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AVANT-GARDES: Selections from the Merrill C. Berman Collection

February 5 – April 24, 2004

Constructivism, Dada, De Stijl, Futurism, Neue Sachlichkeit, Surrealism

J. S. Anderson, Johannes Baader, Willi Baumeister, Christ Beekman, Pasqualino Cangiullo, Carlo Carrà, Jean Crotti, Felix DeBoeck, Walter Dexel, Cesar Domela, Vassily Ermilov, Alexandra Exter, George Grosz, Raoul Hausmann, Hannah Höch, Karl Holtz, Vilmos Huszar, Paul Joostens, Gustav Klutsis, El Lissitzky, Lou Loeber, Jeanne Mammen, Robert Michel, Alastair Morton, Oskar Nerlinger, Josef Peeters, Liubov Popova, Thijs Rinsema, Aleksandr Rodchenko, Karl Peter Röhl, Rudolf Schlichter, Paul Schuitema, Victor Servranckx, Nikolai Sidelnikov, Maria Siniakova, Jindrich Styrsky, Karel Teige, Solomon Telingater, Jan Tschichold, L. H. Tutundjian, Konstantin Vialov, Ilia Zdanevitch, Piet Zwart

Ubu Gallery is pleased to present **AVANT-GARDES: Selections from the Merrill C. Berman Collection**, featuring more than 65 works by over 40 artists associated with most of the major European avant-garde movements which flourished between the two World Wars. Selected from his superb collection by Merrill Berman himself, this exhibition presents a richly diverse group of artists and styles linked by their “forward-looking” posture and visual “punch.” The works to be exhibited at Ubu – as with Berman’s entire collection – represent a “personalized” cut through 20th Century visual culture “authored” by a collector with an extremely keen and knowledgeable eye. Rather than acquiring only important names (although the collection has more than its share of these, as well), Berman has considered the “aesthetic” aspect of each work and its historical context in deciding whether to add it to his collection. The exhibition will include original, unique works, as well as “ephemeral” advertising or promotional pieces, some with a level of rarity such that they may be considered “functionally unique.”

Berman is best known as a collector of graphic design – both the final printed works and the original art works used in their creation – and his collection consists of well in excess of 20,000 pieces. The archival scope of Berman’s collection is fertile ground for the curatorial community and his collection has been the basis of numerous museum exhibitions drawn solely from his holdings, including “Graphic Design in the Mechanical Age” (Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution; Williams College Museum of Art; Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington; IVAM Centre Julio González, Valencia, Spain; and the Suntory and Kawasaki Museums, Japan; 1998). While Berman’s collection covers all aspects of 20th Century art and spans the U.S. and Europe (with a few forays into other areas, such as Japan), it is particularly rich in Russian avant-garde art and graphics. Russian avant-garde exhibitions drawn solely from his collection include “Building the Collective: Soviet Graphic Design, 1917–1937” (Miriam & Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery, Columbia University, 1996); “Art into Life: Russian Constructivism, 1914–1932” (Walker Art Center; Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington; and the State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow; 1990) and “Art for the Masses: Russian Revolutionary Art” (Williams College Museum of Art, 1985).

A fully-illustrated catalogue will accompany the exhibition and is expected to be available in mid-February.

Ubu Gallery is located at 416 East 59th Street between First Avenue and Sutton Place. Hours are 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Tuesday through Saturday.

For further information or for visuals, please contact Adam J. Boxer or Gile R. Downes, Jr., Director, at (212) 753 4444.