



A maquette of Jean Dubuffet's *Welcome Parade*, July 2, 1974

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Contact: Jennifer Benz Joy
Public Relations Associate
212.421.3292
www.pacewildenstein.com

Jean Dubuffet: Monumental Sculpture from the Hourloupe Cycle

PaceWildenstein presents a rare exhibition of the artist's sculptures

at 545 West 22nd Street, New York City

October 10 – November 8, 2008

NEW YORK, September 29, 2008—Recognized as one of the most enigmatic painters of the second half of the 20th century, Jean Dubuffet's entrée into the architectural dimension of his work developed during his *Hourloupe* period (1962–74). **From October 10 through November 8, 2008, PaceWildenstein will present *Jean Dubuffet: Monumental Sculpture from the Hourloupe Cycle*, a rare exhibition of the artist's sculptures, including *Welcome Parade*, initially conceived for the opening of the National Gallery of Art's East Wing and realized and exhibited for the first time at PaceWildenstein.**

A catalogue with essays by Daniel Abadie, Professor of Art History at the Université Libre de Bruxelles and curator of the 2001 *Jean Dubuffet - l'exposition du centenaire* at the Musée d'Art Moderne Geroges Pompidou, Paris, and Sophie Webel, Director of the Fondation Dubuffet, will accompany the exhibition, and **a reception will be held on Thursday, October 16th from 6-8 p.m. at 545 West 22nd Street, New York City.**

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Jean Dubuffet (1901–1985) began the *Hourloupe* cycle in 1962. At the time the artist was 61 years old and had been painting for 20 years. In the beginning the cycle consisted of drawings and paintings, but Dubuffet, wishing to give them greater “corporeality,” transformed the flattened images into three-dimension, creating what he referred to not as painted sculptures, but rather “drawings which extend and expand in space.”¹ It was for the architectural dimension of his work that Dubuffet would earn the American Institute of Architects’ medal, the only honor that he did not turn down during his lifetime.

The *Hourloupe* cycle, characterized by three predominate colors: red, white, and blue with sinuous black lines representing a major exploration of three-dimensional space influenced by the artist's interest in architecture and, as Daniel Abadie explains, by his desire "to design monumental sculptures as a dialogue with passersby."

Welcome Parade, the largest work on view in *Jean Dubuffet: Monumental Sculpture from the Hourloupe Cycle*, is composed of five polyurethane paint on epoxy figures: *L’Accueillant*, *Cherche-Aubaine*, *L’incivil*, *Rédingoton*, and *Le Facétieux*, and measures over 13' x 27' x 16'. Originally conceived during a long collaboration with architect I.M. Pei, who was in charge of designing the East Wing of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., the work was a response to the offer to “place an entire room at the disposal of the artist so that he might display his works there on the walls, ceiling and floor.” During the early 1970s when this project was in discussion, Dubuffet, in the tradition of his *Hourloupe* cycle, would also realize and install *Groupe de quatre arbes*, a permanent public commission situated at the Chase Manhattan Plaza in New York (inaugurated in October 1972) and *Coucou Bazaar*, his celebrated “animated painting” consisting of costumed actors and large-scale *Hourloupe* works, would be performed at both the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York and the Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, Paris on the occasions of his retrospectives at those institutions in 1973.

Jean Dubuffet: Monumental Sculpture from the Hourloupe Cycle includes two other monumental works *Tour aux Récits* (1973–2000) and *L’Ambulant* (2008, after a maquette dated August 8, 1973) as well as a smaller solitary figure entitled *Personnage pour Washington Parade* (2008, after a maquette dated 1973). With the *Hourloupe* cycle, Dubuffet sought to create an alternative reality; a parallel world whose name,

¹ Jean Dubuffet, “Remarks on the Unveiling of The Group of Four Trees,” New York, October 24, 1972 translated by Benita Eisler in *Jean Dubuffet: A Retrospective, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum* (New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 1973) 36.

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when spoken in French, conjured “some wonderland or grotesque object or creature, while at the same time they evoke something rumbling and threatening with tragic overtones,”² the artist explained in his remarks at the unveiling of *Groupe de quatre arbes* in 1972.

Tragically, the National Gallery put Dubuffet’s project officially “in abeyance” for financial reasons. Soon thereafter, Arne Glimcher, Dubuffet’s dealer since 1968, offered the artist the opportunity to enlarge some of the characters from *Welcome Parade*. Webel concludes that Dubuffet “chose five of them, enlarged to a less-grand scale and arranged differently, to form a new monumental group he name *La Députation*—which to end a long story, would be exhibited in Washington at the opening of the East Building.”

In 1973 Jean Dubuffet established a foundation for the sole purpose of preserving his monumental projects from “technical, financial and sometimes political vagaries.” Webel writes that the artist’s “main preoccupation was to ensure the future of those projects, so that they might eventually become a reality after his death while respecting the character of his artistic work.” During his lifetime, Dubuffet worked very closely with Richard Dhoedt, a fabricator who cast all of his important large-scale projects. Dhoedt is responsible for realizing the works on view in the current exhibition, in accordance with the stated wishes of the artist.

Jean Dubuffet (b. 1901–d. 1985), a student of the Académie Julian in Paris, left school in 1918 to pursue an independent form of art education. Along the way, he developed an appreciation for literature, philosophy, linguistics, and music. After fulfilling his military obligations in France (1939–40) and pursuing an occupation in his family’s wine business, the artist returned to painting full-time in 1942. Shortly thereafter, Dubuffet started exhibiting in galleries and museums around the world.

Like many of his generation in Europe in the wake of World War II, Dubuffet sought artistic authenticity not within the confines of formal European tradition, but rather he looked to those on the margins of art: the socially isolated and to a limited degree, the art of children. Influenced by those perspectives on art, Dubuffet incorporated similar visual language into his own work. Dubuffet referred to this painting style as “Art Brut.” He coined the term, a predecessor to outsider art, in the late 1940s.

² Ibid., p. 35.

In his lifetime, Jean Dubuffet was the subject of twelve major museum retrospectives including The Museum of Modern Art (1962), which traveled to The Art Institute of Chicago and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Tate Gallery, London (1966); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (1966); Museum of Fine Arts, Dallas (1966), which traveled to the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Musée des Beaux-Arts, Montreal (1969-70); and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (1973, 1981).

PaceWildenstein has represented Jean Dubuffet since 1968, and since that time, fourteen solo exhibitions have been mounted at the gallery. Additionally, in 2003, PaceWildenstein installed four large-scale sculptures from the artist's *Hourloupe* cycle: *Rédingoton*, *Calamuchon*, *Tour aux membrures*, and *Tour aux scriptions* on Park Avenue between 54th and 57th Streets in New York City.

Jean Dubuffet's work is part of over fifty public collections worldwide.

For more information on *Jean Dubuffet: Monumental Sculpture from the Hourloupe Cycle* please contact Jennifer Benz Joy at jjoy@pacewildenstein.com or Lauren Staub at lstaub@pacewildenstein.com or call 212.421.3292.

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L'Ambulant, 2008 after maquette dated August 8, 1973



Tour aux Récits, 2007 after maquette dated July 19, 1973

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