



About Jean-Jacques Lebel and French Happenings of the 1960s

Combining a broad overview of Jean-Jacques Lebel's coming-of-age among Surrealists and his rupture with the movement, Laurel Jean Fredrickson focuses on two landmark happenings in this book: the first, "Funeral of the Thing of Tinguely" (1960), and the most scandalous, "120 Minutes dedicated to the Divine Marquis" (1966). This study illustrates the development and significance of French happenings in relation to cultural and political changes of the 1960s.

Research in Lebel's archives, and others like the Archives nationale d'outre-mer are indispensable in the telling of this extraordinary historical and theoretical narrative. It illuminates sensitive, often veiled dimensions of postwar French society, from torture during the Algerian War, to government censorship, to the sexual politics of nudity in art. This volume shows how Lebel synthesized the lessons of Dada and surrealism and 1960s experimentalism, internationally, electrified by the political radicalism of surrealist poet Benjamin Péret and of such groups as Arguments and Socialisme ou Barbarie, to participate in shaping the erotics and forms of revolution in May 1968.

From the author

I am currently working on two book projects: The first is *Deterritorialized Identity: Transnational Women Artists and French Colonialism*. This book will expand on my research on the Algerian War and French colonialism, drawing into my study of Zineb Sedira other contemporary women artists with origins in French colonies in an effort to enhance understanding of deterritorialized identities in our period of unprecedented displacement. The second project is a book on Robert Filliou, the subject of an existing article and of my master's thesis. Because a strength of my first book was its unusual organization that opened up connections, which otherwise are not in view, I envision the organization of this book in similar terms, for instance to reveal overlaps between Keynesian economics, experimental art, notions of creativity as inherent to all, Fluxus, and Buddhist philosophy.

“An important contribution to discourses on radical art, culture critique and political strategies in France during the 1960s. Lebel's practice is examined as a “creative rhizome of dissent”, as a problematic process of liberation located in contradictions within counterculture and the moment of “1968”.”

– Francis Frascina, John Raven Professor of Visual Arts (Emeritus), Keele University, UK

“Fredrickson re-invests the 1960s Happening with revolutionary ideology in her fascinating examination of Jean-Jacques Lebel's radical art. She reveals a committed coordinator of deliberately disconcerting challenges to orthodox thinking, as she adroitly negotiates some of the social dilemmas raised by his political poetry-in-action.”

– Simon Anderson, Associate Professor of Art History, Theory & Criticism, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, USA

“Fredrickson's book is a brilliant, even thrilling, study of one of the most astonishingly polymorphous and rhizomatic artists to have emerged from the surrealist cauldron. Attending to Lebel's fusion of anarchist politics, surrealist eroticism, fluxus-informed experimentation, and Beat generation poetics, *Jean-Jacques Lebel and French Happenings of the 1960s* tells the story of a vibrant and radical *créolité*. At the same time, Fredrickson makes a compelling case for an expanded conception of Dick Higgins' notion of the “intermedial” wherein aesthetics and politics become impossible to disentangle. As the first full-length study of one of the most iconoclastic and uncategorizable figures of the European avant-garde, this book will reshape the way we think about performance art in the post-war period.”

– Roger Rothman, Professor of Art History, Bucknell University, USA