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'MUSEUM / enfants non admis': Arriving Late to Marcel Broodthaers

Michal Ron

In 1968, the Belgian artist Marcel Broodthaers inaugurated the *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles* at his home in Brussels, with the *Section XIXème siècle*. In 1972, Broodthaers closed his *Museum* at documenta 5 with the *Musée d'Art Ancien, Département des Aigles, Gallery du XXe siècle*. Art historical discourse has framed the fictitious *Museum* project as institutional critique. My essay shifts the focus to the historical critique embedded in Broodthaers's *Museum* by introducing an analytical meditation on the project's temporality. Following the artist's references to a large span of historical periods in the *Museum's* Sections, my essay claims that they demonstrated

disjointed temporalities. The *Museum*, temporal and ephemeral, was anchored in its present, and left very few material traces. Pausing on a verse that reappeared in the artist's works, 'Museum / children not admitted,' I suggest that the artist problematized access to his *Museum* for generations of future viewers. My reading shows how the artist blocked the past, while appropriating historical materials or burying his own work. Reading these complex temporal relations in the light of the theoretical writings of Walter Benjamin and Jacques Derrida, I suggest that the artist buried the nineteenth century for a future to come.

Keywords: Marcel Broodthaers, historical critique, Jacques Derrida, children, museum, reinstallation, nineteenth century, contemporary art, fiction

Introduction¹

Being a Child.

1. dawdling — To be slow, to be late. Could you please hurry up?
2. imitating — Then understanding. As a way of learning. Fake it till you make it.
3. jumping — Into muddy puddles. Into conclusions.
4. associating — Before Freudian slips, confusing words through similarities.²

This essay is an analytical meditation on the temporality of Marcel Broodthaers's (1924–1976) *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles*

(Museum of Modern Art, Department of Eagles, 1968–1972), or rather, a mediation, suggesting a way to approach this fictitious enterprise, which grew ever more present almost fifty years after its inventor, founder, and director closed its doors. Broodthaers's *Museum*, like most of the artistic oeuvre of the ex-poet, existed in the confrontation between language and objects. The *Museum's* twelve different *Sections*, emerging and ending within its four years of operation, left very few material traces—yet *Museum* poems and *Section* titles remain. Therefore, the method of interpretation here insists on words, their appearances, their echoes, and their relations to the question of time. My essay introduces an art historically naïve perspective: one of studying the state of things as inherited today. The logic of an archive brings materials, distanced in time and space, into proximity, under the laws of coincidence and chance. It is not unsimilar to the way Broodthaers brought together over 300 objects, which had only the depiction of an eagle in common, and arranged them in one exhibition, then laid them out in the two-part publication *Der Adler vom Oligozän bis heute* (Broodthaers 1972). In the following, I, too,³ bring together Marcel Broodthaers with Walter Benjamin (and notice that their initials, M. B. and W. B., could mirror each other, like Narcissus looking at his reflection in the pool).⁴ This article reflects on the critical *Musée d'Art Moderne*, Brussels/le Coq/Antwerp/Middelburg/Cologne/Düsseldorf/Kassel, in light of the institutional Museum of Modern Art, New York. And, I make more associations, sometimes provoked by a word, or, following Jacques Derrida, even by the sound of a word as it is pronounced.⁵ This is the methodological principle of my approach: to borrow structures from M. B., who was also an *homme de lettres*,⁶ to think them through and to think through them. I have already begun with a demonstration, borrowing Broodthaers's meditation on 'Being Narcissus' and 'Being an Artist' from his artist's book *Magie. Art et politique* (1973a)—and applying it anew, this time to infantility.

MUSEUM [...] until the end of time

On a plastic plate, an *Industrial Poem*, which Marcel Broodthaers produced between 1968 and 1969 in his capacity as the director of his own fictive museum, the *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles*, a poem reads (Figure 1):

'A form a surface a volume, servile.
 An open angle. Hard edges,
 A director a maid and a cashier.
 MUSEUM
 children not admitted
 ... all day long, until the end of time.'⁷



Figure 1. Marcel Broodthaers, *Museum: Children not admitted*, 1968–1969. Painted vacuum-formed plastic plate, 82 x 119 x 0.5 cm. Black version, edition 4/7, and white version (courtesy of the Herbert Foundation Collection, Ghent; © 2021 Succession Marcel Broodthaers/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn).

Time—'temp'—is the final word, ending the verse. Its elevated letters, which were pressed out by vacuum, dis-appear against the background color of the plate, which is in one version white, in another black. 'MUSEUM' is the largest word. It shines in golden capital letters at the center of both versions. Time is one theme that Broodthaers problematized in his work and particularly in his *Museum: the Museum was*, as another *Industrial Poem* from 1968 attests in its italicized header, a 'Musée d'Art Moderne' with a 'Section XIXè Siècle'—Nineteenth Century Section (Figure 2). The sign lists, under a 'DEPARTEMENT DES AIGLES,' the nineteenth century French neo-classicist painters Jacques-Louis 'DAVID' (1748–1825) and Jean-Auguste-Dominique 'INGRES' (1780–1867), next to the inferior, and pompous, Belgian romantic painter Antoine Joseph 'WIERTZ' (1806–1865). The realist painter Gustave 'COURBET' (1819–1877) is perhaps the closest to modernism among this honourable group. 'It is Ingres who interests me, not Cézanne and the apples,' as Broodthaers (1987: 44) explained, in the self-edited 1974 interview 'Ten Thousand Francs Reward.'

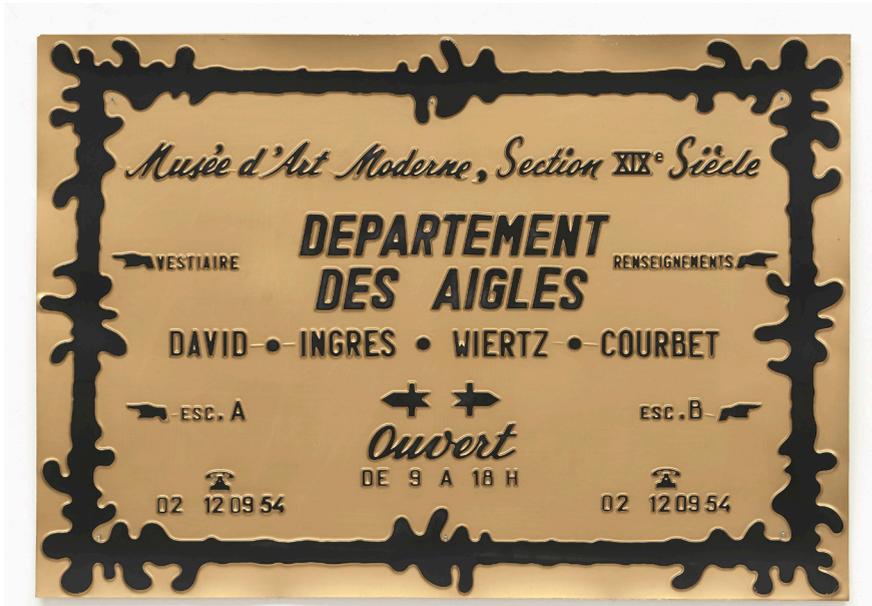


Figure 2. Marcel Broodthaers, *Department of Eagles* (David, Ingres, Wiertz, Courbet), 1968. Painted vacuum-formed plastic plate, 82 x 119 x 0.5 cm. Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York (digital image © 2021 MoMA, NY/Scala, Florence; © 2021 Succession Marcel Broodthaers/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn).

The artist founded his *Museum of Modern Art* in his apartment in Brussels at 30 Rue de la Pépinière. The following inventory is from an open letter, dated the 25th of August 1969, which he contributed to the 1969 exhibition *Konzeption-Conception* in Leverkusen (Wedewer and Fischer 1969):

'The Museum of Modern Art – Section XIXth Century – Département des Aigles is composed of the following elements:

1. Packing cases, bearing the transport, marks of works of art:
handle with care, top, bottom ... picture ...
2. Postcards reproducing paintings of the XIXth century:
Ingres ... Delacroix ... David ...⁹

But next to many postcards of nineteenth-century paintings, including ones by Jean Baptist Corot (1796–1875) and Antoine-Jean Gros (1771–1835) as well, it also featured a postcard reproducing a painting by the twentieth-century artist René Magritte (1898–1967).⁹ Slides of those postcards were projected on wooden art transport crates (the aforementioned 'packing cases'). In addition, the garden's brick wall bore the inscription 'DEPARTEMENT DES AIGLES,' which could clearly be seen behind the artist in his film *La Pluie (Projet pour un text)* (1969). On the inside of the apartment's windows, visitors could read the words 'MUSEE' and 'MUSEUM.'¹⁰

These 'elements' could be viewed for one year only. After its formal inauguration on the 27th of September 1968, with a cold buffet and a speech by Johannes Cladders, then director of the Museum of Mönchengladbach, the *Nineteenth Century Section* was open until the 27th of September 1969.

Immediately after, the museum reopened in Antwerp, but only for one week, from the 27th of September to the 5th of October 1969. Under the title *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles, Section XVIIème Siècle*—Museum of Modern Art, Department of Eagles, Seventeenth Century Section, it presented the same 'elements,' with one important difference: this time, the postcards were of paintings by the seventeenth-century Flemish master Paul Peter Rubens (1577–1640). In this section, the windows also featured inscriptions. From the street facing the gallery, the inscription in French appeared as a mirrored text; from the inside, it read 'DEPARTEMENT DES AIGLES.' The opposite was true of the inscription that appeared in Flemish, since Antwerp is located in the Flemish region of Belgium. Inside, the inscription was mirrored. It could be read correctly only from the outside, facing the windowpane from the street: 'SECTIE XVII EEUW,' Seventeenth Century Section.

In 1972, after several more iterations, the *Museum of Modern Art* went all the way back to prehistory. The exhibition of the *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles, Section des Figures*—the Museum of Modern Art, Department of Eagles, Section of Figures—at the Städtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf consisted of an installation titled 'Der Adler vom Oligozän bis heute'—the figure of the eagle from the Oligocene until today. In this project, Broodthaers presented over 300 objects that carried the figure of the eagle. The objects belonged to different historical periods, they originated in different geographical regions, and were made to fulfil different functions. They were on loan from diverse institutions: from museums of art, ethnology, history, war, and nature, from automobile clubs and restaurants. Next to each object, a label declared 'THIS IS NOT A WORK OF ART,' in French, German, or English. '(The inscriptions illustrate an idea of Marcel Duchamp and René Magritte),' the artist clarified in the exhibition catalogue, also in these three languages (Broodthaers 1972: 12).¹¹ Most historical, archeological, and quotidian items in Broodthaers's *Museum of Modern Art* were not only genuinely 'not works of art,' they weren't works of modern art, either, except perhaps for Magritte's *Les Fanatiques* (1955), which depicts an eagle, and *Adler* (1972), a postmodern eagle contribution commissioned from Gerhard Richter (b. 1932). Later that year, at documenta 5 in Kassel, Broodthaers finally opened the 'Section of Modern Art' of the 'Museum of Modern Art'—the *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles, Section d'Art Moderne*: a tautology containing the title of the museum's section in wall inscriptions in three languages, and arrows directing both ways to the 'DIRECTION,' 'CLOAK-ROOM,' 'CASHIER,' and 'OFFICE.' Broodthaers included the window inscriptions 'MUSEUM MUSEE,' readable from the outside, and 'Fig 0,' readable from the inside, and a floor piece, protected with ropes and stanchions, with the inscription 'Private Property,' also in three languages—only to transform everything after six weeks into a *Musée d'Art Ancien, Département des Aigles, Galerie du XXe siècle* (*Museum of Ancient Art, Department of Eagles, Gallery of the Twentieth Century*) with a new floor piece with new inscriptions of verbs in the infinitive: 'Write Paint Copy / Figure / Speak Form Dream / Exchange / Do Inform Can.'¹² In the title, which now

associated a museum of ancient art with a gallery of the twentieth century, a contradiction replaced the tautology.

In his references to a large span of historical periods in the *Museum's* sections, Broodthaers demonstrates disjointed temporalities. From the *Museum's* first days to its last, past and present are convoluted. The *Museum* has its home birth in Autumn 1968, following the events of May 1968.¹³ But what relevance does the nineteenth century have for the set of problems urgent 'these days'?¹⁴ At documenta 5, titled *Questioning Reality—Pictorial Worlds Today*, the *Museum* ends its operations with a move in the reverse: when a *Gallery of the Twentieth Century* becomes part of a *Museum of Ancient Art*, the world of 'today' is recognized as antiquity. These temporal complexities echo Walter Benjamin (Benjamin 1999: 22), who in the second, 1939, *Exposé to the Arcades Project* writes about Baudelaire:

"Spleen et idéal" – in the title of this first cycle of poems in *Les Fleurs du mal*, the oldest loanword in the French language was joined to the most recent one.'

Musée d'Art Ancien, Galerie du XX Siècle—in the title of this last section executed under the *Département des Aigles*, ancient art was joined to the most recent. According to Benjamin (1999: 22–23):

'For Baudelaire [as for Broodthaers], there is no contradiction between the two concepts. He recognizes in spleen the latest transfiguration of the ideal; the ideal seems to him the first expression of spleen. With this title, in which the supremely new is presented to the reader as something "supremely old," Baudelaire has given the liveliest form to his concept of the modern. The linchpin of his entire theory of art is "modern beauty," and for him the proof of modernity seems to be this: it is marked with the fatality of being one day antiquity, and it reveals this to whoever witnesses its birth.'

Following Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, Broodthaers and Benjamin are often brought together.¹⁵ Both engaged with modernity, Baudelaire, and the nineteenth century in critical observations that reveal the economic and ideological 'universe of phantasmagoria,' as Benjamin (1999: 14) put it, of their day. But for now, let us just catch this quotation by its tail: modernity 'is marked with the fatality of being one day antiquity, and it reveals this to whoever witnesses its birth.' The *Museum of Modern Art* indeed turns into a *Museum of Ancient Art*. To 'the fatality of being one day antiquity' I shall return in due course. Here I wish to note that in the case of Broodthaers's *Museum of Modern Art*, only a few attentive companions and collaborators witnessed its birth. Temporal and ephemeral, it was anchored in its present day. At that time, visitors had to hurry if they wished to follow the *Museum's* epiphanies, as it emerged in a sequence of sections that successively appeared in different locations, travelling from Brussels to the beach of Le Coq (*Section Documentaire*, 1969) and then to Antwerp, Düsseldorf (first with *Section XIXe Siècle (bis)*, 1970), Middelburg (*Section Folklorique: Cabinet de Curiosités* at the Zeeuws Museum, 1970), Cologne (*Section Financière* [Financial Section], 1971), Düsseldorf again and Kassel.¹⁶

The *Section Documentaire* (Documentary Section) took place on the beach of Le Coq, Belgium, in August 1969, with the assistance of Herman Daled, who might have not been aware at the time that he was assisting in the production of a new section of the museum.¹⁷ Broodthaers and Daled, wearing white caps with the labels 'MUSÉE MUSEUM,' drew the floor plan of the Brussels apartment-museum in the sand. They put up hand-written signs which read 'Museum of Modern Art, Nineteenth Century Section,' 'touching the objects absolutely prohibited,' and 'It is strictly forbidden to walk on the works.'¹⁸ The sea and the wind would quickly erase this documentary section. Luckily enough, Maria Gilissen, the artist's partner, documented the action in photographs. Later, Broodthaers (1974) incorporated them in the catalogue of his 1974 retrospective exhibition in Brussels' Palais des Beaux-Arts (Figure 3).

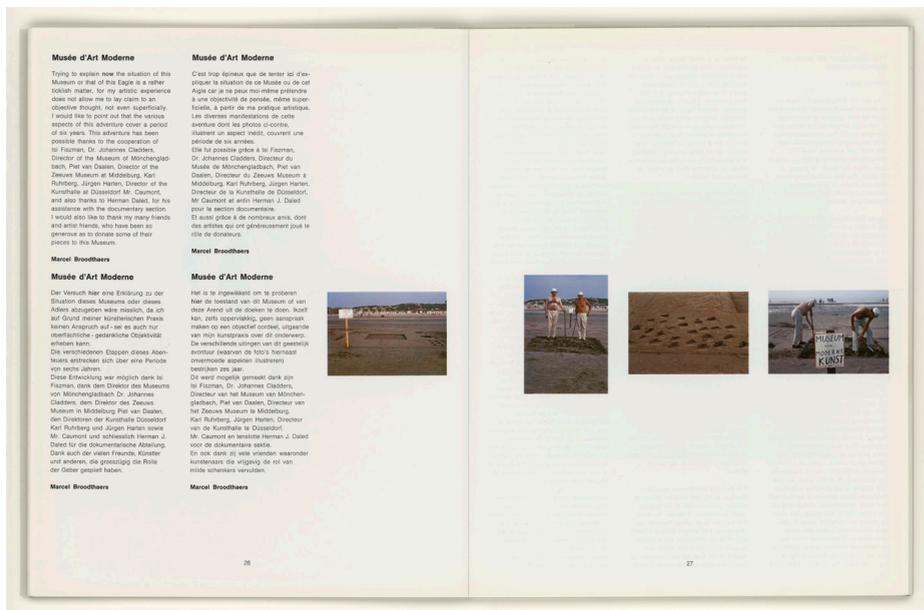


Figure 3. Marcel Broodthaers, *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles, Section Documentaire, from Catalogue/Catalogus* (Brussels: Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1974), pp. 26–27 (photography courtesy of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Kunstbibliothek; © 2021 Succession Marcel Broodthaers/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn).

Documenting in photographs the ephemeral *Documentary Section* was an early self-negating, tongue-in-cheek strategy.¹⁹ The final move, however, amounted to making publicity for a soon-to-be-closed museum. Alongside the tautological *Musée d'Art Moderne, Section d'Art Moderne*, which was transformed into the contradictory *Musée d'Art Ancien, Galerie du XXe Siècle*, in Kassel, the artist presented the *Section Publicité* (Section of Publicity). The latter consisted of a black booth with the inscription 'founded in 1968.'²⁰ On its inner and outer walls were framed assemblies of details from the *Section des Figures*. Inside the dark booth, the visitors encountered vitrines with exemplars of the catalogue *Der Adler vom Oligozän bis heute*, alongside catalogues from other museums with images of eagles on their covers and documents from the other *Sections* and activities of the museum. Two slide projections showed images of eagles, the right carousel devoted to

historical images, and the left, to advertisement (Hakkens 1993: 85–87); next to them stood a wooden art transport crate. There were also some empty frames and some hollow frames, and next to each were numbered labels reading 'Musée d'Art Moderne, Publicity/Werbung/Publicité.' When the *Section Publicité* that advertised the *Section des Figures* opened in Kassel at documenta 5 on the 30th of June 1972, the Düsseldorf exhibit of the *Section des Figures* was still open, but only ten days short of its closing on the 9th of July. All of the more than 300 objects that made up the *Section des Figures* were dispersed and returned to the lenders. With documenta, Broodthaers closed the museum. In the press release,²¹ he declared:

'Founded in 1968 in Brussels under pressure from the political views of the time, this museum is closing its doors with documenta. By then its heroic and solitary form of demonstration would be assimilated and find affirmation through the exhibitions that could be realized in the Düsseldorf Kunsthalle and documenta. It is thus only logical that it should now congeal in boredom' (Moure 2012: 354).

Reconstruction, as faithful as possible (?)

In fact, it did never 'congeal in boredom.' On the contrary, the *Museum* turned into an example of institutional critique par excellence. And ever since Broodthaers's *Museum* closed its doors, art historians and theoreticians have been revisiting it time and again. Yet they mainly do so through publicity materials (Bruckmüller 2019)²² such as documentary photographs found in catalogues, or through occasional reconstructions—a situation that the artist seemed to have already anticipated when he produced the entropic *Section Documentaire* on the beach of Le Coq. He certainly played with the idea of return by including the documentary photographs in the catalogue of his 1974 retrospective at the Brussels Palais des Beaux-Arts. Today, it is not only 'forbidden to walk on the works' in the 'Section of the Nineteenth Century' that the artist marked in sand—it is simply impossible, as it probably already was the day after. And indeed, the ephemeral *Section Documentaire* was itself not a documentation, but a reconstruction, a fact that transforms the photographs into the documentation of a temporary reconstruction. Is it a matter of coincidence that, like the museum made of sand, the house at 30 Rue de la Pépinière no longer exists?²³ For his 1975 retrospective at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, entitled *L'Angélu de Daumier*, Broodthaers created a replica of the apartment-turned-museum and called it *La Salle blanche* (Figure 4).²⁴ The wooden construction has a floor, a ceiling, and three walls; the fourth side is open to the viewer. The five surfaces are inscribed with art world-related words, among them 'galerie' and 'musée.' In the catalogue (Broodthaers 1975: Vol. 1), Broodthaers explained that this was a 'Reconstruction, as faithful as possible (?)', of an ensemble made by the artist in 1968, at the time when he was attacking the notion of the museum and that of hierarchy' (translated in Moure 2012: 479). We may view this reconstruction only from the outside, similar to how we viewed the mirrored inscription 'Seventeenth Century Section' on the *Museum's* windowpane in Antwerp,

and 'Museum Musée' at documenta 5. Significantly, the other inscriptions, 'Departement des Aigles' on the garden wall and inside the space in Antwerp, or 'Figure 0' on the windows of the Neue Galerie in Kassel, could be read from the inside of the *Museum*—when one was there, inside the space. But facing *La Salle Blanche*, we are standing behind a rope. Next to lighting equipment. As if we were viewing a (historical?) film set.



Figure 4. Marcel Broodthaers, *La Salle blanche*, 1975. Wood, photographs, light bulb, paint, and cord, 390 x 350 x 658 cm. Collection of the Centre Pompidou, Paris. Installation view of the exhibition *Marcel Broodthaers* at MoMA, New York, 14 February–15 May 2016. Photographer: John Wronn (digital image © 2021 MoMA, NY/Scala, Florence; © 2021 Succession Marcel Broodthaers/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn).

The only section of the *Museum* that currently, or perhaps re-currently exists, and that we may physically access remains the *Section Publicité*. Outliving the *Museum* as its publicity kit, it has kept on traveling from one show to the next since its reconstruction in Marian Goodman Gallery in New York (1995):²⁵ the *Section Publicité* reappeared in the National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto (1996) and at documenta X (1997). Purchased by K21 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen in 1999, it found a new home base in Düsseldorf, from which it arrived at the Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels (2001), the Monnaie de Paris (2015), back in Kassel, then at the Fridericianum (2015),²⁶ and then travelled with the Broodthaers retrospective to the Museum of Modern Art in New York (2016), to Reina Sofia in Madrid (2016), and eventually back to Düsseldorf, to the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen (2017), advertising in a transatlantic voyage a *Museum* that has long been absent.

MUSEUM / children not admitted

Obviously a prank, the prohibition 'children not admitted' is not discrimination against children. Remember how Broodthaers joyfully built his museum

castles in the sand: like a child playing on the beach, shirtless and wearing a 'MUSEUM' cap on his head.²⁷ In another open letter, released in Düsseldorf on the 19th of September 1968, signed by Broodthaers under the authority of the 'DEPARTEMENT DES AIGLES,' another version of a 'MUSEUM' poem appears that recalls the one in the *Industrial Poem*.²⁸ The letter's ending concludes: '...people not admitted. We'll be playing here every day, until the end of the world.'²⁹ The 'children not admitted' is generalized to 'people not admitted'—but to where? 'Here,' to a place in which 'we'll be playing.' Yet 'MUSEUM / children not admitted' could refer to the prohibitions prevalent in the institution, which dictate the desired mode of behavior, the codes of educated reception, and the subjection to a set of values that a child must learn: for example, that 'Touching the objects [is] absolutely prohibited' and 'It is strictly forbidden to walk on the works.'³⁰ We may closely follow a line of reasoning for such a prohibition. 'The Frick Collection Policy on the Admission of Children' (Frick Collection 2009), for instance, states that 'Children under ten are not admitted to the collection.' Facing the two institutions one against the other, the one fictitious, the other real, we can play a little game of ping-pong. The Frick Collection gets to begin:

'This policy dates back to the founding of the Collection, which opened to the public in 1935.'

First move: historical authority. Does Broodthaers's policy date back to the nineteenth century? Or only to 1968?

'It [...] seemed necessary to fulfill the intention of the collection founder [in Broodthaers's case, museum director] [...] to preserve and display the celebrated works of art in their domestic setting.'

Domestic, like the museum-within-an-apartment at 30 Rue de la Pépinière? Was the intention of Broodthaers as the *Museum's* director to preserve and display the celebrated works of art in their domestic setting? But what if the *Museum* is the work of art?³¹

'The works of art are displayed with a minimum of ropes, barriers, platforms, cases and stanchions'

—which Broodthaers fittingly used in Kassel to protect the 'private property,' and later to protect *La Salle blanche*.

'Unfortunately, many other museums have learned that irreparable harm can be done to an artwork in the briefest instant.'

Please note the jumps from one temporal perspective to the other: the founding of the collection is already historical, the harm could be done in the briefest instant, and between the lines, the preservation of the works is destined for posterity.

'Most institutions solve this by [...] so-called "period rooms," where the visitor may look from a barricaded doorway into interior from an earlier time.'

Just like we may look into *la Salle blanche*. Broodthaers could have gotten the idea from the historical rooms in the Museum of the Baron Salomon de Rothschild. In his catalogue of *L'Angélu de Daumier*, Broodthaers (1975: Vol. 2) even referred to these rooms under the title 'Salle Rose,' and included their photographs.

'The rooms [...] contain works of art that are more rare, fine, and valuable than those of nearly any "period room" to be found in another museum.'

The rooms of Broodthaers's *Museum*, let's not forget, contained just postcards of works of art and things that were 'not works of art.' But let's also notice the function of the 'period rooms': allowing viewers to look into an interior from an earlier time.

'The admission of young children [...] would necessitate erecting [...] barriers to protect the works of art. That action would change fundamentally the experience of viewing.'

The experience of viewing is precluded for today's re-viewers of Broodthaers's *Museum*.

'Not only would children thereby fail to experience these works of art in their historical setting of 1914 [...] but this experience would be lost for adults as well.'

Does the loss of the physical *Museum* preserve the experience of those who originally saw it between 1968 and 1972?

'The Frick Collection applied to and received from New York City Commission on Human Rights an exemption from the age discrimination provisions [...]. Hence, the Collection is legally entitled to its position.'

Next comes the justification from the law! A director of a fictive museum, Broodthaers made his own laws.

'We sincerely regret any inconvenience [...] but [it] is the only responsible stance we can take.'

Let's keep this justified prohibition of the admission of (young) children in mind. It wonderfully reaffirms the wittily bureaucratic open letters Broodthaers wrote as the director of a fictitious museum, in his ironic parody of the bureaucratic communication of real museums—for example, the aforementioned formal closure of the *Département des Aigles*, 'people not admitted. We'll be playing here every day until the end of the world.' It also sheds light on the temporal relations between the preservation of the past and the viewing in the future, a future Broodthaers withdraws his museum from: 'children not admitted / ... all day long, until the end of time.'³² Is this the only responsible stance he could have taken in order to protect his *Museum*? Protect from whom? Here I wish to propose another reading of

Broodthaers's poem that takes a different direction: the prohibition 'children not admitted' does not (only) apply to people who were born less than ten years ago, but all those who were born too late (or too far away) to enter Broodthaers's *Museum* in time. The latecomers, the belated, those arriving late, are the 'children' excluded from Broodthaers's *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles*.

Of the reference to children as young in regard to history, and not only in regard to years of age, we learn from another instance in Broodthaers's work, where the words 'MUSÉE. MUSEUM' and 'ENFANTS NON ADMIS' appear together again. This happens in both the French and English versions of *A Film by Charles Baudelaire* (1970), which later formed part of the program of *Cinéma Modèle* of the *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles* (1970). *Cinéma Modèle* was open to the public in the basement at Burgplatz 12 in Düsseldorf between November and December 1970 and was later transformed into the *Section Cinéma*. The film, which Broodthaers conceived as a contribution to the seminar Lucien Goldmann gave on Baudelaire at the University of Brussels in 1969–1970, was allegedly made by Baudelaire, who presented his torturous memories of his forced voyage across the Pacific in 1841.³³ It is composed of still images that show a map of the world and focus on relevant marine parts. A succession of words, such as 'SHARK,' 'COOK,' and 'KNIFE,' and numerals appear in both versions. But the versions vary in the selection of words: these move between geometrical terms such as 'SPHERE,' 'PYRAMIDE,' and 'CYLINDRE' in the French version, to loaded concepts such as 'SILENCE,' 'DEATH,' and 'FAMINE' in the English one. The numerical data also show considerable differences between the series of numbers that climb from 000000 up to 900000 and down again in the French version, to the dates, beginning with 'January 3rd 1850' and climbing up to 'December 17th,' in the English version. After 'December 17th' repeatedly flashes several times, the dates go back in time until they stop on 'March 28th.' In both versions, the words 'MUSÉE. MUSEUM' appear in gold against a black background accompanied by a soundtrack (until that point the film is silent) in which a voice of a child twice announces, with accompanying subtitles, 'ENFANTS NON ADMIS' (Borja-Villel 1997: 116–125).³⁴ In 1974, when Broodthaers participated in a group exhibition in Brussels's Palais des Beaux-Arts that included Carl André, Daniel Buren, Victor Burgin, Gilbert & George, On Kawara, Richard Long, and Gerhard Richter, he projected the film outside of the exhibitions, as an extension of the program. Broodthaers (Moore 2012: 429) augmented the film with verbal information and explained:

'Un film de Charles Baudelaire is not a film meant for cinephiles. Why not? Because it was shot in the 19th century. And cinephiles have never seen reels dating from the time when Muybridge, the Lumière brothers and Edison were not even born or taking their first steps under the watchful eye of industrial mamas and papas.³⁵

Similar to Baudelaire in Benjamin's description, Broodthaers presents to the viewer (not the reader, but the viewer) 'the supremely new

[...] as something supremely old,' like a film that Baudelaire shot before the invention of the light bulb. Shooting a 35 mm film, Broodthaers's preferred medium, at a time when video was the new emerging medium, and presenting it alongside the works of sophisticated minimalist and conceptual artists, surely 'marked' the film 'with the fatality of being one day antiquity.' This it revealed 'to whoever witnesses its birth.' Furthermore, the film was never digitalized for wide distribution for the benefit of those who came late. The latter have had to detect and follow the special occasions on which Broodthaers's films are projected in order to get the rare chance to view them. The film 'is not a film meant for cinephiles,' and children are 'not admitted' to the *Museum*. Perhaps the *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles* was not meant for a generation of children, dating as it does from a time when some of us were not even born or were taking our first steps under the watchful eye of culture industry mamas and papas?

Practically isolated from communication

But we are all still admitted to the *Section Publicité*, especially in its transatlantic voyages, when it advertises a *Museum* that has been absent almost since the work's inception. Another transatlantic voyage of an absent work forms the subject matter of *Le Manuscrit trouvé dans une Bouteille* (1974), with which I wish to take a small detour here (Figure 5). I claim that Broodthaers's works are not only firmly anchored in their present time and space, as could be said about most time- and site-specific installations, happenings, and performances, or about every artwork whatsoever, but also incorporate the question of their own reception in the future yet to come. Also, Broodthaers achieves this not despite but through his penchant for the outmoded and fondness for witty appropriation of historical subject matter, as this edition well demonstrates.



Figure 5. Marcel Broodthaers, *Le Manuscrit trouvé dans une Bouteille*, 1974. Glass, printed ink on paper, and cardboard, 30 cm high (courtesy of Edition Block, Berlin; © 2021 Succession Marcel Broodthaers/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2021).

The work is composed of an object: 'an ordinary bottle used for white Bordeaux-wine ... the words "The Manuscript" and the year "1833" are printed on [it] in a light black colour,' the artist explains in the information sheet wrapped around the bottle. The subject is 'the tale of Edgar Allan Poe "The Manuscript Found in a Bottle" published for the first time in 1833 in a newspaper at Baltimore.' Similar to the last voyage of the *Section Publicité*, the bottle crossed the Atlantic and arrived in Germany, in West Berlin, as the header of the information sheet hints. It reads 'J'ai trouvé cette bouteille "am grünen Strand der Spree"' (I found this bottle 'on the green strand of the Spree'). At the time the artist produced this edition with the Berlin gallerist René Block, he was a DAAD stipend resident in West Berlin, where the river Spree flows, and where *Am grünen Strand der Spree*, a 1955 novel by Hans Scholz, was adapted into a television series, and therefore was well-known in the 1960s. And Poe? In 1833, Poe's tale won the first prize in a competition in Baltimore for convincingly describing, in a first-person narrative, the magnificent adventures of a passenger on a sea voyage doomed to drown on a quest to the South Pole who, at the last moment, tossed his manuscript, sealed in a bottle, out of the sinking ship, to the world. Yet the manuscript must have drowned somewhere along the way, as the bottle from 1833 arrived in 1974 in West Berlin—empty. The work negates the metaphor of the artwork as a message in a bottle that awaits its reception in an emancipated future, which Theodor W. Adorno (2006: 102) famously felt in need of while he engaged in critical writing in the US in times of (transatlantic, once again) exile and displacement.³⁶ Here, the empty bottle is the message.³⁷

But we can still read Poe's tale about the voyage to the unknown on a strange and mysterious ship elsewhere, and we can also interpret it as a metaphor for the journey every writer goes through during the creative process. Writing is always done in the present time, whereas the reader resides in an unknown future, in another time and place, to which the writer sends a 'message in a bottle.' And when Broodthaers supplies the viewer—not the reader, but the viewer—with an empty bottle, in an edition of 120, he replaces the old message from 1833 with a brand-new commodity item—fake? fictive?—from 1974.³⁸

In the same year, Broodthaers similarly described an earlier move in the oft-cited interview 'Ten Thousand Francs Reward,' where he pondered over *Pense-Bête* (1964), his last poetry book, which he transformed into a sculpture (Figure 6). In this interview he (Broodthaers 1987) commented on the art world as a former poet and described how, in his view, the text's transformation into an object, in which 'you cannot read the book without destroying its sculptural aspect,' was a concrete gesture that passed the prohibition on to the viewer. But when 'no one was affected by the prohibition' he understood that 'until that moment' he 'had lived practically isolated from all communication, since' he 'had a fictitious audience.' At the time, the artist admitted, 'no one had any curiosity about the text; nobody had any idea whether this was the final burial of prose or poetry, of sadness or pleasure' (all quotes p. 44). Are the empty bottles without message Broodthaers's conclusions from this episode that

happened ten years earlier? Should one rather distribute the container than supply the content? And how should we understand the change taking place today, when a new generation that is curious about the text has arrived at the scene? So curious, that for that generation, at MoMA, the poems' English translations stood next to the 'books in plaster' in a nearby virtual copy. MoMA included even those poems which are covered with glued colored paper in other copies of *Pense-Bête*, and which Broodthaers spared from the sculpture. 'Suddenly I had a real audience, on that level where it is a matter of space and conquest,' said Broodthaers to the indifferent audience he first met as an artist (p. 44). Does Broodthaers's new audience, today, undo his poetry's 'final burial'? Is that audience, which resurrects the text in a messianic act, real? From Broodthaers's point of view, it must be fictitious. Does this audience, which can read the book without destroying its sculptural aspect, disobey the prohibition Broodthaers passed on to it? Or perhaps it remains unaffected by the prohibition, looking for the text elsewhere? The experience of viewing has changed. For children, and 'adults'—Broodthaers's contemporary companions and collaborators—as well. Returning to the *Museum*, let's now look into another prohibition: 'Museum / children not admitted.' Yet we, the children, are admitted to the *Museum*, elsewhere. Can you enter the *Museum* without destroying its fictitious aspect?



Figure 6. Marcel Broodthaers, *Pense-Bête*, 1964. Books, paper, plaster, and plastic balls, 30 x 84.5 x 43 cm. Collection of S.M.A.K, Ghent. Installation view of the exhibition 'Marcel Broodthaers,' MoMA, NY, 14 February–15 May, 2016 (digital image © 2021 MoMA, NY/Scala, Florence; © 2021 Succession Marcel Broodthaers/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn).

To capture reality and at the same time what it conceals

The partial reinstallations of the *Section XIXe Siècle* that include the original art transport crate (which nowadays is itself shipped inside of an art transport crate), over which the original slides (or probably exhibition copies thereof) are projected, and next to which the postcards are attached on the wall, lack

the domestic setting of the demolished apartment in the Rue de la Pépinière. The result becomes less of a subversive action of founding a section of a fictive *Museum of Modern Art* at home, and more of an artwork by itself. Or, in Broodthaers's words, anticipating this future in 1972: 'By then [now] its [the *Museum's*] heroic and solitary form of demonstration would be assimilated and find affirmation through the [posthumous] exhibitions.' Compare to the later description of *La Salle blanche* from 1975: 'Reconstruction, as faithful as possible (?), of an ensemble made by the artist in 1968, at the time when he was attacking the notion of the museum and that of hierarchy.' A little less remains of that attack when this section of the fictive *Musée d'Art Moderne* is elegantly assimilated by a real museum of modern art, as for instance at the 2016 Broodthaers Retrospective, curated by Christoph Cherix and Manuel Borja-Villel.³⁹

The section that raises most difficulties for a reconstruction attempt, precisely because it was held in a real institution and relied upon its structures to secure loans of so many objects from so many institutions, was the *Section des Figures*. Very difficult, yes, but not impossible! An ambitious attempt to reconstruct several different sections of the *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles* at the Monnaie de Paris (2015), curated and researched by Chiara Parisi and Frédéric Legros, even included a partial reconstruction of the *Section des Figures*, recollecting and re-borrowing about 70 percent of the items that were on display in the 1972 *Section des Figures* in the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf. *Section Publicité* held a lot of information for the reconstruction. And it is interesting to notice which 'figures' were missing from this truly heroic institutional endeavor, at the Monnaie de Paris, forty-one years after: among other items, Gerhard Richter's painting *Adler* was absent due to difficulties locating the anonymous holder of the work (the artist's website informs us that the painting has not been exhibited since 2003). And so, ironically, the painting escaped the label 'THIS IS NOT A WORK OF ART'—perhaps proving that it is one after all? Anyway, the main fault of this meticulous, heroic reenactment—as one might call it—of the *Section*, is that it was not fictive, but rather real: a real recollection of a fictitious *Museum*. As real as the empty bottle of white Bordeaux wine with the inscription 1833, the bottle from Poe's fiction, from which Broodthaers made a rather real art edition. According to Broodthaers (1973b: 20, translated in Moure 2012: 354), 'a work of fiction allows one to capture reality and at the same time what it conceals.' What does the fictive museum show us in its afterlife? What does it conceal?

Thierry de Duve (2013: 250) argues that in 1917, with *Fountain*, Marcel 'Duchamp put a message in the mail that surely arrived by 1962.' It had certainly arrived to Broodthaers by 1972, when he pointed at Duchamp's *Fountain*, combined with Magritte's 'Ceci n'est pas une pipe' (this is not a pipe), as constructing the method of the *Section des Figures*. Following de Duve, I want to ask: what kind of message did Broodthaers put in the bottle that arrives empty? Is it we who have arrived late, or are we still too early?

MUSEUM / children not admitted / ... all day long, until the end of times

The child who, in a Nietzschean fury, refuses to learn through historical education the term 'it was,' is not admitted.⁴⁰ I would suggest that one possible reading of the message that is absent in Broodthaers's 1833 bottle is that Broodthaers buried his work, as he said he did in *Pense-Bête*, closed his *Museum*, as he said he did at documenta 5, and sealed the nineteenth century, with Baudelaire and Mallarmé, with it. Unlike Adorno, Broodthaers does not anticipate a reader from the future who will look in a bottle for a message from a bygone time and an unknown place. Also, unlike Benjamin, he does not lay claim to the oppressed voices of past generations with messianic conviction.⁴¹ In the spirit (or should we say specter) of Karl Marx as quoted by Jacques Derrida (1994: 142), Broodthaers seems to call, too: 'let the dead bury their dead.'⁴² When he buries his work, he buries Poe's and Baudelaire's, he buries the whole of the nineteenth century, the seventeenth century, and prehistory... Because he awaits a future to come? And a future, as Derrida maintains, must, per definition, be something completely different, completely other and foreign to any given present. In 'Archive Fever,' Derrida (1995) writes:

'The intensity of this suspension is vertiginous—and it gives vertigo while giving the only condition on which the future to come remains what it is: it is to come. The condition on which the future remains to come is not only that it not be known, but that it not be knowable as such. Its determination should no longer come under the order of knowledge or of a horizon of preknowledge' (p. 47).

But whereas Derrida writes about the question of the future as a question of a response, Broodthaers answers with a negation. He says that until a certain moment, he was isolated from communication, since he had only a fictitious audience. The future audience is fictitious. And for the real audience he produced works of fiction, which allows one to capture reality and at the same time to seize what it conceals. Is the future a work of fiction? If the answer is affirmative, it captures reality, and at the same time what it conceals—the fact that we are in the future of the nineteenth century—but if the future is a fiction, the nineteenth century, in many senses, is still our present.

In 1970,⁴³ Broodthaers (Hakkens 1994) said:

'I think that the nineteenth century, in general, is much more interesting than ours. At that time, truly new expressive forms, which we are now using, were being discovered. I also think that history, as far as art and literature are concerned, began as a road in the opposite direction. I have the impression that, from a certain point of view, we make a journey back in time. I think that in ten years we won't be in 1980, but in 1930. I hope that we skip 1939 and 1940' (p. 17).

According to Broodthaers, from a certain point of view, we are making a journey back in time, and according to his calculations, we are now not in 2021, but in 1971. As long as we take an interest in Broodthaers,

we are not in the future, but return to the nineteenth century. And on our road in the opposite direction, Broodthaers warns us to skip 1939 and 1940. In *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, Derrida puts it closely yet differently: he writes about the burden of inheritance against the euphoria of the 'end of history.' In his account, to be is to inherit. And in his voyage with the specters of Marx, which include specters that haunt Marx and his haunting specters, he (Derrida 1993) shows that until the future comes, we inherit responsibility, and many ghosts:

'the ghosts of those who are not yet born or who are already dead, be they victims of wars, political or other kinds of violence, nationalist, racist, colonialist, sexist, or other kinds of exterminations, victims of the oppressions of capitalist imperialism or any of the forms of totalitarianism' (p. xviii).

And with the acknowledgment of that reality comes not euphoria, but a deep melancholia. 'O Mélancolie, Aigre chateau des Aigles' writes Broodthaers (1957: 14) in an early poem, which later grants his *Museum* with its eagles.⁴⁴ As long as we inherit Broodthaers, we inherit his ghosts as well.

And, as Broodthaers demonstrates, we inherit his ghosts through empty vessels, like an empty bottle from 1833. By the same token, we inherit Broodthaers himself through empty vessels, as the world-travelling *Section Publicité* demonstrates; we also inherit him with the eagle and the motto 'O Mélancolie, Aigre chateau des Aigles' engraved on a plate that is attached to its doorpost. But for us, these vessels aren't empty, since the specter of commodity fetishism, which haunts Marx, haunts them too. Predicting the inevitable fetishizing of his own production, Broodthaers's negation conveys historical critique. The works neglect/negate/abort/reject/exclude their own fictitious future—they sublimate themselves. Yet in a Broodthaersian dialectical move, they do so especially well when they are on display, when it becomes 'a matter of space and conquest.'

To conclude, I would like to end this reflection with another perspective. In the catalogue concerning his eagles exhibition, Broodthaers claims, 'I am certain that I would have just as little luck with the serpent, the lion or the bull' (Broodthaers 1972: 16, translated in Moure 2012: 341). Derrida (1986: 1) begins *Glas* asking: 'what, after all, of the remain(s), today, for us, here, now, of a Hegel?' and continues: 'His name is strange. From the eagle it draws imperial or historical power.' Another pun. For those who pronounce the philosopher's name like the French, Hegel sounds a little like Aigles. What if *Département des Aigles* reads *Département de Hegel*?

What if Broodthaers announces the end of art (Figure 7) (Buchloh 1980: 57)?

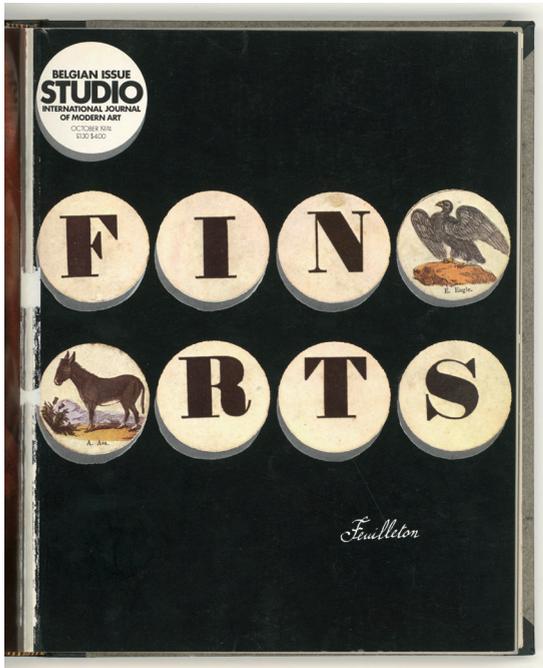


Figure 7. *Studio International* Vol. 188, no. 970, "Fine Arts — Feuilleton," 1974. Front cover designed by Marcel Broodthaers (photography courtesy of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Kunstbibliothek; © 2021 Succession Marcel Broodthaers/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn).

To be continued...⁴⁵

1. This paper is a revised version of a presentation given at Hunter College, City University of New York, on the invitation of Thierry de Duve, in the context of Unravelling M.B.: A Two-Day Conference on Marcel Broodthaers. The conference was held 13–14 May 2016 in conjunction with *Marcel Broodthaers: A Retrospective* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (14 February–15 May 2016). I would like to express my deep gratitude to Thierry de Duve for his generous invitation and trust and to Esther Levinger for supporting me with the preparation of this paper back then.
2. Compare my paraphrase with Marcel Broodthaers's trilingual artist's book *Magie. Art et politique*, in which every text appeared in French, German, and English (Broodthaers 1973a: 22):

'Being Narcissus.

1. sleeping — Plains of sleep. Dreams — etc. —
2. reading — The book as it transforms itself into images. Let everything literally become mirror.
3. drinking — After the acid wine, the gentle wine. And then the sea. May the glass find the clearest of springs and fill with water saltless and full of alcohol.
eating — Cobras, vipers, boas, grass snakes ...
... later on to be fascinated with one's own image as with a snake. Later again, naked.

Being an Artist.

1. sculpting — To drown like the son of god! What glory! ... It's better to fake. Properties: A diver's outfit. Several fish. Flowers.
 2. painting — Witnesses appearing on stage, the merchant with his friend, the art lover. Swearing allegiance.
 3. drawing — The artist's writing complements or replaces his image. He signs.
 4. engraving — Market study.'
3. 'Moi aussi, je me suis demandé si je ne pouvais pas vendre quelque chose et réussir dans la vie,' types Broodthaers famously on the invitation to his first solo exhibition at Galerie Saint Laurent in 1964. From Hannah Bruckmüller I learn now to ask: 'I, too'—I as well as who? In Broodthaers's case, Bruckmüller demands to know, who else asks 'whether I could not sell something and succeed in life'? She shared the findings of her archival research in a conference presentation (Bruckmüller 2018), forthcoming in *Oxford Art Journal* as "'Beware the challenge!" Marcel Broodthaers, poet in the pop trap. Archival notes on an artist's narrative.'
4. 'I, too,' bring Broodthaers and Benjamin together and pursue the path lead by Benjamin H. D. Buchloh's (1980) post-Marxist reading of Broodthaers's work, which inspired a generation of scholarly followers and disciples in the US, including Douglas Crimp (1989), Rosalind Kraus (1999, 2010), and Rachel Haidu (2010). The German written literature is less tempted by this trail, even though it is well aware of it. An exception is Sebastian Egenhofer (2016). Egenhofer and I often focus on the same works from Broodthaers's oeuvre, yet each view them from a different angle. Where Egenhofer proves that Broodthaers demonstrates the historicity of the present, I look at this historicity from a standing point in its future, when it becomes past, history, a historicized history—a doubled wrapping I intend to develop throughout this paper.
5. For one example out of many, see Derrida's *Cinders* (Derrida 2014: 3–4):

'Là written with accent grave: là, there, cinder there is, there is, there, cinder. But the accent, although readable to the eye, is not heard: cinder there is. To the ear, the definite article, la, risks effacing the place, and any mention of memory of the place, the adverb là ... But read silently, it is the revers: là effaces la, la effaces herself, himself, twice rather than once.'

6. For more on Broodthaers as *homme de lettres*, I look forward to the publication of the dissertation by Hannah Bruckmüller (2020).
7. Author's translation. 'Une forme une surface un volume, serviles. / Un angle ouvert. Des arêtes dures, / Un directeur une servante et un caissier. / MUSEUM / enfants non admis / ... toute la journée, jusqu'à la fin des temps.'
8. The catalogue reproduces Broodthaers's machine-typed letter in French and supplies the English translation, quoted above with its peculiarities.
9. Namely *La Cascade (The Waterfall)*, 1961.
10. Rachel Haidu (2010: 133) pauses on the words Broodthaers paints on the

- windows of the apartment at the Rue de la Pépinière and describes how 'Broodthaers painted the words *Musée* and *Museum* on the inside of each of the windows, as if to show that in the empty room, these words speak to no one.'
11. How the labels illustrate the idea is the subject of rich discussion, first and foremost by Broodthaers himself, explaining his 'Method' on the next page, and later by Thierry de Duve (2016).
 12. 'Écrire Peindre Copier / Figurer / Parler Former Rêver / Échanger / Faire Informer Pouvoir.'
 13. On the founding of the *Museum* as a response to the sit-in at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in which Broodthaers serves as secretary, see Haidu (2010: 110) and Egenhofer (2016: 680).
 14. In an open letter Broodthaers releases from the Palais des Beaux-Arts on the 7th of June 7 1968, he writes on 'these days': 'Finally a word to all those who did not take part in these days or who held them in contempt: you should not feel like you have been sold until you have been bought, or hardly.' He corrects himself in his next open letter, which he releases in Kassel twenty days later, on the 27th of June: 'Do not read in my letter of 7 June 68: — you should not feel like you've been sold before the purchase. — But rather: you should not feel like you have been sold after the purchase.' The letters appear both in the original and in translation in Gloria Moure (2012: 188–191).
 15. Buchloh opened the path when he quoted Benjamin in the epigraph to his early essay on Broodthaers (Buchloh 1980). Douglas Crimp (1989) continued this line by reading Broodthaers's fictive museum through Benjamin's analysis of the private and public collections. Rosalind Krauss (1999) developed the analogy in regard to Broodthaers's use of the outmoded. Finally Krauss (2010) went as far as to draw parallels between Paul Klee's *Angelus Novus*, which Benjamin described as the angel of history, and the shape of the eagle in Broodthaers's fictive museum. Broodthaers was never directly engaged with Benjamin's writings. As Krauss (2010: 116) confessed, the artist held none of Benjamin's books in his library. In the context of a conference devoted to allegories, Egenhofer (2016: 684–685, 696) makes the most recent contribution to reading Broodthaers with Benjamin, reflecting on the temporality of Broodthaers's *Museum* in relation to Benjamin's concept of melancholy.
 16. The *Museum's* iterations are clearly featured in Borja-Villel and Cherix (2016: 172–215).
 17. Daled shared his experiences with Broodthaers at Broodthaers's Lesson, Thierry de Duve's graduate seminar at Hunter College, City University of New York, 11 February 2016. On that occasion, which took place after MoMA's purchase of the Daled collection, Daled also described his luck as a collector as that of a surfer catching a good wave.
 18. 'Musée d'Art Moderne, Section XIXème siècle'; 'Défense absolue de toucher aux objets'; 'Il est strict[e]ment interdit de circuler sur les travaux.'
 19. In her systematic monograph on Broodthaers's *Museum*, Susanne König

(2012: 84, 89, 138) views the *Section Documentaire* as parodying the function of the museum, since the nineteenth century, of documenting history, and more particularly, holding the documentation in photographic form. Yet I suggest that the photos document the *Section Documentaire*—which Broodthaers and Daled drew on the sand. I also find it important to note that Broodthaers published these photos only in 1974, in *Catalogue/Catalogus*, as a tricky strategy of representing his *Museum*, as I am about to demonstrate. König (2012: 192–193) differentiates the *Section Documentaire* from the drawing in the sand, which she associates with Land Art, when she mentions that Broodthaers sold the photos, whereas he couldn't sell the drawing.

20. 'gegründet im Jahre 1968 – fondé en 1968'—in this case, the inscription appeared only in German and French. Compare the documentary photo of *Section Publicité* in Catherine David's (David and Dabin 1991: 227) important catalogue of the Broodthaers exhibition at Jeu de Paume, Paris.
21. Broodthaers's German press release for documenta 5 was reprinted in the art magazine *Heute Kunst* the following year (Broodthaers 1973b).
22. Hannah Bruckmüller (2019) focuses on Broodthaers's forms of re-leases and publicity, and even coins the term 'domestic publicity' to define Broodthaers's and Maria Gilissen's sophisticated practices of drawing materials from the private home and transforming them into public matters.
23. The building was demolished around the time of Broodthaers's death (Brandnock 2004). Since *La Salle blanche*, the wooden reconstruction of the apartment at Rue de la Pépinière, dates from 1975, the year before Broodthaers passed away, we might wonder whether the artist was aware of the plans to demolish the building. This still demands further investigation.
24. Janine Stoll (2018) dedicates her monograph to this single work, and to its second exhibition copy.
25. The reconstruction at Gallery Marian Goodman was accompanied by a thorough catalogue (Marian Goodman Gallery 1995).
26. During documenta 5, *Section Publicité* stood at the Neue Galerie.
27. The photographs documenting the event (Borja-Villel and Cherix, 2016: 182) are rare in that they show Broodthaers shirtless. He usually keeps an elegant appearance, as a museum director would, with a good suit and a tie. Here he is wearing white pants and a cap, inscribed with the word 'MUSEUM.' Broodthaers's bare chest, pale and covered with hair, shows his age, but is at the same time comparable to the bare bodies of the children accompanying the effort, a girl (Marie-Puck Broodthaers) and a boy (Pierre Daled), wearing swimming trunks only.
28. 'MUSEUM / ... Un directeur rectangle. Une servant ronde ... / ... Un cassier triangulare. Un gardien carré ...' (Egenhofer 2016: 683).
29. ' ... peuple non admis. On joue ici tous les jours, jusqu'à la fin du monde' (Egenhofer 2016: 683). I slightly revised the English translation that appears in Moure (2012: 201).
30. It is also notable that the signs of *Section Documentaire* are handwritten

- in a childish manner, with markers. On the sign 'IL EST STRICT[E]MENT INTERDIT DE CIRCULER SUR LES TRAVAUX,' a forgotten E in the word 'strictement' is added afterward above the word, intruding onto the red frame of the sign. See photos in Borja-Villel and Cherix (2016: 183).
31. Or the 'Not a Work of Art,' if we go back to the *Section des Figures*?
 32. Egenhofer (2016: 684–5) suggests a close reading of the open letter and the *Industrial Poem*, leading him to view Broodthaers's *Museum* as a space of an endless, empty, memoryless present, which reminds him (too) of Benjamin's writing on the time of the melancholic, and especially the convoluted dealing with boredom and eternal return in *The Arcade Project*.
 33. Speaking on *A Film by Charles Baudelaire*, Trevor Stark (2016) demonstrated Baudelaire's model of the poet in exile, against which Broodthaers could find a counter-model for the politics of aesthetics within the work of Stéphane Mallarmé.
 34. As opportunities to view Broodthaers's films remain rare, the extensive catalogue featuring the artist's work in film (Borja-Villel 1997) is a crucial, valuable aid.
 35. From Broodthaers's explanation that accompanied the film, shown as a complementary program for the group exhibition *Carl Andre, Marcel Broodthaers, Daniel Buren, Victor Burgin, Gilbert & George, On Kawara, Richard Long and Gerhard Richter* at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, 1974, reprinted in the French original in Borja-Villel (1997: 121).
 36. Adorno (2006: 102) describes the new music as 'the true message in a bottle.' In her interpretation of *Le Manuscrit trouvé dans une Bouteille*, Petra Metz (2007: 170–2) suggests that the work reactualizes Poe's tale in an Adornean sense.
 37. Many bottles appear in Broodthaers's work, not all empty, not all full. Contextualizing *Le Manuscrit trouvé dans une bouteille* in the progression of the artist's early objects—the glass jars containing images cut out from printed advertisements such as *Tour visuelle* (1966), the bottles of milk appearing covered with handwritten words in the film *Le Corbeau et le renard* (1967) followed by the empty bottles with new-drawn labels reproduced in *L'Angélu de Daumier*, Vol. 2—could help us reflect on the relations between words and objects in Broodthaers's work, a rich and fascinating topic that is not the focus of investigation here.
 38. Broodthaers makes a similar move in the earlier artist's book *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard. Image* (1969) and the aluminum plates he exhibits in *Exposition Littéraire Autour de Mallarmé* at Wide White Space Gallery in 1969, in which he erases the verses of Mallarmé's poem, replacing them with black marks that mimic the unprecedented layout of Mallarmé's innovative book. In his artist's book Broodthaers also replaces Mallarmé's name with his own, presenting the 1897 edition of the book as a fake? fictive? book from 1969.
 39. Egenhofer (2016: 677, note 7) criticizes a similar moderation in the reinstallation of Broodthaers's 1974 *Jardin d'Hiver* at the Hamburger Bahnhof exhibition with the, in his words, 'infantile title' of *Die Kunst ist*

Super! as 'Symptom des zeitgemäßen kuratorischen Missverständnisses' (a symptom of contemporary curatorial misunderstanding).

40. Friedrich Nietzsche (2010):

'Nonetheless, this game must be upset for the child. It will be summoned all too soon out of its forgetfulness. For it learns to understand the expression "It was," that password with which struggle, suffering, and weariness come over human beings, so as to remind him what his existence basically is—a past tense that is never over and done with.'

41. We can here add another work to this list of examples, the film *Figures of Wax* (1975), in which Broodthaers conducts an interview with the auto-icon of Jeremy Bentham at University College London. Broodthaers receives no response from the deceased (Lindsay 2013).
42. 'The revolution of the nineteenth century must let the dead bury their dead' (Derrida 1994: 142).
43. Marcel Broodthaers in *Le monde des formes*, 1970, a documentary film broadcast by the B.R.T. on the program *Ziggurat*, 19 January 1992.
44. 'O melancholy bitter castle of eagles.' The verse is translated in Deborah Schultz (2007: 30).
45. A thorough Hegelian reading of Broodthaers's work is beyond the scope of this essay. It awaits another essay, as a promise for a future-to-come. What relations could we establish between artistic practice and philosophical investigation? Could it be that, while burying the nineteenth century, Broodthaers buries 'Die Welt von Hegel' (The World of Hegel) along with it? In that case, do not read: — You should read Département des Aigles as Département de Hegel. — But rather: You should read Département des Aigles as Département des Esels. And from paraphrasing Broodthaers I move to a direct quote, from the open letter he released in Kassel on 27 June 1968: 'Ceci, afin de contenter l'âne et le père de chacun.' 'I say this to satisfy the donkey and the father of one and all' (Moure 2012: 190–91).

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