

PROVOKYA

DADA BROS MAN RAY & PICABIA
The Avant-Garde Masters at Vito Schnabel Gallery
By Ines Valencia
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Man Ray, *The Tortoise*, 1944. Oil on canvas, 20 x 24 inches (50.8 x 61 cm) © Man Ray 2015 Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY / ADAGP, Paris 2021.

Vito Schnabel Gallery, in New York, is hosting the historical exhibition *Man Ray & Picabia*. This show brings together two of the most legendary artists of the avant-garde and essential contributors to the Dada movement. It runs through May 15, 2021.

Man Ray & Picabia focuses on nine carefully selected paintings produced between the late 1920s and mid-1950s (some of which have not been on display to the public for decades.) Both artists did meet briefly in 1915 (Marcel Duchamp introduced them). Still, the dialogue presented in the exhibition is an imaginary one between the two, one that uses juxtaposition to bring their similarities to light. Both were prominent figures in the Dada and Surrealist movements, and breaking rules played significant roles in redefining what can be considered art and what it can contain and do. The show includes a catalog featuring an essay by writer and Man Ray specialist Timothy Baum, who declares that Man Ray and Picabia were “Dada brethren.”

Man Ray (1890 - 1976), whose birth name was Emmanuel Radnitzky, was an American artist born in Pennsylvania, although he spent the larger part of his artistic career in Paris. Like many of his American contemporaries, he was first exposed to contemporary European avant-garde works at the Armory Show in New York City in 1913. The Dada movement (which consisted of artists who protested against logic, capitalism, and time conventions by creating satirical, irrational, and nonsensical works) drew him to Europe. He once stated that ‘Dada cannot live in New York. All New York is Dada, and will not tolerate a rival.’ Man Ray’s practice was diverse as he experimented with

different media types (including painting, photography, collage, and sculpture,) although he considered himself a painter. In Paris, he joined the Dadaist group and became well known for his photography (his subjects included some of the biggest names in the art world, including Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dalí, Peggy Guggenheim, Gertrude Stein, and Jean Cocteau). However, he abandoned the medium for painting in 1937.

Francis Picabia (1879-1953) was a French artist specializing in painting, poetry, and typography. Like Man Ray, he was one of the central figures in the Dada movement. Having moved on from Impressionism, Pointillism, and Cubism, Picabia identified with the provocative spirit of Dada and was active in both Paris and Zürich but renounced his ties to the movement in 1921, the same year Man Ray arrived in Paris, after which Picabia left for the French Riviera. In the 1940s, he adopted a more ‘realist’ approach to painting.

Man Ray & Picabia opened on March 25 and runs through May 15, 2021. The show features works that demonstrate the artists’ revolutionary approaches to painting, such as *Non-Abstraction* (1947) and *The Tempest* (1948,) painted by Man Ray during his time in California, as well as works from Picabia’s *Transparencies* series which he created some years after leaving Paris in 1921. His sensual and provocative painting *Femme á la chemise Bleue* (1942-43,) a work that illustrates one of the artist’s later stylistic shifts where he drew inspiration from popular kitsch imagery, is also featured. Learn about the evolution of both artists’ careers, as well as their unapparent similarities and differences, in this beautiful, one-of-a-kind show.

MAN RAY & PICABIA



Francis Picabia, *Helias*, c. 1930. Oil on canvas 25 5/8 x 21 1/4 inches (65 x 54 cm) © 2021 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris.



Francis Picabia, *Mendica*, ca. 1929-34. Oil on canvas, 63 1/2 x 51 1/8 inches (161.2 x 130 cm). © 2021 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris.



Francis Picabia, *Stanhopea Martiana*, c. 1932. Oil on canvas 18 x 15 inches (45.7 x 38.1 cm) © 2021 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris.



Man Ray, *Composition*, 1954. Oil on canvas 18 x 15 inches (45.7 x 38 cm) © Man Ray 2015 Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY / ADAGP, Paris. 2021



Man Ray, *Non-Abstraction*, 1947. Oil on panel 36 1/4 x 27 1/2 inches (92.1 x 68.9 cm) © Man Ray 2015 Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY / ADAGP, Paris 2021.



Man Ray, *Peinture Feminine*, 1954. Oil on canvas 50 x 43 3/4 inches (127 x 111.1 cm) © Man Ray 2015 Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY / ADAGP, Paris 2021.



Man Ray, *The Tempest*, 1948. Oil on canvas 18 x 24 inches (45.7 x 60.1 cm) © Man Ray 2015 Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY / ADAGP, Paris. 2021