

**Transatlantic Interdisciplinary Research Colloquium Small
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Abstract

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Jean Dubuffet's Jargon Texts, Art Brut Writings, and the "Raw" Artist's Book

Between 1948 and 1983, French artist Jean Dubuffet (1901-1985) composed eight short prose pieces in a nearly illegible phonetic writing he referred to as jargon. By publishing his autographed texts as deliberately small-format and cheaply printed illustrated book(let)s, he attempted to “go against the grain of bibliophile rites,” thereby distinguishing himself from the more luxurious *livres d'artiste* of other avant-garde artists. At the same time, Dubuffet pursued the development of a collection of artworks created by asylum inmates, mediums, and other “antisocial” individuals for which he coined the term *art brut*. Drawing on a chapter in progress of my dissertation project on *écrits bruts*, my paper explores the relationship between Dubuffet's own literary pieces and the writings he found during his visits to French, Swiss and Belgian psychiatric hospitals. While scholars have noted a shared focus, in Dubuffet's jargon texts and in some of the writings from his collection, on transcribing spoken French and experimenting with homophones, I complement this stylistic comparison with a reading of Dubuffet's “petits livres” as prototypes for the monograph series *Les Fascicules de Art Brut* (1964-) dedicated to art brut artists. By comparing the original editions of Dubuffet's jargon texts with the “fascicules” of this series presenting the multifaceted and often extensive writings of art brut authors such as Jeanne Tripier or Sylvain Lecocq, I argue that Dubuffet's (neo-)avant-garde poetics and his affinity with “raw” printing (*imprimerie brute*) strongly informed the framing of these writings of psychiatric patients as short, idiosyncratic, and radically opaque textual artworks.