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MORE ABOUT DUCHAMP'S WORDPLAY

RELIEF 10 (1), 2016 – ISSN: 1873-5045. P. 30-69

<http://www.revue-relief.org>

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.18352/relief.924>

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Given Duchamp's lifelong passion for wordplay, as is already manifested in his early humoristic drawings, I take this love as a decisive factor in the way he "found" his readymades. Another factor I find in articles and illustrations in popular magazines of the time that provide a context in which his works originated. My attempts to reconstruct this context result in another view on the nature of Duchamp's artistic calling than the still prevailing views of the conceptual 60ties and 70ties and the postmodern 80ties.*

Introduction

In my overview of the reception of Duchamp, I examine the plurality of possible approaches. I demonstrate that the cause of this diversity is primarily a result of Duchamp's ambiguity. Dario Gamboni's conception of the artwork as a 'potential image' allows me to consider diverse views about Duchamp as complementary instead of mutually exclusive. Ambiguous images make the viewer aware of his active way of looking. The method I propose is similar to the "educated guesswork" of archaeologists and palaeontologists – an informed guess based on secondary evidence that supports a hypothesis. This approach respects and values the claim of Duchamp on indifference and allows for multiple meanings of a work to coexist. That this produces a more speculative kind of art history seems consistent with the cultural life of the period around 1900 that is characterized by the desire for ambiguity. I put my

* On March 31, 2015, I got my PhD at Leiden University on the thesis "*Chacun son Marcel*"? *Meerduidigheid in het werk van Marcel Duchamp [Ambiguity in the Work of Marcel Duchamp]*, available at Erasmusbooks, Amsterdam. This article is a summary of it.

ideas for a speculative art history into practice, as I searched for that which has potentially played a role in the development of the works of Marcel Duchamp. I believe he did not acquire his knowledge from scientific publications, as much as he acquired it from popular media and hearsay from his immediate surroundings including his brothers and friends. Special attention is devoted to Duchamp's wordplay, in which his ambiguous attitude emerges concretely and that, I believe, is undervalued.

I compare Duchamp's wordplay that, after 1912, began to play a crucial role in the development of his work with the way it previously functioned in the humorous drawings he published until 1910. I see this inartistic, not to say anti-artistic, decision in 1912 as a recalcitrant answer of a dandy to the rejection of *Nude descending a Staircase 2* by his contemporaries of the *Section d'Or*. His language play substituted the scientific basis for the Cubism that his contemporaries sought. I will review the oeuvre chronologically and formulate my own findings, in regard to a couple of works, about what probably played a role in the development of it.

More important than the aspect of sexual attraction and repulsion in the humorous drawings that Schwarz emphasizes, is the purpose of what was to come, the appreciation of the wordplay in the title. Wordplay was at that time very popular in France, as it is indeed still. Perhaps French lends itself more than other languages for this *jeu de mots* because of the frequent occurrence of homonyms. Lists of homonyms were included in French dictionaries and schoolbooks. On such a list of identical sounding words, one would likely find the origin of a pun by Duchamp on the word *art*, which he recorded as a note in *the Box of 1914*: *arrhes : art = merdre : merde* (*arrhes* means deposit, rent or collateral). The combination of *art* and *arrhes* is found in a list of homonyms, taken from a French dictionary, in the *Grand Dictionnaire Callewaert* 1909, 700. Duchamp compares that pun with Jarry's *merdre*, the famous curse that sounds like *merde* (shit), uttered by Ubu upon entering the stage, and which had resulted in great consternation at the opening night in 1896. That event was considered to be exemplary for a scandalous avant-garde success – as was a new performance in February 1908 judging from the report in *Le Rire* of February 29, 1908.

The Jarryesque comparison dates back to when Duchamp brought a bicycle wheel on a stool and, after that, a rack for drying bottles into his studio, but it would be another two years before he would term these things readymade. The readymade as a work of art was then still in the stage of a speculative question as evidenced by the phrase: "*peut-on faire des oeuvres qui ne soient pas 'd'art' ?*" (can one make works which are not works of 'art'?),

another note from 1913 that Duchamp wrote before he matched word with deed.

After 1912, the wordplay began to play a crucial role in the formation of meaning in Duchamp's art. This change happened after seeing the play *Impressions of Africa* by Raymond Roussel in the spring of 1912, after reading Jarry's absurd stories filled with puns, and after examining the hallucinogenic etymological arguments of Brisset. Roussel's example would become of crucial importance to Duchamp.

Apollinaire and the Section d'Or

On October 9, 1912, Duchamp was back in Paris after spending three months in Munich for the opening of the exhibition of *La Section d'Or* by Apollinaire, who had, the day before, received the proofs of his new book about the Cubists. The publication, funded by Picabia, would, however, have to wait until the spring of 1913.¹ Presumably with the still to be processed corrections and additions in mind and to distinguish it from the book *Du cubisme* by Gleizes and Metzinger which had also just appeared, a week in Étival was planned in the family house of Gabrielle Buffet. There, she welcomed the guests together with her mother. Marcel Duchamp was also present.

According to Gabrielle Buffet, they especially talked about Apollinaire's poems, which he recited by the fireplace in the evenings. Of the first poem in the anthology *Alcools, Zone*, named after this area in the Jura, the original version of the lamentation of a narrator is preserved (Apollinaire 1953). A comparison with the published version shows what changes have been made. The text has been subjected to a tight rhythm of verse lines. The narrator is addressed as 'you', it uses homophonic repetitions, and original metaphors are reduced to autonomous sound images. Even punctuation marks, commas and periods, are gone. In an ironic piece in the *Fantasio* from July 1, 1913 (831), the spelling by Apollinaire was characterized as being a *conjugisme*, a pun on *conjunco*, a popular word for marriage, with the prediction that even the spaces between words will have disappeared in the second edition. Those changes took place after the week in Étival.²

In addition, the proofs of Apollinaire's book about Cubism were discussed.³ The title *Les peintres nouveaux* changed into *Les peintres cubistes* and was preceded by *Méditations esthétiques*, perhaps referring to the famous book *Méditations poétiques* by the poet Lamartine to whom the family Buffet was affiliated. The book is an informal collection of considerations that Apollinaire had previously published and to which texts about new artists were added. In the corrections, one can see how previous passages on Picabia and Duchamp

were changed. They were promoted from the "instinctive" cubism, the lowest category, to the new Orphic branch, so that they formed the closing piece of the book, which ends with a prophecy about a glorious future for Duchamp. However, in the corrections, that passage is followed by a paragraph, in which Apollinaire voices doubts about Picabia and Duchamp: "Let us add that, to tell the truth, the art of Duchamp, of Picabia (instinctive cubism), to the point where it is now (fall 1912), has no definite sculptural sense where these painters merely display the simulacrum of the movement that can be considered as leaning towards the symbolism of motion" [translation BJ].⁴ Even though he deleted that passage later, it does show that Apollinaire did not have such a high opinion of both artists, although he had recently characterized them as "addicted to an art without rules".⁵

A trip to the Hérisson-waterfalls

The company also took trips in the area with Gabrielle as a guide. One of those trips led them to *Les Rousses* from where they enjoyed a view over Lake Geneva.⁶ A highlight in the surroundings of Étival was, in 1912 and still is, a stroll along the series of waterfalls of the Hérisson, twenty-five kilometres from Étival. The *Baedeker* and *Les Guides Joanne* extensively describe a visit to the waterfalls, including the way there and the mill where one could stop for food and drinks. The location had been made accessible by to the *Club Alpin* that had laid out the road along the cascades with, as a spectacular detail, a passage behind the highest waterfall (Baedeker (1903), 270 and Joanne (1909), 305-306).



Postcards Hérisson Cascades and travel guide Guides Joanne 1911-1912

The existence of multiple postcards of the Hérisson waterfalls further indicates that it was a popular destination at that time. It is tempting to assume that the company made this trip and that it can somehow explain Duchamp's choice, a year later in a department store in Paris, to buy a bottle rack that, at that time in French, was called a *hérisson* and was also sold under this name in that particular store.

Painting is finished

After his return to Paris, Duchamp realized that painting as he did before, affiliated with a group of likeminded artists and operating through the art trade, no longer interested him. The fact that Duchamp was done with the art of painting is remarkable. It was indeed that October that the group of *la Section d'Or* started to enjoy success, Delaunay in particular. Up until then, Duchamp worked from the same interest. As his drawings and paintings from 1911 show, he also sought a way to connect the idea of speed and the modern technique of train, automobile and aircraft with visual art. The difference between Delaunay and Duchamp is shown in their response to The Aviation Salon of 1912. It inspired Delaunay to paintings like *L'Equipe de Cardiff* (1913), in which he added the aircraft by Blériot, a billboard of the aircraft factory Astra, and a propeller as metaphors to the Eiffel Tower and the Ferris wheel,

both of which he had used before as symbols of the modern age.



La grande roue (postcard) and R. Delaunay, *L'équipe de Cardiff*, 1913 (postcard)

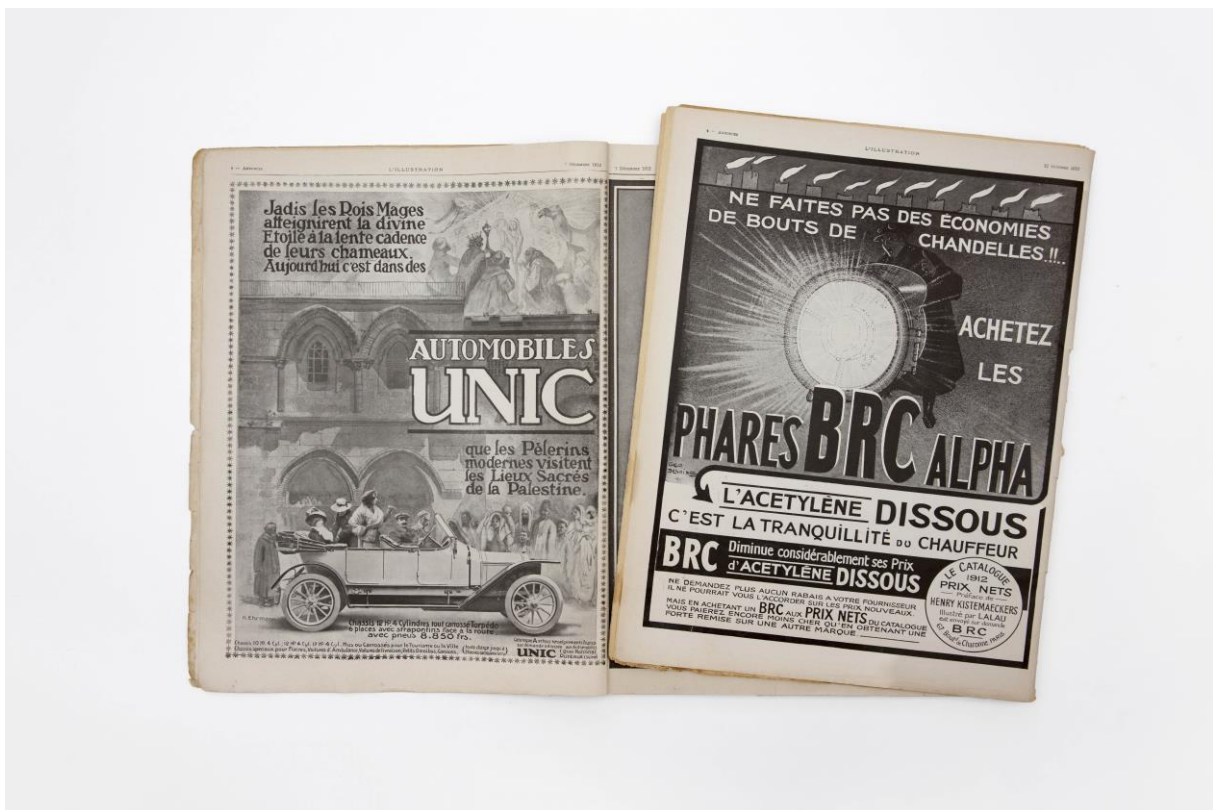
What inspired Delaunay to an abstracting pictorial painting, led Duchamp to ideas about the bankruptcy of the commonplace art forms, as shown by his remarks against Brancusi and Léger. Duchamp was brooding on something else. Delaunay had, in that year, exhibited *Les Fenêtres* (Windows); paintings in which the transparent colours looked like glass. In that context, he wrote: "Eyes are the windows of our soul" as a variation on the French proverb "Eyes are the mirror of the soul" (Cohen ed. 1978, 84). Where Delaunay hinted at a painted suggestion of glass, Duchamp hatched the idea of an actual glass window as a medium. He no longer relied on pictorial metaphors.

Duchamp in Paris: Can one Make Works Which are not Works of "Art"?

The Jura-Paris Road

The text 1912 *The Jura-Paris road* about the return trip after the week in the Jura formed the prelude to the associative outline of ideas for *the Large Glass*. The text is full of cryptic words like *la machine à 5 coeurs* (the machine with 5 hearts) or *à cinq heures* (at five o'clock) and *le chef des 5 nues* (the boss of the 5 nudes) or *seins nus* (naked breasts) or *saints nus* (naked Saints). In addition to this

homophonic word play, it mentions an *enfant-phare* (lighthouse child or headlight child, but also: in fanfare). This *enfant-phare* has a comet on the back of his head with the tail forward. The text reads like a futuristic ode to a car with a five-cylinder engine, which in the night tries to find its way from behind the light beams of its headlights. Another version of the text describes the headlight child as a type of Jesus child, that radiates with glory, as a "burgeoning of the machine-mother" (Duchamp 1980, note 109). To the relationship that has been established between the cryptic phrases of 1912 *The Jura-Paris Road* and Roussel's *Impressions of Africa*, I add my suggestion that Duchamp follows the reverse path of Roussel, not from text to image but from image to text. Images that function as inspiration for his text are, in my view, to be found, for example, in the advertisements for acetylene headlights in *L'Illustration* (October 12, 1912, issue 4), and for a car in the December 7, 1912 Christmas issue of *L'Illustration*.



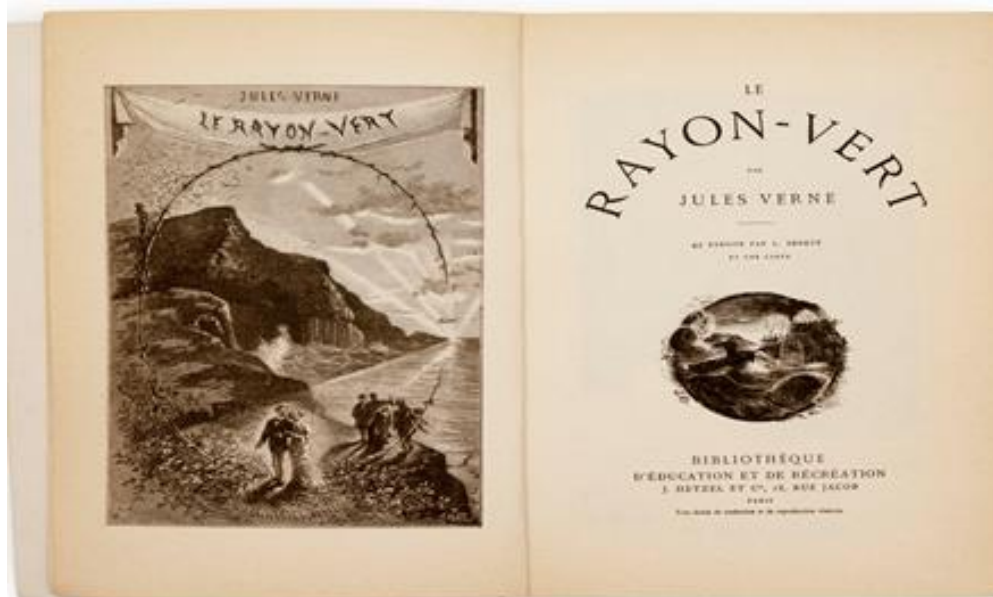
L'Illustration 7 december 1912 and 12 october 1912.

That advertisement suggested that the Three Kings had difficulty reaching the Star of Bethlehem on the rhythm of the camels, but that modern pilgrims visit the Holy places in a Unic Automotive. The picture shows a car with a modern Western company in an Oriental environment, parked in front of a church building. Above the building, like a vision in the sky, a nativity scene is

shown: Maria holding up baby Jesus and showing him to the Three Kings. From behind the child's head, a ray of light beams forward. In addition to this inspiring ad, I would like to point out a passage from the poem *Zone* by Apollinaire that had been discussed in *Étival* and was published in December 1912 in a prepublication of *Mercure de France*. In it, Apollinaire mentions "Three Kings who follow the Star". It appears that, to the original text a passage has been added about a Christ who, in the twentieth century, morphs into an airplane and whose Ascension is being watched from below by the Devil.

The green ray

In the first sketch for *the Large Glass*, the work is divided into two parts: *the Bride* above, *the Bachelors* below. They are separated by three horizontal lines that were to be executed as glass strips. That separation of glass gives, in my opinion, an indication of a book that inspired *the Large Glass*. Because of their horizontal position the glass strips are green in colour. In 1947, Duchamp would give a hint about their origin in his contribution to an exhibition of the surrealist group in Paris. There, on his instigation, Kiesler had made an installation, which is described in the catalogue as: "a porthole lets the green ray of Marcel Duchamp through". Herbert Molderings made a connection with *Le Rayon vert* by Jules Verne (Duve ed. 1991, 257-261).



Jules Verne, *Le Rayon Vert*, 1968 (1882)

In that book by Verne, the claim of the nineteenth-century positivist science on objective truth is ridiculed. According to Molderings, that is the reason why Duchamp refers to the book: to link his own ironic/critical concepts of science,

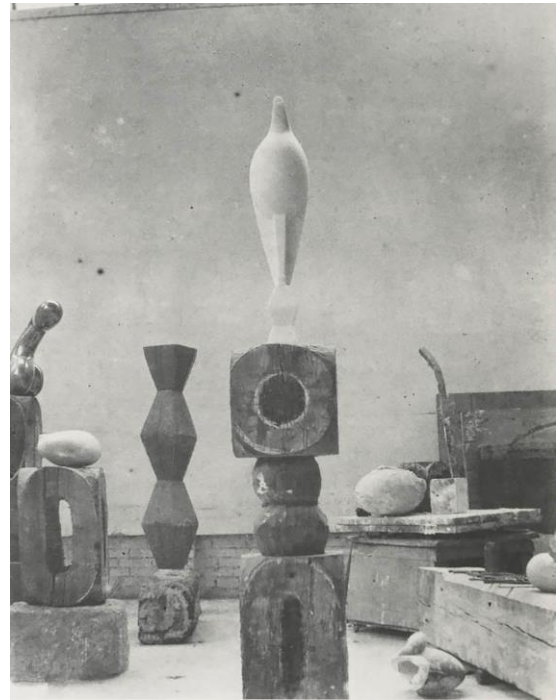
as they are shown in his readymades, to the theme of the exhibition: 'the modern myth'. However, I think the reference by Duchamp to Verne's book not only relates to the theme of the exhibition, but goes back to the first ideas for *the Large Glass*. That idea of a flashback in 1947 also fits in with the new work *Given...* with which Duchamp had started precisely that year and which would, at the release after his death, explain many cryptic suggestions behind *the Large Glass*. That inspiration by Verne's book can be deduced if we take into consideration the story as a whole. The search for the green beam that shoots over the horizon at a clear sunset is, in the book, a symbol for the search for true love. Irony about a scientific explanation of love, competition between science and art, the battle between bachelors for the love of a bride: these are the basic characteristics of the book that are also essential elements in the story of *the Large Glass*, such as Duchamp composed it in 1913 and 1914.

"Can one make works which are not works of 'art'?"

I will connect the first readymades, *Bicycle Wheel* and *Bottlerack*, that developed after moving to the *rue St. Hippolyte*, to the note: "*Peut-on faire des œuvres qui ne soient pas 'd'art'?*" ("Can one make works which are not works of 'art'?") from 1913, which Duchamp wrote before he moved. I suggest that the interrogative form of that note connects to the title of the catalogue *Is it Art?* that had appeared at the Armory Show in New York in 1912, where his *Nude descending a Staircase 2* resulted in a scandalous success. As before with the humorous drawings, where the meaning is created in the symbiotic relationship between the caption and the image, the new objects in his studio receive their meaning in their description or title. This meaning is often based on wordplay that serves as a means by which Duchamp transforms everyday objects into readymades. *Bicycle Wheel* can thus be seen as a wordplay along the lines of Roussel, and especially when the work is defined in French: *une roue sur une selle*, (a wheel on a kitchen stool), a tribute to Roussel as inspirer. In addition, it can be seen as a quip about visual arts in its reference to a stool (*selle*) as a symbol of sculpture, to the introduction of the pedestal in sculpture by Brancusi, and to the circles of colour by Delaunay and Kupka that were designed to suggest a sense of movement.



Winner prix de Rome for sculpture *Femina* 15 aug.1911 and view atelier Brancusi 1918 (?) (image from *Princesse X* exh. cat. Centre Pompidou 1999).



After *Bicycle Wheel*, *Bottlerack* appeared in his workshop, a *hérisson* as that object is called in French. I will relate this work to the watermill in *The Large Glass*. The motive for which, as I have said before, can be found in a visit to the Hérisson waterfalls in the Jura. Not only because they were, given their proximity to Étival, a likely destination for a group getaway in October 1912, but also on the basis of a drawing from *the Green Box*, in which the water shoots over *the Bachelors* in accordance with the situation at the falls, as travel guides at the time also stated.

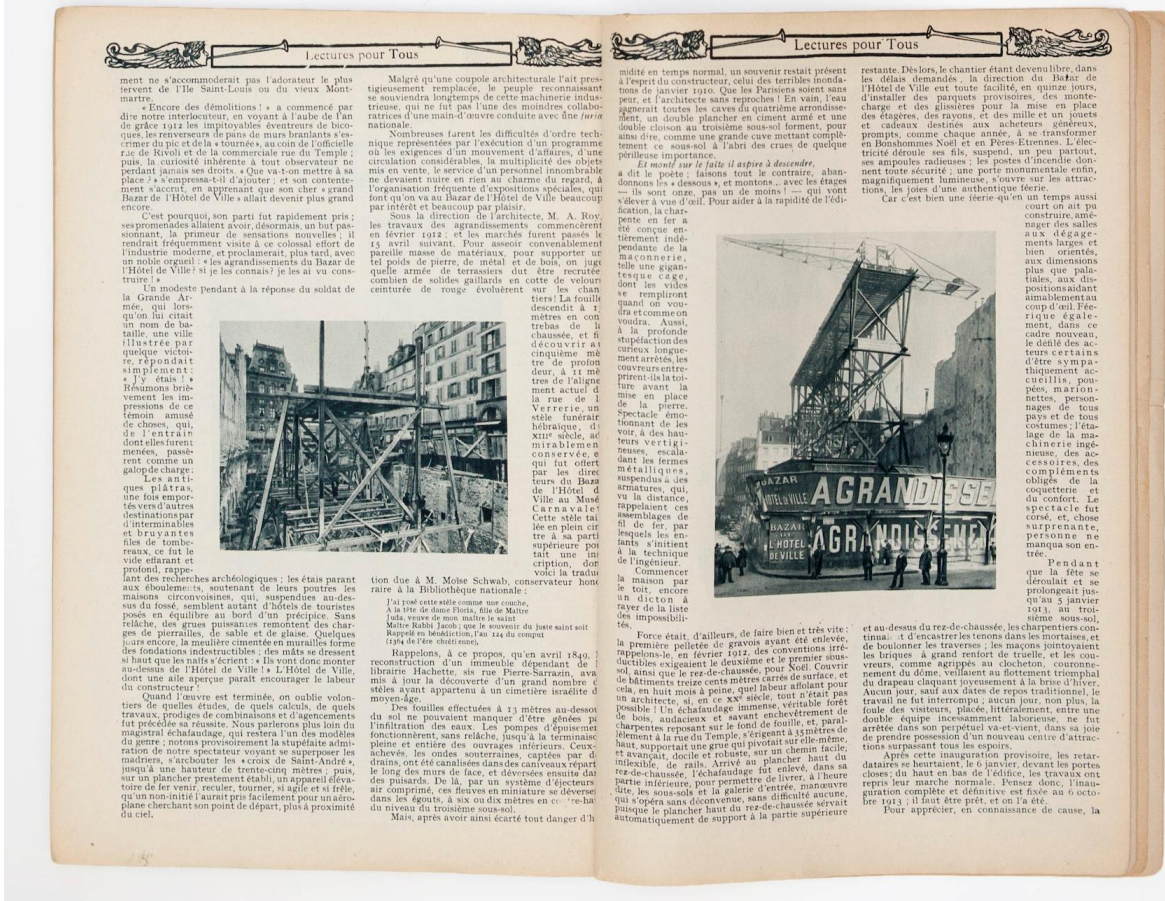


face du Grand-Saut, une des plus belles cascades connues, à cause de son développement en éventail sur un escalier de strates étagées qui forment un véritable château d'eau naturel; la hauteur de la chute est de 70 m. Le sentier grimpe en zigzags sur l'escarpement de la rive dr. et, à 50 m. en amont de la cascade, franchit le torrent sur la passerelle Durier, à 2 min. de laquelle est le belvédère du Club Alpin, sur un éperon de roc qui domine le lit du Hérisson de 75 m. Remontant la rive g., on arrive bientôt devant la deuxième grande chute du Hérisson, tombant de 55 m. d'un seul bond du haut d'une paroi de roches en surplomb et baptisée le *Niagara Jurassien*; on peut descendre jusqu'au pied de la cascade où le Club Alpin a établi la passerelle Lacuzon, ainsi nommée du célèbre chef de partisans franc-comtois qui se cacha, dit-on, dans une caverne ouverte dans la falaise de la rive dr. Grâce au surplomb de la roche un sentier a pu même être établi sous la cascade et l'on peut passer entre la paroi et la chute d'eau, mais il faut marcher prudemment.

Le sentier, très pittoresque, gravit l'escarpement de la cascade, puis remonte pendant 1,200 m. env. le cours du torrent, qui n'est qu'une longue suite de cascates et de charmantes cascades. Bientôt la gorge s'ouvre et l'on traverse une belle prairie où se trouve le moulin de François contre

Note from *the Green Box* (from: A. Schwarz, *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp*, 1969) and detail from *Les Guides Joanne 1911-1912*.

In my reconstruction, Duchamp was not looking for a drainer when he, as many of his fellow citizens, went to visit the newly opened modern *Bazar de l'Hotel de Ville* and came across a bottle rack with the name *Hérisson*, where he, in a Roussellian way, realized the similarities with the series of waterfalls with the same name at Étival.



reconstruction Bazar de l'Hotel de Ville, *Lectures pour Tous*, 15 October 1913.

The bottle rack with the name *Hérisson* merges the journey along the waterfalls into a simultaneous representation of space and time, to put it in Cubist terms, coloured by the erotic feelings of the traveller for his guide Gabrielle Buffet.

A flexible meter

The name for 3 *Stoppages Étalon* (3 Standard Stoppages), in which Duchamp subjected the meter to chance with three different lengths as a result, seems to have been found on a shop window: *stoppages et talons* (stoppages and heels). A possible motive I find in the *Conférence Internationale de l'heure* from October 1912. This conference was held on whether the Paris time, which was linked to

the old 0-meridian through Paris, was still to be followed internationally after the relocation of that meridian to Greenwich. The meter is a symbol of French rationalism. Every French child was taught in school that the meter had been a ten millionth part of a quarter of the meridian of Paris since 1795 and that the original meter was kept at the *Bureau International des Poids et Mesures* in Sèvres. The meter was a reminder of the time when the meridian of Paris still counted as the 0-meridian. The change to the English time was pre-emptively realized by setting the clock back 9 minutes and 21 seconds before the congress was held. With that, the unity of time was, like the meter, detached from its referent in nature and became an abstract unit.

At that time, mathematical certainties were seen in perspective, for example, by the hypothetical, non-Euclidean scientific philosophy of Poincaré, whose death in 1912 received extensive media coverage in newspapers and magazines. All this formed the context for Duchamp's pataphysical experiment with the meter. Duchamp's act is similar to a hilarious piece on the loss of the meter that was published in the August 29, 1912 issue of *Le Sourire*

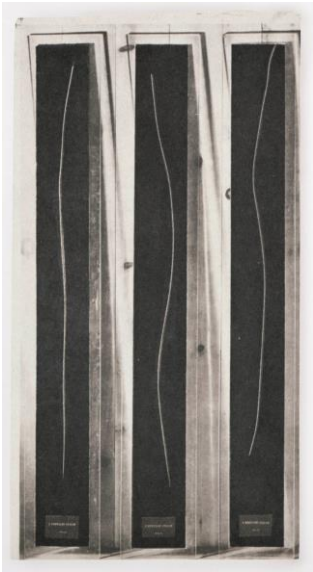


4^e Mettre dos à dos Mlle Cecile Sorel [et M. Fr. Poulbot, mesurer la différence de taille et multiplier par 3,1416 (π).

5^o Mesurer, soit dans sa cuisine, soit dans sa cave, un bout du méridien terrestre, en déduire l'arc et diviser par dix millions.

6^o Acheter, dans un bazar, un mètre pliant de deux sous.

Le Sourire, 29 aug. 1912 and detail.



M. Duchamp, *3 Standard Stops* (from E. Bonk, *The Box in a Valise*, 1989).

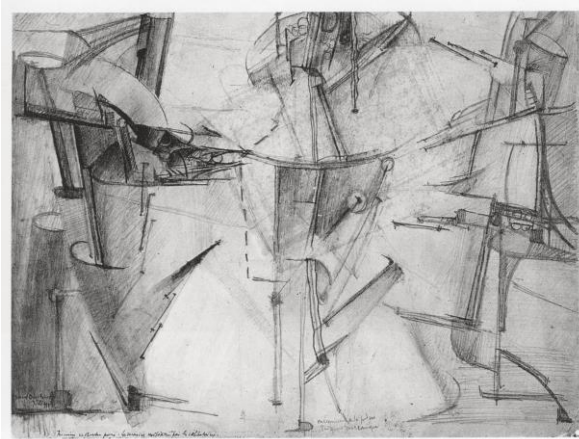
The reader was advised to visit the bazar and buy a *mètre pliant*, literally a 'flexible meter' – a ruler. It showed a 'last' photo of mister *Méridien Terrestre* with the appearance of a washed up clown.

Duchamp's approach is that of an ironic twentieth-century alchemist that provides the relationship between space and time with a new referent, at the precise moment that the standards of the metric system became abstract concepts. With *3 Standard Stoppages* the rational science of physics was satirized by the crafter Duchamp, who, with a piece of darned thread, reconnected the abstracted foundations of science with the concrete world of objects.

The Xth Station of the Cross

The *Chocolate Grinder* and the *Scissors in the Large Glass* are conceived as a coherent whole in an etching from 1967. I see in this a link with the traditional image of the Crowning with Thorns from the Passion, in which Christ is sitting on a block while soldiers push down the crown of thorns with two crossed sticks. Both in Munich and in the Louvre, versions of Titian's interpretation of this scene can be found. My suggestion is supported by the painting of this *Christ en pudeur*, as the scene is called in French, in the Rouen Cathedral, where it is situated in the position of the tenth Station of the Cross. The combination of the *Chocolate Grinder* and the *Scissors* therefore seems like a continuation on *Mécanisme de la Pudeur ou Pudeur Mécanique*, the drawing from Munich that, as Duchamp said later, was drawn as a joke in the usual composition of the tenth Station of the Cross, in which Christ is stripped by

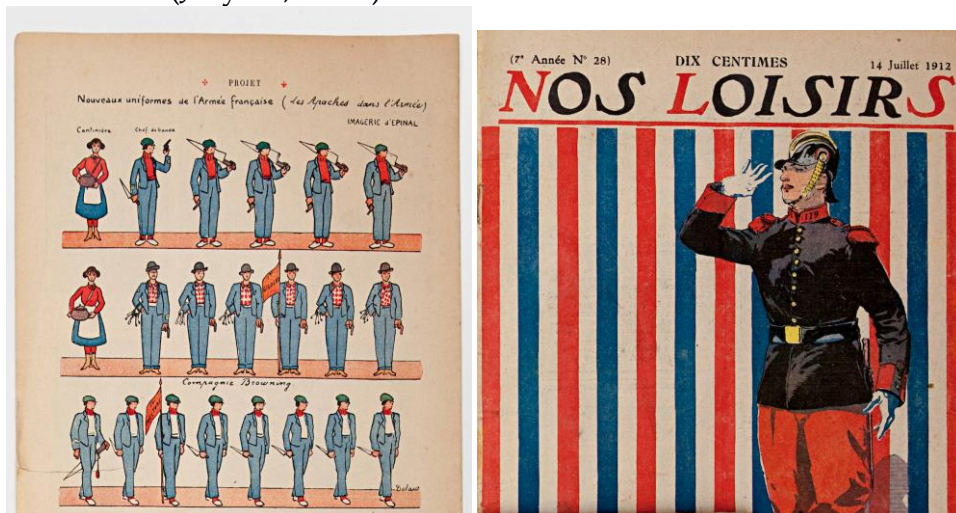
the soldiers. That drawing with the subtitle *The Bride Stripped Bare by the Bachelors* later yielded the title for *the Large Glass*. In this reference to the tenth Station of the Cross there has been a change in gender of the bride and the bachelor(s), but this is not surprising given the autobiographical nature of the work, in which the first syllables of the protagonists' names, *la Mariée* and *les Célibataires*, form the name Marcel.

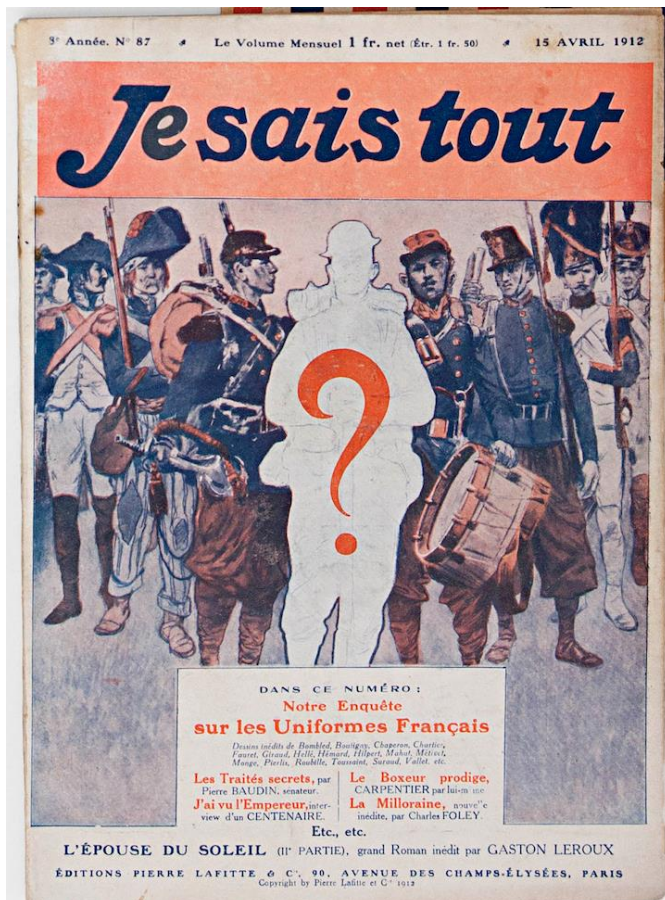


M. Duchamp, *The Bride stripped bare by the Bachelors* 1912, (from A. Schwarz, *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp*, 2000); Xth Station of the Cross in the church of Blainville (photo Bert Jansen); Xth Station of the Cross, Rouen Cathedral (photo Madeline Maus).

Camouflage

The colour of *the Bachelors* in *the Large Glass* is provisional; they are still in lead, a primer, "waiting for their colour as croquet cones." Although there is only one military uniform in *the Bachelors* (the cavalryman), I see in that "waiting for colour" a reference to a discussion that took place at that time about the colour of the army uniform. The arrival of advanced weaponry demanded the replacement of the brightly coloured uniforms with camouflage clothing. Other European countries had already chosen khaki and field grey, but in France, the conservative military command kept the traditional red *pants* until after the Battle of the Marne. Articles on this can be found, for example, in *L'Illustration* (03.09.1912), *Le Rire* (may 4, 1912), *Je sais tout* (April 15, 1912), and *Nos Loisirs* (July 14, 1912).

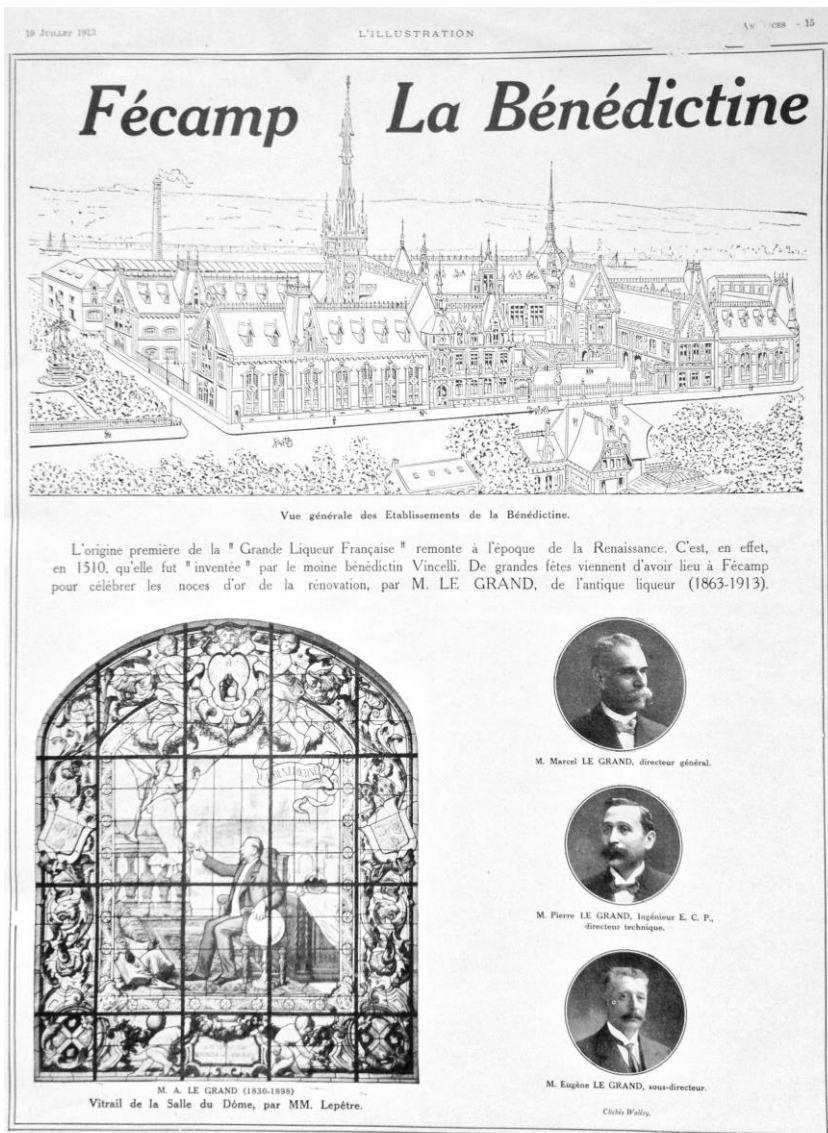




Three magazines in which the color of French uniforms is discussed.

A visit to Fécamp

The idea for the falling bottle of Benedictine pulling back the *Glider*, probably arose in early September 1913 while on vacation with his family in Yport. The great local event that summer was the opening of the Benedictine liqueur factory in the neighbouring Fécamp. The *L'Illustration* of July 19th published the news in a full-page advertisement with a picture of the stained glass window that is still located in the factory. On it a personification of Fame gives a bottle of Benedictine to a gentleman in the bottom part of the window.



Advert in *L'Illustration* July 19, 1913.

The liqueur factory was a well-known patron for artistic poster makers such as Shem and Mucha. And on December 20, 1913, in *Le Rire*, a drawing was published of an aviator who pours himself a glass, referring to Pégoud who, in that year, had flown upside down for the first time.

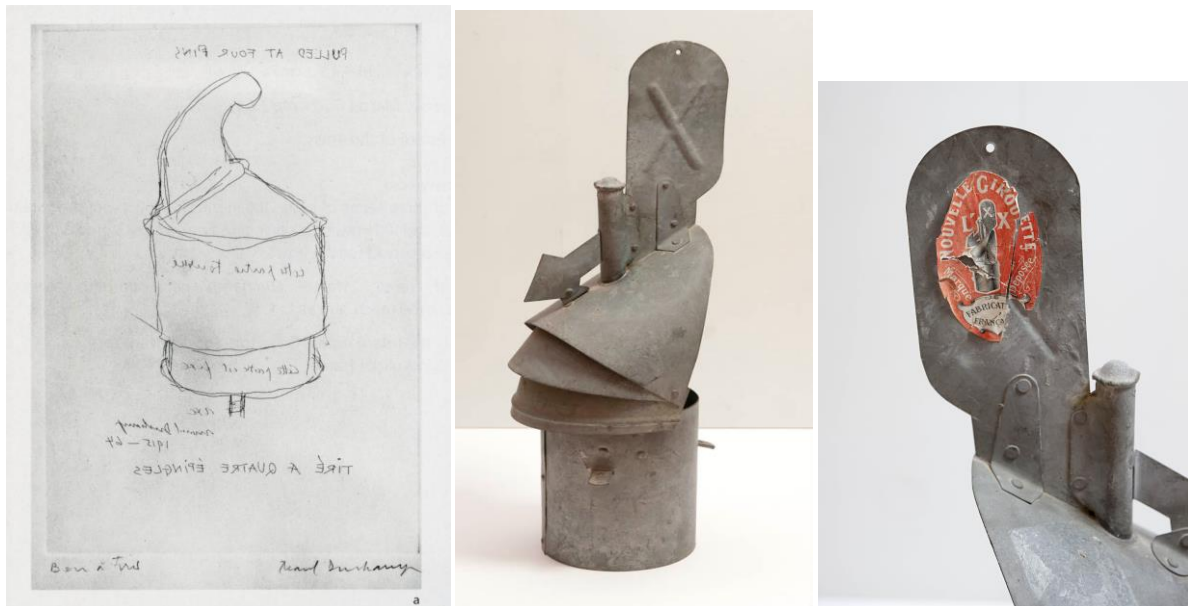
Duchamp in New York: Art Made "Read-y"

L'X

Many readymades in New York originated from the friendship with Walter Arensberg; an avid lover of language games and well aware of Guillaume Apollinaire, Stéphane Mallarmé, Sigmund Freud and Gertrude Stein. In Arensberg, Duchamp found not only a patron, but also a language researcher

akin to Brisset. The friendship with Arensberg and the works that it brought forth confirm the importance of language in the creation of works. Like philologists, of the stature Roussel/Arensberg/Brisset, distort the relationship between words and objects, and metaphor makes language literary, Duchamp's readymades make objects "readable" as visual art. In that sense of "made readable," I want to consider the name 'readymade' that Duchamp began to use in 1915; 'ready' as a cognate of 'to read'.

The motive for this, I think, is the first readymade with that name: *Pulled at 4 Pins* (*Tiré à 4 épingles*), a chimney fan with a rotating cap: a *girouette* in French.⁷ That word also has a figurative meaning: someone who often changes his mind; a fickle person. It also refers to a Don Juan as De Maupassant uses the word in *Yvette* (Maupassant 1910, 10). The English title *Pulled at 4 Pins* is a literal translation of the French *Tiré a quatre épingles* (dressed to the nines). Duchamp also used that French title in 1959 for an etching in which the sheet seems to be pulled away from four corners by creases drawn on the paper.⁸ The etchings are not only connected by their corresponding titles. A link can also be established with the original readymade. The form of an X in the etching of 1959 corresponds with the L'X, the French name for a chimney cowl. The X was embossed on the iron of the cowl.



M. Duchamp, *Tiré a quatre épingles* (from A.Schwarz, *The complete works of Marcel Duchamp*, 2000), a French chimney cowl and detail (collection Bert Jansen).

In the French version of the title (*Tiré à quatre épingles*) one can, as is known, also find the origin of the word "readymade" for these kinds of works, which Duchamp chose at the end of 1915. *Dressed to the Nines* refers to clothes, like 'readymade', the word that was used for off-the-peg clothes. This reference to

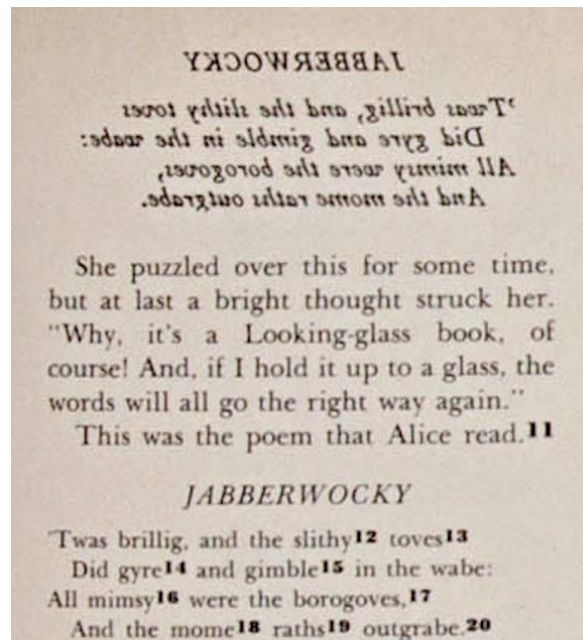
the clothing industry is supported by a portrait of Duchamp by Jean Crotti that was modelled directly on his face and was described in a catalogue of April 1916 as “a sculpture made to measure”. *Made to measure* (*sur mesure* in French) is, like ‘readymade’, a tailoring term but means the opposite (exh. cat. 1983, 93).

The term ‘readymade’, however, is in my view not only to be interpreted as a tailoring term. The word ‘readymade’ itself can, in my view, also be analysed multilingually, in conjunction with the English that Duchamp began to learn after his arrival in New York. Those lessons were basically held in parallel with the French lessons that his New York friends received from him in the form of French-English conversation. From Louise Norton and Beatrice Wood, we know that Marcel’s language lessons mostly came down to learning ambiguous words and scabrous phrases (Marcadé 2007, 139).

Louise Norton was gifted *Pulled at 4 Pins* by Marcel Duchamp before she met her husband Edgard Varèse through Duchamp in the autumn of 1917. Duchamp knew Varèse through Gabrielle Buffet, who was a classmate of Varèse during their music studies in Berlin. After her divorce from Allen Norton, Louise had multiple sexual encounters with, among others, Duchamp and Henri Pierre Roché (Marcadé 2007, 161). The *girouette* thus befits her in the double meaning of a female Don Juan. She later lost the readymade. In the late thirties, Duchamp was unable to find a picture of it to add to the overview of his oeuvre in *the Box in a Valise*, as he did with the other readymades. Furthermore, in 1964, the chimney cowl was not reproduced in eightfold unlike the other fourteen readymades. Duchamp did, however, make an etching of the cowl on which the inscription can be read in mirror both in English and French.

Jabberwocky nonsense

This mirror-image text provides, in my opinion, a clue to the origin of the word ‘readymade’ in relation to Louise Norton. During their classes, Duchamp used *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking Glass* by Lewis Carroll (Decimo 2002, 99). Norton characterizes the inscription of her readymade as “Alice in Wonderland nonsensical” (exh. cat. 1973, 225). A possible connection with the word ‘readymade’ arises from the poem *Jabberwocky* (Carroll 1970, 191). That poem, full of onomatopoeic words and portmanteaux, has become synonymous for nonsensical language, ‘Jabberwocky’ after the dragon named Jabberwock. The text only becomes readable when Alice holds the book in front of a mirror because it is printed in mirror image.



Detail from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking Glass*, (ed. M.Gardner), 1970, p.191.

In that name *Jabberwocky* a linguistic definition of the word 'readymade' can be found, if the -y is seen as a suffix, as a clause of 'to read'. 'Ready Made' can then be translated as 'made readable'. Later, in 1972, Louise would publish a biography of her husband with the title *Varèse, behind the Looking Glass*, in which perhaps the memory of Duchamp's language lessons resounds.

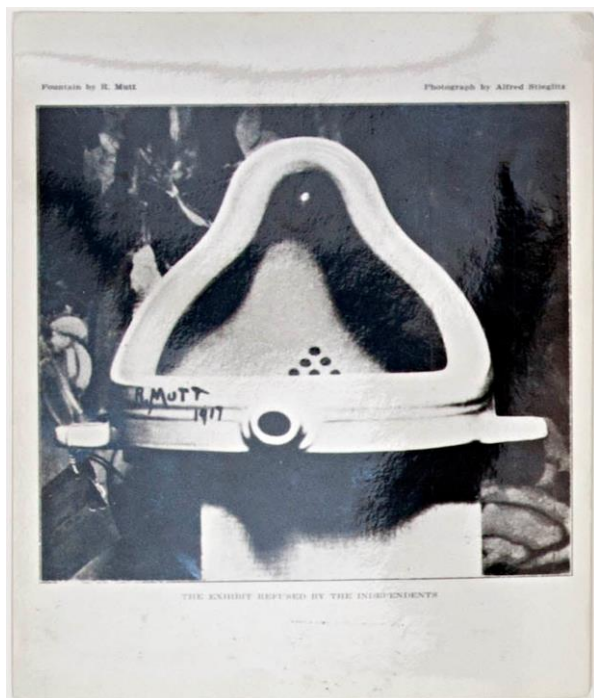
A wall sink as a urinal

Fountain was photographed by Stieglitz in front of a painting by Marsden Hartley, in which the shape of the urinal is repeated in a horse's ass. In Duchamp's circle of friends, the shape of the urinal was also compared with the contours of a Madonna and a meditating Buddha. That comparison probably has his origins in a different painting by Marsden Hartley *Musical Theme (Oriental Symphony)* (1912-1913), that was sold a year earlier by Stieglitz to another acquaintance of Duchamp, John Quinn.



Marsden Hartley, *Musical Theme (oriental symphony)*, 1912-1913 (from internet).

In that painting, images of a Madonna and Child and a meditating Buddha side by side, are combined with an abstract shape that corresponds to the contours of the urinal. The contemptuous equation of a urinal with a Madonna and a Buddha or a horse's ass is to be interpreted, in my opinion, as a sneer at the abstracting art that Marsden Hartley produced. I further note that to title a urinal *Fountain* is, in my view, not strange given the correspondence in shape with a French *fontaine* (fountain) in the sense of a lavabo, a wall sink – its reservoir disappearing, after its connection to the water supply, above the shell-shaped basin. We know them still as they are pictured in the catalogue of *Manufacture Française d'Armes et Cycles de Saint-Etienne* of 1911.



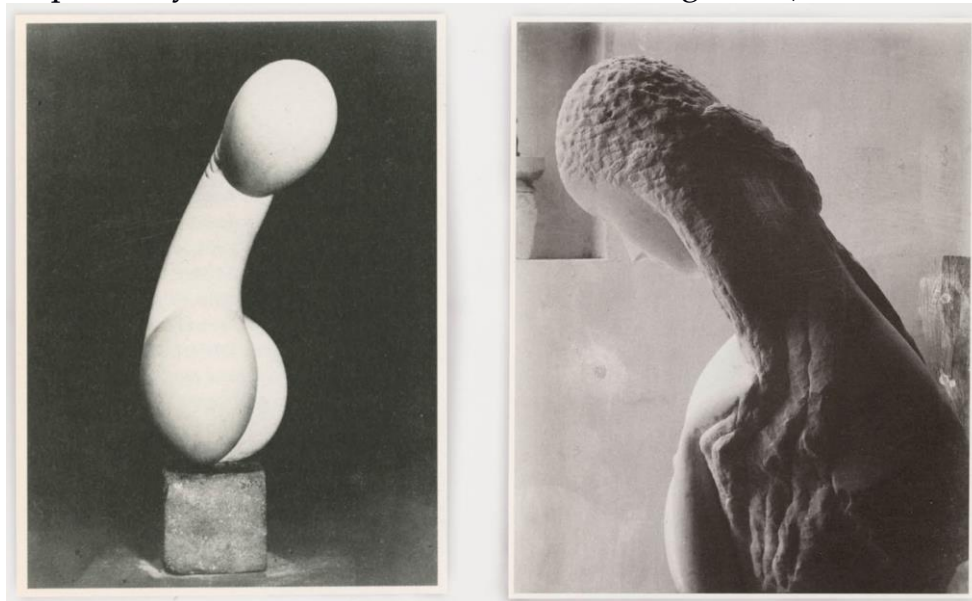
M. Duchamp, *Fountain* 1917 as presented in *The Blind Man 2* (from: W. Camfield, *Marcel Duchamp Fountain*, 1989) and *lavabofontaine* (detail) from: *Manufacture Française d' Armes et Cycles*, St. Etienne 1911 (?).

This association of a urinal with a fountain was also made by Proust, though erroneously, in *À la recherche du temps perdu, Jeunes filles en fleurs. Autour de Mme. Swann*, when the young narrator together with his nanny, visits a public toilet in which they have recently been installed: “*ce qu’on appelle en Angleterre un lavabo et en France, par une anglomanie malinformée, des water-closets.*” (Proust 1999, 393). This interpretation as a sink, combined with a sexual connotation, is supported by Duchamp’s advice to Beatrice Wood to use a shell-shaped soap dish as a representation of the female sex in the painting that she submitted to the Independent Artists exhibition for which *Fountain* was also intended.

I would also like to point out the painting/collage *Le Lavabo* by Juan Gris another friend of Duchamp. That painting had drawn much attention at the exhibition of the *Section d’Or* in 1912 because it incorporated shards of a mirror. Apollinaire defended the work against the critic Louis Vauxcelles by repeating Juan Gris who had declared that you can only represent a mirror, a variable surface that even reflects the viewer, by pasting it on as such. Vauxcelles, a declared opponent of all innovations in the arts, reiterated that mockingly in *Gil Blas* and also turned his ridicule to artists that wanted to represent movement for which he took *The King and Queen Traversed by Nudes at High Speed* by Duchamp as an example (Apollinaire 1980, 230).

Princess Marie Bonaparte

The sculpture *Princesse X* by Brancusi in the exhibition seems to have played a crucial role in the choice of the tilted urinal (Camfield 1989, 55-56 and exh. cat. 2000, 77-88). In 1916, the sculpture in a white marble and a bronze version had been on show in New York in The Modern Gallery. The marble version was purchased in March 1917 by John Quinn, who, a year earlier, had bought *Musical Theme* by Marsden Hartley. The bronze version was submitted to the Independent Artists exhibition and subsequently acquired by Arensberg. That Brancusi's sculpture, unlike Duchamp's *Fountain*, was accepted is remarkable because the sculpture was widely recognized as a phallus. *Princesse X* was submitted as a portrait of Marie Bonaparte, who had posed for Brancusi in 1909, which led to a sexual relationship (Schouten 2011, 66-69). Brancusi later remembers her as a woman who was obsessed with her own beauty and constantly looked back in the mirror. That is how he initially portrayed her and he would later abstract that pose into a form that really does look suspiciously like the male sex organ (exh. cat. 1999, 9-10).



C. Brancusi, *Princesse X* 1915 and *Woman looking at herself in a mirror* 1909 (from *Princesse X*, exh.cat. Centre Pompidou 1999).

Perhaps with this Brancusi is referring to Marie Bonaparte's strong views about an anatomical cause of female frigidity in relation to the shape of the penis, about which she would later write (Bertin 1982, 140-141). After her analysis with Sigmund Freud, she would introduce psychoanalysis in France in 1925. It seems that with *Princesse X* Brancusi anticipated his model's unpublished views. Duchamp, who was friends with Brancusi and perhaps aware of his affair with Marie Bonaparte, would have, for that reason, chosen

Fountain as a counterpart of his sculpture, that within the inner circle of the organizing committee of the Independent Artists exhibition received much praise, but was also known for its suggestive shape.

R. Mutt – Richard Muther?

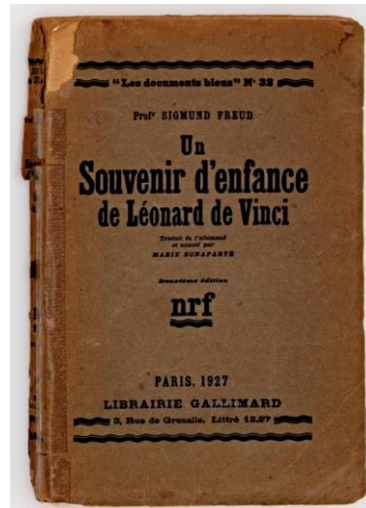
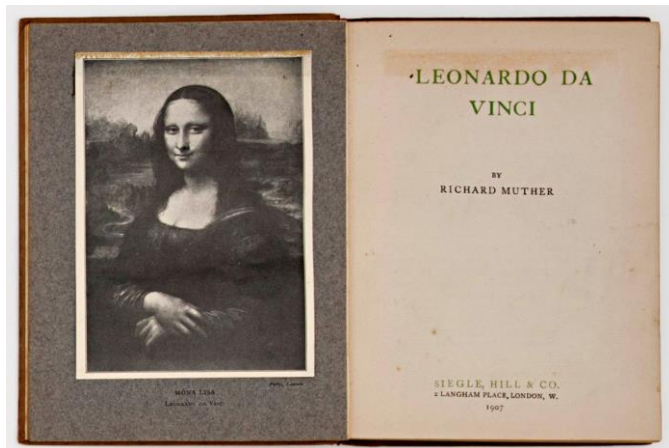
The question remaining is the why behind the signature R. Mutt. Duchamp himself has mentioned a double reference: to Mott Iron Works, the store where the urinal was purchased, and to the daily comic Mutt & Jeff (Camfield 1989, 23 and note 21). To this he added the R as initial, an abbreviation of the name *Richard* (in French slang: *money-bag* in contrast with the empty form of the urinal), which together with Mutt yields the German *Armut* (poverty). Ulf Linde read the signature as a reversal of *Tu m'...*, the title of the painting that Duchamp would make before long. A reference to the German *Mutter* (mother) has also been suggested, which Duchamp later seems to endorse when he, in 1964, tears a family photograph, with him sitting on his mother's lap, in the form of a urinal. To the possible associations I would like to add Richard Muther the author of popular art books at the time, about Leonardo da Vinci for instance (Muther 1907). Also because he soon reappears as a possible source of inspiration, namely when Duchamp with his contemptuous criticism of the *Mona Lisa* introduces his, by now termed Dadaist approach, to Paris.

The fact that in 1919 Da Vinci's four hundredth anniversary of death was commemorated may have also played a role in Duchamp's motives for the act of providing a reproduction of the *Mona Lisa* with the caption L.H.O.O.Q., much like the exhibition of the *Mona Lisa* in 1963 in New York and Washington, where in six weeks, two million people walked past the painting, was a motive for *L.H.O.O.Q. rasée* (L.H.O.O.Q. Shaved).

Marie Bonaparte and Sigmund Freud

The joke of *L.H.O.O.Q.* lies in the reference to Da Vinci's homosexuality, which was the subject of *Eine Kindheitserinnerung des Leonardo da Vinci* by Sigmund Freud (1910) that had been translated into English in 1916. As Nesbit and Sawelson-Gorse have shown, Arensberg owned a copy of this as well as other books by Freud. Freud was also a subject of discussion at the soirees, for example when the dreams of Beatrice Wood were interpreted in a Freudian way (Nesbit/Sawelson-Gorse (1995), 170 and note 97). The memory to which the title of the book refers is a dream of Leonardo about a vulture that descended on his cradle and put its tail in his mouth. Freud explains that dream as a memory of the mother's breast (Freud 1927, 95). Furthermore,

Freud believed that Leonardo's homosexuality could be deduced from the heavenly smiles of the women in his paintings, which he associated with the early childhood of the artist with his mother and an absent father because he was an illegitimate child. Freud obtained his data from among others the books of Merezhkovsky and Muther. As mentioned before, I suggest that the reversal of the syllables in the name Muther, the author and publisher of a popular series of art books, may have played a role in the signature R. Mutt on *Fountain*. That connection between *L.H.O.O.Q.* and *Fountain* is supported, albeit within an anachronistic reasoning, when it turns out that Freud's book was translated into French in 1927 by Marie Bonaparte, Brancusi's muse for *Princesse X*, the sculpture that revealed the female nature of *Fountain*.



R. Muther, *Leonardo da Vinci*, 1907 and S. Freud, *Un Souvenir d'enfance de Léonard de Vinci*, (translated by Marie Bonaparte).

A Rembrandt as an ironing board

At some point, Duchamp advises himself in his notes to limit the number of readymades. At the same time, he contemplates possibilities of the readymades existing as text only; for example the sentence *se servir d'un Rembrandt comme une planche à repasser* (Use a Rembrandt as an ironing-board). In addition to the rebellious meaning, the phrase can also be considered as a pun. A *planche* (board) is an art term for a painting and 'Rembrandt' pronounced in French sounds like a form of *remembrance*, a solemn word both in French and in English. Together with *repasser* ('to iron', but can also be deconstructed to *re-passé* (the past again)) an interpretation emerges as "a Rembrandt used to commemorate the past." For this interpretation, I find support in a description of the installation that Matta made, at Duchamp's request, in 1947 next to *The Green Ray* by Kiesler (Marcade 2007, 387). Which concerned the unexecuted passage in *the Large Glass* of the *Handler of Gravity*.

Therein dangled a flatiron (*fer à passer*) on a rope, featuring the text: *à refaire le passé* (to remake the past). The statement "Use a Rembrandt as an ironing-board" became known, famous and infamous after Duchamp cited the sentence as an example in the definition of the lemma 'readymade' in the *Dictionnaire abrégé du surréalisme* in 1938. The sentence had this same effect at the opening panel of the exhibition *The Art of Assemblage* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1961. The English 'ironing board' will have further strengthened the ironic aspect. Duchamp's admirer Robert Rauschenberg was part of the panel and repeatedly entered into discussion with Shattuck who emphasized the historical aspect of the readymades as a 'zero point' to which they fall back after they had served as art only once. According to him, that could not be repeated and he thus denied the importance of the readymade as contemporary art (Elderfield 1992, 118-151). A year later, Rauschenberg made for *Dylaby* in the *Stedelijk Museum* in Amsterdam an installation, part of which still exists: a *combine painting*, titled *Dylaby* consisting of a loose hanging canvas, a rusty Coca Cola billboard and an ironing board (shown in: exh. cat. (1987, 91)).



R. Rauschenberg, *Dylaby* 1962 (from exh. cat. *Coleccion Sonnabend* 1987).

That board was, judging by the log of Ad Petersen, the starting point for the final installation (exh. cat. 1962, n.p.). In that work, Robert Rauschenberg seems to refer to Duchamp's infamous remark about using a Rembrandt as an ironing board.

Duchamp and the Film World

After 1923, Duchamp turned away from the art world. There it was said he had stopped being an artist, a view that is still widely held. The reality, however, is rather different. After 1923, Duchamp called himself an *artiste défroqué* – a retired artist; with which he did not suggest that he was no longer an artist, but rather he compared the art world with a religious community of which he no longer wished to be part. In Paris, he, together with Picabia and Man Ray, was part of a circle in which film was for the first time recognized as an artistic medium. That happened in conjunction with performances of the *Ballets Suédois* at the *Théâtre des Champs Elysées* where artists and designers were recruited for the costumes, music and scenery. Their input was also sought by Marcel L'Herbier for *L'Inhumaine*, that ran between September and December of 1924. The film was received as a form of avant-garde art, also because a host of international artists had collaborated on it: Fernand Léger and Robert Mallet-Stevens for the scenery, Paul Poiret for the costumes, René Lalique for some objects, Georges Antheil and Darius Milhaud for the music, and Jean Börlin for the choreography. The avant-garde design emerges, for instance, in the filming of a tumultuous musical performance on October 4, 1924 by Antheil for which *tout Paris*, including Duchamp, was invited to attend as extras to listen and respond. The music did indeed lead to heated controversies between supporters and opponents, just as L'Herbier had hoped.

Duchamp also searched for new forms of art, besides the serious consideration of a career as a professional chess player. This was accompanied by a restless traveling back and forth between New York and Paris. Together with Man Ray, he had, since 1920, conducted experiments with stereometric photos and with film. At the end of 1921, he had written Arensberg from Paris that he wanted to come back to New York and get a job in film as an assistant cameraman. Picabia also had aspirations in the film world, in which he wanted to involve Duchamp. At the end of 1922, he had written him in New York and invited him to work on a film for which he had been approached by L'Herbier. Duchamp declined that proposal at first, but he later revised that decision. But by then, L'Herbier had already relinquished Picabia's participation in *L'Inhumaine* by asking Léger in his place. Thereafter, Picabia decided to finance his own productions. His actions and the quarrelling in

1924 in the Parisian world of Dada can be followed in the last issues of his magazine 391, the issues XVIII and XIX. The last page of issue XIX, published in October, contains an invitation to attend the premiere of the ballet *Relâche* for which Picabia had created the decor. In the break between the two acts, an *entr'acte cinématographique* would be shown. Issue XVIII of July 1924 contains Duchamp's design for *Rotary Demisphere* including the *spoonerism* along the edge. The cover too features a few feats of Rose Sélavy in that area: *Oh! Do shit again! ... Oh! Douche it again! ... and Du dos de la cuillère au cul de la douairière!* A letter was also published in that issue from Gabrielle Buffet, dated June 20, 1924, in which she writes about the fun they had while seeing the opera *Mercur*, with music by Satie and sets and costumes by Picasso, "*tres nettement inspiré de Picabia et Duchamp.*"

Monte Carlo Bond

In this context, Duchamp's *Monte Carlo Bond* developed. The hint to Mercury in the two wings of shaving cream on Duchamp's head is, besides a reference to the god of trading, perhaps also traceable to the ballet *Mercur* that caused quite the racket. Perhaps there is an additional reference possible, namely to the book *Feu Mattias Pascal* (The late Matthias Pascal) by Luigi Pirandello that L'Herbier was going to adapt for the screen after finishing *L'Inhumaine*. The intention for this he had declared in 1924. In all likelihood, Picabia and Duchamp were aware of L'Herbier's plans because they moved in the same circles and Picabia also had direct contact with L'Herbier. The latter writes in his autobiography that Picabia, after he was passed over for Léger, did not ask him, as previously agreed, for the filming of *Entre'acte* in May 1924, but approached René Clair, who in December 1923 also contacted L'Herbier (1979, 103-104).

Duchamp, who after April 20 was back in Paris after his chess competition in Nice, perhaps then linked the idea for his *Bond*, which he had gotten at the roulette table in Monte Carlo, to the story of Pirandello. The book provides sufficient indications for that assumption. Mattias Pascal, a librarian, runs away after an argument with his wife and his mother-in-law. He wins a fortune at the Monte Carlo gaming tables. With that money, he is feeling man enough to withstand the women at home. During his return trip, however, he reads in a newspaper article that his wife has identified the body of a suicide victim as his own. In that he sees a chance to start a new life. In Rome, he finds a place to stay in a family-run lodge under the fictitious name of Adrien Meis. When he knocks, the occupant Anselmo Paleari opens the door, his head and chin covered in shaving cream. Paleari immediately suspects that the man at

the door is an artist. Paleari exploits a daughter-in-law, a dipsomaniac woman with a moustache, who acts as a medium and conjures ghosts. During such a session, her husband steals the money from Adrien Meis, who knows he cannot report the crime to the police because he cannot identify himself and realizes that for that same reason a marriage with Adrienne, Paleari's attractive daughter, is impossible. He decides to assume his real identity and, after a fictitious suicide as Adrien Meis, he goes back home. But, it turns out, his wife has remarried to his childhood friend. He starts to work as a librarian again and sometimes he puts flowers on his own grave. In the village, he is known as the late Matthias Pascal.

I believe, the picture of Duchamp's head full of shaving cream on his *Monte Carlo Bond*, besides the connotations with the god of trading, could also refer to the novel by Pirandello, after the muddleheaded Paleari who exploits a masculine daughter-in-law as a spiritual medium and with whom a man without an identity, Matthias Pascal alias Adrien Meis, moves in and who Paleari initially mistook for an artist: all characters and aliases of Duchamp from the recent past.

Pirandello himself was also present in the Parisian avant-garde circles. The contract for the film adaptation of the book was signed in October 1924, two weeks before the commencement date on Duchamp's *Bond*. During that month, his play *Chacun sa vérité* was performed at the *Théâtre de l'Atelier* and on November 19, 1924, *La Jarre* premiered at the *Ballets Suédois* after his libretto. The same company performed *Relâche* by Picabia a month later, a play in two acts, between which the film *Entr'acte* by Clair was screened, in which Man Ray and Marcel Duchamp play a chess game interrupted by a 'downpour'. The opening, scheduled for November 27, 1924, was delayed until December 4. On the last day, New Year's Eve 1924, *Ciné Sketch* was added, a tableau vivant of Duchamp and Bronia Perlmutter, both posing naked as Adam and Eve from a painting by Cranach. Duchamp would give shape to his own cinematic aspirations in *Anémic Cinéma*, filmed by Man Ray, which included the rotating *Rotary Demisphere (Precision Optics)*. The film was financed by himself with the inheritance from his parents who had died shortly after one another in February 1925.

A Milky Way as a Veil

A waterfall in Chexbres

After the war, Duchamp left to France to visit family and friends. Shortly before his departure from New York in 1946, he had a *Box in a Valise* sent to

Maria Martins, the wife of the Brazilian ambassador, with whom he had had an affair since 1943. How passionate that love was, can be deduced from his personal addition to the *Valise: a*, so it seems, "abstract expressionist" painting, which was, it turned out, not painted with paint but with sperm. Its title, *Paysage Fautif*, is a pun on votive paintings that are offered to a saint to express gratitude for a miraculous healing. This affair would inspire him to a new work as a sequel to the in 1923 declared unfinished *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, even* [*the Large Glass*].

In early August 1946, Marcel Duchamp arrived with Mary Reynolds in hotel Bellevue in the Swiss Chexbres. Directly adjacent to the hotel is a waterfall, with which the small river the Forestay cascades itself down the ravine. A narrow path runs to a barracks, which was at the time in use as *champ de tir*, a shooting range, such as it can be found in every Swiss municipality where drafted men held shooting practices. From that barracks, they shot to the other side, in the slope next to the waterfall.

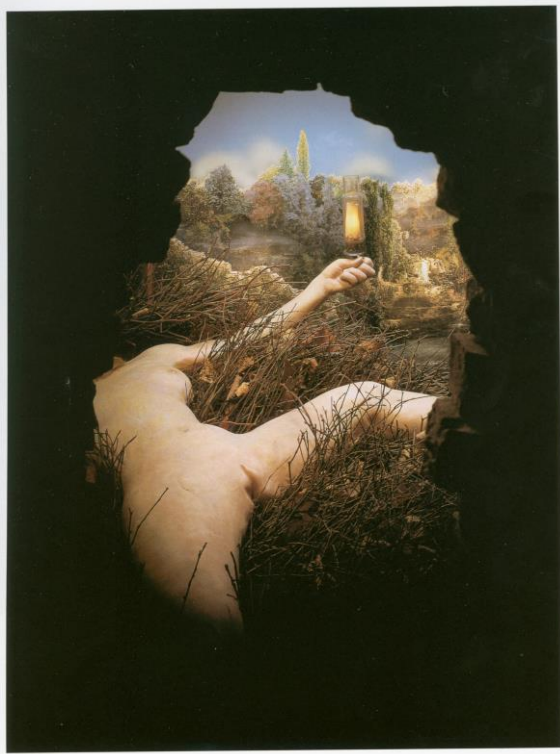




Postcard hotel *Bellevue* Chexbres and postcard waterfall Chexbres (from Banz, *Duchamp and the Forestay Waterfall*, 2010).

More than twenty years later, after the death of Duchamp in 1968, Duchamp's photographs of that waterfall in Chexbres had been used in his posthumous work of which the full title is: *Given: 1. The Waterfall / 2. The Illuminating Gas*.

Given... is set, other than the performance in *the Large Glass*, within a confined space. The position of the viewer is fixed behind two holes at eye level in an old stable door. Behind a broken wall, the viewer sees a tableau vivant that gives a peek behind the horizon in *the Large Glass*. In her domain, the bride exposes herself without any embarrassment, legs wide, lying in an idyllic landscape. In her hand she holds a flickering gas lamp and in the background flows, without ceasing, a waterfall.



M. Duchamp, *Etant donnés*, 1946-1966 (from exh.cat. *Marcel Duchamp Etant donnés*, (ed. M. Taylor, 2009).

The waterfall in Chexbres must have reminded Duchamp of the time when he, thirty-four years earlier, conceived the idea for *the Large Glass*. That is already apparent from the title of the work for which he found the inspiration here and which is an echo of the first lines that he had formulated as the "condition"

in his plans for *the Large Glass*. The waterfall and the gas lamp in that work are indeed only conditionally present as text. They are not portrayed. In this new work, however, they receive all the attention, if only because they are permanently in motion. His passion for his then lover Maria Martins will have reminded him in Chexbres of that other secret love that, in 1912, formed the motive for *the Large Glass*, the more so as the scene of that love was nearby. Seen from the terrace of the hotel in Chexbres, the Western horizon is formed by the hills of the French Jura. It was there that in 1912 everything started to speed up, during that week in Étival, in the parental home of Gabrielle Buffet.

A veil moving by her breath

That both works complemented each other was already clear in 1954 when Duchamp, at the installation of *the Large Glass* in the museum in Philadelphia, had a window installed in the wall behind it, anticipating the arrival of *Given....* Particularly, because through that opening, a fountain and a bronze sculpture of a female nude became visible within the transparent world of *the Large Glass*. The creator of that sculpture was Maria Martins. To her he had dedicated *Paysage Fautif* and it is after her body that the nude in *Given...* is modelled.⁹

The supplementing meaning of *Given...* to *the Large Glass* emerges very clearly in regard to the *Voie Lactée* (The Milky Way) from where the Bride ventilates her commands and in which the Bachelors fire their shots. That *Voie Lactée* can, through word play, be associated with a *voile acté* (an acted veil). As a pars pro toto for that Milky Way/acted veil the three *Draft Pistons* can be considered. Duchamp had based its form on three photographic recordings of drapes in front of a window, moving in the wind.

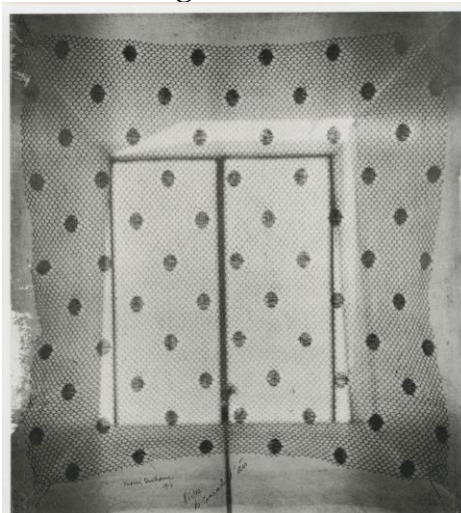


Photo M. Duchamp for *Draft Piston* 1914
(from A. Schwarz, *The complete works of Marcel Duchamp*, 2000).

The polka dot pattern on that mesh is reminiscent of a small *voile* (veil) that ladies back then often wore. When the bride voices her orders, those *Draft Pistons* are moved by her breath, indeed much like a *voilette* (veil) as it also appears in the subtitle of *Belle Haleine: eau de Voilette* (*Beautiful Breath: Veil Water*), the readymade of a perfume bottle. And does that *voie lactée* also become a *voile acté* as a reference to *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*, in the memorable performance of 1912 that shocked the Parisian public when the faun (Nijinsky) fornicated with the abandoned veil of a nymph?



Nijinsky in *L'Après-midi d'un faune* 1912 (from internet).

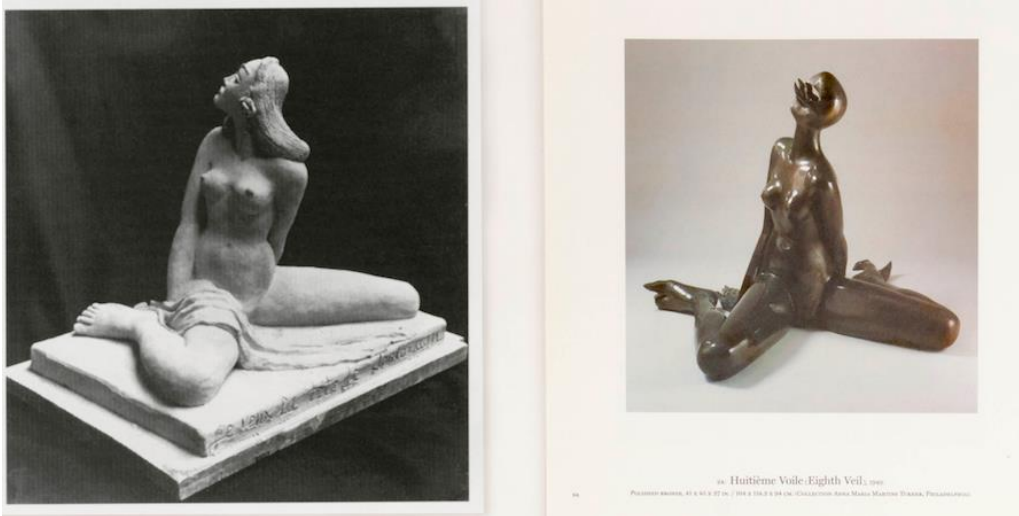
Duchamp was not present at that event, but was present a year later when *Le sacre du Printemps*, also by Stravinsky and Nijinsky, again caused much commotion and stirred up the memories of the previous year. Lucien Métivet had written an ironic piece about it in *Fantasio* on July 1, 1912 and in it established a link with the infamous sale of the painting *Salomé* (1880) by Regnault.

Salome's dance

According to the 1912 volume of the theatre magazine *Comoedia Illustré*, the theme of the veil dance and of *Salomé* were very *en vogue*. Apart from the attention for *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* in a special issue of June 15, 1912, the magazine, on July 19, 1912, devotes an article to the stage performance of *Salomé* by Oscar Wilde and on September 15, 1912, there is an illustrated piece on the contortionist Sahory Djeli, who accentuates the snake-like movements of her naked body with veils and advertised with x-ray photo's of her contorted poses. Furthermore, Loïe Fuller performed her *Serpentine*-dance in

the theatre *Bouffes Parisiens* as a *Papillon de Nuit*, as *Fantasio* portrayed her in colour on December 1, 1912.

The interpretation of *voie lactée* as *voile acté* is confirmed quite explicitly by some of the works by Maria Martins that Naumann links to *Given...* (Naumann 2002). In 1939, she conducted a preliminary study for *Salomé* who, after her Dance of the Seven Veils, sits naked on the floor with a cloth covering her lap. In 1949, Martins again created a sculpture in a virtually identical pose. Only the cloth is gone and her pubic hair is now prominently visible.

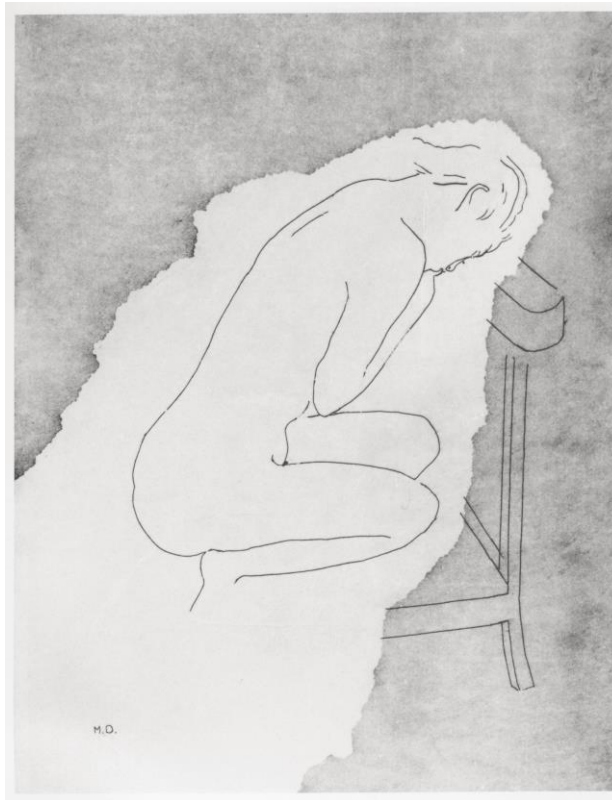


M. Martins, *Salome*, 1939 and M. Martins, *Eighth Veil*, 1949 (from *The Surrealist Sculpture of Maria Martins*, exh.cat. André Emmerich Gallery New York, 1998).

The title is *Eighth Veil*. Meanwhile, Martins has begun her affair with Duchamp and is aware of his plans for *Given....*

The bride finally stripped bare

There is another indication that has supported the interpretation of the *Voie Lactée* as a *voile acté* from the beginning in the notes for *the Large Glass*. This interpretation can be found in one of Duchamp's last works, a series of etchings from 1967-1968 in which he satirizes citations to Ingres, Cranach, Courbet and Rodin. On one of these, a naked girl is pictured, kneeling on a prayer bench. The etching has been printed in two stages. For the second stage, the etching plate has been sawn out around the girl, causing a grey toned background to emerge when printing.



M. Duchamp, *The Bride stripped bare*, 1968 (from A. Schwarz, *The complete works of Marcel Duchamp* 2000).

In that contrast, the white paper surrounding the girl on the prayer bench gets the appearance of a bridal gown and a tulle bridal veil. This is also the instruction on the etching plate: as a *voile de mariée*. "The Bride has finally been stripped bare here," said Duchamp according to Schwarz, when he looked at the etching proofs (Schwarz 2000, 880). Given her tender age, however, this does not concern a young woman, but a girl receiving her first communion. On that occasion, after all, girls are also dressed as brides. In Duchamp's youth, that religious celebration occurred at the age of 12.¹⁰ That comparison of a 12-year-old communicant with an adult bride can also be found in an etching that Duchamp made in 1909 on the occasion of the first communion of his second cousin Simone Delacour. On that picture she looks, dressed in a white bridal/communion gown, to a cart pulled by two horses. However, they are rocking horses and the cart is a pram. On it rests a chest with her attire, stamped with her initials S.D.. It could be a cartoon, such as Duchamp made at that time for *Le Rire*.¹¹

Peeping Tom

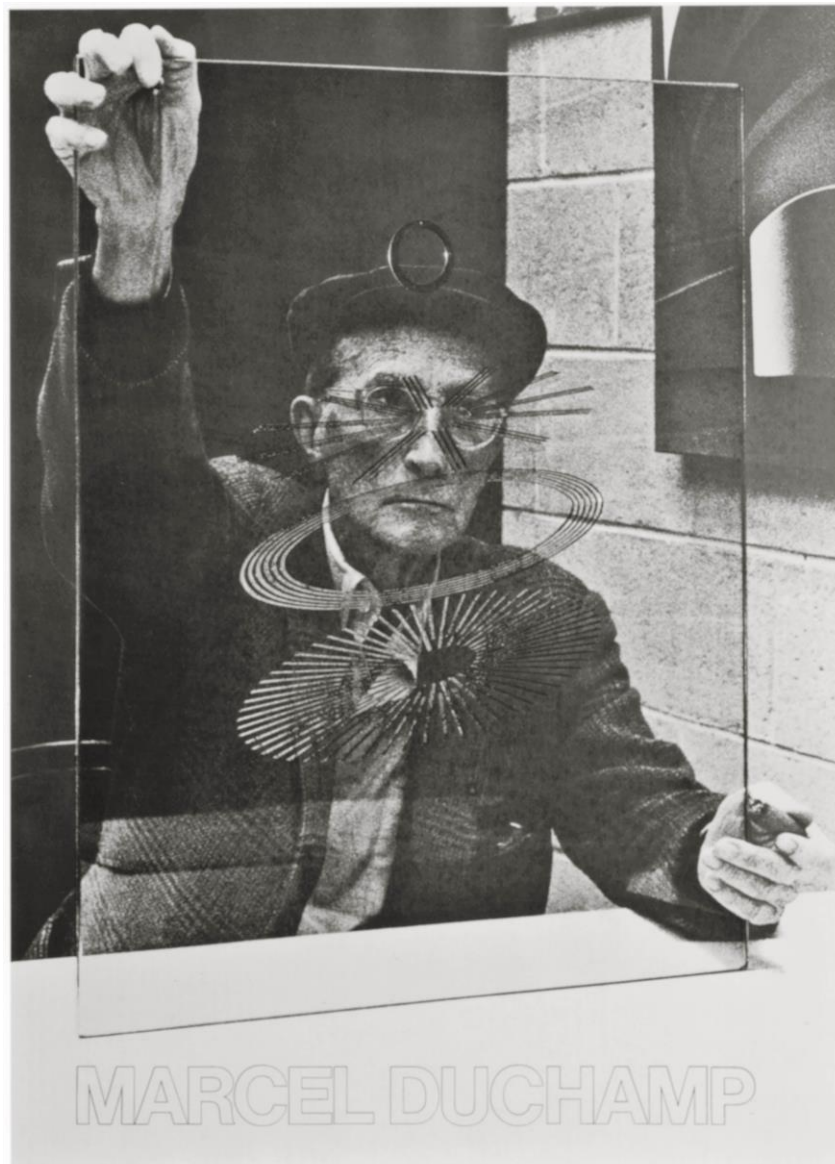
Through Lebel, Duchamp and his wife Alexina met the psychoanalyst Lacan who they dined with on September 21, 1958 and where they could see

Courbet's *L'Origine du monde* (Marcade 2007, 440 and 443). Lacan's wife commissioned a chastened version that could be placed in front of the original to be spared the looks of the cleaning lady and the neighbours. According to Marcadé, that could have been the motivation behind the idea of the door with the peep holes in *Given...*¹². A counter argument against that suggestion may be that Duchamp only placed the door four or five years later. I prefer to view it as a reference to a traditional wedding custom in the French countryside that also involves a shamelessly peeping eye. After the feast, the unmarried boys and girls (*les célibataires*) went looking for the young couple that had secretly retired earlier. When they found them, they would break into the bedroom with a chamber pot sold especially for this purpose. On the outside, it features in ornamental letters the command: *à la mariée*, (for the bride). On the bottom, a lifelike eye is painted.



Wedding chamber pot (collection Bert Jansen).

After his death, Duchamp turned out to have given a hint about his posthumous peep show in a photograph. After he had signed *Given...* and had arranged its transfer via Copley to the museum, he left for London to assist Hamilton with the layout of the retrospective *The Almost Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp* that opened in June 1966. Hamilton had created a copy of *the Large Glass* that Duchamp signed as *copy conform*. In addition, Hamilton had made an edition of the passage of the *Oculist Witnesses* where the Bachelors enter the realm of the Bride. On a photograph of Hamilton from 1966, Duchamp holds such a glass plate in front of his face, looking through the circle in the centre. After the publication of *Given...*, it became clear what Duchamp intended with that pose. Hamilton adapted the photograph in 1970 to a poster and published it under the title *The Oculist Witness*.



R. Hamilton, *The oculist witness*, 1968 (from exh. cat. *Inventing Marcel Duchamp*, 2009).

NOTES

1. On the corrections by Apollinaire see: Apollinaire 1980.
2. A comprehensive commentary on *Alcools* can be found in: Décaudin 1993 and Divis 1966, 106-107.
3. The second set of proofs is dated October 8, 1912 (Apollinaire 1980, note 16, 18-19).
4. Ajoutons, pour dire le vrai, qu'au point où il en est aujourd'hui [aut. 1912] l'art de Duchamp, de Picabia (cubisme instinctif) où ces peintres ne donnent que le simulacre du mouvement et qui pourrait être considéré comme tendant au symbolisme de la mobilité, n'a pas encore eu une signification plastique bien déterminée (Apollinaire 1980, note 7, 140).
5. Picabia s'adonnait, en même temps que Marcel Duchamp, à un art que n'enferme plus aucune règle (Apollinaire 1980, 265).

6. Correspondence Jacques Caumont to me. I myself have proposed views on Lake Geneva as a possible inspiration of the high position of the Bride in *the Large Glass* in Jansen 1996.
7. I follow Schwarz's dating. Nesbit/Sawelson-Gorse date the readymade of the chimney cowl a year later, because Duchamp did not mention it in his letter to his sister in January 1916, in which he does mention the snow shovel (Nesbit/Sawelson-Gorse 1995, 152, note 48).
8. That etching functioned as an illustration for a book of poetry with four poems by Pierre de Massot.
9. The arm that holds the lamp is a casting of the arm of Duchamp's later wife Alexina Sattler whom he would marry in 1954.
10. The institution of receiving the first communion at the current age of six or seven was determined by Pope Pius X in 1910.
11. This link to the Bride in *the Large Glass* is also established by Schwarz whereby he points out that the initials of Simone Delacour match those of his sister Suzanne Duchamp (Schwarz 2000, 880).
12. The position of the viewer in front of the naked woman is reminiscent of an illustration by Dürer, which shows how a painter portrays a nude model in perspective on a screened surface. That illustration could be seen in Munich at the time of Duchamp's stay in 1912 as demonstrated by Herz 2013, 224.

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