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The Incursion of Jean Dubuffet
Art Brut in America The Incursion of Jean Dubuffet

Art Brut in America



American Folk Art Museum

Alfonso Ossorio, Ted Dragon, Jean Dubuffet, and Lili Cirilo in Hyères, France, May 1950. Alfonso Ossorio and Edward Dragon Young Papers (SC 15), file 88.

Harvard Art Museums Archives, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. Black and white reproduction.



Jean Dubuffet and Alfonso Ossorio

Kent Minton

Few of Jean Dubuffet's personal and professional relationships survived the ups and downs of the artist's notoriously demanding and *colérique* temperament. His friendship with Alfonso Ossorio, which lasted from their introduction in November 1949 until late in their lives, however, represents a rare exception to the rule.

At the end of the 1940s, while continuing to produce his own paintings, Ossorio became increasingly interested in collecting the work of his contemporaries or, as he put it, in "buying ideas."¹ Ossorio purchased Jackson Pollock's *Number 5, 1948* from the Betty Parsons Gallery in January 1949. By spring, Ossorio and Pollock had become fast friends. When they got together, they often spoke of another artist whom they both admired: Dubuffet. At Pollock's urging, Ossorio went to Paris in the fall of 1949 to meet Dubuffet and see more of his work. The rendezvous was arranged by Ossorio's friend, the French author and translator Blaise Allan, who happened to know Dubuffet's close acquaintance and first champion, the linguist and chief editor of *La nouvelle revue française*, Jean Paulhan.²

In Paris, Ossorio and Dubuffet immediately hit it off and saw each other constantly. Dubuffet showed Ossorio his latest works as well as examples from his collection of art brut. Ossorio purchased three of Dubuffet's paintings: *Robinson* (1949), *Figure au site champêtre* (1949), and *La dame au pompon* (1946). Before Ossorio returned to New York, Dubuffet gave him a copy of his first book, *Prospectus aux amateurs de tout genre* (Prospectus for Amateur Artists of Every Kind) (1946), and the catalog he had prepared for a recent exhibition of art brut at the Galerie René Drouin, *L'art brut préféré aux arts culturels* (Art Brut in Preference to the Cultural Arts) (1949).³ The first book, which Ossorio would cite as one of the most important books he ever read, takes the form of a user's manual for "amateur artists of every kind."⁴ Foregoing art historical contexts and linear narrative, it highlights the materialistic and operational side of painting, and as such seems to anticipate much of what Dubuffet would write on Ossorio in 1951. The second book offers Dubuffet's formal definition of art brut.⁵

Ossorio would visit Dubuffet in Paris again in December 1950. In the interim, for ten months from early 1950 to the fall of that year, Ossorio traveled to his birth country, the Philippines—specifically, to Victorias in the province of Negros Occidental—to work on a mural depicting Christ on Judgment Day. The mural was painted inside the Chapel of St. Joseph the Worker, a church erected for the employees of his family's sugar refinery. It was Ossorio's first time back since he was ten years old, and the return stirred up conflicted feelings. His childhood had not been a particularly happy one, and as an adult he was in the process of questioning his Catholicism.⁶ Ossorio and Dubuffet established a rich correspondence during this time, exchanging books and photos as well as news clippings. Ossorio wrote to Dubuffet frequently, updating him on his progress and keeping him abreast of the problems he was having with some of his artmaking materials in the tropical climate. In turn, Dubuffet sent letters with very precise technical advice. One in particular, dated March 26, 1950, contains eight "recipes" for oil painting on cement.⁷

At the same time that he was painting the mural for the church, Ossorio made a series of approximately four hundred drawings, gouaches, and watercolors. The mural project, which required Ossorio to stay within the confines of traditional Christian iconography, felt constraining to him.⁴ The smaller works became his release. They were spontaneous and improvisational; some were even done on sheets from a pad of Tiffany & Co. paper that his brother had given him, simply because it was there at hand. Ossorio allowed himself to try something new: a wax resist technique, which he readily admitted he borrowed from Romanian surrealist Victor Brauner.⁵ Those works became known as the Victorias drawings (even though they are technically paintings) and comprise many of the pieces that Dubuffet focuses on in his 1951 monograph on Ossorio, *Peintures initiatiques d'Alfonso Ossorio* (The Initiatory Paintings of Alfonso Ossorio) (page 41). Dubuffet rightly refers to them as Ossorio's "over-flow"—decorations for his "own personal and private Church."⁶ Ossorio sent Dubuffet photographs of his mural and a few actual examples of the smaller works. In Dubuffet's responses, we see his increasing admiration for Ossorio's outstanding originality, and he expresses an interest in writing a book on Ossorio and organizing a show of his work in Paris. Both projects eventually came to fruition.

Ossorio also sent Dubuffet photographs of some American art brut objects that he owned, including the anonymous *Crucifix and Christ Child*. He had begun collecting these long before he learned of Dubuffet's parallel research. In a letter dated May 22, 1950, Dubuffet replied: "Many thanks for the beautiful photograph of the crucifix in the bottle; that minor expression of American art brut keenly interests me. I am delighted to paste the reproduction into the albums of the Foyer de L'Art Brut."⁷

At first, Ossorio's art went hand-in-hand with the idea of art brut for Dubuffet. Moreover, Ossorio clearly fit Dubuffet's notion of the art brut artist as he defined it in 1949: someone "who works from his own reserves" and refuses to "mimic" others. Equally important, Dubuffet felt that Ossorio's works were, like those of all artists bruts, "grandly remote from the aims of classical European art."⁸ In his letters, Dubuffet praises Ossorio for his idiosyncratic and extremely personal style: "You have developed—no one could have done it any better—a means of self expression that suits you perfectly."⁹ For Dubuffet, cultural art was "counterfeit," whereas art brut constituted the true aesthetic gold standard. In Paris, March 1950, Dubuffet wrote to Ossorio, "I beg you to continue to send your gold coins [the Victorias drawings] to a country of wooden nickels."¹⁰

Over time, however, Dubuffet's opinions inevitably evolved, and he came to admit that Ossorio was far too cultured and literary to be considered a true art brut artist. And yet, to Dubuffet's mind, Ossorio nevertheless possessed something so unique that he merited a full-fledged monographic study. Dubuffet would continue to view him, equivocally, as a highly cultured artist who was able to willfully reject cultural and historical influences. His position on this issue was never fully resolved, and it is reflected today in Ossorio's status in the Collection de l'Art Brut in Lausanne, Switzerland. Eleven of Ossorio's works are included in the collection, but they reside in permanent limbo—that is, in the *neuve invention* department of the museum, which is dedicated to artists who have brut qualities but are not entirely "exempt from cultural implications."¹¹

Cover of the book *Peintures initiatiques d'Alfonso Ossorio* by Jean Dubuffet (Paris: La Pierre Volante, 1951), 10 1/4 x 8 1/4 in. Fondation Dubuffet Archives, Paris. Black and white reproduction.



Ossorio returned to New York from the Philippines in October 1950 and stayed until December before going back to Paris. When he left for Paris, Ossorio let Pollock and Lee Krainer use his residence at 9 MacDougal Street in Greenwich Village as a *pied à terre* , and he took with him two recently purchased paintings by Pollock— *Number 30, 1949* and *Number B, 1950* —and approximately three hundred Victorias drawings.

In Paris, Ossorio rented an apartment near Place Clichy and saw Dubuffet frequently. Dubuffet showed him around town and took him to see the new installation of the art brut collection in the Éditions Gallimard pavilion. He introduced him to important people, including Michel Tapié, an art world guru, critic, and collector, and proponent of what he dubbed "art autre" (art of another kind), exemplified, according to Tapié, by the works of Henri Michaux, Dubuffet, Ossorio, Mark Tobey, Pollock, and Georges Mathieu, among others.¹⁸ With some help from Dubuffet, Tapié would organize Ossorio's solo show at Studio Paul Facchetti in Paris (October 9–30, 1951).

In May 1951, Dubuffet and his wife, Lili Carlu, invited Ossorio and his partner Ted Dragon to vacation with them at a nudist colony on the Île du Levant, one of the four islands that constitute the Îles d'Hyères, off the Côte d'Azur, not far from St. Tropez (page 38). It was a beautiful and sunny spot, which Dubuffet described as a "kind of deserted isle completely invaded by *'le marquis'* [evergreen shrubs], and a virgin forest 3 meters [about ten feet] high composed of very tall Briar Trees, myrtus and Strawberry Trees."¹⁹ Ossorio and Dragon gladly took them up on their offer and stayed there fifteen days. "We enjoyed the nudism," Ossorio later explained. "It is only difficult at meals."²⁰

Dubuffet was a workaholic, even while on vacation. The friends all stayed together in the same house, and Dubuffet also rented a room in the village where he went each morning to write his monograph on Ossorio. The book includes descriptions of selected Victorias drawings as well as some related works that Ossorio had created since arriving on the Île du Levant. Ossorio painted, Dubuffet wrote. When composing the book, Dubuffet had many of the works about which he was writing right in front of him—some of which had been executed just hours before. This fact is reflected in Dubuffet's writing style. For example, at one point, he inserts that "the last twenty [works] were executed in my presence, so to speak, in May 1951, on one of those half-wild islands off Hyères (where I am presently writing these lines)."²¹ Dubuffet makes it clear that his study is not art history written from afar (in time nor in space), rather, it is art writing "on the spot," and as such, much closer to journalistic reportage. He quickly transcribes Ossorio's painterly performance, his "dance," as if it was unfolding before our eyes:

And here is our painter, standing at his work-table, about to begin. The page before him is moistened with water, hence more conducive and more impressionable. And water is the vehicle—if not the primordial element—of the birth of worlds; water is the first mother of beings, and the sacred element *numero uno* . He dashes on several colors, which produce certain patches; a few summary lines—in great haste and suddenness—are mingled with those patches; all this is flung onto the moist paper, is hastily organized (under the effect of the very rapid drying) in streaks and flows, in trees, in caterpillars, in stars.²²

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Peintures initiatiques d'Alfonso Ossorio is arguably one of Dubuffet's finest pieces of writing. It established him as an accomplished art critic and theorist as well as a painter, sculptor, and architect who made occasional forays into theater. At times, it sounds like he was writing about his own art. This comes across most obviously when Dubuffet discusses Ossorio's *La mère en rose* (1951) (a work he subsequently purchased), which has much in common with the former artist's series of *Corps de dame* paintings, executed from April 1950 to February 1951, just before he wrote his book on Ossorio (page 44). With that series, Dubuffet set out to demolish the traditional genre of the female nude. His messy, amorphic, and disproportioned figures are flattened, beaten, smeared, and incised. Ossorio would have seen these in Dubuffet's studio when he was visiting Paris, and again when they were shown in New York at the Pierre Matisse Gallery (January 9–February 3, 1951). In his review of the show, American critic Henry McBride famously quipped, "they appear to have been flattened out by a steamroller and allowed to dry in the sun for quite some time."²³ The artist's explicit goal, as he adumbrates in a 1953 text published in English in Peter Selz's *Jean Dubuffet* :

When I asked myself what brought me to this subject, so typical of the worst painting I think it is, in part, because the female body, of all the subjects in the world, is the one that has long been associated (for Occidentals) with a very suspicious notion of beauty (inherited from the Greeks and cultivated on the magazine covers); now it pleases me to protest against this aesthetic which I find miserable and most depressing.²⁴

Dubuffet's *Corps de dame* series has been compared to Willem de Kooning's *Woman I* (1950–1952) and related paintings.²⁵ Ossorio owned two of de Kooning's *Women* , works on paper that he bought from Betty Parsons, which Dubuffet may have seen. However, it is impossible to trace a direct causal relationship between the two artists, and upon further investigation it becomes clear that their paintings have little in common. De Kooning's *Woman I* is in dialogue with the popular culture of its day with precisely the kind of beauty that was, according to Dubuffet, being "cultivated on the magazine covers." (In fact, at one point, *Woman I* contained collage elements cut out of a magazine ad for Camel cigarettes.) Dubuffet's *Ladies* are not, nor is Ossorio's *La mère en rose* . This is precisely what connects them, and what Dubuffet focuses on in his text.

In his description of Ossorio's *La mère en rose* , Dubuffet marvels at the paradoxical dialectic "between the metaphysical character that blows through this work (it becomes even more abstract and delirious), and the means of expression employed, which become on the contrary more precise and more realistic."²⁶ Ultimately, Dubuffet, like Ossorio, was interested in the female nude in order to "give body to" a new "materialistic metaphysics" or "metaphysical materialism," hence the neologism that he invented for one of them, *Le Métalzyx* (1950) (page 46). In his series, Dubuffet makes it clear that he shares one of Ossorio's most fundamental beliefs, expressed succinctly in the diary he kept while he was in Victorias: "There is no purity."²⁷ Indeed, in reinventing the female nude in the postwar period, both artists were able to introduce a third term, an impure aesthetic, at once theoretical and corporeal, to a postwar scene divided between "pure" abstraction and figurative realism.

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Alfonso Ossorio (1916–1996). *La mère en rose* (The mother in pink). January 1951. United States, watercolor on paper cut in the shape of a female body, 30 1/4 x 22 1/2 in. Collection de l'Art Brut.

Lausanne, Switzerland, c.1911–1201. Black and white reproduction.



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There is ample evidence to suggest that thinking and writing about Ossorio's paintings inspired Dubuffet's own artistic production in the years to come. As B. H. Friedman rightly points out, in Dubuffet's text on Ossorio he writes about the butterfly-like compositions apparent in several of the Victorias drawings; shortly thereafter he begins to work on his butterfly collages.²⁹ We also learn a great deal about the way Ossorio successfully mixes the vegetable, animal, and mineral kingdoms and concentrates on natural processes, which take place regardless of the artist's intention. This essentially anti-humanist stance—at the core of which is the idea that things happen in nature independent of man's intervention—will resurface in Dubuffet's *Matérialogues* paintings and *Phénomènes* prints from the late 1950s. And at other times, Dubuffet's descriptions of Ossorio's paintings seem to anticipate the development of the former's *l'Hourloupe*, which would commence one decade later and last for twelve years (the longest in his career), especially when he talks about how in Ossorio's works, "the fields of the picture surrounding the figures appear and consist of very complex elements—like those constituting the figures themselves, composed like them."³⁰ The same effect is also apparent in Ossorio's very *l'Hourloupe*-looking exhibition poster from 1951, which Dubuffet would have known well. Interestingly enough, it is Ossorio who in turn would write one of the best articles we have on Dubuffet's *l'Hourloupe* series.³¹

Writing on Ossorio's Victorias works not only inspired Dubuffet's future art practice, but enabled him to further his ongoing attempts to develop a new genre of art historical writing, one that is composed in the perpetual present tense, is presented as lived experience, and favors opacity over transparency, surface over depth, and polysemy over univocal iconological decipherment. The book allowed Dubuffet to put into practice what we might call, borrowing from Merleau-Ponty's concept of the "primacy of perception," a phenomenologically based "primacy of description." Dubuffet's prose is art writing in an inchoate state, continually coming into being, a form on par with the works of art he attempts to describe.

In his 1946 *Prospectus*, Dubuffet argues that a painting should not be viewed passively, absorbed as a whole by an instantaneous glance by its viewer, but rather relived in the same way that it was worked out, remade by the mind and reenacted.³² Five years later, in *Peintures initiatiques d'Alfonso Ossorio*, Dubuffet successfully merges studio practice with art writing, reminding us that just as viewing a work of art should always be an act of re-creation experienced in the present tense, the act of writing about a work of art should be a literary reenactment and re-performance of it.

The following excerpts from the book help to illustrate this:

At first glance [Ossorio's paintings] look like a multicolored chaos, a storm of violently applied blobs, spatters, and vehement lines, in which rather shapeless figures can sometimes be made out (not always right away). . . . all seething with varicosities, leprosy, and abscesses. A fracas of forms, sometimes vaguely anatomical, sometimes deriving from the vegetable kingdom, or from some hybrid domain of sorcery—mandrakes, rats' nests—among which appear still other tiny grinning faces or grotesque little personages.³³

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Jean Dubuffet (1901–1985), *Le Métaphysique* (Metaphysics), 1950, oil on canvas, 45 1/2 x 35 1/2 in., Musée National d'Art Moderne, AM 1976-12. Black and white reproduction.



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Likewise, about Ossorio's compositional choices and specifically his abrogation of form and contour, Dubuffet writes:

The compositional structure of these images aggressively flouts humanist tastes and classical geometries. The world they create has multiple centers of expansion, or no centers whatsoever. All sorts of rhythms appear at quite unforeseen points, circling, drifting, re-engendering. . . . They overlap and oppose each other, and from their conflicts are born certain systems whose bizarre structures are quite disconcerting. We are reminded, in certain cases, of compositions in the form of an explosion—eddying waters, wild hair, melting lava. . . . Here everything seethes, or threatens to; Ossorio loves whatever moves, heaves, surges. And he loves to punctuate this vehemence with whiplash signs, sudden falls, lightning flashes, flights of birds. . . . In other words, he does not care to move too far from the shapeless, the formless. . . .²¹

Throughout his text, Dubuffet sprinkles in culinary phrases—for example, “[Ossorio creates] an indistinct broth into which we can dip our spoon at any point”—as if to remind us that the works of art must be apprehended somatically, devoured while they are hot.²²

This kind of writing—on-the-spot, materialistic, and performative—which Dubuffet fully develops in his text on Ossorio, is similar to that which appears in recipe-like “how-to” texts in Dubuffet’s quotidian *cahiers d’atelier*, or “studio notebooks,” which he kept throughout his entire career.²³ And, Dubuffet frequently employs this kind of writing when discussing the works of his favorite art brut artists. Indeed, in Dubuffet’s proposed book *Almanach de l’Art Brut* (The Art Brut Almanac), which he began to write in 1948 after Gallimard pulled the plug on the agreed upon series of art brut publications, he planned to include a number of similar how-to entries on “*Peinturez hard!*” (Paint hardily), for each month of the year (for example, “White pigments,” “Watercolors,” “Varnishes,” “Emulsions,” and “Mastic”).²⁴ Unfortunately, this almanac never saw the light of day.

Ultimately, however, Dubuffet admits that Ossorio’s paintings defy language and the very book that he attempts to write. He concludes, “the high lyricism of the forms generated here, the vehement impulse by which all the graphisms are animated, translate the movement of the artist’s thoughts better than any more explicit formulation might do. Thus the attitudes of an inspired dancer convey a certain position of the mind, in a more evident fashion perhaps, and in any case a more exalting one, than any clearly written treatise.”²⁵ Dubuffet knows that he does not have the last word on Ossorio; no one does. His art is an open book.

Ossorio’s exhibition at Studio Paul Facchetti in Paris, in which he first displayed his Victorias works, and for which Dubuffet’s book served as a catalog, ran from October 9 to 30, 1951. Near the end of it, Ossorio left with Dubuffet for New York City. After a six-day journey on the *Île-de-France*, the two artists reached New York on October 23. According to his autobiography, *Biographie au pas de course* (Biography at the Last Minute), written months before he passed away in 1984, Dubuffet met Pollock at Ossorio’s apartment the first night he arrived in New York. A former wine salesman who drank rascally if at all, Dubuffet

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recounts that he was not impressed by Ossorio and Pollock's "late night discussions fueled by whiskey"²⁶ This perhaps explains why soon thereafter Dubuffet and his wife moved to a flat at 50 Charles Street instead of staying in Ossorio's MacDougal Street apartment. Generally speaking, Dubuffet had little contact with American artists during his visit. While in New York, Dubuffet preferred to spend most of his time with Ossorio, Yves Tanguy, and Tanguy's wife, Kay Sage. He also sought out Marcel Duchamp, who appreciated the conceptual side of Dubuffet's enterprise and went out of his way to help him prepare the English version of his famous talk on "Anticultural Positions," delivered at the Arts Club in Chicago on December 20, 1951. Ossorio accompanied Dubuffet on his five-week trip to Chicago and to his lecture.

Before departing for New York, Dubuffet had officially dissolved his first *Compagnie de l'Art Brut* in Paris, in September 1951. He made arrangements to have his *Collection de l'Art Brut* shipped to Ossorio's recently purchased estate in East Hampton, called the Creeks. Ossorio graciously agreed to this and housed the collection at the Creeks until the spring of 1962, when Dubuffet asked for it back (pages 36–37).

The objects in Dubuffet's *Collection de l'Art Brut* had become part of Ossorio's life. He literally lived with them for close to a decade, and he treated them as if they were his own. The unique non-hierarchical manner in which Ossorio displayed them at the Creeks not only reflects his desire to accurately preserve the way they were first shown in the basement of the Galerie René Drouin in Paris, but also speaks to Ossorio's openness and heterogeneous tastes, as well as his modesty. When Hans Namuth showed up to take pictures of his East Hampton estate, Ossorio remained behind the scenes. The works of art brut came first.

Dubuffet often stated that he did not keep up with contemporary art. Likewise, it seems that he wasn't interested in playing the game of New York versus Paris. When, in October 1953, *Art Digest* asked him to respond to the question "Is American Art Over-rated?" Dubuffet refused to take the bait:

Disputes and controversies on aesthetics make me ill at ease, and I don't like to take part in them. I am like those who enjoy dancing or swimming, but who find no pleasure in watching others dance or swim, and even less in discussing the theory and practice of dance and swimming. . . . As for what I learned of American avant-garde art during my stay in New York, I had not at all the impression of being in the presence of an art different from that which can be encountered in abundance in Paris and elsewhere. It is an international art, characterless, homeless, comparable to Esperanto, and one that flourishes right now in every capitol and in all latitudes. I have in my hand some Japanese and Indian magazines which are full of it.²⁷

When the interviewer presses him for the names of contemporary artists he likes, Dubuffet mentions Ossorio. As is evinced in *Peintures initiatiques d'Alfonso Ossorio*, Dubuffet admired Ossorio's art because it was everything that fashionable, market-driven, international contemporary art was not. It was timeless, not timely; his artistic language was personal and individual, not part of a universal art-world Esperanto. Dubuffet maintained that Ossorio's art

was something that must be experienced in person, in the here and now. It was not something that could be captured through glossy reproductions in art magazines.

And here we arrive at the main reason Ossorio remains so important. It is not only because he was a consummate artist in his own right, had solo shows at Betty Parsons Gallery and the Studio Facchetti in the 1940s and '50s, and had a direct influence on leading contemporary figures like Julian Schnabel, Mike Kelley, and Damien Hirst. Nor is it simply because he was close friends with some of the most important artists of the twentieth century, including Pollock, Dubuffet, and Clyfford Still, nor because he was an astute collector and curator who founded and ran the Signa Gallery in the 1960s. Ossorio and his works remain essential because—and Dubuffet was absolutely right about this—they are always "initiating" something new, and because our "initiation" to them is ongoing even today.

The painter and scholar Mike Solomon, Ossorio's studio assistant at the time of his death, says of the artist's last days:

Even though it was very difficult for Alfonso, there were some wonderful moments in that last year, particularly with the couple of hundred works on paper that he had done in the Philippines in 1950. They are done with a wax resist technique. You can apply wax to paper, either when it is a hot liquid, when it's melted, or when it's cold, rubbing it on like a crayon. Wax will resist water-based paint, like inks or watercolors, which are added on later. Many layers or levels can be produced, and what was so extraordinary was how separate and autonomous Ossorio's layers could be. Dubuffet [in his book on Ossorio] said that he was playing many keyboards at the same time. He showed me how he made those pieces, all the variations. After they were done, some were coated entirely with a layer of wax. Every few years he would scrape off some very thin layers to make them clean again, using cloths, sometimes even using a little knife. Nobody really knew about these series. Some of them were done in pieces that had to be fitted together, so he had to show me how to do that, and how to mount and frame them. He divulged all these secrets that only I knew for a few years, until after he died, when we began showing them. The motor behind the whole reassessment of Ossorio's work really goes back to that period of the fifties. So he knew exactly what he was doing in telling me.²⁸

Solomon's description of Ossorio's *Victorias* works, which he was still in the process of working on at the time of his death in 1990 (some forty years after he started them), reminds us that Ossorio's works are indeed puzzles that we must continue to encounter in person, and to reassemble in the present. Dubuffet knew this better than anyone. In the end, this helps to explain why *Peintures initiatiques d'Alfonso Ossorio* takes on the experimental form that it does: a mosaic of immediate impressions and descriptions, a technical how-to manual for practicing artists, an on-the-spot testimony of Ossorio's ongoing performance.

Notes

- I would like to thank Mike Solomon, Eben Landau, Helen Hudson, and Francis V. O'Connor for answering various questions about Alfonso Ossorio as I was writing this essay. Parts of this essay were composed for the Alfonso Ossorio: Blood Lines, 1945–1955 exhibition at the Michael Rosenfeld Gallery (2013). I thank Haley K. Rosenfeld for her permission to reproduce them here.
- ¹ Alfonso Ossorio, interview by Paul Cummings, "Interview: Alfonso Ossorio Talks with Paul Cummings," *Drawing 7*, no. 3 (January–February 1986): 108.
- ² E. H. Freedman, *Alfonso Ossorio* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1972), 34. This and much of the following background information are taken from E. H. Freedman's indispensable monograph.
- ³ Jean Dubuffet, *Prospective sur les amateurs de leur genre* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1946); Jean Dubuffet, *L'art brut préféré aux arts culturels* (Paris: Galerie René Drouin, 1949). The English translation for *Prospective* is from Jean Dubuffet, "Prospective for Amateur Artists of Every Kind," trans. Joachim Neugroschel, in *Michael Gimcher, Jean Dubuffet: Towards an Alternative Reality* (New York: Aspen/Verlo Press, 1987), 43–58, 87–98. The English translation for *L'art brut préféré aux arts culturels* is from Jean Dubuffet, "Art Brut: Preference to the Cultural Arts," trans. Paul Foss and Alan S. Weiss, *Art and Text* 37 (1988): 31–32.
- ⁴ Alfonso Ossorio, interview by Judith Wolff, in *Alfonso Ossorio: 1940–1980* (New York: Guild Hall Museum, 1980), 5–64. Ossorio also mentions Nandor Fodor's *Search for the Idealist* (1949), Adriaan Beier Maugardt's *A Method for Creative Design* (1932), and René Girard's *Violence and the Sacred* (1977), which Ossorio identifies as "an offspring of the school of Claude Lévi-Strauss."
- ⁵ Dubuffet defines art brut as "anything produced by persons uncultured by artistic culture, where money plays little or no part [contrary to the activities of intellectuals]. These artists derive everything—subject, choice of materials, means of transcription, rhythms, styles of writing, etc.—from their own reserves rather than from the stereotypes of classical or fashionable art." Dubuffet, *L'art brut préféré aux arts culturels*, trans. Joachim Neugroschel, in *Gimcher, Jean Dubuffet* 101–104.
- ⁶ See Francis V. O'Connor's eloquent essay "Alfonso Ossorio's Expressionist Paintings on Paper," in *Alfonso Ossorio: The Color Returns, 1950*, in *Philippines Expressionist Paintings on Paper* (exhibition catalog, New York: Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, 1998), 4–16. For more on the mural project, see Aida de Bethune, "Philippine Adventure," in *Literature Arts* 19 (August 1951): 112–113.
- ⁷ Jean Dubuffet to Alfonso Ossorio, 28 March 1950, Alfonso Ossorio Papers, Archives of American Art, microfilm reel 389B.
- ⁸ For more on the mural's biography, see Eric Forster, *The Chapel of St. Joseph the Worker* (Victoria, Philippines: Victoria Milling Co, 1987).
- ⁹ Alfonso Ossorio, "Interview with Paul Cummings," 127. Ossorio saw Brauche's work reproduced in "Béatrice à la bougie," *Cahiers d'art* 20/21 (1945–1946).
- ¹⁰ Jean Dubuffet, *Peintures initiatiques d'Alfonso Ossorio* (Paris: La Pierre Volante, 1951), 18.
- ¹¹ Jean Dubuffet to Alfonso Ossorio, 22 May 1950, Alfonso Ossorio Papers, Archives of American Art, microfilm reel 389B.
- ¹² Dubuffet, *Peintures initiatiques d'Alfonso Ossorio*, 5.
- ¹³ Dubuffet to Ossorio, 22 May 1950.
- ¹⁴ Jean Dubuffet to Alfonso Ossorio, 29 August 1950, Ossorio Foundation collection; cited in Barbara Freeman, "Alfonso Ossorio, Jean Dubuffet and Art Brut in America," *Raw Vision* 17 (winter 1998–1997): 28.
- ¹⁵ See Dubuffet's explanation of *œuvre inventif* in *Œuvre inventif*: collection of *œuvres expérimentales à l'art brut*, ed. Michel Tapie (Lausanne: Collection de L'Art Brut, 1988), 187–158.
- ¹⁶ Michel Tapie, *Un art autre où il s'agit de nouveaux voyages du réel* (Paris: Galerie-Graou et fils, 1952), translated in part in Michel Tapie, *Observations*, eds. Paul and Esther Jenkins (New York: G. Wittenborn, 1958), 10–28. See also Tapie, "Becoming of an Art Autre," translated in *Be-Bomb: The Transatlantic War of Images and All that Jazz 1940–1956*, ed. Serge Guilbaut (exhibition catalog, Barcelona: Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 2007), 562–565, and Tapie, "Dubuffet, the Terrible," *Paris News Post* (November 5, 1962), which served as the Foreword to the catalog of Dubuffet's show at the Pierre Matisse Gallery (January 9–February 3, 1951).
- ¹⁷ Jean Dubuffet to Jacques Berné, 12 May 1951, in *Jean Dubuffet: Lettres à J.B. 1945–1985* (Paris: Hermann, 1991), 71.
- ¹⁸ Alfonso Ossorio, quoted in Françoise du Plessis, "Duplex and Discrimination: Alfonso Ossorio," in *The Collector in America*, ed. John Lipman (New York: Viking Press, 1978), 204.
- ¹⁹ Dubuffet, *Peintures initiatiques d'Alfonso Ossorio*, 2.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 27–28.
- ²¹ Henry McBride, "Four Transatlantic Resolutions," *Arrows* 43 (January 1951): 26–29.
- ²² Jean Dubuffet, in Peter Szul, *Jean Dubuffet* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1962), 84.
- ²³ See Miklós Gimcher, *William de Kooning, Jean Dubuffet: The Winner* (exhibition catalog, New York: Pace Gallery, 1965).
- ²⁴ Dubuffet, *Peintures initiatiques d'Alfonso Ossorio*, 57.
- ²⁵ From Ossorio's *Victoria diary 1950*, cited in O'Connor, "Ossorio's Expressionist Paintings on Paper," 4–16 (see n. 6).
- ²⁶ Freedman, *Ossorio*, 50 (see n. 2). See also Sarah K. Rich, "Jean Dubuffet: 'Butterfly Man,'" *October* 119 (Winter 2007): 49–74.
- ²⁷ Dubuffet, *Peintures initiatiques d'Alfonso Ossorio*, 16.
- ²⁸ Alfonso Ossorio, "The Idea of the 'Neufcups,'" *Arrows* 87, no. 3 (May 1968), 48–49, 85–86.
- ²⁹ Gimcher, *The Winner*, 78.
- ³⁰ Dubuffet, *Peintures initiatiques d'Alfonso Ossorio*, 7–8.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, 11.
- ³² Jean Dubuffet, *Peintures initiatiques d'Alfonso Ossorio*, 57 (see n. 2).
- ³³ Twenty of Dubuffet's current and former drawings are housed in the Fondation Dubuffet, Paris. Marianne Jakobi includes an extensive list of them in her article "Nommer, à l'origine et à l'avenir: la situation comme genre dans l'œuvre Jean Dubuffet," *Geneva* 24 (2004): 90.
- ³⁴ Dubuffet, *Prospective*, 499–501 (see n. 3).
- ³⁵ Jean Dubuffet, *Peintures initiatiques d'Alfonso Ossorio*, 33.
- ³⁶ Jean Dubuffet, *Biographie ou peu de histoire* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2001), 82.
- ³⁷ Jean Dubuffet, response to the question, "Is American Art Over-rated?" *Art Digest* (October 15, 1953), 12, 23.
- ³⁸ Mike Solomon, in *Artist's Estates: Resolutions in Trust*, eds. Magda Salzman and Diane Coombs (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 217. Solomon is the former and founding director of the Ossorio Foundation.

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