en folie', (1974); J. Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1974); R. Druet and H. Grégoire, *La civilisation de l'écriture* (1976); M. Foucault, *Ceci n'est pas une pipe* (1973); Massin, *La lettre et l'image* (1973); M. Butor, *Les Mots dans la peinture* (1969); and M. de Certeau, 'Vocal Utopia: Glos-solalias', *Representations* 56 (1996), pp. 29-47.
- 49 J.H. Martin (ed.), *Dubuffet et l'art brut*, Milan 2005.
- 50 A. S. Weiss, *Shattered Forms: Art Brut, Phantasms, Modernism*, Albany 1992. Here, in his chapter dedicated to 'Écrits Bruts: The Other Scene of Writing' (pp. 78-87), Weiss examines Artaud's influence on Dubuffet.
- 51 J. Dubuffet, 'De-magnetization of Brains', *Asphyxiating Culture and Other Writings*, s.l. 1988, p. 100.
- 52 M. Thévoz, 'Dubuffet: The Nutcracker', translated by L. H. Wittman, *Yale French Studies* 84 (1994), pp. 198-221.
- 53 S. Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art*, Chicago 1983.
- 54 R. Barthes, *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes* (1975), translated by Richard Howard, New York 2010.
- 55 Following S. Wilson, I cite the publication of A. Gerasimov's letter on August 11, 1947 in *Pravda*, and reprinted in *Les Lettres françaises*, as the first call for Socialist Realism in French painting.