

OPERA GALLERY



(L-R) *Échec à l'être*, October 1971, acrylic on klegecell, 261 x 505 x 11.4 cm | 102.8 x 198.8 x 4.5 in;
Site au défunt, 12 July 1982, 1982, acrylic and paper collage on paper mounted on canvas, 67 x 100 cm | 26.4 x 39.4 in

PARIS

Jean Dubuffet L'Hourloupe et son sillage (1962-1982)

16 OCTOBER - 12 NOVEMBER 2025

July 2025—Opera Gallery is pleased to present **Jean Dubuffet, L'Hourloupe et son sillage (1962-1982)** a major solo exhibition dedicated to Jean Dubuffet (1901–1985) during this year's Paris Art Week. Running from 16 October - 12 November 2025, this exhibition **marks the 40th anniversary of Dubuffet's passing** and highlights the importance of *L'Hourloupe* and the series that grew out of it.

Featuring a curation of works created over a 20-year period, this exhibition largely celebrates his iconic and prolific *L'Hourloupe* series. Lasting for twelve years from 1962–1974, the series constitutes a pivotal milestone in Jean Dubuffet's œuvre that would go on to greatly influence his subsequent series. Thus, in addition to *L'Hourloupe I* and *II*, this exhibition brings together works from *Coucou Bazar*, *Roman burlesque*, *Sites tricolores*, *Crayonnages*, *Récits*, *Conjectures*, *Parachiffres*, *Mondanités*, *Lieux abrégés*, *Théâtres de mémoire*, *Psycho-sites* and *Sites aléatoires*.

The *L'Hourloupe* series originates from stripes scribbled with ballpoint pen, a kind of automatic drawing that Dubuffet would render during telephone conversations. These works are characterised by cellular forms composed of flat areas of red and blue, hatching, and empty white spaces outlined with a thick black line. This cycle, the longest in Dubuffet's œuvre, is a counterpoint to the previous series, a radically different style that the artist establishes as a system and which illustrates the way the artist deconstructs reality to reveal another reality. The *L'Hourloupe* thus consists of “totally abstracting oneself from the everyday natural world to nourish the gaze only with one's own mental elaborations” said Jean Dubuffet in a note dated May 7, 1968.

This exhibition is a testament to the artist's creative genius over the last two decades and explores the tension between construction and deconstruction of reality, figuration and abstraction, matter and language.

Among the exhibition's highlights is *Échec à l'être*, 1971, one of Dubuffet's 175 large-scale “Practicables”—painted cutouts originally created for his iconic immersive performance, *Coucou Bazar*. This hour-long show, first presented at the Guggenheim Museum in 1973, was conceived as a hybrid of painting, sculpture, and performance, bringing the *L'Hourloupe* series to life with costumed actors and dancers and painted stage elements. In 1982, Jean Dubuffet began the series *Sites aléatoires*, which included *Site au Défunt*, 1982. Returning to the practice of cutting and collage, he created his characters in advance on paper coated with white paint. This work is in the aesthetic continuity of the *Psycho-sites* series with compositions not directly referencing reality—inhabited by childlike, identical characters that could be interpreted as ideograms.

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For Opera Gallery, Dubuffet is more than a towering figure of French post-war art—his radical vision represents the spirit of artistic rebellion and innovation that has been a cornerstone of the gallery's curatorial mission for decades. "Dubuffet's work reflects the very DNA of Opera Gallery," says Marion Petitdidier, Director of Opera Gallery Paris. "We've long been committed to reexamining the French Post-War canon and connecting it with contemporary sensibilities. His radical language, material experimentation, and rejection of convention are themes we return to again and again." Presented during Paris Art Week—one of the most vibrant moments in the international art calendar and coinciding with Art Basel—this exhibition reaffirms Opera Gallery's deep engagement with the key voices of 20th-century art. It also underscores Paris' position as a renewed centre for postwar and contemporary dialogue.

Opera Gallery previously presented Dubuffet in its 2021 Paris exhibition 'Bal des Figures'. With this new exhibition dedicated to Dubuffet, Opera Gallery reaffirms its enduring commitment to Post-War French art.

About Jean Dubuffet:

Born in Le Havre, France in 1901, Jean Dubuffet is known as the founder of the Art Brut movement. Over the course of his roughly 40 year career, Dubuffet rejected traditional artistic standards and embraced the work of outsiders, including children and psychiatric patients, believing their art was more authentic and expressive. His own work was characterised by a raw, unrefined style, often using unconventional materials like sand, tar, and pebbles. His bold, primitive aesthetic challenged established norms and had a lasting impact on Post-War art. He remained active until his death in 1985, leaving behind a legacy that continues to influence contemporary artists today.

Dubuffet's work has been featured in hundreds of solo exhibitions worldwide, including over 30 travelling exhibitions and numerous retrospectives. His work is held in over 60 public collections worldwide including The Art Institute of Chicago, The Centre Pompidou in Paris; Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Tate in London, and many more.

About Opera Gallery:

Founded in Singapore in 1994, Opera Gallery has forged a network of galleries worldwide with locations in London, Paris, New York, Geneva, Madrid and Dubai, establishing itself as one of the leading forces within the international art market.

Headed by Gilles Dyan, Chairman and Founder, Opera Gallery specialises in Modern, Post-War, and Contemporary art. In addition, the gallery represents international emerging artists such as Andy Denzler, Pieter Obels and Gustavo Nazareno, alongside internationally recognised names such as Ron Arad, Manolo Valdés and Anselm Reyle.

For more than 30 years, Opera Gallery's mission has been to showcase the dynamic, innovative, and diverse expressions of Modern and Contemporary art through its ambitious yearly exhibition programming and collaborations with private collections and leading public institutions. Opera Gallery in Paris is led by Director Marion Petitdidier.

Press Contact:

Beverly Bueninck | beverly@suttoncomms.com | + 33 (0)6 50 99 52 00
Ilenia Bolognesi | ilenia@suttoncomms.com | + 33 (0)6 65 56 38 02
Katherine McMahon | katherine@operagallery.com | +44 7763 200114

Opera Gallery Paris

62 rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré
75008 Paris
paris@operagallery.com
T +33 1 42 96 39 00
Mon - Sat : 10 am - 7 pm

operagallery.com