

# PACE LONDON

For Immediate Release

**Jean Dubuffet**

*Théâtres de mémoire*

13 September — 21 October 2017

6 Burlington Gardens, London W1S 3ET

Press View: Tuesday 12 September 2017, 11am — 1pm

Private View: Tuesday 12 September 2017, 6pm — 8pm



London—Pace London is honoured to present *Jean Dubuffet: Théâtres de mémoire*, the first exhibition of Dubuffet's *Théâtres de mémoire* series in over three decades and the first-ever exhibition dedicated to the series in London. Curated by Arne Glimcher, the founder of Pace Gallery, and Tamara Corm, Senior Director at Pace London, this exhibition features nine monumental paintings on loan from Fondation Dubuffet, Tate and Fondation Beyeler. Most of the works have never been seen in the UK before, including *Les données de l'instant* (1977), *Dramatisations* (1978), *Les commentaires* (1978), and *Vestiges et*

*devenirs* (1976). *Jean Dubuffet: Théâtres de mémoire* is on view from 13 September to 21 October 2017 at 6 Burlington Gardens.

The *Théâtres de mémoire* is one of Dubuffet's most important series of works, and contains some of the largest paintings he has ever made. The series, which Dubuffet started at age 74, also marks one of the last he created. The gigantic collages are composed of overlapping papers, layer upon layer, where he tested their placement by moving the elements, adding, rearranging, and deleting images until an eventual perfect coalescence of the interlocking parts was achieved. This was a new technique for the artist, and a redefinition of his art.

Each work is a vast picture made up of smaller paintings, which Dubuffet cut out and glued to the canvas. He began his process on his studio floor, where he would arrange different combinations of cut-out figures and scenes. He then used magnets to pin the paper or canvas to the wall, allowing him to easily replace one element with another, and to overlap segments until he reached his final compositions. These are the paintings that first interested Jean-Michel Basquiat, who regularly visited the gallery to see any new arrival by Dubuffet.

The paintings depict abstractions, landscapes, scribbles and figures from Dubuffet's mind. Dubuffet titled the series after Frances Yates' book *The Art of Memory*, which presents the 'memory techniques' used by Cicero and orators in the Middle Ages that enabled them to remember storehouses of knowledge. For Dubuffet, each of the *Théâtres de mémoire* is a collection of actual places and scenes that crowd and conflict in our memory. Just as memories are hazy and incoherent, the compositions have no clear narrative or starting point. In *Dramatisation* (1978) for example, Dubuffet brings together 42-elements to create an energetic assemblage of large and small figures and abstractions. Dubuffet requires the viewers to participate in this frenzy of visual information, and asks them to get lost in contemplation and experience, in Dubuffet's words, "viewing by the mind, not the eyes".

Further highlights of the exhibition include *Localisation* (1975) and *Les données de l'instant* (1977) on loan from the Fondation Dubuffet. This work depicts individuals and groupings of figures executed in distinctive styles and colours that reference earlier phases in Dubuffet's oeuvre and foreshadow some of his final bodies of work. As explained by Dr. Kent Minturn in the catalogue essay: "The individual elements bring to mind many of Dubuffet's past series, including his *early Marionnettes de la ville et de la campagne* (1942–45), *Paris Circus* (1961–62), *l'Hourloupe* (1962–74) and his more recent haphazard *Crayonnages* and *Parachiffres* (1974–75). They are the gateway to the artist's chief interests and obsessions that will dominate the last ten years of his artistic production".

The exhibition will be accompanied by a display of works from *Brefs exercices d'école journalière*, the series Dubuffet made directly after the *Théâtres de mémoire*. Like the *Théâtres de mémoire*, these paintings are assemblages that reflect many of the feelings of Dubuffet's earlier periods. In these works, Dubuffet carefully uses a range of scales to create spatial illusion.

The exhibition marks 50 years of Pace representing Dubuffet and follows Pace's tradition of staging landmark exhibitions on the artist, including two shows of *Théâtres de mémoire* presented in 1977 and

1979 in New York. An illustrated catalogue featuring an introduction by Arne Glimcher, a personal letter from Jean Dubuffet to Arne Glimcher and an essay by Dr. Kent Minturn will accompany the exhibition.

**Jean Dubuffet** (b. 1901, Le Havre, France; d. 1985, Paris) began painting at the age of seventeen and studied briefly at the Académie Julian, Paris. After seven years, he abandoned painting and became a wine merchant. It was not until 1942 that he began the work which has distinguished him as an outstanding innovator in postwar European painting. Dubuffet's interest in art brut, the art of the institutionalized and the untrained, whether a paleolithic cave artist or the writer of contemporary graffiti, led him to emulate this directly expressive and untutored style in his own work. His paintings from the early forties in brightly colored oils were soon followed by works in which he employed such unorthodox materials as cement, plaster, tar, and asphalt—scraped, carved and cut and drawn upon with a rudimentary, spontaneous line. Dubuffet's oeuvre was propelled by a constant evolution of techniques, seeking to dislocate site, space, and established continuities. In 1966, he received three independent retrospectives at museums, including the Tate Gallery, London; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; and Museum of Fine Arts, Dallas, which travelled to the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. Jean Dubuffet has been represented by Pace since 1967.

## **PACE**

Pace is a leading contemporary art gallery representing many of the most significant international artists and estates of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Founded by Arne Glimcher in Boston in 1960 and currently led by Marc Glimcher, Pace has been a constant, vital force in the art world and has introduced many renowned artists' work to the public for the first time. Pace has mounted more than 900 exhibitions, including scholarly shows that have subsequently traveled to museums, and published over 450 exhibition catalogues. Today, Pace has nine locations worldwide: three galleries in New York; one in London; one in Palo Alto, California; one in Beijing; and spaces in Hong Kong, Paris, and Seoul. In 2016, the gallery launched Pace Art + Technology, a new program dedicated to showcasing interdisciplinary art groups, collectives and studios whose works explore the confluence of art and technology. Future\ Pace, established in 2016, is a cultural partnership between Pace and Futurecity innovating multidisciplinary collaborations for art in the public realm. Pace London inaugurated its flagship gallery at 6 Burlington Gardens in 2012.

Pace London is open to the public Tuesday to Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and by appointment on Monday.

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Image: Jean Dubuffet, *Les données de l'instant*, 1977, acrylic on glued paper mounted on canvas © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2017.