

JEAN DUBUFFET
Anticultural Positions

By Phong Bui | June 3, 2016

ACQUAVELLA GALLERIES | APRIL 15 – JUNE 10, 2016



Jean Dubuffet, *Façades d'immeubles* [Apartment Houses, Paris], July 1946. Oil with sand and charcoal on canvas. 44 7/8 × 57 3/8 inches. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Bequest of Florene M. Schoenborn, 1995 (1996.403.15). Image copyright © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, NY / Art © 2016 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris.

Primordial tenants stand proudly in front of
Their *Apartment Houses* [in] Paris after the war—
Some on terraces or in frames of doors.
Others transpose their *Rustic Dialogue* onto
A gesture of *Farewell from the Window*.
Troweling earth's substances onto one surface,
Scraped away, the incisive lines conform to imagery
That is urgently born, escapes from the artist's inner mind.

Like a cave painter drawn to memorialize
A hunting ritual at day's transition to night, the light here is generated
From within. A brownish grey palette welcomes
Storms of neighboring colors: green, red, blue,



L to R: Jean Dubuffet, *Texturologie I* [*Texturology I*], September 24, 1957. Oil on canvas. 32 × 39 1/2 inches. Private Collection. Photo by Kent Pell / Art © 2016 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris; Jean Dubuffet, *L'étonné* [*The Astonished Man*], October 1959. Silver foil and driftwood. 14 1/8 inches high. Private Collection. Photo by Kent Pell / Art © 2016 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris.

Fleshy earth, soft and amorphous lumps,
Hide glue, zinc oxide, hues all returned to
The random naturalization of pebbles and sand.
The colors seem to gather together the *Will to Power*.
(A dictator's image, nude with eyes crazed and a feeble appearance).

A Jump Rope Dancer, statically frozen in the center below,
Her delineated black outlines were there
To etch the image indefinitely onto our memory.
Glimpses behind a building between intervals of
Four Women Lifting their Arms do not guarantee an
Immediate entrance. Be patient!

Meanwhile, a profile of a man on a brooch
(On a woman's stole) and
A wristwatch, handbag, and signature scratched beneath her skirt.

Black Beauty was painted in
November 1945, liberated from the fear and despair!
The gravity and grace of *Joë Bousquet in Bed* since 1918.

Blotting, pressing, dripping, sliding, broodingly cheerful.
How delightful to meet a person with a Combat Beard or
A woman with *Cherry Cheeks*, the distant cousin of
A woman with a *Growth on the Cheek*.
Miró, Giacometti, de Kooning may have met them too.

Someone nearby remarks of her encounter with
Lively Garden and *The Cross-Eyed Man* that she was astonished
By how brutally reaffirming
The artist's willingness is to use a delicate touch
As part of his arsenal (when needed).
The Beach at Cassis, inversely, is an emphatic masterpiece.
Our Old Land, *The Gallant Pursuit*,
Texturologie I, and *Gray Pavement* declare a brand
New world of textural constellation that has always been there.
The fertility of earth
Constantly feeds the mystery of consciousness.