

**PERFORMANCE**

**DOVE BRADSHAW**

**THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM FIRE HOSE**

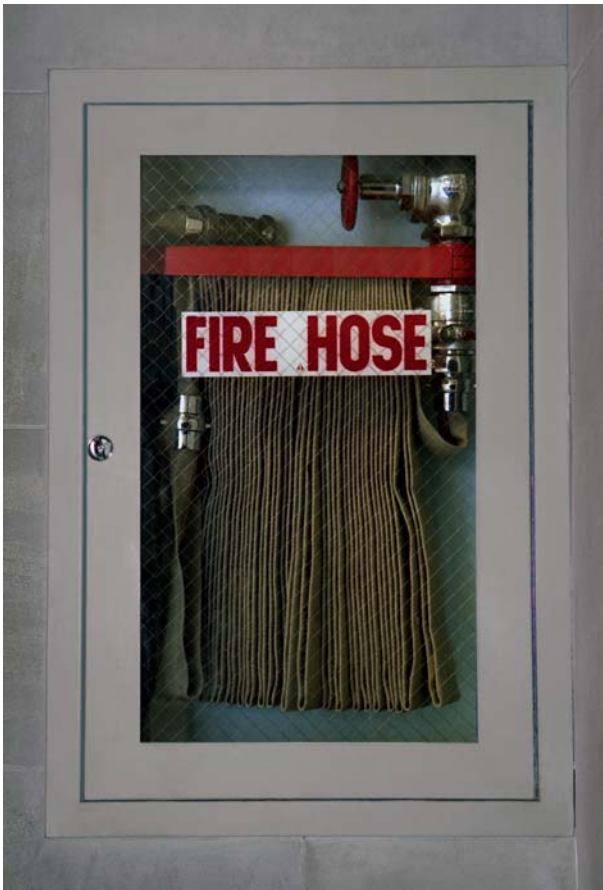
**1976-2012**



***Performance***  
**Dove Bradshaw**  
**The Metropolitan Museum Fire Hose**  
**1976 – Present**  
**Electronic Edition**

Inkjet prints, some introduced to fire or water, have been bound with steel clips for the print edition. The words and images were made or borrowed with permission from existing sources for this edition.

Dove Bradshaw



*Performance*  
North West Corner of the Grand Mezzanine  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art  
New York

There is a fire hose on the wall of one of the rooms in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. It is neatly folded in a glass-enclosed box, metal frame. It is functional. Reassuring. It is also beautiful. One day the artist Dove Bradshaw slyly affixed her name beside it as its creator, thus making it the perfect Dada-conceptual object. So is it functional? Beautiful? Is it Conceptual? Is it Art? Is it hers? To all of these questions I'd say: YES.

Dorothea Tanning  
Artist, Poet

## *PERFORMANCE*

Colophon and Signature

*Performance*: claimed fire hose in situ

Dorothea Tanning, 2004

Table of Contents

John Cage, 2004

*Performance*, 1976

Guerilla Postcard, 1978

Chronology

A Great Museum, Its Fire Hose and Artist, Dove Bradshaw, by Charles Stuckey, 2006

Saks Fifth Avenue text, 1979

Saks Fifth Avenue billboard, 1979

*Performance*, 1979

Battalion Commander Robert Schildhorn, 2004

Wilfredo Chiesa, 2008

Saks Fifth Avenue billboard, 1979

Saks Fifth Avenue billboard, 1979

*A Piece of the Met* by Stuart Little, 1979

Carl Andre, 2004

*Performance* Book, 2004- 2006

*Performance*, 2008

Brian O'Doherty, 1980

Thomas McEvelley, 2003

Art and Artifact, The Museum as Medium, 2001

Metropolitan Museum Postcard, 1992

Dove Bradshaw, 2004

C.C. Eliau, 2004

Ray Johnson, 1992

Sol LeWitt, 2002

Ecke Bonk, 2004

Evelina Domnitch and Dmitry, 2004

David Ross, 2004

Saks Fifth Avenue billboard, 1979

Marina Abramovic, 2004

Nick Lawrence, 2004

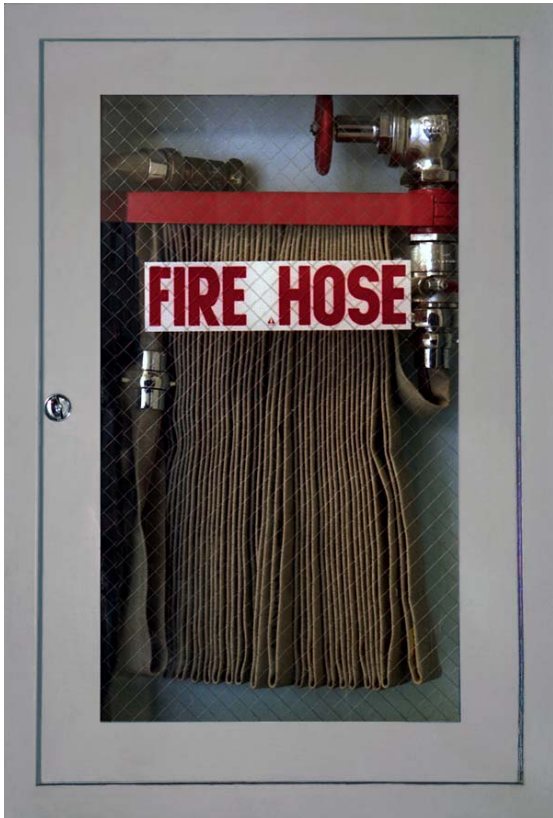
Saks Fifth Avenue billboard, 1979

Saks Fifth Avenue billboard, 1979  
Nick Lawrence, 2004  
Steve Berg, 2004  
Francis Nauman, 2004  
Barry Schwabsky, 2004  
Antony Haden-Guest, 2004  
Saks Fifth Avenue billboard, 1979  
William Anastasi, 2004  
Robert Barry, 2004  
Saks Fifth Avenue billboard, 1979  
Emanuel De Melo Pimenta image and poem, 2004  
Saks Fifth Avenue billboard, 1979  
*Will Mighty Met Ever Put out This fire* by George Meyers, Jr., 1995  
Bradshaw photograph in text, Carl Kielblock, 1992  
Saks Fifth Avenue billboard, 1979  
Caught in the act photographed by Dmitry Gelfand, 2004  
Letter to Jeff Rosenheim by Bradshaw, 2004  
Evelina Domnitch and Dmitry Gelfand images and selection of Taoist  
    Texts: Water Below/Fire Above  
    Fire Above/Water Below, 2004  
Timothy Bradshaw, 2004  
Michael Oratofsky, 2004  
Saks Fifth Avenue billboard  
Daniel Charles, 2004  
Label [updated], collection of Rosalind Jacobs, 2006  
*Performance* in situ, 2008  
Wolf Herzengonroff, Director of Kunstmuseum, Bremen, 2005  
Gary Tinterow, Englehard Curator in Charge, Nineteenth Century,  
    Modern and Contemporary Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006  
Sharon H. Cott, Senior Vice President, Secretary, and General Council,  
    The Metropolitan Gratefully Acknowledges the Gift, 2007  
Philippe de Montebello, Director of the Metropolitan Museum, 1977-  
    2008, letter to Rosalind Jacobs, 2008  
Poster, collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art, 2006  
*Performance*, 2008  
Book Collections

I see your work everywhere!

John Cage  
Composer





Dove Bradshaw

*Performance*

1976

Brass, enamel, canvas, glass

44 x 30 x 8

## *PERFORMANCE: Chronology*

1976 March: With the title *Fire Extinguisher* the artist *claimed* the fire hose in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Great Hall Balcony, NW Corner, by affixing a simulacra label identifying it as her work. Declaring it a *claimed object* (her coinage) as opposed to an *objét trouvé*, she stated underscores the fact that it is already in an art context, with its function intact.

1978 She photographed the fire hose and produced a postcard edition of a 1000 mimicking official cards. Discreetly she placed a stack amongst her peers in the Twentieth-Century rack in the Museum's store and successfully purchased two. Whenever visiting exhibitions, she restocked them. The Museum was complicit aware it was not from their production.

1979 Spring: Without consultation with the artist or the Museum, a Saks 5th Avenue designer bought a postcard, enlarged it to four feet and produced a multi-colored edition using it as a theme in a store-wide display.

1980 The original silver gelatin print was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. Kline who donated it at the request of the Metropolitan Museum's Department of Photography in order for it to be made into a postcard. Out of their 50,000 images, it was selected for one of their 10 postcard allotments for the next decade. The print was lost in the matting department for eight years.

1992 The Museum published its edition of 10,000 postcards commemorating the photograph, not the sculpture. After a few years the card sold out. Despite its popularity, with such abundant inventory the Department will not reissue it.

1993 *Fire Extinguisher* was retitled *Performance* and appeared in the artist's first monograph, *Dove Bradshaw: Works 1969-1993*, text, *A Conversation With John Cage and Thomas McEvilley*, Sandra Gering Gallery, New York.

1995 The artist was interviewed by staff writer, George Meyers for the Columbus Dispatch for his article, "Will the Mighty Met Ever Put Out This Fire?"

2001 Thames and Hudson, New York, published a reproduction and text in *Art and Artifact, The Museum as Medium*.

2004 Following a suggestion by sculptor Carl Andre, the artist made *Performance* into a Limited Edition of ten Artist Books, including its history as well as existing and invited artistic responses. Exhibited at Volume Gallery, New York, The Metropolitan Museum and The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York each acquired copies. The artist produced a small paired edition of the Metropolitan's post-card, burning a hole in the verso sides. Reproductions of the card were burned in each book.

2006 Dadaist collector Rosalind Jacobs purchased an updated label and offered it to the Metropolitan Museum, in memory of her husband, Melvin Jacobs.

2007 December 31: *Performance*, the fire hose itself entered the Permanent Collection. An official label has not acknowledged this. First discovered painted beige, the fire hose encasement has been repainted twice in thirty years, dark grey, currently light grey with a replacement of the hose by the 85th Street Fire Department which maintains it.

2008 This electronic book was published and is revised when necessary.

2011 In "A hose, by any other name...", The Art Newspaper, New York, Anthony Hayden-Guest announced the fire hose photogravure edition of thirty, printed by Niels Borch Jensen, Copenhagen. Titling it *Performance Burned*, the artist burned a hole through each print.



Dove Bradshaw, American, 1949-  
Fire Extinguisher, 1976  
Brass, paint, canvas  
THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Printed in U.S.A.

*Performance*  
1978  
Self-published  
Edition of 1000

## A GREAT MUSEUM, ITS FIRE HOSE AND ARTIST

DOVE BRADSHAW

The Metropolitan Museum of Art has just accepted the gift of a 1976 conceptual work by Dove Bradshaw, the fifth work by her in its permanent collection. Thirty one years ago the artist mounted a facsimile museum label on the wall at the northwest corner of the Metropolitan's Grand Mezzanine, to "claim" as her own art the glass-encased fire hose located there. (Whenever her label was removed, Bradshaw replaced it. Written about in the boulevard press when occasion prompted, it is ever growing in notoriety. Donated in honor of her late husband, Mr. Melvin Jacobs, by Dada collector Rosalind Jacobs, Bradshaw's work now includes an updated and somewhat expanded version of the same museum label.

An early example in her oeuvre of indeterminate work, it is titled *Performance* (as of 1993) in anticipation of a seemingly ceaseless engagement with the museum as well as the patently contingent nature of a fire hose. The Duchampian gesture of the *objet trouvé* is expanded here on two fronts by the object's *a priori* placement in an art space and by its intact function. In 1978 Bradshaw made a photograph of the fire hose in order to produce a postcard of her work then on unauthorized view at the Metropolitan. She surreptitiously placed hundreds of these along side bona fide museum postcards in the Metropolitan's shop where they found buyers. One of them was a display designer at New York's Saks Fifth Avenue, who used colorized blow-ups for a store-wide campaign in 1979. The following year the Metropolitan acquired its first work by Bradshaw, her 1978 fire hose photograph, and in 1992 the museum issued its own official postcard in an edition of 10,000. This also sold out. In 2006, not satisfied that the museum had recognized the work as a sculpture, Bradshaw produced her updated label and prompted its donation. The fire hose became a sculpture in their permanent collection as of December 31, 2007.

Will the Metropolitan's acquisition bring this conceptual art saga to an end? Perhaps. But if the work should be put on display, what ought the museum rightly spotlight? The label, or the adjacent fire hose? And if the work is kept off display, could the museum's disregard provoke the artist to yet another intervention?

Charles Stuckey  
2006

Saks Fifth Avenue

1979

Photo-silkscreens on paper mounted on board

44 x 30 x 8 inches

Here and interspersed among the following pages:  
the eleven variously colored blow-ups made by a  
Saks' designer from a postcard that was bought  
from the Metropolitan Museum. The blow-ups  
were used in a storewide display without the  
artist's knowledge.





*Performance, 1979*

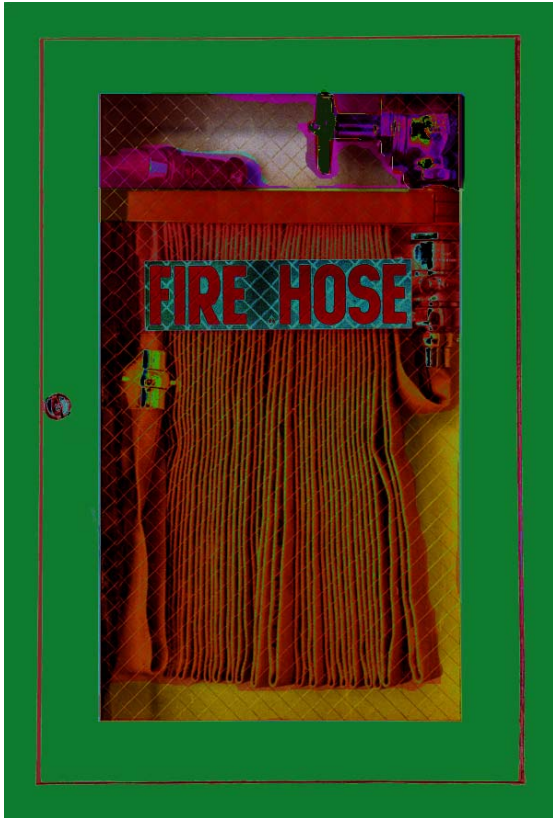


[After forty-five seconds of laughter]  
If there were a label next to the fire hose, it wouldn't be a problem in the least. In case of an emergency we would use it all the same.

Battalion Commander Robert Schildhorn  
10<sup>th</sup> Battalion on 85<sup>th</sup> St and Third Avenue,  
Metropolitan Museum's zone

This is the first work of art that needed the sanction  
of a fire department.

Wilfredo Chiesa  
Painter



Saks Fifth Avenue billboard



Saks Fifth Avenue billboard

# NEW YORK

*A Piece of the Met*

By Stuart W. Little

My friend Dove Bradshaw is making her way in the art world. Already she has a piece on the walls of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in a choice location just outside the entrance to the Treasures of Tutankhamum, where 10,000 art lovers pass by daily. How had this happened? The other day Dove gave away her secret.

Dove has designated the Fire Hose Station at the northwest corner of the Grand Gallery as a work of art – hers. An admirer of Duchamp and his mixed-media presentations of females, she found in the fire hose a counterpart, male principle. After hunting in the Whitney and the Modern, she located the “archetypal” fire hose in the Met.

Dove had a label printed, listing the work by name and materials (“brass, paint, canvas”) which she mounted on the wall behind the backs of the curatorial staff in October 1976. This, she tells me, comes under the category of a “claimed” object of art as distinguished from a “found” object. The label was removed within a week. Those alert guards in the Grand gallery. Undaunted, she applied another label. The guards redeployed; she counterattacked. “I decided I would make this a life’s work.” Dove said.

Months elapsed. When Dove next revisited her work last October, there, intact behind the glass case, was her third label!

**Defacto recognition!**

**Emboldened.** Dove went a step further. She had a postcard of the work printed. When the sales-counter staff at the head of the main staircase wasn’t looking, she stuck a bunch in the racks of twentieth-century artists in the company of Monet, Albers, and Pollock. Then she stepped up and bought the first two herself. The unblinking salesperson charged her 27 cents each.

“I stop in nearly once a week to refurbish my rack,” Dove said, calculating that 150 cards have been sold in less than two months, though so far all proceeds, including the customary artist’s royalty, have gone to the museum.

Dove Bradshaw has had several exhibits of her jewel-like ceramic pieces. Her fine pencil drawings are now showing at the Graham Gallery. Her ultimate goal, however, is open artistic recognition from the Met.

A small book should be made of the Fire Hose story.

Carl Andre  
Sculptor



PERFORMANCE  
DOVE BRADSHAW

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM FIRE HOSE  
1976-2006



*Performance, 2008*



A gallery is constructed along laws as rigorous as those for building a medieval church. The outside world must not come in, so windows are usually sealed off. Walls are painted white. The ceiling becomes the source of light. The wooden floor is polished so that you click along clinically, or carpeted so that you pad soundlessly, resting the feet while the eyes have at the wall. The art is free, as the saying used to go, "to take on its own life." The discreet desk may be the only piece of furniture. In the context a standing ashtray becomes almost a sacred object, just as the fire hose in a modern museum looks not like a fire hose but an esthetic conundrum. ...

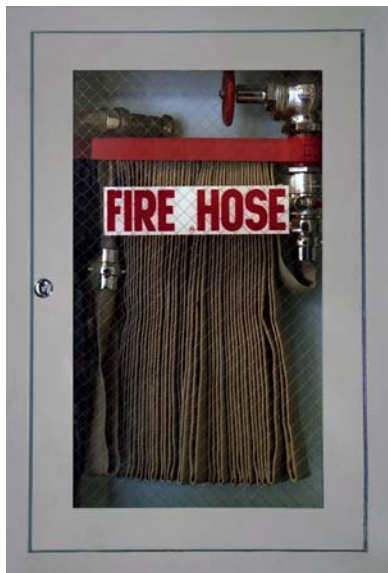
Brian O'Doherty  
Artist, art critic, novelist

*Inside the White Cube,*  
Brian O'Doherty, Lapis Press,  
San Francisco, 1986

*Fire Extinguisher* (1976) (now called *Performance*) was an early act of the genre that would come to be called museum interventionism. ...In 1980 the museum acquired Bradshaw's photograph for its collection, and in 1992 issued its own version of the postcard, printing a brief description of those events on the verso, thereby seemingly ratifying the validity of her appropriation of its premises.

Thomas McEvelley  
Art Historian, Philologist,

*The Art of Dove Bradshaw*, Thomas  
McEvelley, Batty Publisher, West  
New York, NJ, 2003



**DOVE BRADSHAW  
PERFORMANCE**

Postcard edition of 1,000

1978

This work evolved from a label Bradshaw had composed and placed secretly next to a fire-hose in a principal gallery of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in 1976. Having photographed the 'exhibit', she went on to produce her own postcard, copies of which she placed unofficially in the Museum shop. These sold well, and eventually the Museum acquired Bradshaw's original photograph, which was reproduced as the authorized version of the postcard.

**ART AND ARTIFACT  
The Museum as Medium**

By  
James Putnam  
Thames & Hudson  
New York  
2001



**Fire Extinguisher**

Dove Bradshaw, American, b. 1949

Gelatin silver print, 6 7/8 x 4 1/2 in., 1978

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. Klein, 1989 1989.1091

In 1978, the conceptual artist Dove Bradshaw "claimed" a fire hose in The Metropolitan Museum of Art by posting a label next to it that identified it as her work. Next, she had the fire hose photographed, produced postcards of her piece, and quietly placed them in the Museum's store. They sold briskly. This postcard reproduces the photograph, *Fire Extinguisher*, now in the Museum's collections.

Printed in the U.S.A.  
01-07482-1 © 1992 MMA

*Performance*

1992

Edition of 10,000

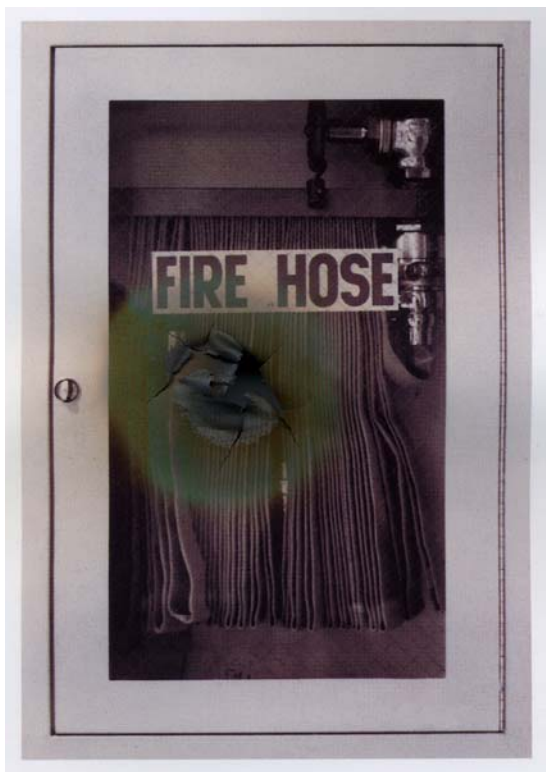
Metropolitan Museum of Art

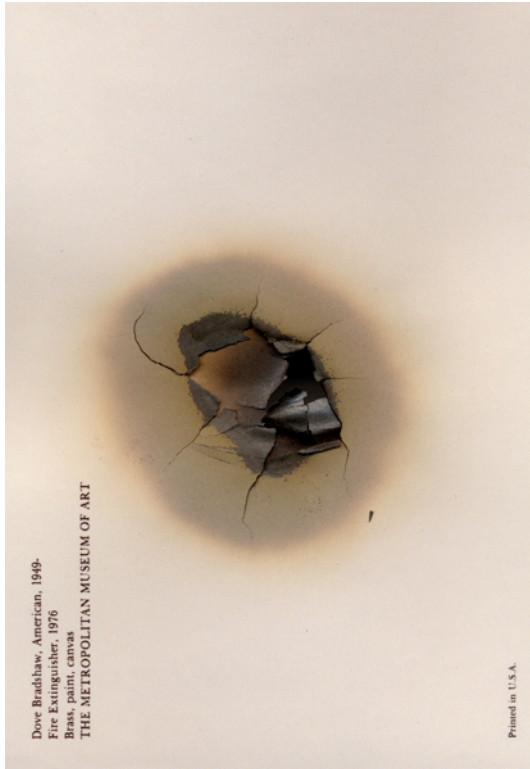
Dove Bradshaw's " Fire Hose", might well be recognized by the Met for its continuation of Duchamp's perception into the nature of art and objects; and for the idea's demonstration that context is important to an understanding of 20<sup>th</sup> century art.

There is a distinction between Bradshaw's claimed object and the *Ready Made*. In Duchamp, the object is isolated from its location and function. By contrast, the hose "claimed" by Bradshaw is discovered in situ- its *raison d'être* intact.

The "MMFH" has for many years been a signature postcard in the Met's shop. When the museum's visitors want an image that conveys their understanding of the Met and encapsulates their visit to the museum, they have reached for Bradshaw's "Metropolitan Museum Fire Hose". The visitors have passed judgement. Finishing the gesture begun by the artist, they have found Art.

C.C. Elian  
Artist





Dove Bradshaw, American, 1949.

Fire Extinguisher, 1976

Brass, paint, canvas

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Printed in U.S.A.

Dove Bradshaw  
Performance Burned, 2004  
Metropolitan Museum postcard burned, 6 x 4 inches  
Permanent Collection: Metropolitan Museum, 2012



Five Envelopes, American, S. 1922  
Dore Bradshaw print, 6 1/2 x 4 1/2 inches  
Gallerie silver print, 6 1/2 x 4 1/2 inches  
THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert K. Kim, 1972. (also see  
in The Metropolitan Museum of Art by printing a photograph  
that substituted in her work. Now, she had to be her photograph  
Klein's name. They could be in. The print is made of  
photography. For a complete, see on the Museum's website.

Printed by the E.P.A.  
New York, N.Y. 10001

RAY JOHNSON  
144 WEST 7 STREET  
LOSCIE VALLEY  
NEW YORK 10023

Ray Johnson  
2.19.92  
1992  
A PEE- LING  
Hand peeled card, colored pencil, ink  
4 x 6 x 3 inches

Mailed by Bradshaw to Johnson. He reworked the card, stamped it with his name and address and returned it.







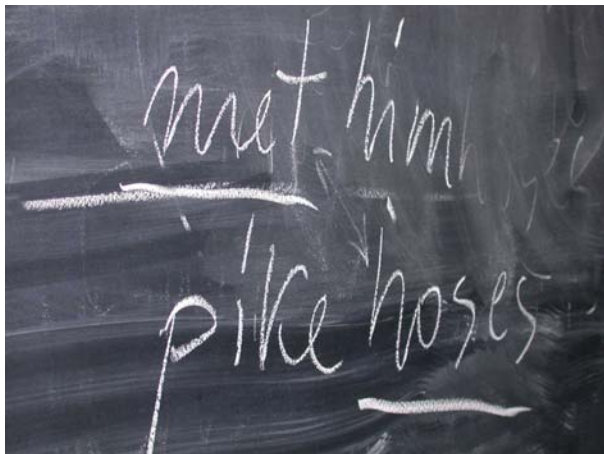
Sol LeWitt

7.27.02

2002

Ink, stamps on verso of the  
Metropolitan Museum Fire Hose post card  
4 ¼ x 6 inches

Purchased at the museum without knowledge of  
authorship and later when discovered sent to the  
artist.



Ecke Bonk  
Art Historian, author

methose  
karlsruhe 2004  
scrivener: eb/typosophes sans frontières  
'met him pike hoses' was hand-scribed  
in chalk on the typosophic blackboard  
date: 24/04/2004  
multiple of 10 1999/2000 – 12 x 8 ½ inches

\* "met him pike hoses": *Ulysses*, 265.01, 280.18,  
283.32, 375.28, 637.42, 670.37.



Evelina Dornitch and Dmitry Gelfand  
*Plain Cold Ease*  
2004  
Brass, canvas  
24 x 20 inches in diameter

This is not a fire hose

It appears to be a fire hose.

On closer inspection it seems indeed to be a fire hose.

Not a mere replica of a fire hose, however, but a functioning fire hose, properly installed on the wall of a public art museum, now appropriated as a work of art by an act of sheer will (or sheerchutzpah).

I think about seeing flowers and other devotional items placed on the floor in front of Buddhist sculptures on view in the Tibetan art installation at the Newark Museum. I think about why these objects were first made, and how they were intended to be used.

We understand what a fire-hose does.

Do we understand what a museum does?

Do we understand what art does?

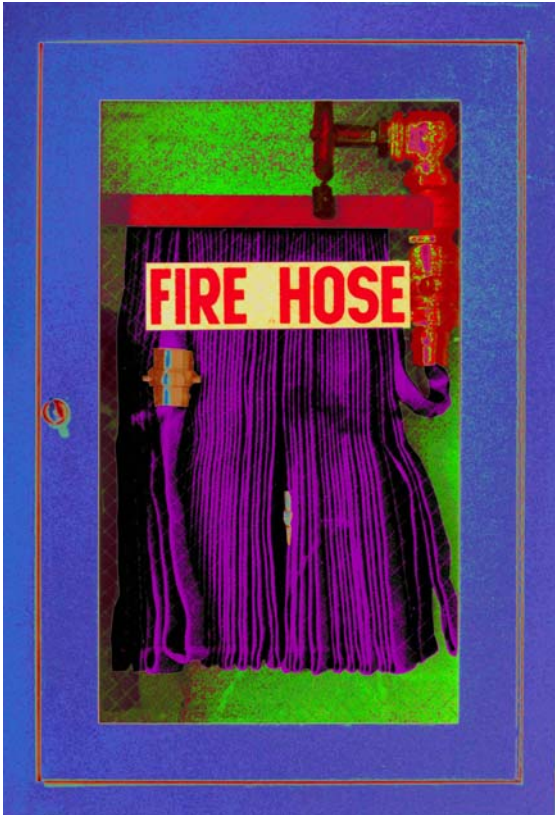
This is not a fire hose.

David A. Ross  
Curator  
Director of the Whitney  
Museum of American Art  
New York (1991-1998)

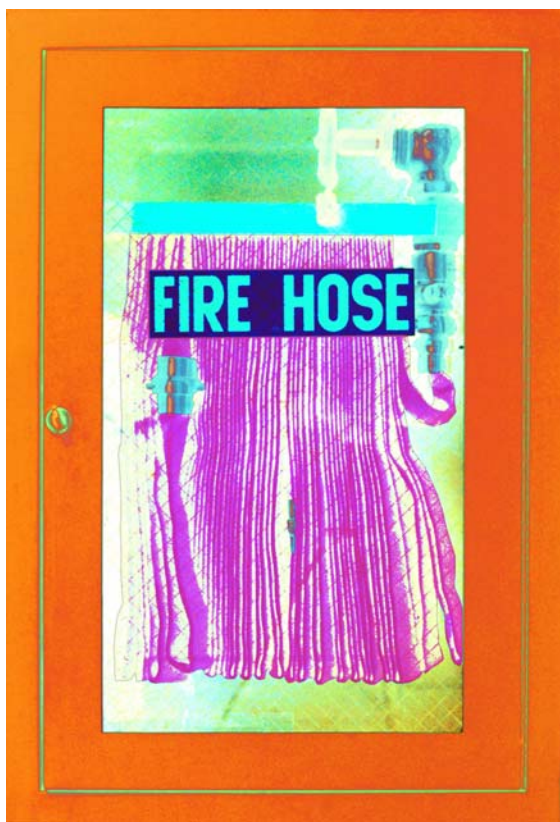
When we enter the museum, apart from art work, we see heaters, empty chairs for the guards, fire extinguishers, emergency exits, all kinds of plants as decoration -- mostly palm trees that look sick because they're constantly under artificial light -- velvet ropes, etc. All of these things, whether we want them or not, are part of the aesthetic make-up of the museum, which is not the choice of the artists or the curators.

For exactly this reason I like the Fire Hose piece. By putting a label next to the hose, Dove Bradshaw manages to twist the context without even moving the object from its original place.

Marina Abramovic  
Artist

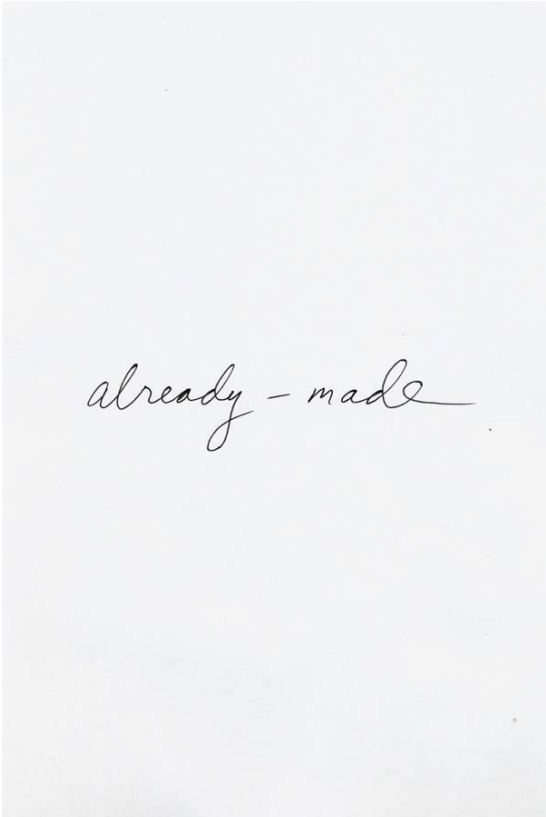


Saks Fifth Avenue billboard



Saks Fifth Avenue billboard

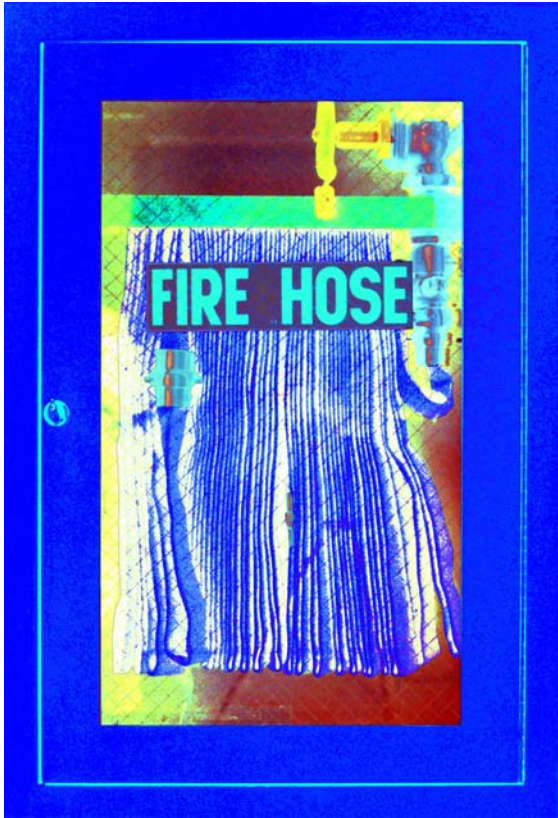


A photograph of a light blue rectangular surface with the handwritten text "already - made" in the center. The text is written in a cursive, black ink style. The background has a subtle gradient and some faint, larger-scale patterns.

already - made

Nick Lawrence  
Artist, Founder/Director of  
Volume Gallery, New York

innappropriation



Saks Fifth Avenue billboard

## FOOTNOTES TO 3 LOST HAIKU

I wrote 3 haiku on your firehose piece  
but when I searched the computer  
they were lost

They went something like  
the methodical folds  
and brass fittings

Behind glass and something red  
probably the hose collar  
the long shiny nozzle

I will continue to look  
for the original 3  
they were perfect

Not like these apologies  
for losing them  
not art for not not art's sake

I mean suppose there was a fire  
and my dog was there  
threatened by flames

No photo of a firehouse  
no art could save his luckily  
unconscious soul

Not art you see it's this way:  
"One lies all one's life long  
notably to those that love one,

And above all to that stranger  
whose contempt would cause one  
most pain—oneself.”

So said Proust  
who will never see the impotent firehose  
care anything for it

Like a pathetic minor god  
it waits on the wall to save us  
without self-concern

Its companion the axe  
hung next to it  
wide bright blade unused

While we stroll the galleries  
and admire Bellini  
and do not believe in

The possibility of ruthless tongues  
of flame breaking through  
eating us

Enchanted by the attempts  
to break through and find what we really need  
hanging on the walls

Steve Berg  
Poet, Founder of the American Poetry Review



Saks Fifth Avenue billboard

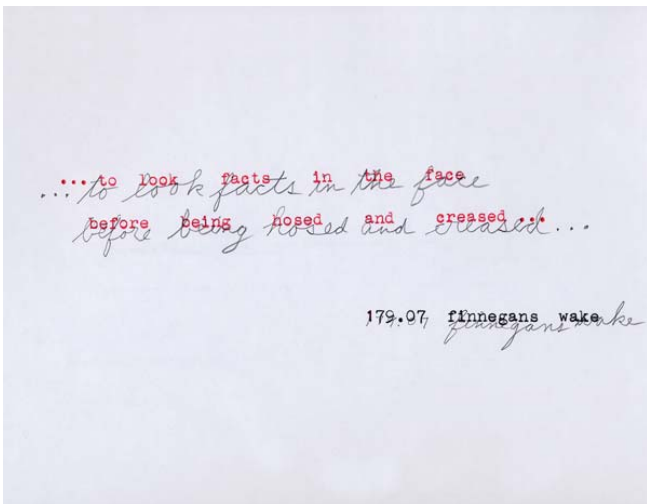
The main reason why the Metropolitan Museum should purchase Dove Bradshaw's *Fire Hose* is because it would be wonderful to see them acquire something they already own. To my knowledge, such an acquisition is unprecedented in the history of Western Art. Not even Duchamp thought of that!

Francis M. Nauman  
Art Historian, Duchamp and  
Man Ray Specialist

Marcel Duchamp invented the readymade, true enough. Likewise, Jan van Eyck pioneered oil painting, but I believe the Met has admitted some subsequent examples. Something becomes matter for art when it becomes available for anyone to use who can make something of it. With what is now *her* fire hose, Dove Bradshaw introduced a dissonantly generous note of her own into the concert of art as represented by the Met. Taking what the artist has made hers and in a new way making it its own again, the institution would show wise self-understanding by acquiring what it already has.

Barry Schwabsky  
Poet, Art critic





William Anastasi  
Artist

*Hosed and Creased*  
2004

Ink, pencil on photographic paper  
7 ½ x 5 inches

\* 179.07 Finnegans Wake

ROBERT BARRY  
READYMADE PERFORMANCE PIECE, 2004

A: I like dumb things. If it's dumb in the right way it's brilliant. I tried to make it as dumb as I could.

M: It's very dumb indeed, Bill.

A: Thank you, Tom.

(Laughter.)

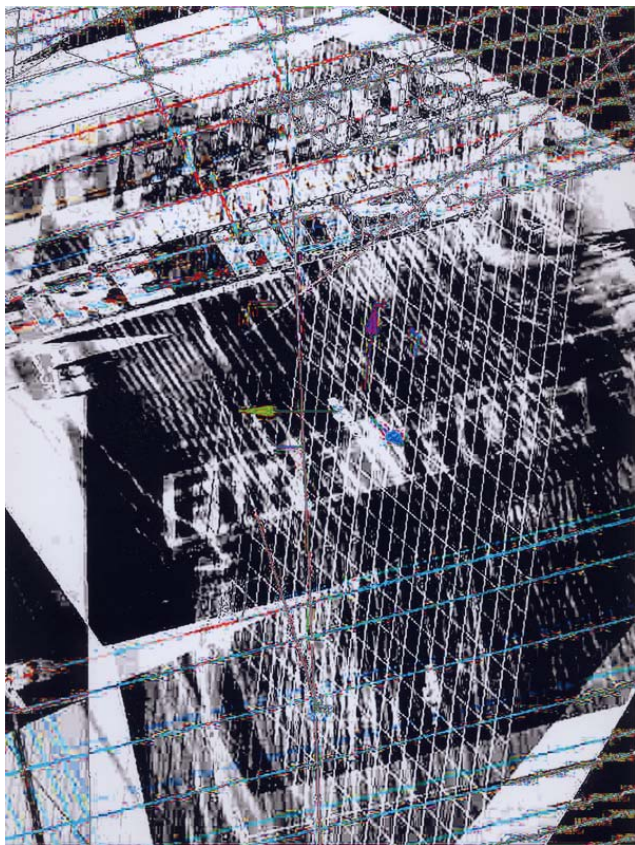
EXCERPT FROM "WILLIAM ANASTASI AND  
THOMAS MCEVILLE, A CONVERSATION, AUGUST  
1984."

Robert Barry  
Artist

READYMADE PERFORMANCE PIECE  
2004  
Stapled collage and text  
3 x 8 ½ inches



Saks Fifth Avenue billboard

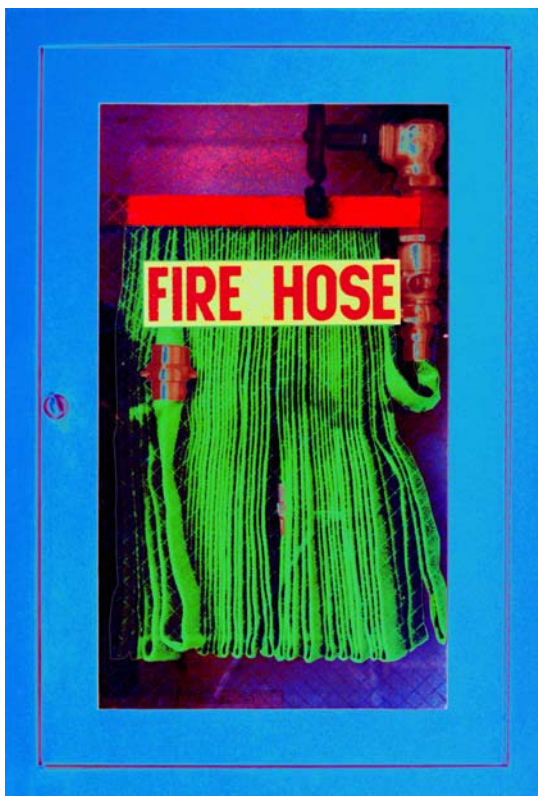


Emanuel de Melo Pimenta  
*Fire Hose*, 2004  
Inkjet print  
10 x 8 inches

Dove Bradshaw is an alchemist/Reflecting  
In its deepest sense/In its deals  
Transformation / Inside a kind of  
Measure / Trialogue world seven  
Civilisation / And the  
Nature / A common world  
Senses / On eyes  
A text about / Inside  
Could only be / Virtual eyes  
Poetry / Like hypertext perception  
When it deal / By Dove Bradshaw  
With her work / One environment  
World / City evening table  
Omniverse / In a new sense  
Totos / Hose  
Fire Hose / Measure  
On fire Hose by Dove Bradshaw / Civilisation  
Happens inside / People  
A virtual environment / One  
Seven Fire Hoses / About  
Inside the eyes / What could happen  
Of three people / Reflecting  
One / Like Seven Fire wholes  
Reflecting / A tolos  
Inside / Fire  
The Other's eyes / On  
A kind of / Deepest Senses  
Trialogue / Word  
Like  
On / Onmiverse York City  
A wooden table / Quasi  
In New York City / Hyperspace your eyes  
Quasi / Three

Hyperspace / Inside  
Like a hypertext / Where its doors  
Where its doors / Doors that can only be  
Doors of Perception / Poetry Fire Hoses  
Are in the memory / at evening  
Like / In New York's Other  
The unforgettable / Inside  
Fractal / Memory in transformation  
Nine Polaroid Photographs of a Mirror  
By William Anastasi  
1967 / Like / Now  
Inside / Just number  
Three eyes / Inside  
A common evening / In New York City  
Hosebud / Dubhouse  
Cyberchemistry

Emanuel Dimas de Melo Pimenta,  
Composer, Architect, Photographer, Poet, Author



Saks Fifth Avenue billboard

## Will mighty Met ever put out this fire?

*An artist has made a fire-hose “performance piece” into a long-running show*

**By George Meyers Jr.**

*Dispatch Entertainment Reporter*

NEW YORK - This is a story about the persistence of art and a fire hose. It's about an idea whose time came and went, returned and stayed. She, who laughs last, laughs best.

Meet Dove Bradshaw, 45 year-old purveyor of high jinks at one of high art's most unchuckling of cathedrals, the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Now an artistic adviser to the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, Bradshaw also is a performance and conceptual artist who has exhibited her drawings, photos, paintings, sculpture and film at galleries and museums around the world.

And she has exhibited herself – as a smiling and unsmiling nun – in a 1979 performance piece staged in the subway corridors of Grand Central Station.

Yet her most renowned, if not notorious, performance is one in which she had to be almost invisible – as she acted on behalf of ambiguity and unreason, whimsy and rebellion. Nothing overthrows an institution so much as a horselaugh.

Knowing, as her stylistic forebears Marcel Duchamp and John Cage did before her, that art can be ambiguous and iconoclastic, and as self-referential and self-conscious as a shell game, Bradshaw “claimed” a fire-hose station in the Grand Gallery of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's second floor, saying it was art-- *her* art.

After a time, the museum bought it hook line and sinker.

It was not easy: The artist in October 1976 stalked the museum – watching its guards, timing their movements –





until she found just the right moment to affix a label to an “archetypal, classically beautiful” glass-encased fire hose.

Her unofficial label identified the object by name and materials (“brass, paint” and, for the material of the hose “canvas”) and the artist as one, “Dove Bradshaw, American, 1949 –.” Unamused, the curatorial staff removed the label within a week.

Bradshaw mounted another attack. Equally as determined, the museum staff or guards repelled her effort and label again.

Months elapsed, but Bradshaw and idea stayed intact. Possibly the museum staff had by 1978 understood performance art and the slippery idea that the entirely subjective boundary between art and life, stage and street, was rapidly collapsing. For whatever reason, when Bradshaw affixed her label yet again, it stayed put and gave her encouragement to seek what any mildly encouraged artist would seek: evidence of success, a flirtation with commerce, an expanded audience, thrills.

So, in 1978 the inventive artist printed a Met-like postcard of “her” glass-encased fire hose from a photograph she took of the hose. One day, when everyone at the Met’s Gift shop staff blinked, Bradshaw stuck a batch of them in with the official Met postcards reproducing the images of Claude Monet, Joseph Albers, Jackson Pollock and the like.

Bradshaw visited the Met weekly to restock her card, which since has sold hundreds. The Met enjoyed commission-free sales and another small boon by not having to pay the mystery artist a customary royalty. The local news media in 1979 picked

up the story, blew Bradshaw's cover and drew attention to the joke. The punch line disappeared from the fire hose.

But the die was cast; the museum was warmed by the attention. Now knowing the who and whereabouts of the artist, the Met in 1980 acquired her original photograph of the hose – from a collector who bought it from Bradshaw for \$1,000 – to make its own postcard. Alas for Bradshaw, museum curators came and went and the photograph itself was misplaced – lost for eight years. Recovered in the museum's matting department in 1988, the card was reprinted as the Met's cards are, once every 10 years – finally putting Bradshaw officially on display with Monet, Albers and Pollock in 1992.

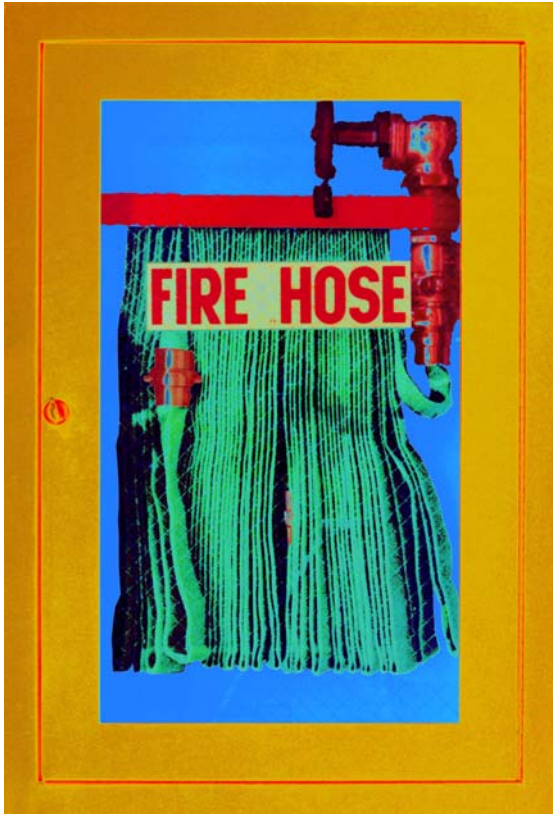
Having no rights to her postcard, Bradshaw today earns no commission from her 20-year effort, a performance running as long as any success on Broadway.

There's more: A Saks Fifth Avenue art director bought one of her cards from the Met, blew it up to poster size, silk-screened color onto the hose, brass pipe and words, à la Andy Warhol, and used the posters as in-store displays. Bradshaw's name, too was reproduced on every poster, which were displayed indiscreetly by Saks elevators.

But Bradshaw had some rights. The idea, at least, was hers, as the postcard text clearly stated. Wanting to enjoy some part of the success brought by her efforts, Bradshaw asked Saks for "a small compensation" - a \$100 gift certificate to the store – and got it. The same can't be said for Monet, Albers or Pollock.

Reached at her home Wednesday in New York, Bradshaw said she's not done with the hose, or the Met. "My next step is to get the museum to designate the hose as a sculpture. I'm hoping a collector might then buy the hose from me, for \$10,000."

A spokesman at the Met said the fully functioning fire hose is not for sale, though it offers the 1992 postcard of Bradshaw's *Fire Extinguisher*, as the artist first called it, for 50 cents. Because of the unique, years-in-the-making aspect of this fancy-into-fact artwork, Bradshaw retitled her piece, *Performance*. " *Performance* fits best," she said, "after all, should there be a fire, the piece would go into effect.



Saks Fifth Avenue billboard



Caught in the act

2.20.04

Dear Jeff,

In our telephone conversation about Duchamp vis à vis the hose, it can be said that after the found object redirected the course of aesthetics there is virtually nothing of the "new" that is not indebted to him -- every gesture, *de facto*, becomes a response.

This one, though, in addition to the combustible farrago with the museum, offers a slight but perhaps significant difference since it centers on one of the major shifts in art. That is from the object and picture plane to the site itself. (One of the sweet things about site specificity is that the hose cannot be misplaced, stolen or de-acquisitioned.)

Of interest in this context is Duchamp's famous remark that a work of art's relevance has about a fifty year life expectancy. If this holds true for the Fire Hose it is intriguing that its relevance for putting out fires might outlive its relevance as a work of art. At any rate the title lays claim to those ongoing "performances".

And the fact that it's on the premises around the corner from all those icons – is frosting on the dessert.

Warmest regards,  
Dove

Jeffrey Rosenheim, Associate Curator, Department of Photographs,  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art and along with Maria M. Hamburg  
the guiding spirit behind the production of the Metropolitan's fire  
hose card.






Evelina Domnitch

Dmitry Gelfand

*Images accompanying the Taoist text*

## SETTLED (63)

 water above  
fire below

When water is heated by fire, its coldness vanishes, and when fire is controlled by water its heat stops. What superior people see in this is that practitioners of the Tao invert the earthly and the celestial, taking the celestial element wrapped up in the earthly (represented by the yang in the center of water ) and fill in the earthly element mixed in with the celestial (represented by the yin in the center of the fire ); the earthly vitality transforms and the true vitality it born, the conditioned spirit dies out and the original spirit remains. Using the vitality to nurture the spirit, using the spirit to concentrate the vitality, the vitality and spirit cling to each other and congeal inseparably; returning to the original, going back to the fundamental, that which was unsettled is now settled.

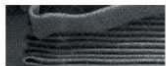
But returning to the original and going back to the fundamental just completes the preliminary stage of work; if one does not use the natural “fire” of reality to forge this attainment into reality, when settlement culminates it will become unsettled again, and the work that has been done hitherto will all go to waste. Therefore superior people consider and prevent them beforehand.



# SETTLED



# UNSETTLED



## UNSETTLED (64)



fire above,  
water below

Unsettled means the earthly and the celestial are separated. Water and fire are in different places. Water flows downward and fire flames upward, so water cannot control fire and fire cannot heat water – innate knowledge turns into artificial knowledge and temper flares; innate capacity turns into artificial capacity and greed arises.

Once people get mixed up in temporal conditioning, the real is obscured and the artificial comes forth, body and mind are unstable, vitality and spirit are clouded, volatility erupts and greed arises; taking misery for pleasure, they go to any lengths, and become extremely unsettled. It is called the end of man.

Nevertheless, sages have a way of restoring the primordial within the temporal; it is just that people have never thought of this settlement. If they wanted this settlement, they would be capable of settlement. Therefore superior people carefully discern things and keep them in their places.

“Things” here means the primordial and the temporal, the real and the false, earthly and celestial; “place” means where these things abide. Carefully discerning whether things are real or false, it is necessary to be perfectly clear in mind, with genuine knowledge and perception, free from any doubt or confusion whatsoever. This is the work of investigating things to produce knowledge.

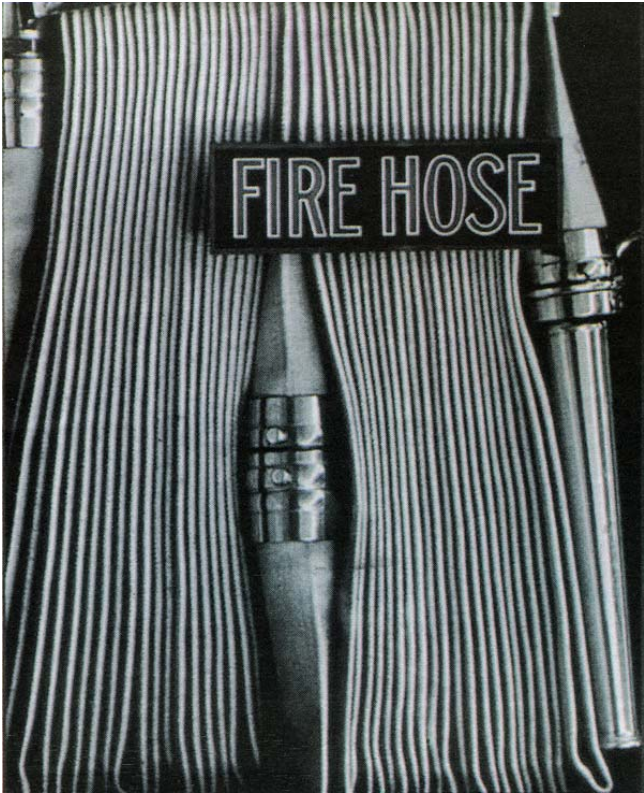
When one discerns things and understands truth, and also keeps things in their place and does not act recklessly, the mundane and celestial are not mixed up; then there is settlement in the midst of the unsettled.

The reason the sages put the hexagram UNSETTLED at the end was so that when people are not yet settled they will investigate the truth and hasten to seek settlement.

*The Taoist Classics*, the collected translations of Thomas Cleary, Shambhala, 2000, vol.4, pp. 296-298, 319.

In sympathy with John Cage's 4'33", this piece offers a subtle shift in our way of viewing the world

Timothy Bradshaw  
Violin Maker



Michael Oratofsky  
Painter

Painting on canvas  
Discovered and published in  
*The Best of Big News*, New York, 2004



Saks Fifth Avenue billboard

SINCE THE FIREHOSE EVOKES "WRITING ON WATER" (=THE TIBETAN PRECEPT JOHN CAGE LIKED TO CITE TO DEFINE HIS OWN POETICS), AND SINCE IT EVOKES MORE SPECIFICALLY JOHN CAGE'S "INLETS", WHERE THREE MUSICIANS ARE MADE TO TAKE HOLD OF LARGE CONCHES PARTIALLY FILLED WITH WATER, SOFTLY SHAKING THEM UNTIL THEY START TO GURGLE, WHILE SOUNDS OF A CRACKLING FIRE ARE SIMULTANEOUSLY PLAYED - IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THE CAGEAN PERFORMERS DO OFFER NATURE A CHOICE GIFT : LETTING IT DO THE COMPOSING ; AND JOHN CAGE HIMSELF HAS MADE CLEAR THAT THE COMPOSER, WHO IDENTIFIES WITH NATURE, IS AS SUCH ITS FIRST PERFORMER BECAUSE HE IS THE FIRST TO HEAR. - HENCE THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE FIREHOSE AND, SAY, DUCHAMP'S URINAL: BOTH ARE "READY-MADES", MADE FROM ARTIFACTS, AND TECHNIQUE IS FAR FROM FOREIGN TO NATURE SINCE IT AMPLIFIES IT, HELPS IT TO POUR ITS MUSIC. - THEN DOVE BRADSHAW'S "FIRE HOSE" IS A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT OF A SORT AND IS WORTH NOT ONLY A POSTCARD BUT A VISIT IN ITS MUSEUM RECESS.

Daniel Charles  
Philosopher, Musicologist

**Dove Bradshaw**

American, born 1949

*Performance*

Brass, paint, canvas, reinforced glass

1976

Calling it a *claimed object*, Dove Bradshaw in 1976 quietly affixed her label next to this fire hose. In 1978 the artist made a guerrilla postcard of her work and placed it in the museum postcard racks. She purchased two. In 1980 the museum acquired the original photograph used for that card. In 1992 the museum issued an official postcard telling its history. The card sold out. In contrast to an *objet trouvé*, the fire hose is integrated into the art context. It exemplifies one of the major shifts in art since the 1960's – refocused attention from the object and picture plane to the site itself. A second distinction from the *objet trouvé* is the fact of the hose's potential function. Both the City's Fire Department and the Metropolitan Museum's Fire Department who inspects the hose regularly assures all concerned that in the case of its need this label would not in any way be a deterrent – thus the title *Performance*.

Purchase: Rosalind Jacobs, 2006

In honor of Melvin Jacobs

*Performance [updated label], 2006*

Gift of Rosalind Jacobs, in honor of Melvin Jacobs

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2007





*Performance, 2008*

Dove,

Your piece in the  
Metrop.-Mus. will be exhibited  
all the time, no curator  
will change it, no „zeitgeist“!  
Only technical development  
will alter it!

What a future for this  
artwork!

Wolf H

Bremen 20 April 2005

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART  
1000 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10028-0198

July 10, 2006

Ms. Rosalind G. Jacobs  
570 Park Avenue  
New York, NY 10021

Dear Ms. Jacobs:

We would be happy to accept the gift of the work by Dove  
Bradshaw, so long as there are no restrictions attached.

With our thanks for making this possible, I am,

Sincerely yours,



Gary Tinterow  
*Engelhard Curator in Charge*

DEPARTMENT OF  
NINETEENTH-CENTURY,  
MODERN, AND  
CONTEMPORARY ART

Tel 212.570.3890  
Fax 212.570.3896

Acknowledgement of gift to Rosalind Jacobs from  
Gary Tinterow, Chief Engelhard Curator in Charge

**THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART**

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
OF  
THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART  
GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES

THE GIFT OF

Dove Bradshaw, American, born 1949

*Performance*, 1976

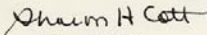
Brass, paint, canvas, reinforced glass

Fire hose vitrine dimensions: 43 ½ x 29 ½ x 7 ½ in. (110.5 x 74.9 x  
19.2 cm)

TO THE MUSEUM

BY

Rosalind Jacobs



Sharon H. Cott

Senior Vice President, Secretary and General Counsel  
**December 31, 2007**



The Metropolitan Museum of Art  
Letter of Acquisition, December 31, 2007



DOVE BRADSHAW  
PERFORMANCE  
1976-2006  
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART



*Performance, 2008*



THE METROPOLITAN  
MUSEUM OF ART

Director

January 14, 2008

Ms. Rosalind Jacobs  
570 Park Avenue  
New York, New York 10021

Dear Ms. Jacobs,

It is with great pleasure that I write to offer my thanks for your recent gift to The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Your contribution of Dove Bradshaw's *Performance, 1976*, is a welcome complement to the holdings of the Department of Nineteenth-Century, Modern, and Contemporary Art, and we are indeed grateful for your generosity.

We are most appreciative of your interest in strengthening the Metropolitan's holdings, and I thank you again for this demonstration of your generosity.

With best wishes, I am,

Yours sincerely,



Philippe de Montebello

PdM/ark

Acknowledgement letter to Rosalind Jacobs  
From Philippe de Montebello

Before Banksy there was Bradshaw. And this is a story with more bends than the Metropolitan Museum firehose that artist Dove Bradshaw "claimed" by putting up a DIY label, naming herself as the artist., in 1976. The label was routinely taken down and she would as routinely replace it until the time of the Tutankhamun exhibition when she saw it still on the wall. "I was thrilled. And that emboldened me to take the next step," she says.

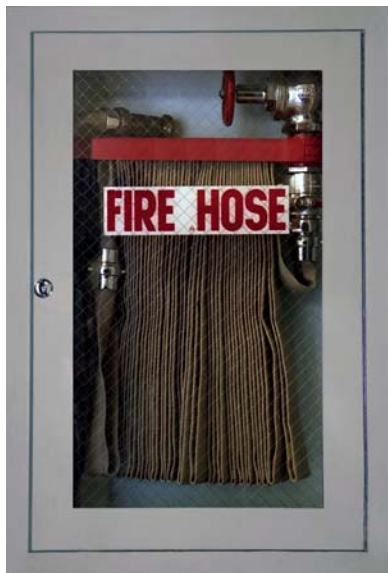
Bradshaw had her piece photographed and made an edition of 1,000 postcards, using the Met logo and listing her details and the materials, the way actual Met postcards do.

"I slipped it into the 20th-century rack amongst my peers and bought two right away. The salesclerk just charged me the same as any other cards. Whenever they ran low I stocked them again. They knew. They thought it was amusing."

"Then Maria Hambourg, head of the Met's Photographic Department, decided to make it an official postcard. [The original photograph] was bought for her by New York collectors, Robert and Susan Klein. I charged \$1,000. It went missing for a few years but it became an official Met postcard in 1992. They published 10,000 but only once. There was a lot of pressure, even though it was a hot seller and sold out very soon. Sol LeWitt did a drawing on it. I sent it to Ray Johnson. And he did a very clever tripple pun on it."

Bradshaw decided these reactions merited a book and asked various artists to contribute. [My] contribution was a cartoon showing the hose on fire. Bradshaw then produced an actually burnt postcard. It is now being made into a [photogravure] by the Copenhagen printer, Niels Borch Jensen in an edition of 36 in the spring. Will the saga continue? Longer than the hose, which has been refabricated three times [sic].





**DOVE BRADSHAW  
PERFORMANCE**

Postcard edition of 1,000

1978

This work evolved from a label Bradshaw had composed and placed secretly next to a fire-hose in a principal gallery of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in 1976. Having photographed the 'exhibit', she went on to produce her own postcard, copies of which she placed unofficially in the Museum shop. These sold well, and eventually the Museum acquired Bradshaw's original photograph, which was reproduced as the authorized version of the postcard.

New York  
2011

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART  
1000 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10028-0198

April 25, 2011

Ms. Rosalind G. Jacobs  
570 Park Avenue  
New York, New York 10065

DEPARTMENT OF  
NINETEENTH-CENTURY,  
MODERN, AND  
CONTEMPORARY ART

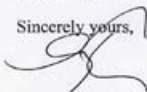
Tel 212.570.3744  
Fax 212.396.5333

Dear Ms. Jacobs,

It was a pleasure seeing you at the tour of Cézanne's *Card Players* this morning. I have since reviewed once more your letter of April 14<sup>th</sup>. I am happy to inform you that we are in the process of drafting a label for Dove Bradshaw's *Performance* (2007.530a, b). But I do feel bound to acknowledge that although Ms. Bradshaw claimed the fire hose, we are not obliged to exhibit her work continuously.

We remain grateful for your support of the department through your generous gift.

Sincerely yours,



Gary Tinterow  
*Engelhard Chairman*

Notice of mounting a label to Rosalind Jacobs from  
Gary Tinterow, Chief Engelhard Curator in Charge

## Book Collections:

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York  
The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York  
Merce Cunningham, New York  
Robert Gordon, New York one of  
Dexter and Gina Williams, Los Angeles



PERFORMANCE  
DOVE BRADSHAW  
2008

