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THE MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM ACQUIRES IMPORTANT COLLECTION OF WORKS BY FRENCH AVANT-GARDE WRITER ALFRED JARRY

The Collection Given to the Morgan by Robert and Linda Klieger Stillman

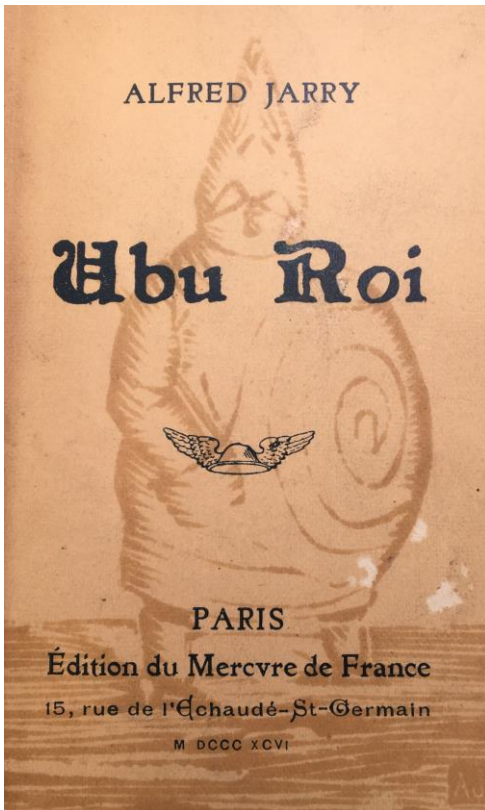
New York, NY [October 16, 2017]—The Morgan Library & Museum announced today the acquisition of one of the most important private collections of material related to the life and work of avant-garde French writer Alfred Jarry (1873-1907). Assembled by Dr. Robert J. Stillman and Dr. Linda Klieger Stillman, of Potomac, Maryland, the gift totals some three hundred items, including books, magazines, correspondence, musical scores, and ephemera, encompassing every significant appearance of Jarry in print, as well as modern and contemporary publications that reflect his ongoing legacy.

The formal name of the gift is the Robert J. and Linda Klieger Stillman Pataphysics Collection.

Jarry was a ground-breaking pioneer of the early modernist movements of the turn of the twentieth century. His unusual works traversed literature, art, theatre, journalism, and book design. He is best known for the play *Ubu Roi* (1896) and for his invention of the set of ideas he termed “Pataphysics”—loosely defined as “the science of imaginary solutions.” Jarry’s work would influence such art movements as Dada, Surrealism, and Futurism.



Alfred Jarry, ca. 1896



“The Morgan Library & Museum is honored that Robert and Linda Stillman have chosen to donate this extraordinary collection to us,” said Colin B. Bailey, director of the museum. “Alfred Jarry’s short life had enormous consequences for art of the twentieth century and, indeed, up to the present day. We look forward to organizing an exhibition of these exceptional pieces and to producing a catalog to help foster ongoing scholarship of the artist’s work.”

Included among the many highlights are first editions of Jarry’s rare books, several of which are inscribed to his contemporaries, such as *Minutes de sable mémorial* (1894) and *César Antechrist* (1895); the first publication of *Ubu Roi* as it appeared in the avant-garde magazine *Livre d’Art*; the author’s corrected proofs for *Ubu enchaîné*; and the two editions of the *Almanach du Père Ubu*, illustrated by Pierre Bonnard. Other noted artists represented in the collection include George Rouault and Joan Miró.



The collection has two important letters from Jarry to his closest friend, Rachilde, one of which is well-known to scholars as “The Testament of Père Ubu,” signed with his character’s name, and previously belonging to Tristan Tzara, founder of the Dada movement.

The Stillman donation also includes extremely rare copies of Jarry’s own artistic magazines *L’Ymagier*, co-edited by Remy de Gourmont, and *Perhinderion*. Many other important avant-garde magazines of the day are represented, such as *La Revue Blanche*, *La Plume*, *Soirées de Paris*, and *Le festin d’Ésope*, edited by Apollinaire. Along with publications from Jarry’s time are hundreds of journals and artists’

Top: Alfred Jarry (1873-1907), *Ubu roi*. Paris: Mercure de France, 1896. The Robert J. and Linda Klieger Stillman Pataphysics Collection.

Bottom: Alfred Jarry (1873-1907), *Chanson du décervelage (tuté)*, chantée par Jacotot, au 5e. acte d’*Ubu roi*. Music by Claude Terrasse. Paris: Mercure de France, 1898. The Robert J. and Linda Klieger Stillman Pataphysics Collection.

books associated with the Collège de 'Pataphysique and its affiliated societies all over the world, which have furthered Jarry's eccentric work and ideas.

In addition, the Stillmans have collected visual art contextualizing Jarry and Pataphysics. These pieces include original Jarry woodcuts, a rare photograph of Jarry in his fencing studio plus other original photos, and works by such modern artists as Joan Miró, Thomas Chimes, and William Kentridge. This parallel collection will be loaned to The Morgan Library & Museum for the special exhibition.



Robert J. and Linda Klieger Stillman. Photography by Robert Isacs.

“The Morgan Library & Museum epitomizes the ideal venue to house our collection,” wrote the Stillmans, in a statement regarding their gift. “Our primary objective in assembling this unique material was to make it available to researchers and to the public, which aligns with the mission of the museum.

“We look forward to a mutual focus on scholarship, creativity, access and transparency; we value the Morgan’s stewardship and accountability. The institution excels in curating, conservation, cataloguing, digitization, education, display, and exhibitions. We are delighted that the professional staff and the Board of Trustees have enthusiastically welcomed the collection. Global interest in Pataphysics and the Pataphysics of the future assures ongoing engagement with the collection. We are honored to collaborate with the Morgan, and we deeply appreciate the connection we have had made with its extraordinary leadership.”

Dr. Linda Klieger Stillman holds a Ph.D. from Georgetown University’s School of Languages and Linguistics. She is a leading international authority on Pataphysics and a longtime member of the Collège de 'Pataphysique. She has devoted several decades to the study of Jarry and his legacy, and is the author of a number of books and scholarly articles, including a critical biography. Dr. Stillman has also organized international symposia on Jarry and Pataphysics. Dr. Robert Stillman received his medical degree from Georgetown University, is a notable physician in the Washington, DC area, and is currently

director emeritus of the Shady Grove Fertility Center with national and international facilities. He is also a clinical professor of endocrinology at Georgetown.

The Morgan Library & Museum

A complex of buildings in the heart of New York City, the Morgan Library & Museum began as the private library of financier Pierpont Morgan, one of the preeminent collectors and cultural benefactors in the United States. Today it is a museum, independent research library, music venue, architectural landmark, and historic site. A century after its founding, the Morgan maintains a unique position in the cultural life of New York City and is considered one of its greatest treasures. With the 2006 reopening of its newly renovated campus, designed by renowned architect Renzo Piano, and the 2010 refurbishment of the original library, the Morgan reaffirmed its role as an important repository for the history, art, and literature of Western civilization from 4000 B.C. to the twenty-first century.

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