

Pietro Roccasalva: The Just Married Machine

“The uncertain hour”

In the uncertain hour before the morning
Near the ending of interminable night
At the recurrent end of the unending
After the dark dove with the flickering tongue
Had passed below the horizon of his homing
While the dead leaves still rattled on like tin
Over the asphalt where no other sound was
Between three districts whence the smoke arose
I met one walking, loitering and hurried
As if blown towards me like the metal leaves
Before the urban dawn wind unresisting.
And as I fixed upon the down-turned face
That pointed scrutiny with which we challenge
The first-met stranger in the waning dusk
I caught the sudden look of some dead master
Whom I had known, forgotten, half recalled
Both one and many; in the brown baked features
The eyes of a familiar compound ghost
Both intimate and unidentifiable.
So I assumed a double part, and cried
And heard another's voice cry: "What! are you here?"
Although we were not. I was still the same,
Knowing myself yet being someone other--
And he a face still forming; yet the words sufficed
To compel the recognition, they preceded.
And so, compliant to the common wind,
Too strange to each other for misunderstanding,
In concord at this intersection time
Of meeting nowhere, no before and after,
We trod the pavement in a dead patrol.
I said: "The wonder that I feel is easy,
Yet ease is cause of wonder. Therefore speak:
I may not comprehend, may not remember."
And he: "I am not eager to rehearse
My thoughts and theory which you have forgotten.
These things have served their purpose: let them be.
So, with your own, and pray they be forgiven
By others, as I pray you to forgive
Both bad and good. Last season's fruit is eaten
And the fullfed beast shall kick the empty pail.
For last year's words belong to last year's language
And next year's words await another voice.
But as the passage now presents no hindrance

To the spirit unappeased and peregrine
Between two worlds become much like each other,
So, I find words I never thought to speak
In streets I never thought I should revisit
When I left my body on a distant shore.
Since our concern was speech, and speech impelled us
To purify the dialect of the tribe
And urge the mind to after-sight and foresight,
Let me disclose the gifts reserved for age
To set a crown upon your lifetime's effort.
First, the cold friction of expiring sense
Without enchantment, offering no promise
But bitter tastelessness of shadow fruit
As body and should begin to fall asunder.
Second, the conscious impotence of rage
At human folly, and the laceration
Of laughter at what ceases to amuse.
And last, the rending pain of re-enactment
Of all that you have done, and been; the shame
Of things ill done and done to others' harm
Which once you took for exercise of virtue.
Then fools' approval stings, and honour stains.
From wrong to wrong the exasperated spirit
Proceeds, unless restored by that refining fire
Where you must move in measure, like a dancer."
The day was breaking. In the disfigured street
He left me, with a kind of valediction,
And faded on the blowing of the horn.

III

There are three conditions which often look alike
Yet differ completely, flourish in the same hedgerow:
Attachment to self and to things and to persons, detachment
From self and from things and from persons; and, growing between them,
indifference
Which resembles the others as death resembles life?
Being between two lives - unflowering, between
The live and the dead nettle. This is the use of memory:
For liberation - not less of love but expanding
Of love beyond desire, and so liberation
From the future as well as the past. Thus, love of a country
Begins as an attachment to our own field of action
And comes to find that action of little importance

John Yau



Opening still from Pasolini's *La Ricotta*, 1963









Marcel Duchamp, The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelor's, Even, 1915-23
Philadelphia Museum of Art





Marcel Duchamp. Fountain, 1917, Of all the artworks in this series of readymades, Fountain is perhaps the best known because the symbolic meaning of the toilet takes the conceptual challenge posed by the readymades to their most visceral extreme





Jean Antoine Watteau

Mezzetin

1718-20

Metropolitan Museum of Art

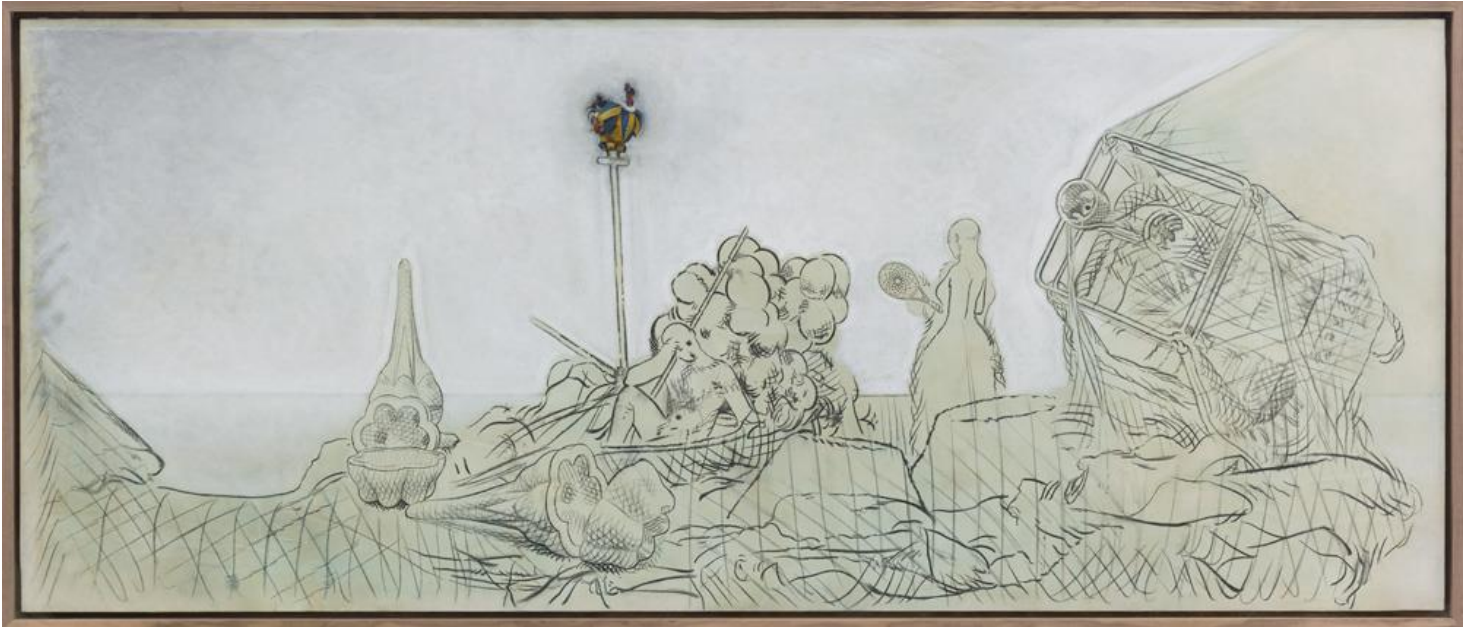
Pietro Roccasalva: Just Married Machine resonates with Watteau's *Mezzetin* (ca. 1718–20). The *Mezzetin* is a stock comic character of the Italian *commedia dell'arte*, is full of yearning, devious, and lovelorn, but not languorous where Roccasalva's *Just married machine* Lute shape boat more passive object of seduction. "





Swiss Guard Soldier Standing in Striped Uniform, Vatican City





Woman Crying with a Handkerchief, 1937 (oil on canvas) by Pablo Picasso/ Museo National Centro de Arte Reina Sofia/ DACS,

The harrowing images that summarise the intense suffering of victims of war through the depiction of a desperate Women Crying woman within a balloon basket is a modern translation of the grief-stricken Women



Give us this day our daily bread. (Matthew 6:11)



While intimately scaled, has a mystic grandiosity similar to the Russian icon by artist-monk Andrei Rublev. Its aura, melding futuristic android imagery with potent Eastern devotion, occupies a symbolic space utterly classic and contemporary at the same time.



Andrei Rublev (Russian: Андрей Рублёв; IPA: [ən'drʲej ru'blʲəf], also transliterated as Andrey Rublyov;^[1] born in the 1360s, died 29 January 1427 or 1430, or 17 October 1428 in Moscow) is considered to be the greatest medieval Russian painter of Orthodox icons and fresco