

MODERNISM

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JACQUES VILLEGLE

TRACES: DÉCOLLAGES FROM THE 1956 – 2000

March 15 - April 30, 2018

For over sixty-five years, Jacques VILLEGLE's work has played an important role in redefining what constitutes a work of art. He is an artist who was instrumental in bringing the streetscape into the space of the exhibition.

Villeglé, a founding member of the *Nouveau Réaliste* group (with Yves Klein, Pierre Restany, Arman, Raymond Hains, Mimmo Rotella, etc.), began collecting objects lost or washed up on the beach at Saint-Malo for use in his earliest sculptures shortly after the Second World War. Since then, his art has always revealed an intense relationship with his perception of the world at its most brutally realistic. From 1949 onward, Jacques Villeglé began systematically collecting scraps of posters torn from walls around town, inventing a brand new artistic practice, which in turn gave rise to a new type of work of art. This radical re-appropriation of an otherwise ordinary material enabled him to capture the spirit of the times and the image of a society driven by communication, which expressed itself above all through its obsession with current affairs and the omnipresence of the media.

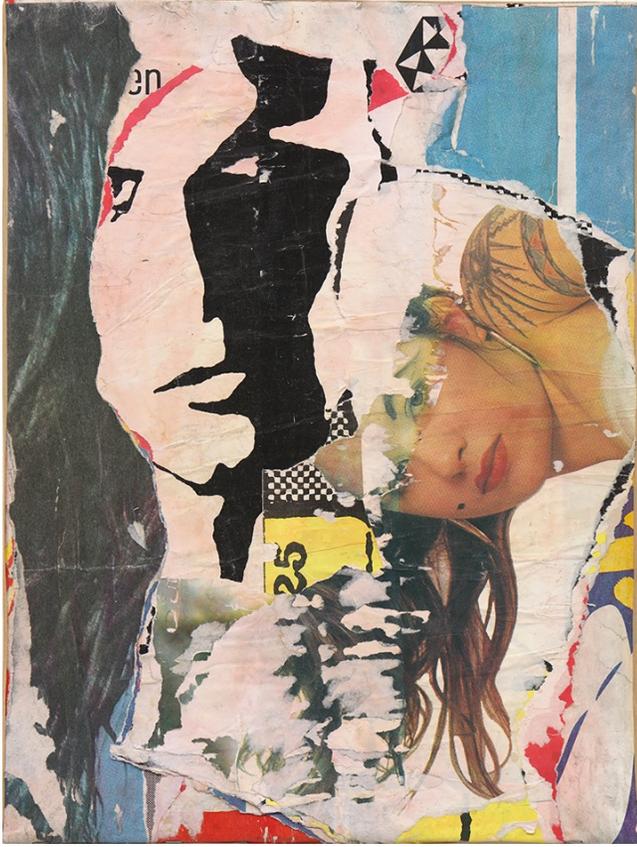
Villeglé sees a social complexity in the developments in the style, typography and subject of the source posters. He also considers the processes of the overlaying and the peeling of the posters by passers-by to be a manifestation of a liberated art of the street. Both aspects are implicitly social and political. As Villeglé points out, anonymity differentiates the torn posters from the collages of the Cubists or of the German artist Kurt Schwitters. In *'Des Réalités collectives'* (1958) Villeglé wrote: 'To collages, which originate in the interplay of many possible attitudes, the *affiches lacérées*, as a spontaneous manifestation, oppose their immediate vivacity'. He saw the results as extending the conceptual basis of Marcel Duchamp's readymades, whereby an object selected by an artist is declared as art.

Jacques Villeglé's works—from his invention of a socio-political alphabet that draws on symbols, codes, and acronyms borrowed from subversive and counter-cultural graffiti, to his transfer of torn posters from the street to the exhibition space—highlight the political dimension of our urban



Rue du Cotentin, mars 1958, décollage mounted on canvas
22 1/2 x 16 1/8 inches

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Banlieue ouest, circa 1989
décollage mounted on canvas
18 7/8 x 14 1/8 inches

communities. His torn posters, with their fragmented images and dislocated typography, are spontaneous, anonymous, and collective; they invite the visitor to lose himself in a space that is as fictional as it is poetic.

Jacques VILLEGLE's work has been exhibited extensively in the United States and Europe, and is the collections of many important museums worldwide (Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Tate Gallery, London; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Musée d'Israël, Jerusalem). In the fall of 2008 a major retrospective of his works was exhibited at the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. In 2011 Modernism published the English translation of Villeglé's theoretical writings *Urbi et Orbi* from 1959, and two new scholarly monographs are forthcoming later this year, one by Alain Borer, and the other by Barnaby Conrad III.

Modernism is pleased to present this in-depth survey of décollage works by Jacques VILLEGLE, one of France's most influential contemporary artists.

THE PUBLIC IS INVITED TO ATTEND A RECEPTION FOR THE ARTIST ON THURSDAY, MARCH 15TH, FROM 5:30-8PM.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CALL: 415/541-0461 / FAX: 415/541-0425

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