



Destruction Was My Beatrice: Dada and the Unmaking of the Twentieth Century

Jed Rasula

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In 1916, as World War I raged around them, a group of bohemians gathered at a small nightclub in Zurich, Switzerland for a series of bizarre performances. Three readers simultaneously recited a poem in three languages; a monocle-wearing teenager performed a spell from New Zealand; another young man flung bits of *papier-mâché* into the air and glued them into place where they landed. One of these artists called the sessions “both buffoonery and a requiem mass.” Soon they would be known by a more evocative name: Dada.

In *Destruction Was My Beatrice*, modernist scholar Jed Rasula presents the first narrative history of the emergence, decline, and legacy of Dada, showing how this strange artistic phenomenon spread across Europe and then the world in the wake of the Great War, fundamentally reshaping modern culture in ways we’re still struggling to understand today.

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