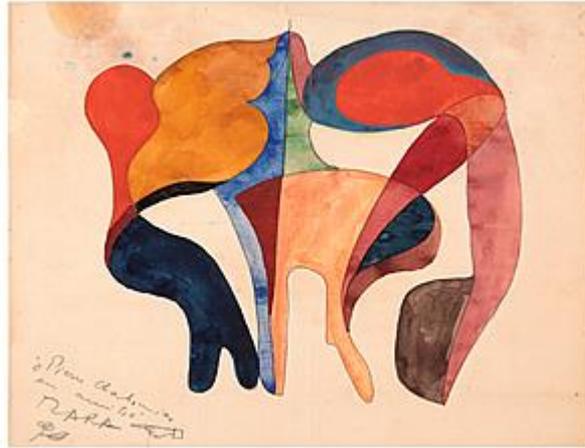


# RONNY VAN DE VELDE

---



**Tristan Tzara (Romania 1896 - Paris 1963)**

## **Composition, 1920-1922**

Watercolour and gouache on paper  
194 x 250 mm

Signed and dedicated 'à Pierre Charbonnier en amitié'

## **Provenance:**

Pierre Charbonnier, Paris  
Private collection, Paris

## **Artist description:**

Was a Romanian and French avant-garde poet, essayist and performance artist. Also active as a journalist, playwright, literary and art critic, composer and film director, he was known best for being one of the founders and central figures of the anti-establishment Dada movement. Under the influence of Adrian Maniu, the adolescent Tzara became interested in Symbolism and co-founded the magazine *Simbolul* with Ion Vinea (with whom he also wrote experimental poetry) and painter Marcel Janco. During World War I, after briefly collaborating on Vinea's *Chemarea*, he joined Janco in Switzerland. There, Tzara's shows at the Cabaret Voltaire and *Zunftaus zur Waag*, as well as his poetry and art manifestos, became a main feature of early Dadaism. His work represented Dada's nihilistic side, in contrast with the more moderate approach favored by Hugo Ball.

After moving to Paris in 1919, Tzara, by then one of the "presidents of Dada", joined the staff of *Littérature* magazine, which marked the first step in the movement's evolution toward Surrealism. He was involved in the major polemics which led to Dada's split, defending his principles against André Breton and Francis Picabia, and, in Romania, against the eclectic modernism of Vinea and Janco. This personal vision on art defined his Dadaist plays *The Gas Heart* (1921) and *Handkerchief of Clouds* (1924). A forerunner of automatist techniques, Tzara eventually aligned himself with Breton's Surrealism, and under its influence wrote his celebrated utopian poem *The Approximate Man*.

During the final part of his career, Tzara combined his humanist and anti-fascist perspective with a communist vision, joining the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War and the French Resistance during World War II, and serving a term in the National Assembly. Having spoken in favor of liberalization in the People's Republic of Hungary just before the Revolution of 1956, he distanced himself from the French Communist Party, of which he was by then a member. In 1960, he was among the intellectuals who protested against French actions in the Algerian War.