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| **Zurich Dada** |
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| Dada began in the midst of World War I in Zurich, Switzerland where several expatriate artists converged in order to escape the brutal and seemingly nonsensical destruction of the war. They responded in turn with nonsense, creating an anarchic and subversive anti-aesthetic that would have profound effects on the history of the avant-garde. Indeed, nearly every major Western art movement since the 1920s, as well as culture jammers of all kinds, can claim some connection to the Zurich Dadaists. They initially met at the Cabaret Voltaire - named after the French Enlightenment philosopher – which was opened by theater director Hugo Ball and his partner, the performer Emmy Hennings, on 5 February 1916. Until the summer of that year, the international group met nightly in a charged Dionysian atmosphere where an audience of fellow expats and dissidents experienced a provocative mix of sound and simultaneous poetry in different languages, Cubist dances with African masks, as well as readings from Expressionist and Futurist texts, from Voltaire, and from the artists’ own manifestoes. Works by Hans Arp and Otto van Rees hung on the walls. The Dadaists violently rejected the values of Western art and culture, which they believed had contributed to the outbreak of war in the first place. They were especially against the ideas of beauty and mimesis, the myth of originality, the truth of reason, and the transparency of communication. |
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| Further reading:  (Arp, 1972)  (Ball, 1996)  (Huelsenbeck, 1991)  (Motherwell, 1989)  (Richter, 1997) |