

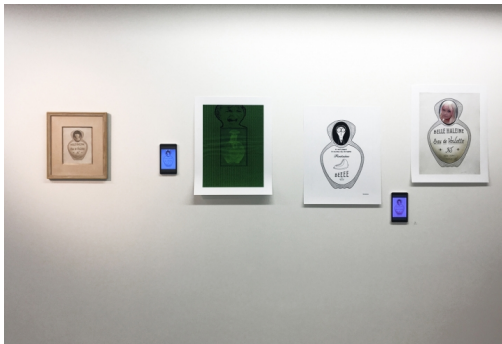
# HYPERALLERGIC

ART

## A Digital Art Tribute to Dada Gets an IRL Gallery Show

Launched in 2015, [Dadaclub.online](#) made high-quality scans of three dozen Dada works available for reinterpretation by new media artists. Now, 27 of the resulting remixes are on view in Paris.

Joseph Nechvatal | October 4, 2017



Installation view of [Dadaclub.online](#) at Galerie Charlot (courtesy Galerie Charlot)

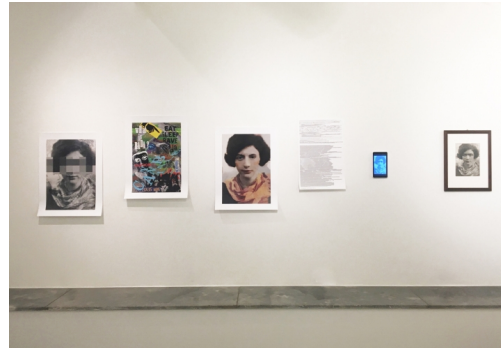
PARIS — In late 2015, in anticipation of the centennial of [Dada's](#) founding, Italian curator [Fabio Paris](#) offered to the online world the possibility of downloading high-resolution digital files of original Dada works: 21 [two-dimensional works](#), 12 [magazine covers](#), and 3D scans of [three sculptures](#). The works, all drawn from the Campiani collection of Carlo Clerici, were intended to be remixed and shared back to the [Link Art Center](#), a nomadic digital art gallery based in [Brescia](#), Italy. The resulting online art project, [dadaclub.online](#), yielded 148 digital artworks that supposedly treasure Dada indeterminacy.

A selection of the project's Dada tributes, curated by Valentina Peri and also titled [dadaclub.online](#), is currently on view at [Galerie Charlot](#), where she blends pieces by 27 digital artists' responses with their Dada precursors. These contemporary works are installed in heterogeneous fashion (mixing screens with prints) as a stream that flows from each of the six Dada pieces included (three of which are by Man Ray) in a progressive path. As such, the show marks an interesting contrast to art historian's Maria Stavrinaki's discussion of Dada's "continuous now." In her recent book, [Dada Presentism: An Essay on Art and History](#), Stavrinaki made the



Inhye Lee, "Plus Belle Haleine" (2016), animated GIF (courtesy the artist, via Dadaclub.online)

case that "Dadaist presentism revolted against any commemorative appropriation of a flawlessly coherent history." For her, real Dada deals with contingency, chance, and uncertainty.



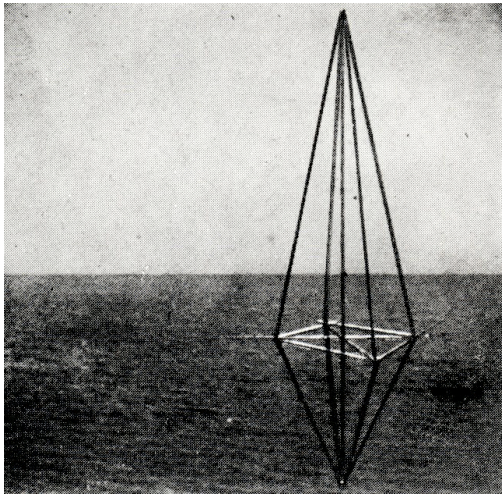
Installation view of *Dadaclub.online* at Galerie Charlot (courtesy Galerie Charlot)



Vuk Cosic, "Psychodada" (2016) digital image (courtesy the artist, via Dadaclub.online)

While it's hard to find in remix culture much of the anti-bourgeois nonsense, noise, and irrationality of original Dada presentism, it is true at least that most of the works here utilize Dada photomontage: the process (and result) of making a composite image by cutting and joining a number of other images. Two of my preferred examples of this are Vuk Cosic's green digital print "Psychodada" (2016) and Inhye Lee's swank animated GIF, "Plus Belle Haleine" (2016). Both play off Man Ray's "Belle Haleine" (1920), which featured one of his earliest portraits of Rose Sélavy (Marcel Duchamp in drag), and which Duchamp in turn

made into a label for a perfume bottle for his artwork “[Belle Haleine, Eau de Voilette](#)” (“Beautiful Breath, Veil Water,” 1921). This play of *mélange*, appropriation, and tribute sets the stage for the entire show.



Evan Roth, “stereopticon” (2016), GIF animation (courtesy the artist, via [Dadaclub.online](#))

*Dadaclub.online* also offered up images of other original oeuvres by Duchamp, Man Ray, [Paul Citroën](#), and [Lazlo Moholy-Nagy](#) (who, in Berlin in 1920, began creating photomontages and collages influenced by the Dadaists [Raoul Hausmann](#) and [Hannah Höch](#)), but it’s missing some important contributions. [John Heartfield](#) and [George Grosz](#) were especially instrumental in making photomontage into a modern art form, and from 1930 to 1938 Heartfield created dazzling anti-fascist [photomontages](#) that critiqued the Third Reich. Offering these up for remixing could

have proved very relevant in our troubled [Trump](#) times. Other major Dada masters of photomontage missing here include Hausmann and [Johannes Baader](#). Up for remixing is Höch’s lesser collage “[Musiker zu Hause](#)” (1962) — her “[Cut with the Kitchen Knife through the Beer-Belly of the Weimar Republic](#)” (1919) is a photomontage masterpiece — and [Kurt Schwitters’s](#) “[Die Kathedrale](#)” (1920), but both have been only minimally reinterpreted, as seen in the project’s [documentary ebook](#). At least they were put to some use in Giovanni Fredi’s [audio contribution](#) (not selected for the gallery show), a pleasant project of cute electro musical riffs created by playing the digital images on a [Qvadro app](#) running on an iPhone 4s iOS 8.1.3.

Though there is much to enjoy here — I very much fancied Paolo Visentini’s “[Murder’s Chewing](#)” (2016) GIF based on the Moholy-Nagy silver gelatin print “[Mord auf den Schienen](#)” (1925) hanging nearby — the show’s opportunity for online open access and interpretation of established artworks is nothing new. Back in 1996, the [äda’web](#) site, curated by [Benjamin Weil](#) and designed by [Vivian Selbo](#), allowed users to remix [Jenny Holzer’s](#) excellent (if familiar) [Truisms](#) (1978–87) series. Her phrases were torturously [submitted to combination-permutation perversions](#) by anonymous activators as part of their *PLEASE CHANGE BELIEFS* online project. Given the conformity to net art tradition in *Dadaclub.online* — something that runs counter to Dada’s insistence on seizing the present and rejecting history and tradition — this project might best be regarded as an elegy to a vanished era of rebelliousness. As such, it is a rather small but necessary step in the continuous battle against the aesthetics of authority.

[Dadaclub.online](http://Dadaclub.online) continues at [Galerie Charlot](http://Galerie Charlot)  
(47 Rue Charlot, 3rd arrondissement, Paris)  
through October 7.



Paolo Visentini, "Murder's Chewing" (2016),  
GIF animation (courtesy the artist, via  
Dadaclub.online)