

Finding aid for the André Breton drafts of publications and letters 2022.M.32

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Special Collections

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André Breton drafts of publications and letters, 1948-1965	7

Summary Information

Repository: Special Collections

Creator: Breton, André, 1896-1966

Title: André Breton drafts of publications and letters

ID: 2022.M.32

Dates: 1948-1965

Extent: 0.3 Linear Feet (69 sheets)

Request Materials: Request access to the physical materials described in this inventory through the [catalog record](#) for this collection. Click here for the [access policy](#).

Language: Collection material is in French.

Abstract: The archive consists of 37 drafts of publications and letters dating from 1948 after Breton had returned to France from his exile in the United States to 1965, several months before his death. The draft writings, primarily texts for exhibition catalogs and exhibition reviews, document his intense activity to promote artists in the last two decades of his life.

Preferred Citation

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<http://hdl.handle.net/10020/cifa2022m32>

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Biographical / Historical

French writer André Breton (1896-1966) was the main founder, theorist, and promoter of surrealism. Born in Tinchebray in Normandy, Breton first studied medicine and during World War I was stationed in psychiatric wards at several hospitals. From this period dates his study of psychiatry and his discovery of Freud's theories on the unconscious and dreams, which would later be fundamental to his development of surrealism. He corresponded with Guillaume Apollinaire, who later introduced him to many of his

collaborators, became friends with Paul Éluard, and began collecting artworks, such as in 1913 an object from Easter Island, in 1918 a drawing by Amedeo Modigliani, in 1920 a painting by André Derain and in 1921 *Tête* by Pablo Picasso. He later actively collected objects from Africa and Oceania.

In 1919, along with Louis Aragon and Philippe Soupault, Breton created the journal *Littérature* which initially supported Dada and the activities of Tristan Tzara. From 1920 dates the publication *Les Champs magnétiques* (Magnetic Fields) written with Soupault and which included examples of the techniques of automatism, in which the writer suppresses conscious control. In 1921, Breton married Simone Kahn, a writer, artist, art patron, collector and the following year moved with Kahn at 44, rue Fontaine in Paris. In 1924, Breton published *Le Manifeste du surréalisme*, which marked the official launch of the surrealist movement and further exposed his doctrine on "pure psychic automatism." Breton was instrumental to the founding of the Bureau of Surrealist Research and a group gathered around him: Philippe Soupault, Louis Aragon, Paul Éluard, René Crevel, Michel Leiris, Benjamin Péret, Antonin Artaud, and Robert Desnos. Several painters were associated with the group and Breton expanded his doctrine on surrealism to painting in 1928 in *Le Surréalisme et la peinture*, which he published and revised several times.

From 1927 to 1935, Breton was a member of the French Communist Party. He was a fervent critic of Stalinism, which eventually contributed to his leaving the political party, but he remained committed to Marxism. This was particularly evident when in 1938 he accepted a mission from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs to give a series of conferences in Mexico where he met Diego Rivera and Leon Trotsky and wrote the manifesto *Pour un art révolutionnaire indépendant* (For an Independent Revolutionary Art) with Trotsky.

After the breakout of World War II, Breton moved with Jacqueline Lamba, his second wife and a painter, and their daughter, Aube, to the south of France before fleeing in 1941 to the United States. There he was involved in numerous publications and exhibitions and traveled to Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Arizona with Elisa Bindhoff Enet (Claro), his third wife, a pianist and artist from Chile. Their visit of Hopi and Zuni pueblos during this trip had a profound impact on them.

In 1946, Breton returned with Elisa to Paris, where he continued to be involved in numerous exhibitions and political actions. In 1947, he organized with Marcel Duchamp, Benjamin Péret, Victor Brauner and Henry Miller the exhibition *Le surréalisme en 1947 : Exposition internationale du surréalisme* at the Galerie Maeght, which featured artists from different countries, such as the Brazilian sculptor Maria Martins, the Algerian painter Baya Mahieddine, the Scottish painter Scottie Wilson, the Haitian painter Hector Hypolite and the Canadian painter and sculptor Jean-Paul Riopelle. During the last two decades of his life, Breton wrote extensively on art and fostered until his death in 1966 a second group of surrealists through exhibitions and publications.

Sources consulted:

"André Breton" at <https://www.andrebreton.fr>.

Béhar, Henri. "André Breton" in Oxford Art Online (www.oxfordartonline.com).

Breton, André. *Œuvres complètes. IV. Écrits sur l'art et autres textes*. Édition de Marguerite Bonnet. Édition publiée sous la direction d'Étienne-Alain Hubert avec la collaboration de Philippe Bernier et Marie-Claire Dumas. Paris: Collection Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (no. 544), Gallimard, 2008.

Chilvers, Ian. "André Breton" and "Surrealism" in *Dictionary of 20th Century Art*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1998.

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Scope and Content of Collection

The archive consists of 37 drafts of publications and letters dating from 1948 after Breton had returned to France from his exile in the United States to 1965, several months before his death. The draft writings, primarily texts for exhibition catalogs and exhibition reviews, document his intense activity to promote painters and to a lesser degree sculptors and printmakers in the last two decades of his life. Several manuscripts refer to exhibitions that were held at the art gallery À l'étoile scellée, founded in 1952 (11, rue du Près-aux-Clercs, Paris), with which Breton was closely associated.

The texts are focused on the artists Jean-Marie Albagnac (1931-); Enrico Baj (1924-2003); Augustín Cárdenas (1927-2001); Jorge Camacho (1934-2011); Fabio de Sanctis (1931-); René Duvillier (1919-2002); Max Ernst (1891-1976); Simon Hantaï (1922-); Jim Dine (1935-); Hector Hyppolite (1894-1948); Gerome Kamrowski (1914-2004); Konrad Klapheck (1935-); Yves Laloy (1920-1999); Jacques Le Maréchal (1928-2016); Yahne Le Toumelin (1923-); Marcelle Loubchansky (1917-1988); René Magritte (1898-1967); Johannes Hendrikus Moesman (1909-1988); Judit Reigl (1923-2020); Jean-Paul Riopelle (1923-2001); Endre Roszda (1913-1999); Henri and No Seigle; Ugo Sterpini (1927-2000); Max Walter Svanberg (1912-1994); Remedios Varo (1908-1963); Miguel Garcia Vivancos (1895-1972); and Aloys Zötl (1803-1887).

One manuscript is a preliminary draft of "L'Art des fous, la clé des champs," which is considered one of Breton's fundamental texts on art and was incorporated into *Le surréalisme et la peinture* in 1965, along with many of the texts written on artists. The manuscripts also attest to Breton's interest in the work of the writers, Michel Butor, author of *La peinture se repeuple*; Karel Kupka, author of *Dawn of Art: Painting and Sculpture of Australian Aborigines*; and Don C. Talayesva, author of *Sun Chief: The Autobiography of a Hopi Indian*. There is a draft of a letter by Breton to Max Walter Svanberg and two letters dating from several months before his death in which Breton further explained which artists he considered to be the most important since World War II.

These manuscripts were featured in the 2003 auction sale André Breton, 42, rue Fontaine, Drouot-Richelieu, Paris, auctioneers Calmels-Cohen. The lot numbers from the sale are listed in each entry.

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Arrangement

The manuscripts are arranged by lot number from the 2003 Calmels-Cohen auction sale. Each manuscript is filed with its Calmels-Cohen folder that gives the lot number from the 2003 sale.

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Administrative Information

Access

Open for use by qualified researchers.

Processing Information

Karen Meyer-Roux processed the archive and wrote this finding aid in August 2022.

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Controlled Access Headings

Subjects - People

- Breton, André, 1896-1966 -- Archives

Subjects - Topics

- Authors--Archives.
- Surrealism--Archives.

Genres and Forms of Materials

- Drafts (documents)

Occupation(s)

- Authors -- History -- 20th century -- Archives

Collection Inventory

André Breton drafts of publications and letters, 1948-1965

Title/Description	Containers
<p>G. Kamrowsky, [1950]</p> <p><i>Scope and Contents:</i> 1 sheet (1 page). The text is a draft of a preface written for an exhibition dedicated to the American artist Gerome Kamrowski (1914-2004) at the Galerie Creuze in Paris from 6 to 21 January 1950. Draft in blue ink with numerous words crossed out. Lot 2251. See <i>Oeuvres complètes</i>, IV, 624-627 and https://www.andrebreton.fr/work/56600100477070.</p>	Box 1 Item 1
<p>Hector Hyppolite, 1948 October 6</p> <p><i>Scope and Contents:</i> 3 sheets (3 pages). In this text, Breton gives an account of the exhibition of the Haitian artist Hector Hyppolite (1894-1948), which was held in Port-au-Prince in Haiti in December 1945. Draft in blue ink with numerous words crossed out. Signed. Dated. Lot 2288. See: https://www.andrebreton.fr/work/56600100366270.</p>	Box 1 Item 2
<p>Aparté, 1949 February</p> <p><i>Scope and Contents:</i> 8 sheets (8 pages). The manuscript and typescript draft co-written by André Breton, Elisa Claro Breton, and Benjamin Péret are dedicated to the Canadian painter Jean-Paul Riopelle (1923-2001). Draft with numerous words crossed out. Lot 2302.</p>	Box 1 Item 3
<p>Exp. Max Ernst [i.e. Exposition Max Ernst], 1950 January 5</p> <p><i>Scope and Contents:</i> 1 sheet (1 page). The manuscript is a draft of the presentation given by André Breton for an exhibition on Max Ernst (1891-1976) held at the gallery La Hune in Paris. Draft in blue ink with numerous words crossed out. Signed. Dated. Lot 2316.</p>	Box 1 Item 4
<p>Miguel G. Vivancos, 1950 April 6</p> <p><i>Scope and Contents:</i> 1 sheet (1 page). The manuscript on the Spanish painter Miguel Garcia Vivancos (1895-1972) was written for an exhibition held in April 1950. Draft in green ink with numerous words crossed out. Lot 2319. See <i>Oeuvres complètes</i>, IV, 708-709 and https://www.andrebreton.fr/work/56600100130710.</p>	Box 1 Item 5
<p>Mes amis Seigle, 1950 December 19</p> <p><i>Scope and Contents:</i> 1 sheet (1 page). The manuscript is a draft for a preface by André Breton written for an exhibition on Henri and No Seigle at the Galerie Creuse in Paris in 1951. Draft in black ink with numerous words crossed out. Signed. Dated. Lot 2327. See <i>Oeuvres complètes</i>, IV, 634-635, 1331 and https://www.andrebreton.fr/work/56600100203450.</p>	Box 1 Item 6

[Text for the opening of the gallery À l'étoile scellée in Paris], 1952 November 28	Box 1	Item 7
<p><i>Scope and Contents:</i></p> <p>1 sheet (1 page). In this text, which appeared anonymously in <i>Arts</i>, Breton mentions Roberto Fernandez Retamar, Wolfgang Paalen, Man Ray, Clovis Trouille, Jean Arp, Balthus, Victor Brauner, Max Ernst, Joan Miró, and Marie Cerminova (Toyen). Draft in black ink with numerous words crossed out. Signed. Dated. Lot 2350. See <i>Œuvres complètes</i>, III, 1080-1081, 1459-1460 and https://www.andrebreton.fr/work/56600100428280.</p>		
Hantaï, 1952 December 28	Box 1	Item 8
<p><i>Scope and Contents:</i></p> <p>2 sheets (1 page). This text in which Breton discusses the Hungarian artist Simon Hantaï (1922-) on the occasion of an exhibition held at the gallery À l'étoile scellée, appeared in January 1953 in <i>Medium</i>. The manuscript consists of one sheet and one folded sheet to be inserted at the end of the text on the first sheet. Draft in black ink with numerous words crossed out. Lot 2353. See <i>Œuvres complètes</i>, IV, 637, 1331-1333 and https://www.andrebreton.fr/work/56600100582480.</p>		
L'Art des fous, la clé des champs, Fall 1948	Box 1	Item 9
<p><i>Scope and Contents:</i></p> <p>4 sheets (4 pages). The manuscript is a draft of "L'Art des fous, la clé des champs," which is considered one of Breton's fundamental texts on art. The text appeared in late 1948 in <i>Les Cahiers de la Pléiade</i> and again in <i>Le Surréalisme et la peinture</i>, where it was illustrated by Aloïse (Aloïse Corbaz) and Adolf Wölfli. Draft in blue ink. Signed. Lot 2372. See <i>Œuvres complètes</i>, IV, 726-731, 1358-1359 and https://www.andrebreton.fr/work/56600100974830.</p>		
Draft of letter by André Breton to Max Walter Svanberg, 1954 May 18	Box 1	Item 10
<p><i>Scope and Contents:</i></p> <p>1 sheet (2 pages). The letter refers to prints and drawings that Walter sent Breton. Draft in black ink with corrections in pink ink. Signed. Dated. Lot 2383</p>		
Le regard de Judit Reigl, 1954 October 31	Box 1	Item 11
<p><i>Scope and Contents:</i></p> <p>1 sheet (1 page). The text is a draft for a preface of the catalog for an exhibition on the Hungarian artist Judit Reigl (1923-2020) at the gallery À l'étoile scellée in Paris. The text appeared again in <i>Le Surréalisme et la peinture</i> in 1965. Draft in black ink with numerous words crossed out. Lot 2384. See <i>Œuvres complètes</i>, IV, 639, 1333 and https://www.andrebreton.fr/work/56600100410470.</p>		
Hector Hyppolite, [1954]	Box 1	Item 12
<p><i>Scope and Contents:</i></p> <p>4 sheets (4 pages). Draft in blue ink with the date "1954" in pencil on the first sheet. Signed. Lot 2390.</p>		
L'épée dans les nuages, 1955 January 23	Box 1	Item 13

Scope and Contents:

1 sheet (1 page). Draft in black ink on À l'étoile scellée letterhead with numerous words crossed out. Signed. Dated. Lot 2397.

Hommage à Max Walter S.; La femme du viking, 1954 February 12 and 1955 March 6 Box 1 Item 14

Scope and Contents:

3 sheets (3 pages), 3 sheets (3 pages). Drafts in black ink with numerous words crossed out. Signed. Dated. Lot 2398. See: <https://www.andrebreton.fr/work/56600100546780>.

Duvillier au tramail, 1955 May 18 Box 1 Item 15

Scope and Contents:

1 sheet (1 page). The text on the painter René Duvillier (1919-2002) served as a preface for the pamphlet of the exhibition *Duvillier, le cheval de mer océan* at the gallery À l'étoile scellée in Paris in June 1955. The text appeared again in *Le Surréalisme et la peinture* in 1965. Draft with numerous words crossed out in blue ink on green paper. Signed. Dated. Lot 2402. See: *Œuvres complètes*, IV, 760-761, 1364 and <https://www.andrebreton.fr/work/56600100182270>.

Marcelle Loubchansky, 1956 January 25 Box 1 Item 16

Scope and Contents:

3 sheets (3 pages). The manuscript is a draft of the preface for the catalog of the exhibition dedicated to the painter Marcelle Loubchansky (1917-1988) and held at the Galerie Kléber in Paris in January 1956. The text appeared again in *Le Surréalisme et la peinture* in 1965. Draft in black ink with numerous words crossed out. Signed. Dated. Lot 2421. See: <https://www.andrebreton.fr/work/56600100222610>.

[Aloys Zötl], 1956 March 21 Box 1 Item 17

Scope and Contents:

1 sheet (1 page). The manuscript is a draft of the text on the Austrian painter and printmaker Aloys Zötl (1803-1887), which served as the preface for the auction catalog of the sale of watercolors of Zötl held at the Hôtel Drouot in Paris on 1956 May 3. Draft in black with numerous words crossed out. Signed. Dated. Lot 2425. See: <https://www.andrebreton.fr/work/56600100138910>.

Endre Roszda, 1957 February 10 Box 1 Item 18

Scope and Contents:

1 sheet (1 page). The text was written for an exhibition on the Hungarian artist organized by Simone Colinet at the Galerie Furstenberg in Paris in February 1957. Draft in black ink with numerous words crossed out. Signed. Dated. Lot 2439. See: <https://www.andrebreton.fr/work/56600100835370>.

Yahne Le Toumelin, 1957 October 16 Box 1 Item 19

Scope and Contents:

2 sheets (2 pages). The text is a draft for the preface of the catalog for the exhibition dedicated to the French painter Yahne Le Toumelin (1923-) held at the Galerie d'Orsay in Paris in November 1957. The text appeared again in *Le Surréalisme et la peinture* in 1965. Draft in black ink with numerous words crossed out. Lot 2448. See *Œuvres complètes*, IV, 653-657, 1337-1338 and <https://www.andrebreton.fr/work/56600100294920>.

Préface-manifeste, 1958 March 25	Box 1	Item 20
<i>Scope and Contents:</i> 3 sheets (3 pages). The text was written on the occasion of the exhibition <i>Dessins symbolistes</i> , which was organized by Breton at the Bateau-Lavoir in Paris in March 1958. The draft is in black ink with numerous words crossed out. One sheet in red and blue ink presents a chronological frieze from 1844 to 1944, which lists artists. Lot 2457. See <i>Oeuvres complètes</i> , IV, 777-784, 1369-1371 and https://www.andrebreton.fr/work/56600100750990 .		
Yves Laloy, 1958 September 14	Box 1	Item 21
<i>Scope and Contents:</i> 2 sheets (2 pages). Upon receipt of the archive, the manuscript was filed in the folder for lot 2457 which consists of the manuscript "Préface-manifeste," which is also dated 1958. It formerly appeared in Breton's personal copy of <i>Yves Laloy</i> (Lot 219) at the 2003 sale. See: https://www.andrebreton.fr/work/56600101000300 .		
Cárdenas, 1959 February 11	Box 1	Item 22
<i>Scope and Contents:</i> 1 sheet (1 page). The text was written on the occasion of the exhibition dedicated to the Cuban sculptor Augustín Cárdenas (1927-2001) at the Galerie La Cour d'Ingres in Paris in February-March 1959. Draft in black ink with numerous words crossed out. Signed. Dated. Lot 2465. See <i>Oeuvres complètes</i> , IV, 738-739, 1360-1361 and https://www.andrebreton.fr/work/56600100197840 .		
Les surréalistes à Don C. Talayesva, [1959]	Box 1	Item 23
<i>Scope and Contents:</i> 1 sheet (1 page). The manuscript does not bear a signature and the date in pencil was presumably added later. It was filed in the folder from Calmels-Cohen along with the manuscript on Cárdenas. The draft is in blue ink on blue paper. See <i>Oeuvres complètes</i> , IV, 1095.		
Maréchal, 1960 October 7	Box 1	Item 24
<i>Scope and Contents:</i> 3 sheets (3 pages). The three manuscripts are different versions of a biography of the poet and painter Jacques Le Maréchal (1928-2016). The drafts in blue ink were written on D'Arcy Galleries, New York, letterhead paper. Lot 2487.		
Nous ne l'entendons pas de cette oreille, 1960 December 6	Box 1	Item 25
<i>Scope and Contents:</i> 1 sheet (1 page). The text relates an incident at a D'Arcy Galleries exhibition in New York, which involved Salvador Dalí. Draft in black ink with numerous words crossed out. Signed. Dated. Lot 2489.		
Hommage, 1961 September 5	Box 1	Item 26
<i>Scope and Contents:</i> 1 sheet (1 page). The text was written on the occasion of the exhibition dedicated to René Magritte at the Obelisk Gallery in London in 1961. Draft in black ink on		

salmon-colored paper with numerous words crossed out. Signed. Dated. Lot 2497. See *Œuvres complètes*, IV, 673-676, 1343-1344 and <https://www.andrebreton.fr/work/56600100062700>.

La peinture se repeuple, [circa 1961]

Box 1

Item 27

Scope and Contents:

1 sheet (1 page). The manuscript written by André Breton on the verso of an invitation card is a copy of the text by Michel Butor, *La peinture se repeuple*, which refers to René Magritte's work *La Condition humaine*. Lot 2497. See: <https://www.andrebreton.fr/work/56600101000415>.

Albagnac, 1961 December 7

Box 1

Item 28

Scope and Contents:

1 sheet (1 page). The text is a draft for a preface to a catalog on the work of the French printmaker Jean-Marie Albagnac (1931-). The draft is in black ink with numerous words crossed out. Lot 2499. See: <https://www.andrebreton.fr/work/56600100239050>.

Main première, 1962 October 5-10

Box 1

Item 29

Scope and Contents:

3 sheets (3 pages). The text is a draft of the preface to the book by Karel Kupka, *Dawn of Art: Painting and Sculpture of Australian Aborigines*. The text was also issued in the journal *La Brèche*, n°4, February 1963, pages 32-35. Draft in blue ink with numerous words crossed out. Signed. Dated. One sheet consists of two portions of sheets glued together. Lot 2508. See: <https://www.andrebreton.fr/work/56600100641980>.

Enrico Baj, 1963 February 10

Box 1

Item 30

Scope and Contents:

3 sheets (3 pages), 6 leaves (5 pages). The two texts both titled "Enrico Baj" are drafts for a preface written for an exhibition held in 1964. One is a manuscript drafted in blue ink with numerous words crossed out and whose first page consists of two sheets glued together. The second is a typescript of 6 leaves which is dated 1963 February. Included is an obituary clipping "Enrico Baj" by Harry Bellet (*Le Monde*, 19 juin 2003). Lot 2512. See: <https://www.andrebreton.fr/work/56600100204960>.

Hommage à J.-H. Moesman, 1963 March 31

Box 1

Item 31

Scope and Contents:

1 sheet (1 page). On the same sheet is a text dedicated to Jim Dine and dated 8 April 1963. Lot 2514. See: <https://www.andrebreton.fr/work/56600100508350>.

Brousse au-devant de Camacho, 1964 April 11

Box 1

Item 32

Scope and Contents:

2 sheets (2 pages). The text is a draft of a preface for an exhibition dedicated to the Cuban painter Jorge Camacho (1934-2011) at the Galerie Mathias Fels in Paris from 8 to 31 May 1964. The text appeared again in *Le Surréalisme et la peinture* in 1965. The draft is on letterhead of La Dragonne, Galerie Nina Dausset and has numerous words crossed out. Signed. Dated. Lot 2520. See *Œuvres complètes*, IV, 834-837, 1387-1389 and <https://www.andrebreton.fr/work/56600100626200>.

[Remedios Varo], 1964 November 22

Box 1

Item 33

Scope and Contents:

2 sheets (2 pages). The two sheets are drafts of a text on the Spanish artist Remedios Varo (1908-1963) that appeared in the journal *La Brèche* no. 7, December 1964. One sheet is dated and bears the initials "A.B." The second sheet is undated and bears the initials "A.B." The drafts have numerous words crossed out. Lot 2523. See <https://www.andrebreton.fr/work/56600100657780>.

[Text related to Fabio de Sanctis and Ugo Sterpini], 1964 December 3

Box 1

Item 34

Scope and Contents:

1 sheet (1 page). The draft is a text written on the occasion of the exhibition dedicated to the architect Fabio de Sanctis and the painter Ugo Sterpini at the Galleria Pogliani in Rome. It begins with the lines "Nous en restions à cette exquise fantaisie en prose..." Draft in black ink with numerous words crossed out. Signed. Dated. Lot 2524. See: <https://www.andrebreton.fr/work/56600100276860>.

Konrad Klapheck, 1965 February 7

Box 1

Item 35

Scope and Contents:

2 sheets (2 pages). The text is a draft for the preface to the brochure for the exhibition at the Galerie Ileana Sonabend in Paris. Draft in black ink with numerous words crossed out. Signed. Dated. Included is the exhibition brochure. Lot 2526. See: <https://www.andrebreton.fr/work/56600100232510>.

Letter by André Breton in response to a literary inquiry, 1965 April 4

Box 1

Item 36

Scope and Contents:

1 sheet (2 pages). Breton explains which literary works he considers to be the most important in France and in the world. Lot 2528.

Letter by André Breton in response to an inquiry relating to artists, 1965 June 4

Box 1

Item 37

Scope and Contents:

1 sheet (1 page). Breton lists the ten artists that he considers to be the most authentic for the past 20 years: Pierre Alchinsky (Belgium); Enrico Baj (Italy); Jean Degottex (France); Alberto Gironella (Mexico); Konrad Klapheck (Germany); Robert Rauschenberg (USA); Max Walter Svanberg (Sweden); and Henri Télémache (Haiti). Included are four facsimiles. Lot 2528.

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