

# TOMMASO CALABRO

GALLERIA D'ARTE

## *Jean Dubuffet*

### *between music and painting*

5 February - 23 March 2019

Opening

Saturday, 2 February 2019

2 - 6 pm

*"In my music, I wanted to place myself in the position of a man of fifty thousand years ago, a man who ignores everything about Western music and invents a music for himself without any reference, without any discipline, without anything that would prevent him from expressing himself freely and for his own good pleasure. This is exactly what I tried to do in my painting..."*

*Jean Dubuffet*

Tommaso Calabro is pleased to announce the exhibition *Jean Dubuffet: between music and painting*, which will be open from February 5<sup>th</sup> to March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2019. Through a dialogue between Dubuffet's artworks and vinyl records, the show will shed light on the affinities between the art and the musical experimentations of one of the most eclectic artists of the twentieth century.

**Jean Dubuffet (1901-1985)** encountered music when, as a child, he started playing the piano. During the 1930s, the refusal of this instrument in favour of the accordion suggests his early detachment from the traditionally noble musical instruments. This initial rejection of a conventional approach to music led Dubuffet to soon develop a strongly anticultural conception of it. At the beginning of the 1960s, the artist started a series of sound experimentations, which sanctioned his refusal of traditional musical conventions. Originated from a collaboration with Danish painter Asger Jorn, and later conducted independently or with other musicians and intellectuals, these musical experimentations consist of recordings on magnetic tape, where instruments of all sorts (classical and exotic, wooden flutes, tambourines, chimes, guitars etc...) produce syncopated rhythms, independent from any written sheet music. When employed, the human voice is used freely, independently from the classical rules of harmony and melody. In his musical research, Dubuffet aspired to replace usual melodic arrangements with a profusion of indistinct sounds, which blend and overlap. His painting is "brute" and so is his music: they are not objects of aesthetic contemplation, but rather sensory suggestions.

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In Italy, Carlo Cardazzo was the first one to support Dubuffet's pioneering musical experimentations. Following the two 1958 solo shows Cardazzo dedicated to Dubuffet's visual oeuvre in Milan and in Rome, the gallerist expressed great enthusiasm for such an innovative research, pointing to Dubuffet's music as a "revelation" to divulge. In 1961, Cardazzo supported the production of a box set of six vinyl records entitled *Esperienze musicali*, or musical experiences. The following year, a refined publication of the Edizioni del Cavallino offered a critical analysis of Dubuffet's musical compositions, including reproductions of the original covers designed by the artist for each vinyl record.

With the exhibition *Jean Dubuffet: between music and painting*, Tommaso Calabro presents the oeuvre of the French master in Milan - the city that hosted his first exhibition in Italy - in a moment of rediscovery of the artist's oeuvre in the peninsula, also prompted by the current Dubuffet retrospective at Fondazione Palazzo Magnani in Reggio Emilia.

Three rooms of the gallery will be dedicated to this show. In the first room, the screening of the documentary *Jean Dubuffet*, directed in 1961 by Jacques Rutman, and the presentation of the abovementioned vinyl covers will introduce Dubuffet as an artist-musician. The other two rooms will focus on a visual-auditive comparison among Dubuffet's artistic experimentations. The solid tone of Dubuffet's music pieces, where the most diverse sounds compenetrates one another, reflects that of the paintings on view in the second room, among which is one of his famous *Texturologies* (*Texturologie XXXV*, 1958). The 1962 *Personnage*, formerly in the collection of the New York MOMA, and *Paysage du magique* (1951), earlier in the collections of Sidney Janis and Pierre Matisse, evoke the absence of compositional rules and the total freedom of expression also characterizing the artist's music. The last room of the exhibition will be dedicated to the reproduction of Dubuffet's vinyl records, where his music will dialogue with the painting *Alentour la maison* (1957). The confrontation between Dubuffet's musical and pictorial production will thus recall Beniamino dal Fabbro's statement that "Dubuffet, although sitting at the piano, with a flute to his lips, and holding timpani and cymbals mallets (...) never ceased to be a painter, that is to reproduce through sound and rhythm the distinctive effects, surfaces, silhouettes, sign *sprezzatura*, arrogance of images, and iridescent poetry of his paintings."

## PRESS

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## OPENING TIMES

Tuesday - Saturday: 10 am - 7 pm