

7.4.1917

Tuesday at seven he would come on Thursday at two, but Bergmann had understood the opposite. Instead of spending the afternoon drawing, he willingly accompanies Duchamp to the Panthéon, which is within walking distance from his hotel. After a tour of this grand building decorated, notably, with scenes from the life of Sainte Geneviève by Puvion de Chavannes, and which shelters in its crypt the tombs of certain illustrious Frenchmen including, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Voltaire, Victor Hugo, and Emile Zola, they take an omnibus across the city to the Parc Monceau.

Not far from this "Chinese Garden" with its "illusions" and many architectural fantasies, is the Musée Cernuschi, 7 Avenue Velázquez, devoted to Chinese arts, which they also visit.

1917. Saturday, New York City

While Marcel is hanging the Independent Artists' exhibition at the Grand Central Palace, Beatrice Wood and Roché work until late at night in his studio. It is they who are producing the bulletin [193.1917] for the exhibition entitled *The Blind Man*, which comprises their texts and one by Mina Loy. An old friend of Roché's, the American cartoonist Alfred J. Frueh has made a drawing for the cover.

1918. Sunday, New York City

In the evening Marcel, the Arensbergs and another friend are invited to Mary Sturges' apartment where they join Yvonne Chastel, Alissa Franc and Roché. Dining together nearby, everybody starts with two cocktails and they return to Mary's afterwards.

1926. Wednesday, Paris

When he saw Francis Picabia's collage of feathers, macaroni, cane and corn plasters entitled *Phones* at the Hôtel Itria on 23 March, Jacques Doucet decided to purchase it. The restoration to the picture has now been attended to and Duchamp sends a telegram to Doucet in Avenue du Bois: "Macaroni repaired is ready for Thursday will write affectionately Duchamp."

1930. Monday, New York City

With consent obtained by Jacques Seligmann from Duchamp himself in Paris [31.3.1930], Walter Arensberg lends *Nu descendant un Escalier*, No.2 [183.1912] to the exhibition "Cubism 1910-1913" at Seligmann's premises,

3 East 51st Street, which have been re-named the de Hauke Galleries for the occasion. The exhibition comprises important pictures by Picasso, Braque, Léger, Juan Gris, de La Fresnaye, Gleizes, Metzinger, Marcoussis and Jacques Villon. Maurice Raynal [9.10.1912] has written the preface to the catalogue.

1943. Wednesday, New York City

Invited for one o'clock Marcel, who is still living at 56 Seventh Avenue [2.10.1942], lunches at the Kieslers with André Breton.

1946. Sunday, New York City

The painter Arshile Gorky invites Duchamp and the Kieslers to dinner.

1949. Thursday, San Francisco

At eight o'clock with the other participants of the "Western Round Table on Modern Art", Duchamp attends an informal stag dinner, presided over by Henry F. Swift, held at the Family Club, 545 Powell Street. At the dinner Duchamp is seated next to one of the panelists, the anthropologist Gregory Bateson.

1953. Tuesday, New York City

Catching up on correspondence, Duchamp writes three letters destined for Paris.

"Two words only of great pleasure to have dipped into your book," writes Duchamp to Marcel Jean, who has sent him the first chapters [14.7.1952] including the one on himself. "I am waiting to have dissected it carefully to give you a report of my reading."

Replying to the first of Robert Lebel's two "serious" matters – which of his works should be reproduced in the forthcoming publication *Le Premier Bilan de l'Art actuel* – Duchamp says that if Lebel finds 9 *Moules Mâlic* [19.1.1915], belonging to Roché "photogenic", this would be his choice rather than *A propos de jeune Sœur* [2.4.1915]. The important news that Lebel has been commissioned to write Duchamp's biography is the second "serious" matter: may he, like Marcel Jean, address a questionnaire to him? And what would Duchamp's reaction be to publishing, at the same time, a complete catalogue of his work?

Repeating his instructions [10.3.1953] for strengthening 9 *Moules Mâlic*, Marcel explains

to Roché that the small glass, *A regarder d'un Œil, de près, pendant presque une Heure* [4.4.1919], was successfully repaired with an invisible glue. "If the glass must travel, it is essential that it arrives in perfect shape 'for centuries to come'."

1954. Wednesday, New York City

After his visit to Philadelphia on Monday Duchamp writes suggesting to Henri Marceau that the Large Glass should not be positioned exactly in the middle of the gallery but nearer the windows. He draws a sketch plan and offers, as soon as they have found another aluminium pillar, to return to the museum and assist with the exact positioning of the Glass.

As requested Duchamp also sends Marceau a photograph of how the Large Glass was installed at Milford, drawing attention to the way it is framed.

1956. Saturday, New York City

Duchamp has learned from Robert Lebel that customs clearance of items for the standard version of the *Boîte-en-Valise*, which he thought had been obtained in December [5.12.1955] following the intervention of M. Jean Adhémar [20.10.1955], has not yet been obtained. As a last resort, Lebel and Lefebvre-Foinet envisage redirecting the shipment to Switzerland and bringing the items back into France as samples in small parcels. Duchamp replies thanking Lebel for giving him some hope to seeing an end to this "unbounded idiocy".



Referring to Lebel's comment that André Breton's new review with a Duchampian title is progressing slowly behind the cover featuring *Feuille de Vigne femelle* [12.3.1951], Duchamp closes his letter with the exclamation: "Vive le surréalisme, même!"

7-8 APRIL



8.4.1926

1959. Tuesday, New York City
"The deed is done," writes Marcel to Lebel, exactly six years since the project for the biography and catalogue began [7.4.1953]. Fawcus is due to sign a contract with Grove Press the following day for the American edition of 2,500 copies to be published in September. Following Lebel's advice, Marcel agrees that, for the presentation of *Sur Marcel Duchamp* (the French edition) at the Galerie La Hune in May, he will only exhibit drawings.

1966. Thursday, New York City
"Many thanks for the photo of your beautiful work in progress," writes Marcel to Richard Hamilton, who has almost completed the replica [16.2.1965] of the Large Glass. "Happy to see it in the last stages already!"

Replying to Richard's queries regarding loans to the exhibition at the Tate Gallery, Marcel has telephoned Andrew Ritchie at Yale University and has spoken to George Heard Hamilton, curator of the Société Anonyme Collection, to pave the way for an agreement to lend *Tu m'* [8.7.1918], which poses transport difficulties on account of its protruding bottle brush.

Marcel doesn't consider he would be successful in obtaining *Le Roi et la Reine entourés de Nus vites* [9.10.1912], from the Philadelphia Museum of Art because the painting is in very poor condition, but he may try for the *Broyeuse de Chocolat*, No.2 [8.3.1915]. He suggests leaving out *Nu descendant un Escalier*, No.3 [29.4.1919], which is the photographic copy he retouched.

Although he is not in favour of the glass, *A regarder d'un Œil, de près, pendant presque une Heure* [4.4.1919], travelling from the Museum of Modern Art, he will speak to Dorothy Miller about the canvas *Le Passage de la Vierge à la Mariée* [7.8.1912].

As for 3 *Stoppages Etalon* [19.5.1914], there is a copy in Mary Sisler's collection, and he promises to follow up Breton and Lebel by writing to the latter.

"On the other side of the picture," Marcel asks Richard whether he thinks, "it would be a good idea to invite to the dinner on 16 or 20 June Mr and Mrs Arne Ekstrom and George and Mrs Hamilton - they seem to want to come."

8 April



1917. Easter Day, New York City
Taking a break from the task of hanging the show at the Grand Central Palace, Duchamp lunches with Walter Pach, Arnold Friedman, Walter Arensberg and Beatrice Wood. During the day, Roché calls by to look at the exhibition and admires the three paintings by Bea.

1920. Thursday, New York City
Although the Société Anonyme is not yet formed legally, its first exhibition is due to open at 19 East 47th Street on 30 April. With Miss Dreier, Duchamp is organizing a continuous programme of exhibitions changing every six weeks. Already looking ahead to the autumn, Duchamp drafts a letter to Archipenko, whom Miss Dreier met on her last visit to Paris [11.11.1919], inviting him to exhibit a group of his work in October.

On behalf of Miss Dreier, Duchamp explains to Archipenko that the intention is to show contemporary art, particularly work not seen in commercial galleries, but in a non-commercial context. Sales will take place directly between the artist and the buyer, or through the main dealers in New York. With a plan of the gallery, Archipenko can choose what he wants to send and even decide how he wants his sculpture installed. In order to avoid tax levied on the sculpture, Archipenko should contact C.B. Richards & Co. to organize the transport and insurance which will be paid for when the shipment arrives in New York. Correspondence is slow but Miss Dreier hopes to have an early, favourable reply together with a short introductory biographical notice. Duchamp himself adds a personal postscript: "Dear Archipenko, do make this shipment. New York needs to see what you have done these last years and many people here would be very happy to be able to appreciate them."

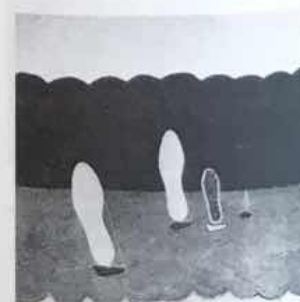
1926. Thursday, Paris
"I hope that feathers and macaroni have arrived safely," writes Duchamp to Jacques Doucet. He tells the collector that in the auction on 8 March



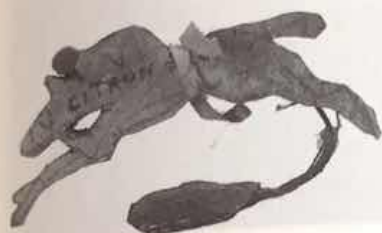
two other works by Francis Picabia, "not at all in the same vein," were acquired by Tristan Tzara and the Galerie Pierre. There is also a portrait of a man on exhibition in Dresden and another due back from America.



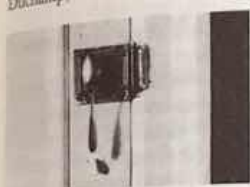
Duchamp himself has kept three Picabias: *Retour des Barques*, a collage of shoe soles and stretcher wedges; *Midi - Promenade des Anglais*, a landscape of feathers, macaroni and leather [21.3.1926]; and *Femme aux Allumettes*, a female portrait made with a variety of small objects including matchsticks, coins and hair-pins. "My intention," he tells Doucet, "is not to sell mine except in conditions guaranteeing the precious side of these things."



1949. Friday, San Francisco
A special exhibition of Modern Art, which includes the famous *Nu descendant un Escalier*, No.2 [18.3.1912], has been arranged.



extending from and adding leverage to the knob of the lock is an ordinary teaspoon. He fingers it appreciatively. "There," says Duchamp, "isn't that art?"



1963. Monday, New York City

Having accepted an invitation to stay with the Baruschellos on 20 May [30.3.1963] at the beginning of a holiday in Italy, Duchamp thanks his young Italian friends for thinking of their return to Rome from Palermo on 10 June. As they plan to go by train to Florence the following day Duchamp suggests: "It seems simpler to me to go to a hotel rather than bother you."

1967. Saturday, Neuilly-sur-Seine

In the morning Duchamp immediately answers a letter from Mlle Popovitch confirming his preferred wording for the cover of the catalogue, "Les Duchamps..." followed by the name of each sibling. He has seen Mourlot, who will bring him a set of proofs and he hopes that the covers will be in Rouen before he himself arrives on Wednesday morning.

9 April



1910. Saturday, Paris

Two of Duchamp's cartoons appear in the press this morning. *Triplepatte*, the drawing which Bergmann probably posed for [25.3.1910], is published full-page in *Le Courrier Français*. A young couple in a hallway are about to embrace: the girl, struggling to disrobe, complains: "Help me then to take off my jacket," and the young man mutters, "There's no doubt I shall never know just when one should embrace women."

In the same issue there happens to be another "three-handed" phenomenon: a drawing of Boronali painting with his tail [1.4.1910] by Widhopff!



The other drawing by Duchamp, for which he was never paid, appears in Paul Iribe's review, *Le Témoin*. A sophisticated couple is sitting at a table, the man in evening dress leans back with a broad smile, a lighted cigar in his hand, "Sorry: there's no idiotic *métier*..." he replies to the girl who has enquired whether he is a Jew.



In the afternoon Max Bergmann, alias Triplepatte, calls to see Duchamp at Neuilly and stays to supper. In the evening, with Duchamp's friends, they play "petits chevaux", a game with dice for which Duchamp himself has made some of the horses and painted the cloth, based on the steeplechase course at Auteuil. Bergmann wins 25 francs and then loses 1.50. At about midnight they walk from Rue Amiral-de-Joinville as far as the Porte Maillot, where Bergmann takes the metro home.

In Rouen the Société des Artistes Rouennais opens its fourth exhibition at the Musée des Beaux-Arts. Duchamp, "so timid previously," disturbs the critics with his *Etude de Nu* (possibly one of those exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants [18.3.1910]?). Although the drawing of the woman's torso is "pure, the colour spoils everything", writes one critic, commenting that "wine rather than blood" must be running in the model's veins.

1917. Monday, New York City

The discord amongst the officers and directors of the Society of Independent Artists [5.12.1916] dominates the atmosphere at the Grand Central Palace until the opening hour of the exhibition. The subject of the dispute is *Fountain*, the entry sent by Richard Mutt from Philadelphia, who has paid his \$6 membership fee and has the right to exhibit. Its defenders maintain that there is nothing immoral in the sculpture and to refuse it would be against the very principles upon which the exhibition has been organized: "No jury, no prizes." Its



detractors led by William Glackens, president of the society, who considers it the product of "suppressed adolescence", believe the object to be indecent and certainly not a work of art. Reminded of the cartoon strip characters Mutt and Jeff, George Bellows suspects that someone has sent it as a joke.

Standing on the top of a black pedestal, the smooth and shiny white enamel form causing all the argument is none other than a male urinal turned on its back.

Finally a meeting is called of those directors who can be mustered at short notice. Mutt's defenders are voted down by a small margin and *Fountain*, say the majority in their statement released to the Press, "may be a very useful object in its place, but its place is not in an art exhibition, and it is, by no definition, a work of art."

No doubt finding a disturbing parallel with the refusal by the "orthodox" Cubists of his *Nu descendant un Escalier* [18.3.1912] from the Parisian Salon des Indépendants in 1912, Duchamp immediately resigns from the Society in protest.

In spite of the drama during the day, the private view in the evening is "gorgeous and gay" according to the critic Henry McBride. Mrs Whitney heads the reception committee and a brass band plays while the guests await the arrival of the mayor, who never turns up. Finding that the show has the look of a real salon, McBride is complimentary about the way the space has been used, the hefty pillars reduced in volume by the astute placing of the partitions. He compares the scene to the foyer of the Opéra in Paris on a Ballets Russes night.

Duchamp's idea for hanging the show in alphabetical order presents a challenge and it is generally heavily criticized. McBride finds his way in easily enough to peruse the 2,500 works, which he estimates the proportion of inoffensive to offensive (meant in the complimentary sense) as being about ten to one, but has difficulty finding his way out. He makes four unsuccessful circuits of the labyrinth and each time he goes round he bumps into the poet and pugilist, Arthur Craven who is billed to give a lecture in the exhibition on 19 April.

"I am glad I do not owe you money," declares the poet to the critic, "What an awful



9.4.1949

place this would be to escape from a creditor. When you turn these corners you don't know what you're getting into!"

Duchamp's apparently fortuitous hanging arrangements result in what Arensberg describes as "the beauty of chaos". There is an eclipse of the European "stars", such as Matisse, Derain, Delaunay, Picasso, Picabia and Gleizes, their dispersion rendering them totally defenceless, while the crowds are fascinated by the sultry and bespangled nude painted by George E. Lothrop, which completely overshadows Mina Loy's entry hung next to it. One of Beatrice Wood's contributions, *Un peu d'eau dans du savon*, fabricated under Marcel's tutelage in his studio, with its real bar of soap in the form of a scallop shell nailed strategically to the canvas is a hit. Gentlemen leave their calling cards wedged into the frame. Another great attraction and one of the finds of the show according to Duchamp, is the *Claire Twins* by Miss Dorothy Rice. Everyone laughs when they see this bold painting of two creatures resembling pantomime dames but they admire it. Even Marius de Zayas of the Modern Gallery is glued to the floor in front of it.

Duchamp is alone in considering that the other discovery of the show is *Supplication* by Louis Filshemius. It was "one of the thousand or two paintings" that McBride "merely glanced at in passing", but Duchamp has shaken his judgment and he agrees to look at the canvas again.

The only person who notices a picture, ex-catalogue, purporting to be Duchamp's contribution, is the journalist Jane Dixon. Referring to *Tulip Hysteria Co-ordinating*, whose very title evokes a climactic movement of the tumultuous can-can, she declared: "Those were the most hysterical tulips I ever saw in my life. So hysterical were they that every vestige of resemblance to their former symmetrical selves had been lost and they were merely lurid splotches of colour running wild all over the canvas."

1918. Tuesday, New York City
The news from France is that Paris was bombarded the previous day by Big Bertha.

After attending a concert of Mexican songs at the Aeolian Hall and dinner, Roché visits Marcel at his studio and they spend the rest of the evening at Yvonne Chastel's with Mary Sturges.



9.4.1950

1937. Friday, Paris

In his sixth contribution to *Ce Soir*, as well as giving news of tournaments in Berlin and Leningrad, Duchamp presents his readers with the chess problem which won the *Arbeider Magasin* competition in 1936, and publishes the astonishing game which Dr Alekhine lost against the young English amateur, V. Buerger, in the present international tournament at Margate.

1949. Saturday, San Francisco

On the second day of the "Western Round Table on Modern Art", the subject of the closed session, which starts at one o'clock in the Members' Room, is why people collect and why museums organize exhibitions.

After returning to the question of retinal art, which he introduced in the first session, Duchamp becomes the focus of an attack by Frank Lloyd Wright, who doesn't believe that Duchamp still regards *Nu descendant un escalier*, No.2 [18.3.1912] as "a great picture".

"I beg your pardon, sir," replies Duchamp, calmly defending his painting. "On the other hand," he points out, "forty years have gone by, and Time, after all, is an important factor in the decision whether a thing is good or bad."

Wright admits that when he made his first architecture he didn't know whether it was going to be good or not and was "learning to walk".

"So was I," comments Duchamp.

"Now that you walk, Marcel Duchamp, do you still regard it as a great picture?" persists Wright.

"More so," says Duchamp firmly.

Making a general attack, Wright refers to Picasso's inspiration from Negro sculpture and says that "...If Picasso is a great artist - that degeneracy does loom..."

"Why do you call it degeneracy," asks Duchamp. "The artist seeks in the primitive what might be good to take."

"And healthy," interjects Milhaud.

"Would you say that homosexuality was degenerate?" challenges Wright.

"No... I believe that the homosexual public has shown more interest or curiosity for Modern Art [than] the heterosexual," replies Duchamp, "so it happened, but it does not involve modern art itself."

Later Duchamp declares: "The word 'forward' implies the acceptance of progress, and progress, of course, does not exist in art that I

know of. There is no progress in art.

Wright doesn't agree, arguing that Duchamp has left out the factor of changed circumstances: "The way we live today compared with the way that same age lived."

"That doesn't apply to the aesthetic emotion," says Duchamp.

Boas then gives Duchamp the opportunity to repeat his ideas expressed the previous day, which differentiate taste and the aesthetic echo. In conclusion Duchamp says: "Generally speaking, very few people are capable of an aesthetic emotion or an aesthetic echo. While many people have taste, only a few are equipped with aesthetic receptivity."

"Does that mean that taste really represents the accumulated or established standards of the period...?" enquires Ritchie.

"Yes," replies Duchamp.

If Duchamp is right "that it is only possible for the great mass of people to follow established opinions", argues Ritchie, then "we may be... on the wrong track altogether in having museums..."

Goldwater wonders how the observer makes the jump from the beginning of education in the museum to the appreciation of the aesthetic echo.

"Well, you have it, or you don't have it," says Duchamp. "I am not a mathematician, and I would never dream of understanding mathematics or think mathematics, because I have not the natural tools for it. Neither, I think, has the layman the tools for art. Only a few people are privileged and their group form the third term of a trinity: artist, work of art, recognition."

"Nevertheless, you would have the privilege, if you so desire, of education in mathematics," observes Goldwater.

"Never," insists Duchamp, "if you haven't the brains for it."

When Ritchie asks Duchamp to define the relation between feeling and taste, Boas proposes he does it by way of an example.

"The absence of an aesthetic echo in many people is best illustrated by colour blindness," suggests Duchamp. "A man who is colour blind will never dream of a red or a green or anything like that. It's the same kind of physical deficiency."

Towards the end of the three-hour session, Boas asks whether Modern Art contains a sense of meaning that can be understood by the onlooker.

10-11 APRIL



11.4.1906

her and may be disposed of as she pleases [5.2.1953]. As she will be returning to New York around 21 April, Duchamp offers to discuss the matter with her then.

1957. Wednesday, Mexico City

On receiving a letter from Louis Carré sent to him care of Rufino Tamayo [6.4.1957], Duchamp immediately forwards the information about *Le Grand Cheval* and Maggy to Katharine Kuh at the Art Institute of Chicago, and adds: "After enjoying Houston we are éblouis by Mexico."

1960. Sunday, New York City

Before leaving for Atlanta, Duchamp writes a note to Leon Kroll confirming that Kroll should contact Alfred Barr about the loan of *Le Passage de la Vierge à la Mariée* [7.8.1912] for exhibition at the National Institute of Arts and Letters [8.2.1960].

The guests of honour at a reception held at four-thirty at the Atlanta Art Association are the judges of the Painting-of-the-Year contest Dr William M. Milliken, director emeritus of the Cleveland Museum of Art (whom Duchamp last met twenty-four years earlier [26.8.1936]), Dr Russell A. Plimpton, director of the Society of the Four Arts, Palm Beach and Duchamp himself. The judges' task has not yet commenced, but they have been invited to attend the presentation of a scholarship award which is presented by Arthur Harris, vice-president of Mead Packaging Inc., to Conroy Hudlow of Chattanooga, Tennessee, a third-year art student at the Atlanta Art Institute. He will receive a year's study in Paris and in exchange a French art student will be given a year's study at the Atlanta Art Institute. After the ceremony tea is served.

1961. Monday, New York City

Instead of going to Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts to give a talk, Marcel (whose back is much better) "is sitting peacefully at home". The cable chess game against the young Dutch players, organized by the Stedelijk Museum [11.3.1961], is still going on. "It makes our nights endless," says Teeny, "and it becomes too engrossing to be real fun."

1965. Saturday, New York City

From Cordier & Ekstrom, where the exhibition is to be held, Duchamp writes inviting a num-

ber of artists to take part in a show next spring for the benefit of the American Chess Foundation. "The show of about thirty works will be called CHESS," explains Duchamp, "and each work should be related to chess in a manner as close or as far-fetched as you wish..."

Each artist taking part will receive a copy of the etching, personally inscribed, which Duchamp is making exclusively for the occasion.

1967. Monday, Neuilly-sur-Seine

For a show of readymades at the Galerie Givaudan to run concurrently with the exhibition at the Musée d'Art Moderne planned in June, Marcel writes to ask Arne Ekstrom if he will lend him the original photograph taken in his New York studio [8.7.1918] of the shadows cast by the readymades, which was shown at the Tate Gallery, so that he can have an enlargement made to exhibit.

The interview which Duchamp accorded to Jeanne Siegel in February, is broadcast in New York on WBAI as part of a series "Great Artists in America Today".

11 April

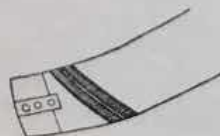


1899. Tuesday, Rouen

The new President of the Republic, Emile Loubet, who was elected following the death of M. Félix Faure, has accorded a day's holiday to all the school children in France and so the beginning of the summer term at the Lycée Corneille is delayed 24 hours. Like his fellow boarders, Duchamp returns to the Ecole Bossuet in the evening; M. Ligeret's class at the Lycée Corneille commences at eight o'clock the following morning.

1906. Wednesday, Eu

After six months service with the 39ème Régiment d'Infanterie at their barracks in Eu - the



Norman town rescued from insignificance by the popular song *Le Maire d'Eu* - Duchamp is promoted to the rank of corporal.

1917. Wednesday, New York City

In a carefully worded and neatly handwritten note, Duchamp writes to Miss Dreier regretting that because of his resignation [9.4.1917] from the board of directors of the Society of Independent Artists, on account of "serious disagreement with the ruling spirit", he has been unable to help her decorate the tearoom at the Grand Central Palace as he had originally promised.

In a much hastier letter he asks his sister Suzanne to relay the anecdote to the family in this way: "The Independents have opened here with great success. A friend of mine, using a masculine pseudonym, Richard Murt, sent a urinal in porcelain as a piece of sculpture. It wasn't at all indecent - no reason to reject it. The committee decided to refuse to exhibit this thing. I resigned and it's a row which will count in New York." He adds that he wanted to make an exhibition of rejects from the Independents but that would have been a pleonasm and the urinal would have been lonely.

1936. Saturday, Paris

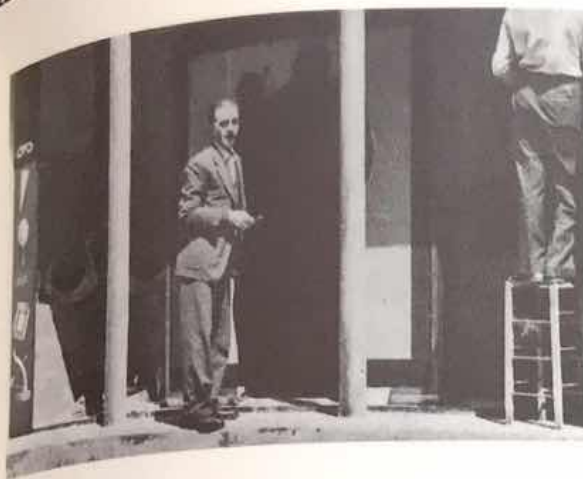
At twelve-fifteen, Marcel has an appointment at Arago to meet Breton and his wife Jacqueline. Roché shows them the works by Duchamp, Brancusi, Picabia and Calder which he is proposing to lend to the Surrealist exhibition opening in London on 11 June.

1941. Friday, Paris

Having a great deal to do before his imminent departure for Grenoble via Lyons, Duchamp writes a note to Georges Hugnet: "Mary [Reynolds] asks you to postpone this afternoon's appointment until next week... so telephone her one day (morning) and arrange something."

1952. Friday, New York City

Deciding to wait before exhibiting his early paintings [23.1.1950] (due to his unwillingness to show them out of context or to put them on the market), Marcel asks Roché to stop all his efforts in this respect. He says: "The sales game is really a dealers' game and neither you or me know how to do it. The buyers of my paintings in the past," Marcel points out, "have always disregarded the dealers' skilful denigration."



19.4.1901

At this attractive spa where they are staying a week, Teeny is taking baths for her sciatica. Next week Mimi Fogt will accompany them for two days to Oaxaca, an old colonial town with a colourful market and the birthplace of Rufino Tamayo. After returning to Mexico City for a few days, the Duchamps then plan to visit the Yucatan before flying from Mérida to New York via New Orleans.

1958. Friday, New York City
Lily and Marcel Jean return to 327 East 58th Street [12.4.1958] for about a week before going to stay with Kay Boyle.

1963. Thursday, New York City
With Teeny and a group from Philadelphia, Duchamp makes a tour of the "50th Anniversary of the Armory Show" [5.4.1963].

19 April



1901. Friday, Blainville-Crevon
Behind the Duchamps' house to the west the ground slopes away and a stony path meanders down the length of the garden, which is bordered on the south by a long, steep bank of trees and on the north by the River Crevon. On the trunk of one of the beeches planted at the top of the bank some distance from the house, Marcel meticulously carves his name and the date.



1917. Thursday, New York City
With the intention of enlivening the programme of events organized by the Society of Independent Artists during its first exhibition [9.4.1917], Francis Picabia and Duchamp have invited Arthur Cravan, an improbable Englishman proud of his uncle Oscar Wilde, to give a



lecture on "The Independent Artists in France and America". The name of this astonishing personality, announced to the unsuspecting American public as director of the Parisian revue *Maintenant*, poet, French amateur boxing champion and art critic, is already causing a stir in the city. He is an awesome but gentle giant over six feet tall, with a powerful, well-proportioned body and handsome head. Francis and Marcel, remembering Cravan's scurrilous review of the French Independents show in 1914 (pronouncing Metzinger a failure, Gleizes without talent, Suzanne Valadon an old bitch, and declaring that Marie Laurencin needed a good spanking, etc. etc.), are counting on him not to pull his punches in New York.

At three o'clock in stifling heat on the mezzanine floor of the Grand Central Palace, half Greenwich Village awaits the event. Cravan is late. When eventually he arrives with his seconds, he staggers through the very smart crowd to the podium where he sways vertiginously, silently. The expectant intelligentsia holds its breath while Cravan stares happily. He lists dangerously, then suddenly strikes the lectern with such tremendous force the sound of the blow resounds in Lexington Avenue. The smile returns to Cravan's lips and, oblivious to the peril of the Sterner painting hanging behind him,

starts gesticulating wildly. He decides to remove his jacket. The puzzled audience remains indulgent at the prospect of the orator's first utterance. Cravan however is concentrating on unbuttoning his waistcoat. When he is free of his waistcoat he detaches his collar and then he ties a handkerchief round his neck. Without uttering a sound his next gesture is to slip the silk braces from his shoulders. Interrupting the adjustments to his appearance, Cravan concentrates his gaze to the wall across the room. By now the *Who's Who*-er than ever crowd is murmuring uneasily but everyone turns inquisitively to find out what has attracted his attention. It is a painting in the exhibition representing a very beautiful, almost naked woman. Still mesmerized by the picture, Cravan leans forward across the lectern and with the loudest cry he can muster hurls one of the most insulting obscenities in the English language at the audience. To prevent the situation from deteriorating any further, almost instantaneously a few exhibition guards – no doubt under instructions from the organizers – encircle Cravan from behind and handcuff him, but not without some difficulty and damage to their uniforms. In the uproar, Cravan is hustled out by the entrance on 46th Street and driven away in a waiting car.



At the Arensbergs later in the evening, Marcel beams with pleasure and exclaims: "What a wonderful lecture!"

Alfred Stieglitz writes inviting Henry McBride to call at 291: "I have, at the request of Roché, Covert [5.12.1916], Miss Wood, Duchamp and Co., photographed the rejected *Fountain* [9.4.1917]... It will amuse you to see it. The *Fountain* is there too."

TALE BY ERIK SATIE

I had once a marble staircase which was so beautiful, so beautiful, that I had it stuffed and used only my window for getting in and out.

*Elle avait des yeux sans tain
Et pour que ça n'se voie pas
Elle avait mis par-dessus
Des lunettes a verres d'ecaille.*

S. T., E. K.



1917. Saturday, New York City

The second number of the *Blind Man* is published today by P.B.T. [27.4.1917]. The contents include Mina Loy's interview with Duchamp's discovery, Louis Eilshemius [9.4.1917], letters of encouragement from Frank Crowninshield, editor of *Vanity Fair*, and Alfred Stieglitz, poems by Walter Arensberg, Francis Picabia, Charles Demuth, Charles Duncan [8.10.1916] and Frances Simpson Stevens, an article on Marie Laurencin by Gabrielle Buffet, a drawing by Clara Tice [20.4.1917], and a short contribution by Erik Satie.

The burning issue, however, addressed bluntly and firmly in the guise of an editorial, is "The Richard Mutt Case". How could Mr Mutt's fountain be refused exhibition on the grounds of immorality or vulgarity when it is commonly displayed in plumbers' showrooms? It cannot be a plagiarism, because Mr Mutt chose it, gave it a new title and in doing so, gave it a new thought, thus removing its utilitarian significance. To refuse it as a "plain piece of plumbing", the editorial concludes, is absurd: "The only works of art America has given are her plumbing and her bridges."

Louise Norton discusses the case of *Fountain* [9.4.1917] in social and philosophical terms under the "neutral" but "perversely" penned title of her article "Buddha of the Bathroom". Citing Remy de Gourmont's essay *La Dissociation des Idées*, she points out how sacred is the marriage of ideas we inherit and that, in accepting them without question, "our eyes are not our own." How valuable it would have been for Art itself if *Fountain* had been exhibited and installed with on one side an established masterpiece from the past, and on the other side "almost any one of the majority of pictures now blushing along the miles of wall in the Grand Central Palace..." To reply to the critics who say that if the object is Art, it cannot be Mr Mutt's because he didn't make it, Louise Norton declares that: "*Fountain* was not made by a plumber but by the force of an imagination," and it is this, above all, that has caused the commotion. To the question, "Is he serious or is he joking?" she suggests that "perhaps he is both!" and that the spectator must judge. After all, isn't there a certain bitter irony for the artist to observe the hypocrisy in this "over-institutionalized world" which at the

same time worships "Progress, Speed and Efficiency" rather "like a little dog chasing after its own wagging tail that has dazzled him"?

To illustrate "The Richard Mutt Case", Alfred Stieglitz photographed *Fountain* at his gallery [19.4.1917]. By choosing his angle carefully and casting a veil-like shadow on its form, Stieglitz emphasized the Buddha or madonna aspects of the offending object. For the background he chose a canvas by Marsden Hartley, *The Warriors*, the central form of which is curiously similar to that of the porcelain silhouette.

One of the readers of the *Blind Man*, Marcel Douxami, a mining engineer serving in the auxiliary services of the French army, who is on mission in New Brunswick, loses no time to write to the editors. He has also received a set of 391, Picabia's rival magazine, published in Barcelona [4.4.1917], and is seriously rattled. Picabia in particular has irritated him. Is it really the painter or an impostor? If anyone can solve the urinal dilemma, it is surely Louise Norton, although she will probably need to call Bergson to her rescue.

The thesis of Max Goth, the philosopher of 391, who divides the world into two spiritual families – the children of Adam, who believe in apparent and superficial realities, and the children of Abraham, who are concerned uniquely with essential and arcane realities – leaves Douxami perplexed. How can the mind of Abraham find anything in common between a flower and the combustion engine, a line and an idea, a colour and a memory, love and a chemical phenomenon, etc.?

Douxami thinks that Picabia would make a good industrial draughtsman, but his mechanical mind in the field of art is infuriating because there is nothing aesthetic in it. As for Picabia's poetry, it resembles the work of René Ghil, which he read in the madness of his youth, and American music... In listening to one or reading the other, Douxami is reminded of lines from Lord Byron's *Childe Harold*, which he quotes from memory scrambling the first two lines:

There is a pleasure on the lonely shore.
There is a rapture in the pathless woods.
There is society where none intrudes.

1936. Tuesday, Paris

"Can't arrive before 25," cables Dee to Miss Dreier at The Haven [21.4.1936], suggesting that Villon, who went to America on 15 April, could take the *Normandie* to return to France.

Since their meeting earlier in the year [19.1.1936], Duchamp has designed for Georges Hugnet the cover of his forthcoming book: *La Septième Face du Dé*. "I am seriously accelerating the printing of the cover," writes Duchamp to Hugnet. "The background colour will probably be printed Thursday evening. So if on Thursday you could give me the finished plate of the title, we will have the cage and the title printed on Friday and the embossing will be done on Monday."

1949. Thursday, New York City

The lectures by Miss Dreier [5.3.1948], James Johnson Sweeney and Naum Gabo delivered at Yale University under the auspices of the Thomas Rutherford Trowbridge Art Lecture Foundation are being published as a book, *Three Lectures on Modern Art*, by the Philosophical Library.

At Miss Dreier's request, Dee calls to see Mrs Rose Morse at the Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, to discuss the size of the book and the illustrations.

1959. Tuesday, Paris

Just a month after Sidney Janis' manifestation [6.4.1959], cocktails are served at the Galerie La Hune to celebrate the publication of the "de luxe" version of Robert Lebel's book *Sur Marcel Duchamp*, which is accompanied by a small exhibition of documents. The ordinary editions of the book, both in French and English, have yet to appear. For the little show Man Ray has provided a blow-up photograph of *Elevage de Poussière* [20.10.1920]. Just the previous day "on pilgrimage" to Perpignan, Duchamp signed a certain number of posters and posted them back to Paris.

1961. Friday, Philadelphia

After spending two days advising Henry Gardiner on the rehanging of the Arensberg Collection in the museum, Marcel returns to New York with Teeny.

1966. Thursday, Neuilly-sur-Seine

Although the Tate Gallery's retrospective exhi-

Marcel Duchamp
Work and Life

Ephemerides on and about
Marcel Duchamp and Rose Sélavy

1887–1968

edited and introduced by Pontus Hulten
texts by Jennifer Gough-Cooper and Jacques Caumont

The MIT Press
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Marcel Duchamp

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The MIT Press
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This exhibition devoted to Marcel Duchamp represents a link in the ongoing cultural itinerary which Palazzo Grassi has been following from the outset, offering a variety of themes spanning from archaeology, the Renaissance and Modern Art, to the contemporary masters. The scope of each exhibition has been to shed light on themes which have not received the attention they deserve, or which provide new insights into the so-called anti-classical cultures, such as that of the Celts, or the Futurists, whom Duchamp dubbed "non-artists". Duchamp was in fact the first artist to stray off-limits, to venture off the paper's edge and outside the picture space, breaking out of the hackneyed frames of reference and raising commonplace objects to the ranks of "works of art". For this reason he is considered the Father of the avant-garde, for having successfully shifted our attention from the business of artistic creation to the concept underlying art itself. The critical rediscovery of Duchamp took place in the Fifties and Sixties, when he suddenly became a point of reference for all the new movements as they emerged: Pop Art, Conceptual Art, and Minimalism. In the case of the present exhibition, Palazzo Grassi has set itself the task of presenting Duchamp's work as exhaustively as possible, following its development through each of the main movements of this century – Cubism, Fauvism, Dadaism and Surrealism – with the hope that these efforts will contribute to a better understanding of that contemporary art which is, inevitably, and expression of our own culture, the culture of our daily existence. But it is also the expression of our striving forwards, towards a future which is ultimately tied to the present and the past – in a word: an exhibition which aims to draw our attention to the very way of being of our civilization.

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mise à nu par ses célibataires, même

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Gisèle Freund
Marcel Duchamp, 1939

The history of the appreciation of Marcel Duchamp's work has little in common with what has happened to the work of other artists of his generation. In the years just before and during the First World War, Duchamp was known in Paris and New York as an outstanding innovator; in fact he was world-famous before he was thirty years old. During the years that followed Duchamp continued to develop his work in an entirely logical manner, but the situation around him changed. It has been said that a couple of unfortunate accidents before the Second World War could have eliminated his work from art history and that, as a consequence, nothing would be known about it today. This is an exaggeration, no doubt, but it is still a sufficiently reasonable and well-founded conjecture not to be entirely ridiculous. If one considers that Vermeer van Delft was ignored by art historians for 200 years, this is not such an unlikely fate to befall an artist. Nonetheless, Duchamp seems to have foreseen the danger that his work might have been forgotten fairly early on. In the mid-1930s he started to arrange for a large portion of his work to be held in the Arensberg Collection; in 1934 he published the *Boîte Verte*, thus providing the basis for a proper understanding of his *magnum opus* the Large Glass. In 1936 Duchamp started the project for a "portable museum" of his work, the *Boîte-en-Valise*, which contained excellent reproductions of all the most important works he had produced until then. In the presentation of the box – the "layout" – he gave some useful hints as to how the works should be observed and how they were related to each other.

One of the reasons why the art world soon lost interest in Duchamp was his aversion to the one-off, handmade, saleable object, such as the painting and the sculpture, which he stopped producing early on. The art world was so preoccupied with this kind of object that, in its eyes, Duchamp's refusal was tantamount to his having stopped working. Even his passion for chess permitted those envious of his freedom to say that he had abandoned art...

For somebody who decided not to repeat himself and to use a new idea only once, Duchamp's *œuvre* is immense, comprising more than 200 major pieces.

When in 1934 André Breton declared, in his usual provocative manner, that painting still needed to find its Gutenberg, it is a safe guess that a previous discussion with Duchamp lay behind his statement. It can also be assumed that the same thought expressed by Duchamp would have been formulated in a much more complex form. In fact, he expressed the need for art to liberate itself from the convention of the handmade marketable object in several different ways: by transforming his images into magazine covers, a cheque (for a dentist), shares (for a company devoted to playing roulette) and in 1935, in perhaps the most convincing way, the *Rotoreliefs*, which were virtual sculptures, visual disks to be "played" on a standard gramophone. They were sold for 15 francs in sets of six. It was characteristic of Duchamp that the answer to an important question lay not only in his abundant writings, but also in a related work, an image or a project. The writings, the "notes" are preparations for the image. The beauty of the total process is very stimulating.

There is immense pleasure to be derived from the contemplation of the different steps of these proceedings, which allow us to see how an important question is dealt with: seriously, elegantly and with great precision.

In the world we are living in today there is an intense escalation of the use of the image. It is a cause for satisfaction that, thanks to Duchamp, the question of reproduction became a matter for serious debate before the trivialization and mechanization that we encounter today.

As late as the 1940s, very few art historians occupied themselves with the history of the art of the twentieth century. It was actually forbidden in most universities. Books about "Modern Art" were usually written by artists, such as the hefty *Vision in Motion* by Moholy-Nagy, published posthumously in Chicago in 1947 or the Dada anthology *Dada Poets and Painters* by Robert Motherwell, published in New York in 1957. For this reason there was often a certain amount of partiality – even ill-feeling – in the presentation, reflecting conflicts between groups and schools, such as the one between Constructivism and Surrealism.

The rumour that Duchamp had stopped working, that he had left the Large Glass unfinished and that he was now devoting himself to chess made him easy prey for the malicious attacks of envious fellow artist-writers. One of the nastiest remarks came from Moholy-Nagy in *Vision in Motion*, where he reproduced the Green Box spread out on a table with the caption "Book (portfolio)", and claimed that Duchamp had been asked to publish his life's work and then emptied the contents of his desk into a cardboard box and had it reproduced, leaving the reader to try to make sense of the mess.

14 But such remarks merely whetted young people's curiosity. Marcel Duchamp's work became known by a new generation in the immediate postwar period, even in the more far-flung parts of Europe. That he belonged to the same family as Jacques Villon and Raymond Duchamp-Villon was very confusing for some academically biased professors preoccupied with psychological theories. One of them told his students that the reason for the "aggressiveness" of Duchamp's work was that he had a terrible inferiority complex with regard to his brother Jacques Villon. To fully understand this strange theory one must be aware that at that time Jacques Villon was much better known than Marcel. In the same vein, Cubism was explained as being the result of the experience of Georges Braque and Fernand Léger in the war, painting camouflage patterns on tanks and guns.

If one compares the vicissitudes of the appreciation of Duchamp's work with the history of the century in general, it is interesting to notice that the ups and downs seem to coincide. When his work was understood and appreciated things were going well for the rest of humanity; when the twentieth century was going through one of its bad moments, his work was spurned. The reason why Guillaume Apollinaire included Duchamp in his book *Les Peintres Cubistes* (1912) has been the subject of frequent speculation. Duchamp was then twenty-five years old and Apollinaire had probably seen only a few fairly insignificant works by him. When Apollinaire finished the first version of his text, Duchamp was not in Paris but in Munich and could, therefore, not have himself shown him the *Nude Descending a Staircase*, which had been refused by Gleizes and Metzinger for the Salon des Indépendants in March of the same year. One might think that Apollinaire's tremendous curiosity for anything new would be enough to explain his interest in Duchamp. The real reason is probably that Francis Picabia had asked Apollinaire

to include Duchamp in his book – and Picabia's wish carried some weight because he helped to finance its publication.

What exactly happened between 8 October, when Apollinaire radically revised his text, and 10–11 October, when Duchamp came back to Paris from Munich, the opening of the Section d'Or exhibition on 10 October and the trip to the Jura that Apollinaire, Picabia and Duchamp went on between 20 and 26 October? It has not yet been clarified. It is certain that, in the end, Apollinaire gave Duchamp pride of place in the book. He removed some woolly criticism from the printer's proofs, and cast Duchamp in the role of the young herald of the great art of the future.

This became the concluding sentence in the new version of the book, and it has tremendous power: *Il sera peut-être réservé à un artiste aussi dégagé de préoccupations esthétiques, aussi préoccupé d'énergie que Marcel Duchamp, de réconcilier l'Art et le Peuple.*

This rather grandiose affirmation has sometimes been regarded as one of Apollinaire's more journalistic pronouncements, but now, at the end of the century, one could also interpret it in a quite literal sense. It then becomes an extremely perceptive statement.

"L'artiste ne sait pas ce qu'il fait. Et j'insiste là-dessus parce que les artistes n'aiment pas que l'on dise ça."

When he made this statement in 1960, was Marcel Duchamp thinking about the genesis of his "readymade", his most significant contribution to history? What ever the case, it would be difficult to find a better example than this genesis to illustrate his assertion.

Let us try to reconstruct the history of the birth of the concept of the "readymade." Duchamp answered a related question when he commented that, when he turned the Bicycle Wheel, 1913 (the first work in this group), it reminded him of a fire in an open hearth. He had moved from the countryside to Paris, and missed the flames of an open fire. While this idea of replacing the flames is clearly not the underlying reason for the creation of the piece, what more beautiful and poetic an answer could one find?

The idea of collage work, introduced by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque the year before (1912), must have interested Duchamp profoundly, although he never produced a Cubist-type collage himself. In a Cubist collage, a fragment of everyday reality – such as a cutting from a newspaper – is taken from among the materials in the studio and introduced into the painting as an integral part. This transfer intimates that the space of the painting and that of the studio are one and the same. The inverted Cubist perspective had already established that "picture space" lay within the space of the studio by developing it in front of the painting and not, as with Renaissance perspective, into the more abstract space behind the painted surface of the canvas. The extension of the picture space into the room, into the artist's studio, seemed less illusory, more "truthful".

As the collage idea became more fully understood and developed, everyday objects became part of the world created by the artist. This evolution is amply testified in the chronicles of art history. It would therefore seem that Duchamp's Bicycle Wheel was the necessary corollary to the collage. However, the issue was so deep and involved that it took over fifty years to be fully grasped. As late as 1954, when I asked Marcel Duchamp about the date of the Bicycle Wheel, he hesitated to call it a readymade.

It was not admitted definitively to the category until the early 1960s. The process was a gigantic, Herculean adventure.

In 1954 I wrote to Duchamp asking him, among other things, whether an object must necessarily be shown publicly to qualify as a readymade, or whether it is a readymade even if it never leaves the studio. He omitted to reply to this particular question – probably because I had not sufficiently appreciated the notion of the studio as a special space, much as the studio of the Cubist painter coincided with the space of the collaged object. It goes without saying that, if you have a rack for drying bottles in your wine cellar, it cannot be considered a readymade. It only becomes one when it is brought into the studio. In fact, when Duchamp published photographs of the readymades in the *Boîte-en-Valise*, they were clearly situated in the artist's studio. In conclusion, one might say that the Bicycle Wheel on the kitchen stool is an intermediate, transitory kind of object: a collage-sculpture-readymade. In answer to the question put to him in 1954 as to whether the bicycle wheel was the first readymade, Duchamp significantly replied: "not even Ready made 1913."

It is also interesting to note that Marcel Duchamp's great friend Constantin Brancusi was meanwhile struggling with a problem of a similar nature, namely, the sculpture and its base, its support. Shortly after, not later than 1916, Brancusi was ready to present the first of his Endless Columns, a form of sculpture which did not require a base. The Bicycle Wheel and the Endless Column would become two of the most influential creations of the century, but only in the last fifty years has their importance been fully appreciated.

14 16 Gradually, the concept of the man-made object becoming a work of art because it has been selected by the artist began to establish itself, and the following year (1914) Duchamp designated the first official readymade: a *porte-bouteille*, or *égouttoir*, a *sèche-bouteille*, that is, a common bottle rack.

Just how the idea made its way is, of course, the big question. When asked, Duchamp replied: "C'est une chose beaucoup plus profonde que l'inconscient, si vous voulez!"

Marcel Duchamp went to New York in 1915 and it was from there that the readymade idea got its definition and that he used the term for the first time. He wrote to his sister Suzanne in Paris on 15 January 1916 and asked her to go to his studio in Rue Saint-Hippolyte, where she would find a bicycle wheel and a *sèche-bouteille* or bottle rack. He asked her to inscribe certain words and sign the *sèche-bouteille*, and made her a gift of it.

The first two parts of the letter turned up in 1984, but the third part, in which he defines what she was to inscribe, has unfortunately been lost.

It is, however, hard to believe that among the literature on each of the readymades, no mention was made of the fact that in French this object is also called an *égouttoir*, meaning, approximately, a "de-dropper" (*goutter* in French means "to drop"), and *goût*, meaning "taste", has almost the same sound. Hence *égouttoir* could mean "the removal of taste", good or bad, from art. The first two readymades were lost when Marcel Duchamp's studio in Rue Saint-Hippolyte was cleared out.

At twenty-nine years of age, when he wrote his letter to his sister, Duchamp established a high point in the art history of our century. He was already a great cultural hero in several different ways. He was one of the most famous artists of his time, largely because of just one work, *Nude*

Descending a Staircase. He had made his first experiments with chance, *3 Stoppages Etalon*, which would have a seminal influence on the future evolution of art, and he had defined, through a long, conscious mental process which he considered much more profound than the subconscious, the notion of the *readymade*, an invention that was to become one of the most important elements in art fifty years later.

Duchamp wrote to his sister from New York. The difference in the artistic climate between Paris and New York, and the change of environment in a more general sense, had accelerated the definition of the idea of the *readymade*. The first years in New York, 1915 to 1918, were the greatest period in Duchamp's early moments of glory and influence. A combination of intuition and the ability to make the right decision at the right time brought him to what was, for a young artist, the most interesting city in the world at that moment. America was not yet at war. Duchamp was exempt from military service. The artistic and intellectual circles of New York received him as a hero and as the great inventor that he was, perhaps without realizing how well-earned and how fitting were the honours they showered on him.

The concept of the *readymades* was defined parallel to the work on the Large Glass. In 1918 Duchamp continued with the *readymades* in the shape of their shadows on his last oil painting *Tu m'*.

In the early 1920s two distinct movements became discernible in the new art, one of which was Surrealism in Paris. Former Dadaist painters and poets were now grouping themselves in an increasingly militant manner around André Breton, and at the same time becoming more and more involved in the political infighting among the various revolutionary groups. Duchamp had strong affinities with these painters and poets and maintained a close bond with André Breton throughout his life. He was never a member of the Surrealist group or involved in their political activities, but served as a *générateur-arbitre*, a "generator judge", accepted and respected by its different members, especially when it came to organizing public exhibitions and other events.

The other leading movement that took shape in the early 1920s was Abstract art, which developed from Synthetic Cubism and the great Russian experience, the prime movers of which had been Kasimir Malevich and Vladimir Tatlin. Piet Mondrian became the leading figure of this movement, which formed itself into such groups as Abstraction-Création and Cercle et Carré, although it then became involved in increasingly academic discussions. As can be seen from the short monographs that he wrote about a large number of artists, including Mondrian, for the catalogue of the Société Anonyme Collection, Duchamp was very well-disposed to Mondrian's art and that of certain others among his followers. Only later, when Duchamp came to Paris in 1954, did he shock the second generation of artists working in this Abstract art movement by talking about *un art rétinien*, retinal art, art concerned only with the eye, as opposed to *cervellité, cosa mentale* or "grey matter", meaning art relating to the total emotional and intellectual sphere of man.

Thus Duchamp felt no strong affinities with the two leading movements in the new art that he saw around him in the early 1920s. Most of the Surrealist work was probably deemed too shallow, decorative, morbid and gratuitous. He maintained a certain degree of interest, but remained detached. Was he disenchanted? In 1923 he had already declared the Large Glass

"definitively unfinished". Through his rejection of the unique art object he held himself aloof from the central preoccupation of both the Surrealists and the "abstract" painters and sculptors. Duchamp's main interest was focused on his multiples and different kinds of publications; pictorial art was thus about to "find its Gutenberg". Duchamp also devoted more time to chess and became a member of the French national chess team in 1924.

In the 1930s Duchamp's work began to be neglected and even forgotten. The older generation sometimes demonstrated their resentment, like Pablo Picasso in his conversations with André Malraux, or Moholy-Nagy in his malicious remarks about the Green Box.

By and large, during the Second World War all creative artistic activity in Europe ceased, while in the Fascist and Communist countries, avant-garde art had been banned from 1933 onwards. Only in the late 1940s did the creativity and curiosity that had reigned in prewar days begin to appear again. But the real change did not occur until the latter part of the 1950s.

In the United States, and especially in New York, things were different. Artistic activity was not curtailed by the war. On the contrary, the war years were one of the most productive periods of American art. Duchamp came back to New York from Europe in 1942. The first book announcing a new interest in his work was published by Roberto Matta in New York in 1944.

It was called *Duchamp's Glass. An Analytical Reflection*, and contained, reproduced at the end, a painting by Matta from the year before, entitled *The Bachelors Twenty Years After*.

It is very possible that the intricate play of perspective in the Large Glass contributed to Matta's inventive use of perspective and his conception of space. Not only is there bold use of perspective in the lower part of the Glass, where there are two central perspective viewpoints, one "old", one "new", but, and this is more important, the transparency of the picture creates a new kind of spatial concept that Matta explored in his work. In his painting reproduced in the book, and also later, he used a notion of space that is based neither on Cubist principles nor on Renaissance perspective. In fact, it is very similar to the highly ambivalent nebulous yet dynamic space structure one can find in a photograph of the Large Glass.

The spatial concept develops in front of and behind the painting's surface, very much like the space in the photographs of Miss Dreier's library, where the Large Glass was then installed. There are three photographs of the library in his book. Matta's canvas surface is equivalent to the surface of the Glass. Imaginary space is developed in front as well as behind. The surface, the painted surface, becomes the factor that holds the different spatial concepts together. "Painting - glass - mirror - these are the three substances in dynamic interrelation with the final image of the Glass. While we gaze upon the bride - there appears through the glass the image of the room wherein we stand and on the radiation of the mirror design lives the image of our own body," Matta writes in his book.

Matta was to work with this kind of spatial concept and turn it into a force that would deeply impress the other painters in New York, especially Jackson Pollock. It is moving that Matta felt the need to document his experience of the photographs of the Large Glass. Others like Mark Tobey would also use this kind of space in paintings from about the same time (for example: *The Void Devouring the Gadget Era*, 1942).

This way of dealing with space has not been given a name, but it would be tempting to call it "American space", partly because it is unlimited and undefined. This is the kind of space that

Jackson Pollock would later work with in his large drip paintings. It was the space that the American Expressionist painters would subsequently explore. What especially attracted young people in the 1940s and the 1950s to Duchamp's work was its precision and its elegance. Second-generation Surrealism and second-generation Abstract art weighed heavily on the times, with their strong flavour of rehashed ideas.

As seen in the vigorously creative surroundings of the work of the Dada painters and poets, Duchamp's work had a special freshness that put it in a category of its own, especially because it was evident that he later kept well away from the products of the clumsily macabre Surrealists.

The first experience of handling the pieces of paper of the Green Box in a library (in the Bibliothèque Jacques Doucet, Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève) was, for someone who had barely heard about it, an astonishing experience, so extraordinary that the next day the reader had to come back with a friend who could testify that the experience had not been a dream.

One of the first of the tributes paid to Duchamp by the generation that was thirty years old in 1955, the generation of Jean Tinguely, Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns, came in the form of the spring edition of the biannual magazine *Blandaren* (Mixer). It was published in 1954 in Stockholm as a cardboard box containing about forty printed items of different sizes "and four pocket films and some candy" (a toothbrush made out of black liquorice and white sugar). The Green Box was clearly the inspiration. In the Mixer box were original "spontaneous" paintings on paper, ironic remarks concerning American Abstract Expressionism and some of the first projects for Pop Art objects.

Over the years young artists would lift ideas from Duchamp with impunity, for the simple reason that his work was so little known. But this plagiarism became so frequent that eventually Duchamp had to be recognized as the originator of a very large part of the new European and American art.

An ultimately rather sterile attempt to interpret the Large Glass, based on its relation to the work of Kafka and on alchemistic terminology and concepts started in 1954 and continued for some time in the circles close to Surrealism. Duchamp did not participate in this debate, which in the end did not enrich its subject but which, nevertheless, focused much new attention on the Large Glass and its author's work in general. Another debate, also rather pointless, concerning Duchamp's relation to his family, did not contribute in a significant way to the understanding of his art and took place without any comment from the artist.

The publication of a new box entitled *Eau et Gaz à tous les étages*, 1959, showed that his creative spirit was far from exhausted.

In the 1960s interest in Duchamp's work grew tremendously, partly because of replicas of the Large Glass that became available in Europe, starting with the copy in Stockholm, made in 1961.

In the 1970s and 1980s the importance of Duchamp's work continued to grow. The great richness of the work, which could now be seen in its totality, became even more apparent.

As this century draws to a close, it is amusing and satisfying to observe that Duchamp's role has won universal recognition. If, in 1953, somebody had said that forty years later his work would be considered more important than Picasso's, that person would have been looked on as a madman.

Et pourtant...