

*The Artist as Poet: Selections from PAMM's Collection*

The *poème-objet* is a composition which combines the resources of poetry and plastic art, and thus speculates on the capacity of these two elements to excite each other mutually.

—André Breton, 1942

With a nod to the Surrealists' use of everyday materials, subversion of common objects, and incorporation of poetic language in their works, this exhibition celebrates how the characteristics of the *poème-objet* (poem-object) are present in modern and contemporary art. André Breton (1896–1966), the principal theorist of literary Surrealism, often discussed the ways in which text and objects could work together, each having its own function in a single work. The works in *The Artist as Poet* span the ten decades between 1917 and 2020 and represent how language, specifically poetry, is variously used in art, while shedding light on Surrealism's influence.

These artists have experimented with language in myriad ways, by incorporating text in the works themselves, referencing seminal works of literature, and giving the works poetic or playful titles. The exhibition includes handmade books, paintings, found objects, constructions, and collages—the flat precursors to the three-dimensional Surrealist object. The idea of using language to subvert the function of an object is what all these artists have in common. Selected from PAMM's permanent collection, these works explore what it means to classify the “artist as poet.”

Credit line:

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