

Dada Mathematics?

The cover is based on E. Arthur Robinson's review in this issue of a museum exhibit held last spring at the Phillips Collection in Washington, DC.

He comments:

The cover shows American surrealist photographer and artist Man Ray in his Hollywood, California studio around 1947. The photograph is by the noted photographer Arnold Newman. It is one of many compositions based on the principle of "environmental portraiture," which seeks to place the subject in his or her natural surroundings. Behind Man Ray are four of the paintings from his postwar series "Shakespearean Equations." He painted them in California but they were based on the earlier photographs of nineteenth century mathematical models from the Institut Henri Poincaré in Paris that Man Ray took before the war. In the top left is "Twelfth Night" which shows four of the Institut Poincaré models, including a cubic surface with a cone point and an Enneper minimal surface. To Man Ray's left is the painting "As You Like It" featuring a sphere held in his signature image of his own hand (a play on his name as pronounced in French). On his right side is the painting "As You Like It (Hands Free)" based on a model called "Three helices with the same axis and pitch." Man Ray's hand is absent this time. To the far left of the photograph is a wooden plank with a child's beach shovel screwed to it. On the plank was later written "Café Man Ray 194∞" and this object was used as the sign for the entrance to the party Man Ray hosted in his Hollywood garden after the opening of "Shakespearean Equations" at the Copley Gallery in Beverly Hills, 1948.

We wish to thank the Arnold Newman Archive at the University of Texas and Getty Images for making the photograph available to us.

—Bill Casselman,
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