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THE TRANSOM

How the Met Got (Fire) Hosed

By **Dan Duray** 7/05 8:39pm



So many artists aspire to one day be shown in the Met.

But some strategies are more more creative than others.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art will soon affix a standard label designating **Dove Bradshaw's** "Performance" an official piece of its collection. The work itself technically never belonged to Ms. Bradshaw, nor is it entirely of her creation. It's actually one of the Met's working fire hoses near the Asian art wing—Ms. Bradshaw's ostensible contribution being the label she made and surreptitiously affixed next to it, designating herself as the "artist" of the firehose in 1976. The **85th Street Fire Department**, which maintains the hose, has said that it has no problem with its hose being art.

In the school of **Marcel Duchamp's** readymades, Ms. Bradshaw explained at a recent gallery opening, the hose is a "claimed" object. Ms. Bradshaw has photographed the work, burned the photographs and even made her own postcards of the hose that she

quietly placed on racks in the Met's gift shops. Even this article, she explained, is part of the performance.

"I certainly wouldn't start one," she told the Transom. "but if there *was* a fire— that would be part of my performance. I'm not a terrorist — though at one time I did subscribe to the Dadaist Manifesto." Would she claim ownership over the act of putting it out?

"Not per se," said the woman who was once told "I see your work everywhere" by **John Cage**.

Just anything involving the hose is my performance; even at a board meeting where they're discussing it, it's under the umbrella of 'Performance.'"

The piece was purchased—with actual money—by Dadaist collector **Rosalind Jacobs** in 2006, offered to the museum for its collection and accepted in 2007. Just this past April, Ms. Jacobs received notice that the label was being drafted.

On some level, Ms. Bradshaw, who has also claimed a hygrometer at the Kunstmuseum in Düsseldorf, suspects the Met is trying to get in good with Ms. Jacobs, whose collection of **Man Ray** photographs may present a compelling reason to **ingratiate themselves**.

In the meantime, she'll just be pleased if it keeps the work where it is, given the Met's upcoming contemporary expansion to the Whitney's Breuer building.

"I looked at the Whitney's fire hoses, and they're hidden," she said. "It's a very minimal, streamlined design, very nice. And I looked at MoMA's, but the Met has the most beautiful ones. It seemed like the utilitarian age of the 19th century. It was so classic."

The Met didn't respond to our request for a comment, provoking Dadist antimuseum sentiment from the Transom until they do.