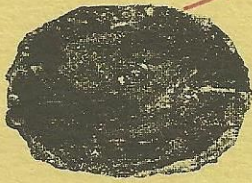


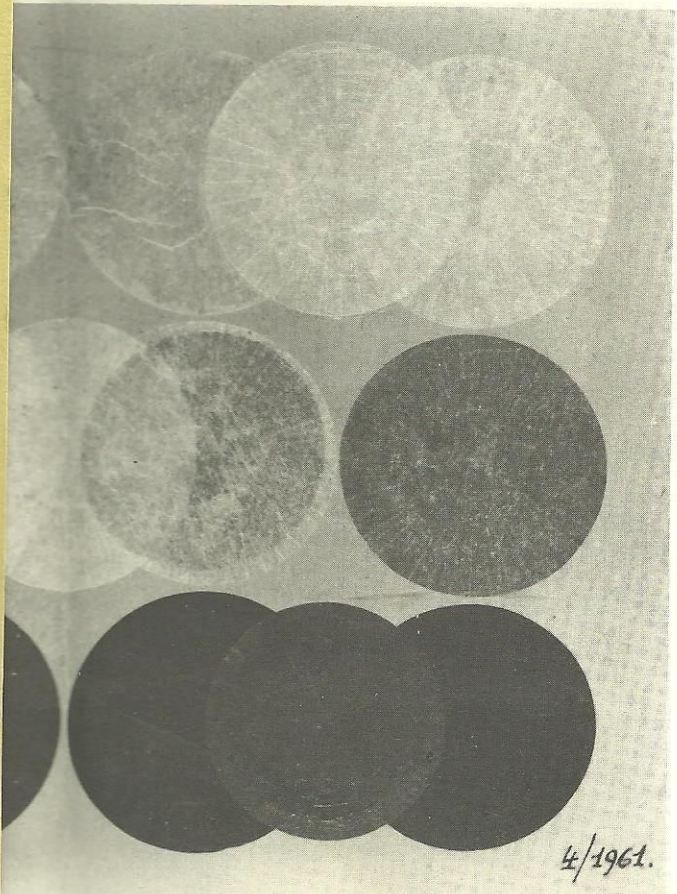
Price
list



8th-28th February 1961

Grosvenor
Gallery

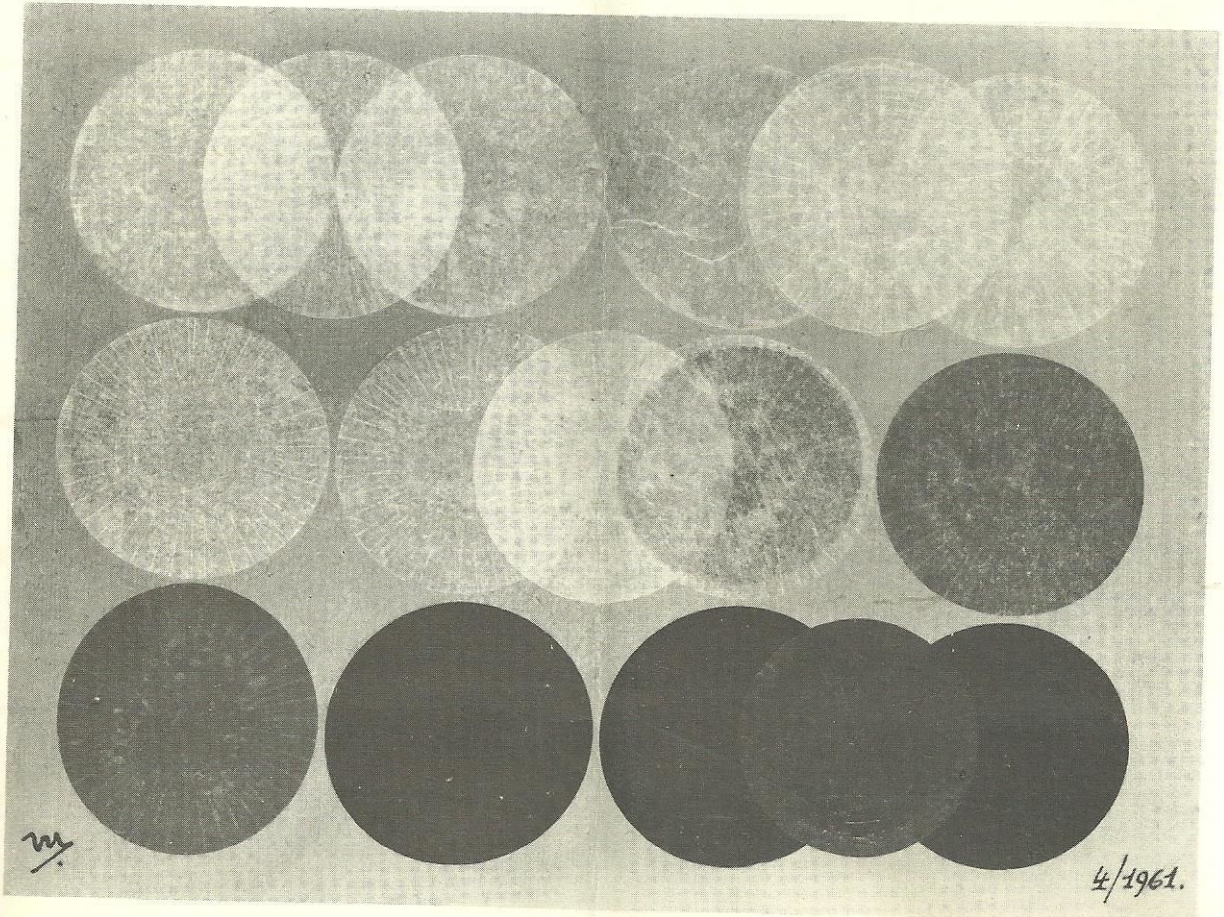
Mesens



4/1961.

Mesens

35 8 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ ins





Jacques B Brunius. Two extracts from an unpublished essay

Before Mesens' collages, one is suddenly certain that most of the makers of collages who have preceded him have used only carefully selected elements, saved because they were strange or catching, grotesque or dramatic, with the idea that they could one day be used in a collage.

He, on the contrary, appears not to be addicted to any premeditated calculation of this kind. All is good for him, whatever may be the banality of origin, he knows how to draw from it some magic. I do not pretend that beneath this there is no selective process and very informed premeditation: what counts is the ease which forbids us to recognise it.

So we arrive, precisely, at the manner in which the techniques of collage, the elements of collage, are utilised. But of manner there is none, properly speaking, or rather all manners are there. Only the spirit remains a recognisable constant.

The wish to have no particular style is so clear that it becomes an affirmed manifestation of anti-style.

But it constitutes besides the truest guarantee against the menace of ossification. In the same way that all elements are acceptable, so all means, all moves are permitted.

There are elements which, while keeping their own identity, seem to disintegrate in a droll manner. This pear becomes Madame Poire en Robe du Soir. These foot prints are indeed still foot prints, but also the lines of a hand. Such are the powers of *collage* to realise ill-assorted unions, incongruities, as well as to render objective intermingling rediscoveries, and the fatality of analogies.

Many elements are entirely hand-made by Mesens, some by cutting *matières*, others by drawing or painting or outlining an existing form. Mesens would pride himself, if one asked him, on not being able to draw, and in preferring tracings or any other form of reproduction.

In any case it is not to be doubted that he commands as few others the sense of composition and that at the very moment when his intention is to mock at the problems of painting, he is himself a prey to these problems, held by a conflict between his painter's instinct and his imperious demon of irony. The result is sometimes an admirably composed little picture which he baptises with a derisorily pompous title like *Valori Plastici*.

Biographical notes

E. L. T. Mesens was born in Brussels on 27th November 1903, as he acknowledges himself in the first line of War Poem. At the age of fifteen he interrupted his secondary studies to dedicate himself to music which he abandoned six years later for poetry. Compelled to earn his living, he was first assistant and soon afterwards director of art galleries. Very young, he was on the editorial board of the avant-garde magazines of the twenties: *Sélection*, *Antwerp*, and *Variétés*, Brussels. His first collage dates from 1924.

With Rene Magritte he was the main promoter and the faithful champion of the surrealist movement in Belgium. He was active, for seven years, at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, where his influence remains alive, and became director of the London Gallery in 1938. He edited during these years the broadsheets and magazines *Oesophage*, *Marie*, *Bulletin International du Surréalisme* No. 3, *Document 34*, *London Bulletin*, *Message from Nowhere*, as well as many pamphlets on topical happenings of that time.

He is the author of three small books of poetry and an anthology of his poetical writings has appeared in Paris (Ed. *Le Terrain Vague*) in 1959. He has also written several articles on painters and has compiled a few catalogues raisonnés which are frequently quoted by authoritative art critics.

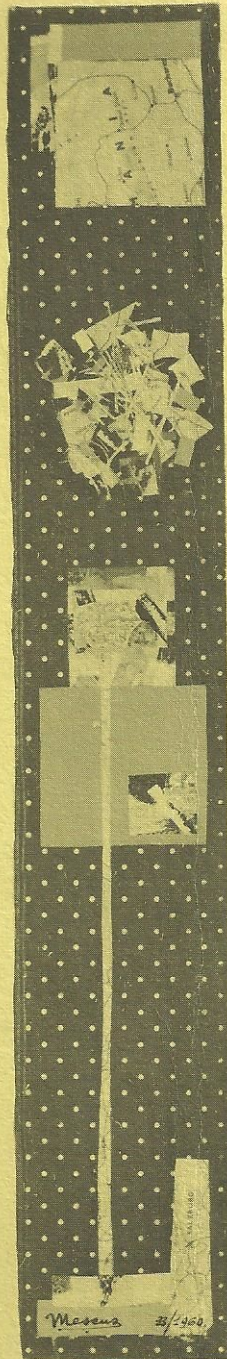
His first one-man show took place in Paris at the Galerie Furstenberg in 1958; the second one at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, 1959; the third one was presented in November 1960 by Carlo Cardazzo at the Galleria del Naviglio in Milan with an out-standing success, and the present exhibition is Mesens' first one-man show in London.

His work has also been shown in collective exhibitions, mainly of surrealist character, in Amsterdam, Antwerp, Belfast, Belgrade, Brussels, Cambridge, La Louviere, Leicester, Liège, London, Milan, New York and other US cities, Otterlo, Sao Paolo, Stuttgart, Totnes, Venice, Zagreb, etc.

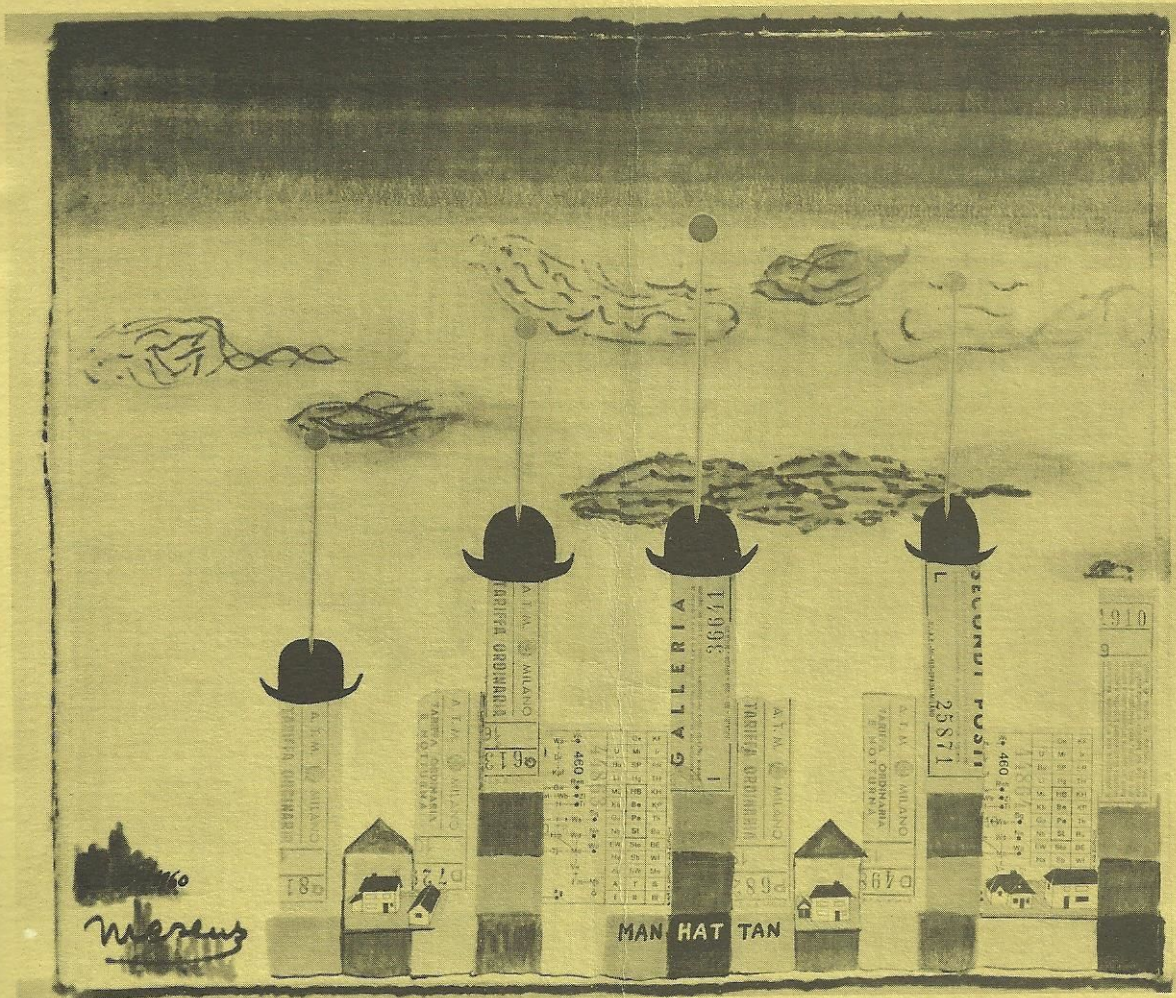
There are collages by Mesens in the following collections and museums: Johannes Teschli (Ascona); Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Suz. Bertouille, Philippe Dotremont, Robert Giron, Benedict Goldschmidt, Marc Hendrickx, Emile Langui, Marcel Mabille, Albert and Michel Niels, Gilbert Perier, Jan Saverys, Jean Scutneaire, J. B. Urvater, Gustave Van Geluwe, P. G. Van Hecke, Paul Willems (Bruxelles), Edwin A. Bergman, Barnet Hodes, Edgard B. Miller (Chicago); C. Frigerio (Lecco); Tom Melly (Liverpool); Lawrence Alloway, Louise Berhendo, J. B. Brunius, Julie Lawson, Andrée Melly, George Melly, Arion Vogel (London), Carlo E. Accetti, Paride Accetti, Gigina and Enrico Baj, Lili Brioschi, Franco Camerini, Roberto Crippa, Carla and Sergio Dangelo, Gianpaolo, Heidi Hruska, Gino Lizzola, Romano Lorenzin, Macchiati, Milena Milani, Gio Pomodoro, Tristan Sauvage, Galleria Schwarz (Milan); Artemio Toso (Murano); Museum of Modern Art-Circulating Department, Harold Diamond (New York); Reinhilde Hammacher (Otterlo); Joan Miro (Palma de Majorca); R. A. Augustinci, André Breton, William N. Copley, Marcelle Cuveillier, Lise Deharme, Henri Dimier, Geo. Dupin, Aube Elléouët, Gerard Legrand, Joyce Mansour, Pol Nicaise, Pierre Vitali (Paris). E. L. T. Mesens lives and works in London.



25 21¼ x 3⅝ ins



- NFS 1 Valori plastici. Collage 5-1954
Collection Miss Andrée Melly, London
- NFS 2 Le noctambule. Collage, ink and gouache 5-1955
Collection Mrs Sybil Mesens, London
- 90 3 Aromatisch pikant. Collage and ink 17-1957
- NFS 4 Entre parenthèses. Collage, crayon and wash 3-1958
Collection Lawrence Alloway, London
- NFS 5 La noctambule. Collage-object 4-1958
Collection Jacques B Brunius, London
- NFS 6 Nuit II. Collage and gouache 5-1958
Collection George Melly, London
- 90 7 Tous les coeurs n'ont pas la même forme, tous les
coeurs n'ont pas la même soeur. Ink and collage 6-1958
- 90 8 Déplacements et villégiatures. Collage, gouache and ink 8-1958
- 9 9 La peur. Collage, crayon and ink 11-1958
Collection Arion Vogel, London
- 10 10 La musique. Collage and wash 13-1958
Collection Miss Louise Berhendo, London
- 120 11 Ciel et terre. Collage 2-1959
- NFS 12 Petites verdurees. Collage and ink 5-1959
Collection Mrs Julie Lawson, London
- 60 13 A coeur ouvert. Collage and ink 20-1960
- 120 14 Mon jardin de nuit. Collage and crayon 21-1960
- 90 15 Triptyque (à ne pas plier). Collage 23-1960
- 90 16 Poudre de guitare. Collage and crayon 24-1960
- 120 17 Verdures dorées. Collage 25-1960
- 90 18 Parmi les palais, les statues... Collage 26-1960
- 90 19 Vingt minutes à Val d'Erba. Collage 27-1960
- 90 20 Double-face contradictoire... Collage and ink 28-1960
- 90 21 Thème de ballet. Collage 29-1960
- 75 22 Cinq minutes au Ministère de la Marine avec Yves Tanguy.
Collage 30-1960
- 75 23 Table de lune. Collage, crayon and wash 31-1960
- 120 24 Mouvement immobile. Collage 32-1960
- 75 25 L'idée. Collage 33-1960



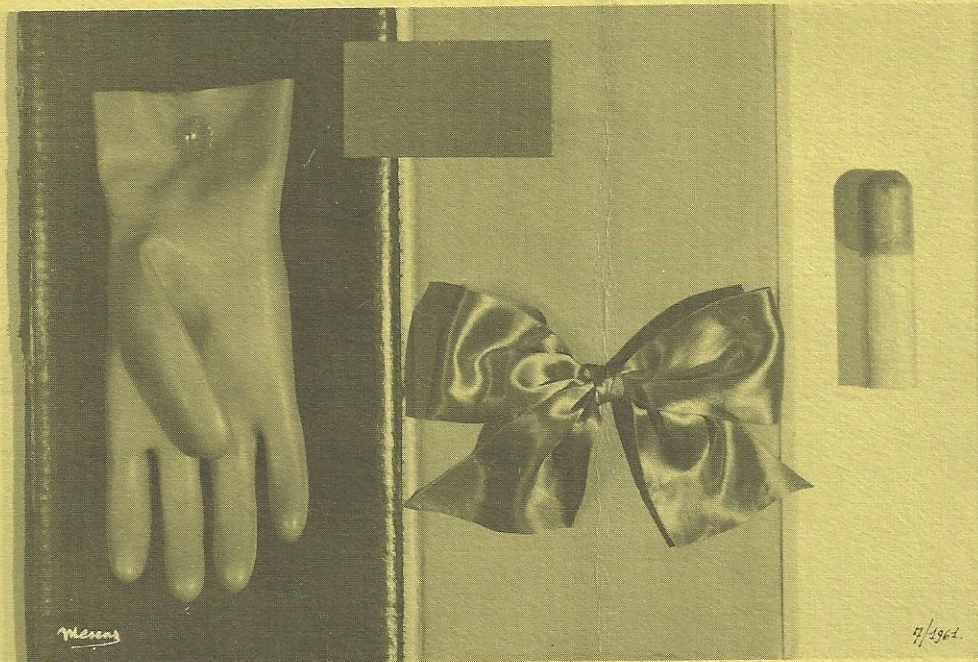
31

- 60 26 Dans la main verte du bagnard, l'écho de l'évidence m'aime. Collage and gouache 34-1960
- 120 27 Après les vendanges, les remous de la revanche. Collage 35-1960
- 120 ~~120~~ 28 Mouvement immobile II. Collage and gouache 36-1960
- 75 29 Rire jaune. Collage and oil 37-1960
- 75 30 Allées et venues. Collage 38-1960
- NFS 31 Manhattan. Collage, ink and wash 39-1960

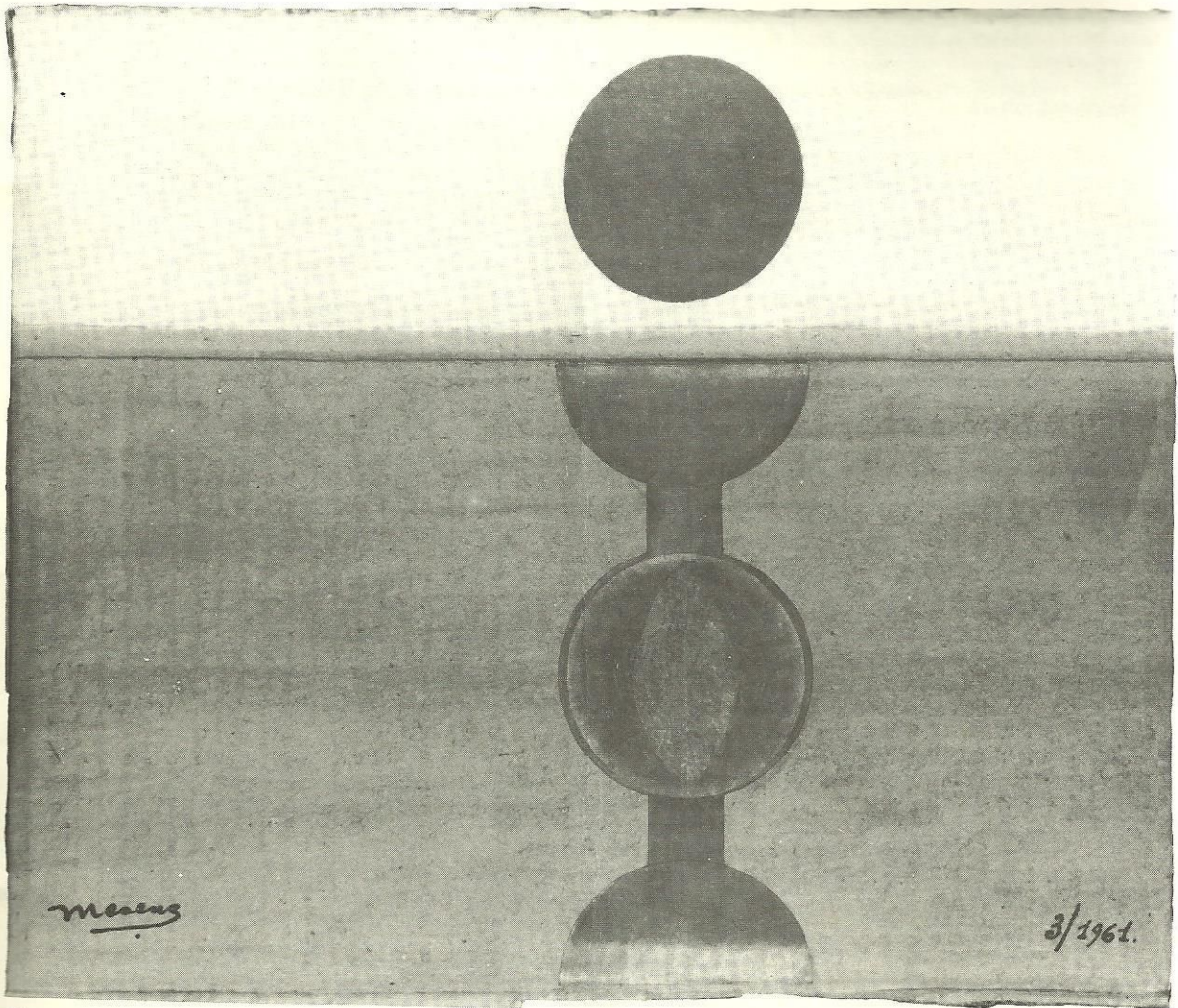


26 10 x 7 ins

- 60 32 Deux mains ensemble font un ange, trois mains font un arlequin. Pen and ink drawing 1-1961
- 60 33 Pour le plaisir III. Collage and ink 2-1961
- 90 34 Marine jamais vue ou Quête. Collage ink and wash 3-1961
- 90 35 Cradle song. Collage and gouache 4-1961
- 75 36 Pour le plaisir IV. Collage gouache and ink 5-1961
- 75 37 La sieste. Collage 6-1961
- 120 38 Objet de culte. Object 7-1961



38 $17\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{8}$ ins



Marius

3/1961.

Some critic's opinions

Lawrence Alloway in *Art News and Review* Vol VI No 27, February 1955

Mesens has no time for collages in which cut paper substitutes for paint. He requires collage, as he wrote about Max Ernst, to plunge us into drama by the opposition of elements of our normal world. Sometimes he uses neutral ready-made material; sometimes he creates traditional surrealist symbols, such as hands, out of alien material; sometimes - the narcissist strategy - he reinterprets early material of his own, such as his photograms. His collages do not repeat each other. He is never the slave of his good ideas. Each separate work crystallises around material that has been collected, preserved, and meditated on with a care for all its possibilities.

Patrick Waldberg. Extract from *Max Ernst*, Publ. J J Pauvert - Paris 1958

Toujours avec la même paresseuse désinvolture, il s'adonna à la et cette confection de collages où s'expriment une pensée à ricochets variété d'humour sarcastique dont il est aujourd'hui l'un des rares détenteurs.

Andre Pieyre de Mandiargues in *La Nouvelle Revue Française* 8e Année No 88, Paris 1960

Mesens, qui est, comme on sait, l'un des maîtres du collage pictural, use des mots comme il fait des découpures, des vieux tickets de tram, des papillotes de confiserie, et par cette méthode il obtient des poèmes qui ont la beauté des objets absurdes et déconcertants que l'on a vus parfois derrière une vitre.

Herta Wescher in *Cimaise* No 5, Paris 1958

Tandis qu'à l'heure actuelle nous sommes spécialement sensibles à de telles sonorités produites par des moyens purement abstraits, la savante maîtrise des autres, figuratifs et baroques, que possède un vieux collagiste comme Mesens, nous touche toujours. Dans l'esprit de Schwitters, il rassemble les matériaux les plus hétéroclites, tickets et bandes, catalogues illustrés et débris de photogrammes, cartons ondulés et emballages de confiserie. Souvent le goût du bizarre dicte les compositions qui se plaisent à des duperies optiques, jouent sur l'ambiguïté de mots fragmentés, dont le sens délibérément détourné est encore accentué par les titres.

D'autres œuvres révèlent, au contraire, une ascèse formelle très stricte; les éléments de trouvailles s'ajustent dans un ordre nettement géométrique, troublé à l'intérieur, par les rappels d'usage quotidien. Mais les images les plus merveilleuses surgissent de papiers de couleurs lumineuses, accordées en des gammes raffinées, qui reflètent l'admiration que Mesens avoue pour Klee.

Edouard Jaguer in *Art d'Aujourd'hui* No 27, Paris Juin 1960

Dans cette catégorie d'œuvres auxquelles la plasticité ne sert pas de justification première, les remarquables papiers collés du poète E.L.T. Mesens tiennent une place de choix. J'écris ici papiers collés

et non plus collages parce que les dernières expériences prodiguées pour notre plus grand plaisir par Mesens (*Mariages de lettres*, *Pancarte d'évangéliste*, 1959) tendent à porter sur un plan plastique—où la masse même des éléments conjure à accréditer les plus réjouissants quiproquos poétiques—un débat précédemment entretenu par l'emploi de moyens plus conformes à la tradition maxernstienne du collage (photographies et gravures du XIX siècle). Maintenant, avec les récents montages de Mesens, il y a de l'imprévisible apparition, dans le domaine de l'analogie et des conjugaisons farfelues, d'une sorte de cubisme non apparent: infra-formel.

Professor Andre de Ridder, Extract from *De levende Kunst gezien te Venetië* (Publ. Paleis der Academiën, Brussel 1958)

Van de dichter E.L.T. Mesens worden een paar papieren collages aan de vergetelheid ontrukkt, om ons te herinneren aan een aanvankelijk door de surrealisten druk beoefend genre. Een bijkomstigheid, plastisch gezien, zullen sommigen oordelen; krachtens de surrealistische waardeschaal, een nogtans niet voor minderwaardig te houden makelij. Op de aanwending van de fotografie als bron van onverwachte gevoels- en vormassociaties heeft inz. de Amerikaanse, lange tijd te Parijs gevestigde fotograaf Man Ray—een op zijn manier revelerend kunstenaar, met een scherpzinnige blik voor de zonderlingste combinaties van gestalten en voorwerpen en de vreemdste afwisselingen van licht en duister, in een uitgebreide toonladder van schaduwen en weerspiegelingen—zich met ongewoon succes toegelegd. Ook Mesens zijn wij enkele zeer geslaagde fotocollages verschuldigd; daarin dringt bij pozen een cosmisch effect door, waar wij niet onverschillig voor blijven. Uit zijn gewone collages, gemaakt met behulp van uitknipsels uit boeken en bladen, prospecti en catalogi, enz... , treedt daarentegen een poëtische visie naar voren, soms schalks, soms vrij teder, een tikje romantisch, terwijl een voornaam kleurinstinct er ons heel aangename verrassingen biedt.

Raffaele Carrieri in *Epoca* No 530, Milan 27 November 1960

La 323esima mostra del *Naviglio* è dedicata a E.L.T. Mesens e alle sue composizioni di collages. Mesens lo conoscevo fino a oggi soltanto come poeta belga. Belga come Michaux. E.L.T. Mesens è preceduto da lettere ballanti come le maiuscole dei suoi papiers collés. Ne espone una quarantina: non so se si è divertito più lui a muoverle e rovesciarle o noi a guardarle. La forbice nelle mani di Mesens è la naturale continuazione delle dita. Le scacchiere dipinte a guazzo, i fondi e i sottofondi reggono il peso lieve degli alfabeti, trinciati come stelle filanti, schegge di paesaggio, mani aperte sostenute da vocali, insetti tipografici che saltano simili a cavallette. In questi ultimi anni i papiers collés sono diventati di grande frequenza. I primi—quelli dei cubisti e futuristi—hanno da tempo il mezzo secolo. Mesens non si è proposto nessun particolare problema plastico, coloristico e formale. Il gioco, il divertimento, la trovata l'hanno guidato tra un poema e l'altro. E dobbiamo aggiungere che oltre a divertirsi lui ci siamo divertiti noi: e non è poco.

Grosvenor Gallery

15 Davies Street London W1

Mayfair 2782 and Hyde Park 3314

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