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Disguise and display: recent publications detail a long-neglected aspect of Marcel Duchamp's seminal oeuvre—installation design as a work of art - Duchampiana I - analysis - Critical Essay

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Displaying the Marvelous: Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dali, and Surrealist Exhibition Installation, by Lewis Kachur, Cambridge, MIT Press, 2001; 259 pages, $34.95.

Marcel Duchamp: In the Infinitive--A Typotranslation by Richard Hamilton and Ecke Bonk of Marcel Duchamp's White Box, Northend, The Typosophic Society, 1999; 132 pages, $27.

Affectionately, Marcel: The Selected Correspondence of Marcel Duchamp, ed. by Francis Naumann and Hector Obalk, Ghent and Amsterdam, Ludion Press, 2000; 448 pages, $39.50. Marcel Duchamp: The Bachelor Stripped Bare, by Alice Goldfarb Marquis, Boston, MFA Publications, 2002; 400 pages, $40.

Marcel Duchamp, Basel, Musee Jean Tingnely, Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2002; 232 pages, $50.

The possibility of significantly reevaluating Marcel Duchamp's career is beginning to emerge as the result of work published or in progress since I surveyed the state of Duchampian studies in these pages three years ago. (1) These recent texts, in addition to their many other contributions, draw attention to a previously neglected aspect of Duchamp's activity, his role as an innovative installation and exhibition designer. Here I will focus on books in English but also briefly note some significant publications in French for the benefit of readers competent in the artist's native language.

Within Duchamp's artistic trajectory, a range of apparently secondary creations of various kinds, works and practices that have largely evaded significant comment, assume particular importance, since they permitted the maintenance of an adroitly managed fiction that he had "given up" art after 1923 or thereabouts. This imposture was sustained despite his engagement with artistic ventures of various sorts, many of which were in no way concealed or obscure but available in full view to anyone who wished to notice them, even while Duchamp labored in secret over decades on a posthumously-to-be-revealed masterpiece (Etant donnes, 1946-66). The grand deception was possible in part because many of these works were produced in genres, mediums and contexts that evaded the commonly accepted status of "art." They could pass as marginalia, ephemera or mere daily-life minutiae unworthy of serious attention. Others disguised themselves by the

diffusion or concealment of authorial responsibility--a practice consistent with Duchamp's conviction that the work of art is a continuing process generated through the interaction of a plurality of minds. (2)

Collaborative works or works executed to varying degrees by proxies thus feature prominently in the second half of Duchamp's history. Among these undertakings, the design of exhibitions and related works is particularly important. Such projects offered the camouflage provided by a collective endeavor and the opportunity to explore the possibilities of a new art form--that of installation or environment art--which, despite early modernist experiments, still passed generally unrecognized as comparable to such established genres as painting and sculpture.

Although never formally a member of the Surrealist group--and fastidiously aloof from its doctrinal pronouncements and factional quarrels--Duchamp commanded immense prestige and authority within its circles, enhanced by his special relationship with its leader, Andre Breton, who had conceived an intense admiration, indeed hero worship, for him even before the two ever met. (3) With Breton, he assumed co-responsibility for planning a series of important Surrealist exhibitions in which he not only showed works but contributed installation designs that he either directly undertook or else inspired and oversaw to varying degrees.

Here the installation itself--as much as or more than the exhibited works--was a critical element, asserting itself in a hitherto unprecedented way. Important accompaniments to these shows were the catalogues which--especially in elaborate deluxe editions--could be seen as works of art in themselves; Duchamp largely designed all but the first of these, with great attention to the covers, and incorporated within them a number of entirely new works. These exhibitions extended over nearly a quarter century--the International Surrealist Exhibitions of 1938 (Paris), 1942 (New York, "First Papers of Surrealism"), 1947 (Paris), 1959 (Paris) and 1960 (New York, "Surrealist Intrusion in the Enchanters' Domain"). (4) Together with some smaller independent exhibition installations and several closely related shopwindow displays, these shows, catalogues and related paraphernalia form a major part of Duchamp's artistic endeavor in this period. They have remained for the most part poorly documented, if at all, and insufficiently explored for their potential contribution to a full picture of the Duchampian oeuvre.

Duchamp's experience in installation design began as early as 1920, for the first exhibition of the Societe Anonyme in New York, but this exercise in modernist purism offered little hint of what was to come. (5) Nor did exhibitions that he organized and installed at American venues in 1926, 1927, and 1933-34 on behalf of his longtime friend Brancusi; these, too, were spare and elegant modernist displays. The series of major Surrealist exhibitions beginning in 1938, however, was marked by a consistent effort to transform the banalities of preexistent gallery spaces into a world of fantastic strangeness, throbbing with unexpected and disturbing imagery, sensorially disorienting and disruptive of the visitor's

normal patterns of movement and behavior. All surfaces--not only the walls, but ceilings and floors--and all directions of space were mobilized into an enveloping continuum of address, in which light also might be theatrically manipulated. The ceiling was particularly favored as an imaging field--hung with coal bags in 1938, entanglingly cobwebbed with string in 1942 or wire in 1947, undulating in fleshy pink in 1959, crowded with dangling clocks in 1960.

The viewer's entire sensorium was targeted, and a wide variety of stimuli played their roles: sounds of insane laughter in 1938, sounds of lovemaking in 1959, a child's piano practice in 1960, along with the smells of roasting coffee beans in 1938, cedarwood in 1942 and perfume in 1959. Performative events were also scripted into the mix. Not all of the intended effects were successfully realized on every occasion, but the significance of these enterprises as forerunners of, and at least in part inspirations for, the multi-medium performance environments that featured so prominently in the new art scene of America and Europe in the later 1950s and the '60s seems incontestable.

Lewis Kachur's book, Displaying the Marvelous, examines the Surrealist exhibitions as manifestations of the movement itself and comments on their public reception. It pays close attention to their reverberations within the wider culture, including the world of fashion. A substantial chapter thus deals With Salvador Dali's activities in America, particularly his participation in the 1939 New York World's Fair with its associated publicity stunts and more or less commercial sidelines. Although Dali's Rainy Taxi, recycled from the Surrealist Exhibition of the preceding year in Paris, was a great popular success, and his Dream of Venus sideshow pavilion--a fantastic architectural confection populated with seminude, underwater showgirls--attracted headlines, his American escapades principally served to disseminate an image of "crazy" Surrealism among the general public on this side of the Atlantic. (Coincidentally or not, Kachur's treatment appeared contemporaneously with an exhibition documenting the World's Fair pavilion project, which was organized by the Gala-Salvador Dali Foundation in Figueres, Spain, and appeared at the Museum of Contemporary Art in North Miami [Mar. 15-June 30, 2002]. (6))

Kachur's account is a valuable contribution to the reception history of modern art in American popular culture. But these 1939 extravagances are somewhat incidental to the main issues of Surrealist display experimentation. The Dali episode is the interior of a sandwich whose more substantial outer layers are the 1938 International Exhibition of Surrealism in Paris and the 1942 "First Papers of Surrealism" show in New York. Kachur's efforts toward reconstructing the circumstances, content and public impact of these two events result in by far the fullest description of them to appear so far. He has diligently ferreted out, collated and evaluated scattered documentary materials of diverse kinds in addition to previously published descriptions and commentaries, whether contemporary or retrospective. His sources include ephemera connected with the exhibitions, along with press clippings, unpublished memoirs and photographs, correspondence,

interviews and other archival items. One important omission, evidently deliberate, is any but the barest mention of the exhibition catalogues (or catalogue surrogates), which are essentially independent creative works complementing--rather than merely documenting--the exhibitions themselves. And while Duchamp's contributions to the two exhibitions are rich with suggestive or illuminating connections to the larger body of his work, Kachur's attempts to assess them leave much to be said.

In the announcements for the 1938 exhibition at Georges Wildenstein's Galerie Beaux-Arts, Duchamp is credited as generateur-arbitre. However this dual title is precisely to be understood (the poets Breton and Paul Eluard are described as "organizers"), there is general agreement that Duchamp was responsible not only for the visual design of the installation but for the overall supervision and organization of the show. (7) This was conceived as a total antithesis to the neutral and self-effacing display regime of the conventional art exhibition--an aggressively assertive, emotionally violent, omnidirectional, multisensory environmental surround. Its impact upon the public would be sensational.

After a doubtless upsetting first encounter with Dali's Rainy Taxi, "parked" in the courtyard before the entrance to the exhibition in the elegant Rue du Faubourg St.-Honore--its pluvial interior was occupied by grotesque humanoid effigies (the sort later to be emulated by the Kienholzes) crawled over by live snails--the visitor entered a long corridor. This was the Rue surrealiste, lined with 16 standing female figures in various states of undress, which were in fact mannequins rented from a commercial supplier, each outfitted for the occasion with a set of bizarre attributes or items of decor by a different Surrealist artist--a kind of synthesis of the typical Surrealist "object" of extravagant fantasy and the Duchampian Readymade. (8)

Mannequins (like their kindred, automata) held a particular fascination for the Surrealists as vehicles for fantasy and the the projection of desire. They also served as emblematic incarnations of a particular mode of desiring increasingly dominant in modern experience--that of commodity fetishism, as first diagnosed precisely in regard to the shopwindows of 19th-century Parisian grands magasins and passages. (9) That Duchamp intended this frame of reference is indicated by his employment as a display support for exhibited works in the next room of revolving doors--an apparatus indelibly associated with the department store--but even more directly by a remarkable note (in fact a visionary poeme en prose) on the psychodynamics of the shopwindow, written as early as 1913 though not published until 1967. (10))

The 16 mannequins afforded ample terrain for the exploration of a characteristic (some might say all too characteristic) Surrealist preoccupation--eroticism involving the fetishization of the female body, often in forms more than slightly inflected by misogyny. Those by Masson, Ernst and Dali were particularly striking. Duchamp--forgoing the extravagant paraphernalia such as birdcages, fish tanks, stuffed animals, clocks, netting, jewels, cutlery, etc., with which his fellow artists bedecked their models--outfitted his mannequin with unique sobriety. She wore Duchamp's own tweed jacket, vest,

shirt, tie, felt hat and shoes, but that--with the exception of an illuminated red lightbulb in the breast pocket--was all. (11) This gender-exchanging masquerade is the partial inversion of Duchamp's earlier serf-transformation into his female alter ego, Rrose Selavy. It is in fact Rrose who claims authorship with a prominently affixed signature inscribed upon the figure's belly, jast above the exposed pubic area to which it flagrantly calls attention. One can now easily see in this figure (as also in the female mannequin that Duchamp would feature a few years later in his shopwindow installation for Breton's Arcane 17 in New York (12)) an anticipation of the female protagonist of the posthumous Etant donnes (with its considerably more lurid sexual display)--a connection that other elements of the 1938 installation reinforce. (13))

The bizarrely adorned maidens of this entrance gallery were in fact to be understood as streetwalkers (no doubt a tacit sneer at art's commodity status, which, as we know, Duchamp fiercely despised). This much is indicated not only by their lineup in waiting, backs to the wall, but by the attachment upon the wall above each one of a facsimile Parisian street sign--creating a mixture of real and fantastic street names suggestive of favorite Surrealist themes. (14) Kachur does not inventory these street names nor discuss them in relation to the particular mannequins with which they were associated (nor does he do this for the graphic components--texts, posters, photographs, etc.--tacked to the walls behind the figures to provide, with the street signs, a mini-environment for each). These framing elements were surely not randomly selected. Duchamp's mannequin stood in front of the (invented) Rue aux Levres, or Street of the (or with) Lips--a name whose relevance, in view of the indications at hand, seems indisputable if indelicate. Over the figure's shoulder, the visitor could glimpse--among other graphic works--a rectangle of oscillating spheres, originally one of the Rotoreliefs of 1935, as it had been reemployed that same year as cover illustration for the Surrealist magazine Minotaure. The sexual reversibility of this image--projective versus recessive--is the perfect equivalent for the gender instability of the Rrose-Marcel persona itself.

From the gallery the visitor gained access to the main exhibition room, packed with Surrealist paintings and sculptures which Duchamp had arranged into a calculatedly disorienting phantasmagoria. Four ornately draped double beds--an extension of the theme of sexual commerce promoted in the entrance corridor--occupied the room's corners, while the floor was thickly covered with dead leaves and underbrush surrounding a pond with muddy banks. (15) The most dramatic treatment was reserved for the normally innocent ceiling--here covered with the ominous shapes of numerous (allegedly 1,200) coal bags, stuffed to appear as if full and hanging like an angry thundercloud. (These sacks replaced the suspended open black umbrellas that Duchamp had originally wanted but could not obtain in sufficient number. (16)) The room was dark, lit only by the fitful glow from a metal brazier set in the center of the floor. Duchamp had intended that electric-eye devices should trigger illumination of the exhibited works as a visitor approached. (He would later employ this same device--unbeknownst to the viewer--to light the interior diorama in Etant donnes.) But this could not be

arranged in 1938; as an expedient, Man Ray--in charge of the lighting for the exhibition--provided guests at the door with flashlights. A photograph of the event shows spectators stooping to examine the works on display at point-blank range in a manner anticipating the hunched posture forced upon the would-be Peeping Tom by the eyeholes set low in the barn door of the later Philadelphia installation. (17) Much about this room seems to forecast that final enterprise, on which Duchamp would not actually begin work until 1946. Not only the water and the underbrush but a female figure, too, was present in the 1938 installation. During the opening, a scantily clad young lady enacted an orgiastic dance for which underbrush, pond and bed--as well as a live rooster--would serve as props.

Such elements both forecast developments to come and alluded to already established themes in the Duchampian oeuvre. An olfactory component--an aroma of roasting coffee that greeted the visitor's nostrils--evoked the Coffee Mill of 1911, Duchamp's first mechanomorphic work and hence ancestor of the Bride, which took shape in the following year. The coal sacks presage the illuminating gas (generated from coal) of Etant donnes, which is also one of the two primary motivating forces in the earlier Large Glass (1915-23). The contrast between the brazier below and the cloudscape of coal bags above parallels that between the clunky bachelor machinery of the Glass's lower zone and the celestial realm of the Bride above. A decade after this show, in 1948, Duchamp's contribution to Hans Richter's film Dreams That Money Can Buy would include scenes of coal being tipped down a chute into a cellar.

In 1942, returning after two decades to New York, where many of the war-displaced Surrealists had regrouped, Duchamp was enlisted by Breton as co-organizer of a new exhibition "First Papers of Surrealism," its title a reference to the document that initiated the new immigrant's progress toward citizenship. Duchamp's major contributions were the construction of the installation as a visual environment and the design of the catalogue. `Duchamp's overall conception, which evidently inspired at least three of the four works that he created for the exhibition--the installation itself and the two covers of the accompanying catalogue--reflects the idea of the "infrathin" that preoccupied the artist during the 1930s and '40s. This was an incalculably thin boundary separating/conjoining opposite qualities or substances and constituting an indeterminate realm of possibility. Corresponding to the straitened circumstances imposed by war and exile, Duchamp's solution derived maximum conceptual and experiential impact from an extreme economy of means. The material was ordinary string, whose alleged length gave rise to the installation's title, Sixteen Miles of String--though evidently only a mile or so was actually employed. But it was enough to transform the staid interiors of New York's Whitlaw Reid mansion--home for the moment to the Coordinating Council of French Relief Societies. With the aid of a few friends, Duchamp wove this twine into an intricate spiderweb of varying density and pattern strung--like the Parisian coal bags of 1938--from the ceiling, thus impeding both the visitor's movements and visual access to the (otherwise rather conventionally) displayed works. As in the 1938 event, the installation was enlivened on opening night with a performance component. Duchamp had recruited the young son of the avant-garde dealer Sidney Janis and a crew of the

boy's comrades to play ball in the midst of the string environment and the tuxedoed guests.

Critical response in the press was perceptive enough to single out Duchamp's contribution to the exhibition as its most original component. Problematizing the viewer's access to the exhibits, it materialized the web of external circumstances and attitudes which condition a viewer's reaction to a work of art, contingencies whose importance Duchamp never tired of pointing out. As usual in his oeuvre, the resultant piece is heavily overdetermined and dense with allusions to previous--and subsequent--works and themes. Most of these connections appear to have eluded Kachur. The most literal reading--that of an entrapping spiderweb--was evidently an intended one: the other participants in the exhibition seem to have understood it in this way. (18) The spider's weaving is, not incidentally, the mythological archetype of artistic production as recounted in the Greek fable of Arachne--famously illustrated in Velazquez's great painting The Spinners, whose spinning wheel may have helped to inspire Duchamp's upended bicycle wheel of 1913. There are other allusions as well. Kachur appositely cites Duchamp's inclusion in the deluxe original edition of Robert Lebers 1959 monograph, the first such ever devoted to him, of a photomontage in which the photograph of a spiderweb is superimposed upon that of a nude female figure taken by Man Ray. (19) Viewers could not be expected to recognize that the spiderweb was one of the images which Duchamp employed to illustrate the concept of the infrathin in a posthumously published note. (20) Obvious, however, is the allusion to the weblike crack pattern which accidental breakage had inflicted upon the Large Glass, and which Duchamp had painstakingly incorporated into its reconstruction only six years before.

String moreover was a material of particular resonance within his oeuvre. For example, the 1913-14 Standard Stoppages (which Duchamp once referred to as his favorite work (21)) was constructed from three one-meter lengths of string whose deformations, owed to dropping through the air from a one-meter height, were both the emblematic dismantling of the officially sanctioned unit of length and the generating terms for a continuing series of transformations and new creations involving the reification or, as Duchamp put it, the "canning" of chance itself. His Hidden Noise of 1916 is an ordinary ball of twine, confined between a pair of mysteriously inscribed metal plates and containing an unseen object manifesting itself solely by its rattling sound.

The conception of Sixteen Miles of String had been anticipated in Duchamp's work as early as 1918, in the Sculptures for Traveling. This was an elastic skein of shredded rubber bathing caps, stretched on cords suspended from multiple directions and variably adjustable. Like its successor of 1942, it filled the space of an entire room and was specifically intended to obstruct and frustrate a visitor's movements. (22) An immediate predecessor of Sixteen Miles of String was also, no doubt, the knotted-string curtains or veils with which Duchamp had equipped the Parisian apartment of his longtime companion Mary Reynolds during the 1930s. (23)

It is hardly coincidental that the one work by Duchamp--exclusive of the installation itself--figuring in the exhibition was the extraordinary palimpsest Network of Stoppages of 1914, which develops the aleatorically obtained string curvatures of the Standard Stoppages into the ground plan governing the disposition of one of the key components of the Bachelor Machinery of the Large Glass's lower half: the Malic Molds or Cemetery of Uniforms and Liveries. Sixteen Miles of String would have many progeny, ranging from Maya Deren's 1943 film Witch's Cradle (in which Duchamp collaborated and appeared (24)) to Eva Hesse's Right After of 1969.

Similar concerns are evident in Duchamp's design of the exhibition catalogue, most importantly its front and back covers, each of which features a close-up photographic detail of a broken surface whose interstitial organization is analogous to the string-web installation itself, and each of which seems similarly to conceal a reference to the imagery of the infrathin. The front displays a section of the stone foundation wall of the Surrealist artist Kurt Seligmann's barn in upstate New York, patterned with gouges resulting from a series of gunshots which Duchamp had fired into it. (25) Corresponding to these marks are five small actual holes piercing the thickness of the paper cover to reveal glints of the flyleaf beneath. These punctures cannot fail to recall the Nine Shots of the Large Glass--a cluster of holes drilled through the glass of the right side of its upper zone, at points determined by the impacts of nine paint-tipped matchsticks fired by Duchamp from a toy cannon. The back cover has a similar close-up, taken this time at a disturbingly oblique angle, of a piece of Swiss cheese riddled with its characteristic holes.

This too seems an overt reference, though of a more biographical sort: it was in the guise of a cheese merchant that Duchamp had crossed back and forth during the year just past between Paris and his refuge in the unoccupied zone of the south of France, transporting components for the then-in-preparation Boite-en-Valise (1935-41). (26) Since the Nine Shots represent the mode of (virtual) contact between the Glass's lower zone of the Bachelors and the otherwise inaccessible domain of the Bride above, it seems clear that both covers refer to the crossing of boundaries, no doubt alluding to the crossing from occupied Europe to America lately accomplished by the Surrealist exiles and more particularly--and most recently--by Duchamp himself.

Further elucidation of these two neglected works would take more space than is available here, as would comment on Duchamp's contributions to the catalogue's interior--the collage with an image of a mirrored breast, In the Manner of Delvaux, or the strange device of the incongruously titled "Compensation Portraits." (27) Kachur's account of the exhibition takes virtually no notice of this catalogue.

With that notable exception, his book affords the fullest and most detailed analysis of the "First Papers" exhibition so far available, as it does also for the exhibition of 1938. (Still, these reports do not in either case entirely supersede previously

published accounts, in which useful observations and otherwise unrecorded scraps of information--sometimes significant--may be found.) Kachur terminates his presentation at this point, leaving the postwar Surrealist exhibitions and Duchamp's contributions to them without any adequate--in some cases virtually without any--treatment in the scholarly literature so far. This decision inspires regret, all the more so in that the book's emphasis repeats that of most scholarship to date. Much more has been published, whether of a documentary or of an interpretive nature, regarding these two events than those which succeeded them over the following two decades. This concentration no doubt reflects a consensus that the energy and importance of the Surrealist movement waned after World War II, replaced (for American critics at least) by a designated successor, Abstract Expressionism. Whatever one's estimation of later Surrealism, this, from the standpoint of Duchamp scholarship, leaves a major gap to be filled.

Indications are that this neglect will not persist for much longer, and that a burst of critical attention is even now being directed toward the Surrealist events and toward Duchamp's installation schemes both within and beyond the chronological limits of Kachur's treatment. A large-scale Surrealist exhibition originating at the Tate, and not long ago on view at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, devoted some attention, and a short chapter of its accompanying catalogue, to this aspect of the Surrealist movement's activities, with acknowledgment of Duchamp's role in them. (28) Brief descriptions of the first four of the five Surrealist exhibitions for whose design Duchamp was in whole or in part responsible figure in Gerard Durozoi's recently translated compendious History of the Surrealist Movement, though the 1960 New York exhibition is unaccountably omitted. (29) Roughly coincident with the appearance of Kachur's book, a Duchamp exhibition at New York's Zabriskie Gallery was dedicated in substantial part to materials produced for or documenting his contributions in this regard. Elena Filipovic, its curator and author of the accompanying brochure essay, (30) is completing a Princeton dissertation in which this topic will figure largely. A critical article discussing Sixteen Miles of String in the context of the cultural politics of the 1942 exhibition featured recently in the journal October, and its author, T.J. Demos, likewise announces a book in preparation. (31) The 1938 and 1942 exhibitions have also been accorded more extended treatments than heretofore within some recent books on broader themes. (32)

For the time being, however, our knowledge of the postwar Surrealist exhibitions and of Duchamp's role in them (he is regularly credited as co-organizer with Breton) is confined to scanty, scattered and very incomplete reports. Duchamp's participation in the first and most ambitious of these--"Surrealism in 1947" at the Galerie Maeght in Paris--is particularly interesting inasmuch as it was conducted entirely at a distance. Despite his decisive involvement in the 1938 and 1942 events, he had signaled his cherished independence with regard to such collective enterprises by ostentatiously avoiding their end products and the public manifestations accompanying them--in the first case going so far as to flee the city for London on the eve of the opening. For the 1947 exhibition, though he had a large role in its planning and is credited with the design of two of its principal installation spaces, the Rain Room and the Labyrinth, Duchamp remained in New York

and confided the realization of his ideas to the architect Frederick Kiesler. (33) Duchamp's suggestions for the first major room, the Hall of Superstitions, were evidently not adopted, but the two rooms following, for which he had provided drawings, more adequately represent his ideas. The Rain Room featured artificial rain in various colors falling on artificial grass and was occupied by a green baize billiard table. The Labyrinth or Dedale, which bore Duchamp's name affixed to its entrance, was a mazelike complex of interlocking recesses which served as niches for fantastic "altars" designed by various artists. Overhead, strung from the ceiling, ran a tangle of jaggedly bent strips of metal and twisted wire--a harsher and more discordant descendant of the 1942 Sixteen Miles of String--which, in the mythological terminology prevailing throughout the exhibition, was misleadingly described as Ariadne's Thread. (34) He also exhibited two individual works, created for the occasion and executed by proxies--the Green Ray with the collaboration of Kiesler, and the Juggler of Gravity with that of Roberto Matta. The first, a seascape diorama glimpsed through a peephole in a curtain, adopts the title of a rather fatuous novella by Jules Verne which had been parodically reworked by Raymond Roussel, the literary avant-gardist to whom Duchamp credited the inspiration for his Large Glass; (35) the second, an assemblage reminiscent of the recent shopwindow installations in New York, is the realization of a component conceived as part of the Large Glass itself but never executed. (36) These works were dismantled with the closing of the exhibition, their elements apparently discarded, and were more or less forgotten until quite recently; they still await full documentation and commentary. Such proxy/collaborative creations, however discordant with then prevailing conventions of artistic practice, were by no means unprecedented in the Duchampian oeuvre. He had pioneered the creation of art at long distance years before, well in advance of the first instance of "art by telephone" generally credited to Moholy-Nagy in 1922. (37) In 1919 Duchamp had transmitted instructions by transatlantic mail to his sister Suzanne in Paris for the execution of the Unhappy Readymade, (38) and already in 1916 had asked her in the same fashion to inscribe texts on the Bicycle Wheel and Bottle Dryer left behind in his old studio there. (39) Duchamp's design for the catalogue cover involved the creation of a new work, Priere de toucher (Please Touch), whose title ironically inverts the prohibition familiar to all museum-goers. This was a relief sculpture of a female breast, itself the suitably embellished transformation of a foam-rubber "falsie" surrounded by black velvet--an anatomical quotation from or allusion to the "lifelike" female figure of Etant donnes just then secretly taking shape. (40)

The 1959 Paris exhibition is even less well documented in published accounts than that of 1947. Here again Duchamp's participation was at long distance. In keeping with "EROS" as the announced theme of the event, the portal to the main exhibition space at the Galerie Cordier was designed at his suggestion as a vaginal opening; (41) the room itself was provided with an undulating pink ceiling, in which appeared a pair of lips--designed after Botticelli's Primavera--from which amorous sighs and moans were emitted. The room following was swathed in green velvet, evoking a moss-covered cavern complete with stalagmitic and stalactitic projections and sand underfoot. At the opening, one could gaze through a

grille--one of Duchamp's specifications--into the final red chamber at an extraordinary tableau devised by Meret Oppenheim: a table spread with a sumptuous feast set out upon the live body of a naked woman (later replaced by a mannequin). The recent Surrealist exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum and its catalogue provide the most extended discussion so far of the 1959 occasion, but much of its account is concerned with the accompanying performance events. (42)

Duchamp once again designed the catalogue--the Boite-alerte, a green cardboard box in the form of a mailbox (echoing his famed Green Box of 1934) that contains an ensemble of texts and objects contributed by various members of the Surrealist group, all "lascivious missives" reflecting the announced theme of the exhibition. Duchamp created two new works for inclusion in this catalogue--the disquieting mixed-medium self-portrait in profile titled With My Tongue in My Cheek as its frontispiece and, for the luxury version, the Laundress's Aprons, a pair of altered pot holders fitted with pouches concealing male and female genitalia made of cloth and fur. (43)

"Surrealist Intrusion in the Enchanters' Domain" of 1960 at D'Arcy Galleries in New York, which was the last Surrealist exhibition Duchamp cosponsored with Breton and which saw him for the first time since 1942 reassume immediate personal control over the installation, is the least known of all. Bemused journalistic accounts of the time reveal that its elements included suspended clocks, a cage filled with live chickens, a green light, a model railroad and a garden hose, but little or nothing about the disposition or possible significance of these items. (44) Neither Duchamp's celebrity nor the emergence of assemblage, environments and Happenings as important features of the era's New York art scene seems to have motivated any serious critical attention to this--up to the present, at least--effectively lost work.

However incomplete their documentation, these hitherto underappreciated or almost unrecognized works suggest the need for a reassessment of the Duchampian oeuvre, especially its later half. With the partial exception of the 1942 installation, these works eschew the material sparseness and emotionally dry, laconic tone otherwise so characteristic of Duchamp. The imagery is profuse and baroquely extreme, overtly appealing to the emotions, with a literary tinge not customarily associated with him. These are hallmarks of Surrealist art and literature, not least the work of Breton, and it is easy to see their prominence in the installations as the natural outcome of collaboration. These factors are indeed prominent in the two instances--1947 and 1959--in which Duchamp's long-distance participation consisted in the furnishing of ideas, and sometimes drawings, whose realization was left to others. In the 1947 exhibition, for example, the role of Kiesler--himself a pioneer of avant-garde installation design as well as a close associate of Duchamp's--was undoubtedly important. But it does not seem that the apparently "unDuchampian" tenor of the installations is to be explained entirely in terms of extraneous influences and contributions. Recognizably Duchampian motifs and devices run through the entire series, including the two events in which the artist's involvement was indirect. And the prevalence of baroque effects and literary

imagery is just as marked in the exhibitions (with the partial and circumstantially influenced exception of the 1942 show) that Duchamp designed and directed in person, including the 1960 installation he conceived and executed entirely by himself.

These apparently atypical features may thus represent an alternative inflection of Duchamp's expressive vocabulary that has not been accorded its proper critical importance. In fact they fall readily into place with others long recognized. The "Symbolist" works of 1910-11, culminating in the unfinished Young Man and Girl in Spring, are replete with luxuriant imagery and mythological associations. Yet they yielded first to the appropriation of Cubism and Futurism in Nude Descending a Staircase of 1911 and then to the austere, conceptually weighted works of his "classic" phase. But it is Etant donnes--whose ideation and execution dominate the last three decades of Duchamp's life, retroactively illuminating much otherwise cryptic artistic activity over that period--that offers the proper analogy to, and context for, these installation works.

Anticipations of Etant donnes begin in the 1938 mise-en-scene and continue thereafter in various ways in the subsequent exhibition and shopwindow installations. The spectacularism of display, the hallucinatory intensity of sensorial address, the emotional immediacy and sinister, otherworldly "realism" of the posthumous work stand at an apparently opposite pole from the stark introversion that we have taken as normative. A similar double-sidedness pervades Duchamp's writings, in which notes of an abstractly conceptual or drily technical sort coexist with others of vividly emotional character.

One of the formative ideas of the Duchampian oeuvre is the systematic undermining or even dissolution of the distinction between the visual and verbal realms. In this project, the three collections of notes made public during Duchamp's lifetime played a fundamental role. The last of these, A l'Infinitif appeared in 1967, just a year before the artist's death, though its contents had originated between 1912 and 1920. (The title is usually translated In the Infinitive, supposedly in acknowledgment of the infinitive tense often employed in the texts, but an echo may be detected of the French term d l'infini, "through the vanishing point"--surely very relevant to the optical and perspectival themes prominent in the texts' contents.) (45) The collection appeared in a limited edition of 150 copies, and is now a rarity whose possession is confined to major museums and libraries and a few private collections. The notes have been made more generally available through reprinting. A selection of them, redistributed by the editor among thematically related materials from the earlier boxes, appear in Arturo Schwarz's anthology Notes and Projects for the Large Glass, (46) and the entire contents are recapitulated in the French and English versions of Duchamp's "complete" writings edited by Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson. (47)

None of these versions offers more than a transcription of the verbal content of the notes with the occasional addition of an accompanying extratextual feature, a sketch or other graphic notation. However, as we know from A l'Infinitif itself, and even more from its predecessor, the Green Box (1934), this abstracted and "dematerialized" textual skeleton is a drastic impoverishment of the total content of the notes. Duchamp evidently considered every aspect of their circumstantial, material presentation to be relevant to their meaning. This included the shape, color and texture of the paper (in the Green Box he employed metal templates to reproduce exactly the torn edges of the originals, and painstakingly searched out equivalent papers and inks), the printing and other graphics, sometimes pictorial, preexisting on the appropriated scraps of paper--laundry bills, menu cards, envelopes, etc.--that bear the original jottings. Also retained were the exact form and spatial distribution of the texts and their accompanying drawings and other elements--underlinings, corrections, cancellations, etc. (Duchamp was here taking to a further extreme the model of his admired predecessor Mallarme, whose "Un coup de des n'abolira jamais le hasard" he had studied and annotated closely. (48))

Thus the distinction between "picture" and "text," with their differing signifying and interpretive practices, is entirely abolished. (In this respect, it is true, A l'Infinitif represents something of a regression from the Green Box's extremist perfectionism: the 1967 compendium's 79 notes were all reproduced on identical paper, and except for three, in black and white only, so that the differing colors of ink and pencil employed in the originals were suppressed.) A considerably more ambitious typographic transcription--incorporating many more of the graphic variables of the originals, along with color reproductions of some of the preexistent pictorial ephemera upon which certain of the notes were superadded--appears accompanied by valuable commentary in the collection of Duchamp's writings edited by Serge Stauffer; this, however, is not widely available and the texts are presented only in Stauffer's German translation. (49)

The evident need for a more generally accessible presentation of the contents of the White Box (as A l'Infinitif is colloquially known), in a form more fully representative of the graphic/pictorial richness of the originals, has led to the creation of a new "typotranslation" by Richard Hamilton and Ecke Bonk. The two could not be better qualified. Bonk has put all students of the oeuvre in his debt with his meticulous and exhaustive documentation of the origins, contents and history of the Boite-en-Valise in its numerous variations, revealing in the process several "lost" or previously unknown original works included in some of the deluxe examples. (50) Hamilton is the noted British artist and veteran Duchampian who, among other contributions, organized the 1966 retrospective exhibition at the Tate Gallery in London. (51) It was Hamilton who, in collaboration with George Heard Hamilton as translator, issued the 1960 English-language "typographic" version of the Green Box that is the precursor of the more ambitious 1999 effort. (52)

The two Hamiltons sought to achieve a typographic layout for the English translation of the French manuscript notes that would preserve at least the essentials of the original texts' spatial distribution and associated markings--an undertaking

limited by the constraints of the typesetting technology of the time. Exploiting the greater flexibility afforded by recent developments in computer-assisted typesetting, Richard Hamilton has succeeded in generating typographic and graphic transcriptions that approximate the originals more closely than his previous effort, to say nothing of the other generally less ambitious attempts of this kind. His new versions incorporate the originals' corrections, deletions and (within certain limits) range of color, and--where most relevant--acknowledge the varying shapes and proportions of the supports. The White Box's black-and-white facsimiles were packaged with a separate portfolio of English translations by the painter Cleve Gray. For the new publication, the texts have been carefully re-translated through the combined efforts of Bonk, Hamilton and Jackie Matisse, Duchamp's stepdaughter.

The 79 original notes themselves, whose rediscovery (if that is indeed what it was in 1964 (53)) led to publication of A l'Infinitif, are now in the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Fourteen of them have been published in color photographs in the catalogue of the William and Mary Sisler collection, whence they came to the museum. (54) An ideal publication of these materials would combine color photographs of all 79 items with a parallel set of English translations (perhaps presented in the Bonk-Hamilton typographic transcription) and detailed commentary. This would offer the student the full iconic content of the original as well as the French text. The additional visual materials which framed the notes in their repackaging as the White Box--notably Duchamp's miniature Plexiglas facsimile of the Glider (a wire-and-plate-glass work from 1913-15) intended but never realized for the Boite-en-Valise(55)--could also be supplied in photographic reproduction. In the meantime, the Bonk-Hamilton version--which can be supplemented with the typographically impoverished French edition of the text--is the best readily accessible presentation of the Box's contents and a service to the diffusion of Duchamp's thought and art.

Duchamp's known correspondence amounts to more than 1,500 letters or other missives of various kinds. These have proven invaluable to students in documenting the chronological skeleton of his life and tracing his movements and actions, and have been exploited in the catalogue raisonne and major exhibition catalogues of his works, in biographical studies and (unfortunately without citation) in Jennifer Gough-Cooper's and Jacques Caumont's immense and invaluable "Ephemerides." However only a handful of examples had heretofore been published, mostly single letters or small groups of letters to a single correspondent. (56)

Francis Naumann and Hector Obalk have recently edited a selection of somewhat under one-fifth of this corpus, in a volume titled Affectionately, Marcel from the closing phrase that the artist habitually employed when writing to his friends. This work presents the original, usually French text in approximated typographic layout, with appended English translation, where necessary, and a minimum of explanatory commentary. Only letters sent by Duchamp appear in this collection; those addressed to him generally do not survive (unless their authors retained copies). Paradoxical as it may

seem in one who so carefully preserved large quantities of working notes, Duchamp systematically discarded correspondence and papers of all kinds. (57) The letters are addressed to family (especially his favorite sister, Suzanne, and her husband), patron friends (Walter Pach, the Arensbergs, Katherine Dreier), comrades-in-arms (H.P. Roche, Man Ray, Picabia, Breton), former girlfriends (Yvonne Chastel, Beatrice Wood), and gallery and museum figures, etc. Duchamp's epistolary style is terse and pointed, without literary niceties. Many of the letters concern business matters: the arranging of exhibitions, problems of shipping or restoration, and negotiations for the sale of art works by other artists, notably Brancusi--a principal source of income for Duchamp, who for many years did not himself produce works of art for sale [see p. 67]. Even those letters entirely friendly in purpose most often have an offhand, slightly distant tone. However cordial, they are rarely personally revelatory; a few external details, some bits of conventionalized banter, skillfully conducted, usually suffice.

What one desires above all from an artist's letters is insight into his or her art. The selection here--winnowed from almost the entire body of surviving correspondence precisely as being of the greatest interest--proves almost completely unforthcoming in this respect. There are exceptions: a letter of 1916 to Suzanne (nr. 43) is precious for indications of Duchamp's thinking about the Readymades at a moment in which their conceptual definition was still fresh and not entirely formed. A letter of 1955 (nr. 237) contains some thoughts not found elsewhere apropos of the Bicycle Wheel of 1913, and one of 1924 (nr. 75) to Picabia explains the betting theory underlying the Monte Carlo Bond of that year. A missive of 1949 to Jean Suquet (nr. 186) pointedly comments on the systematic interrelationship of the Green Box notes and the Large Glass, with the aim that they should "above all prevent one another from taking on an aesthetico-plastic or literary form." And one of 1949 to H.P. Roche (nr. 178) is of particular interest in view of the recent and intriguing suggestion that some of the Readymades--notably the glass ampule Paris Air--were not, as purported, everyday artifacts, but were in fact works of art cleverly made to seem "found." (58) Duchamp requests Roche to buy an ampule of specified size--as replacement for the original which had broken--from the very same pharmacist's shop where the artist had purchased the first one.

But for the most part the letters throw little new light on Duchamp's works, their motivation and possible meanings. There is reason to believe that a certain censorship has curtailed possible revelations, both personal and artistic. In 1950 Duchamp had the task of sorting through and disposing of the effects of his longtime companion Mary Reynolds, recently deceased, and of packing her collection and papers for delivery to the Art Institute of Chicago, where they now reside; any correspondence of his own that remained from their nearly three-decade relationship was removed and presumably destroyed. (59) And Duchamp's letters to Maria Martins, Surrealist sculptor and wife of the Brazilian ambassador to the U.S., with whom Duchamp had a torrid affair in the later 1940s and who may have served as model for the female figure in

Etant donnes, have been withheld at her family's request, as "too personal." (60) (How personal might be suggested by Paysage Fautif [Faulty Landscape] of 1946, a work presented to Maria by Duchamp. In appearance it is a splash or drip abstraction; its medium is seminal fluid. (61)) But letters that Naumann was able to examine, and to whose contents he elsewhere alludes, undoubtedly contain significant information, otherwise unavailable, on the development of the secret project. (62) No doubt these and other as yet undiscovered materials will eventually be brought to public view. Naumann and Obalk certainly deserve our gratitude for their valuable efforts. Nevertheless, as usual, Duchamp has the last word--or silence. In an interview toward the end of his life, he frankly acknowledged "something in my character which prohibits me from exchanging the most intimate things of my being with anyone else." (63)

This reticence--indeed this adroitly sustained balance of presence and absence--is one of the most characteristic and puzzling aspects of Duchamp's personality, to the fascination and sometimes to the distress of those close enough to observe him. It contributed not a little to the mystique which developed around him. It also poses a problem for the would-be biographer, who aspires not only to narrate external events of a subject's life but to identify the connecting threads of attitude and motivation among them. On the heels of Calvin Tomkins's recent biographical treatment, we have now another by Alice Goldfarb Marquis--itself the retitled and considerably revised version of an earlier study from 1980. (64) The author's researches have quarried further bits of biographical data and sometimes helpful sidelights and background information on various situations and personalities. These do not result in a picture of his life and career materially very different--so far as outward facts are concerned--from that presented by Tomkins, though the two treatments vary in the details to which they accord emphasis, the particular incidents that are recalled, etc. Hence seriously interested readers will need to examine both.

The greater contrast between the two biographies lies in the kinds of inferences that the authors draw from the materials they adduce and their attitudes towards their subject. In contrast to Tomkins's generally sympathetic presentation, Marquis adopts a sterner, one might almost say inquisitorial tone. She is particularly alert to any possibility that pecuniary motives may have influenced Duchamp's actions, though she duly notes some of the many instances that testify to his surprising indifference to them. Readers may judge for themselves the aptness of her conclusions about the human failings and psychological problems of this famously elusive and complex--certainly anything but "normal"--subject. A dry skepticism likewise informs her views on the art world, and on the varying fortunes of Duchamp's work and reputation within it. No more than Tomkins's study, however, do the renewed investigations of Marquis uncover anything which adds noticeably to our knowledge or understanding of the works themselves. This no doubt in part reflects the artist's consummate skill in covering his tracks. Marquis usefully calls attention to the contradictions and evasions so bewilderingly prevalent in Duchamp's innumerable statements, interviews and reported comments.

More fundamentally, however, Tomkins's difficulty and hers lies in the intrinsically problematic nature of artistic biography itself. Which is primary, the work" or the "life"? Does one explain the other? And where is the boundary between them? These are questions that Duchamp's example poses in a more acute--and surely more self-conscious--form than almost any other. Defining the artist as a "mediumistic being" necessarily unconscious of the meaning of what he produces, Duchamp quoted approvingly the words of T.S. Eliot: "The more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates." (65)

Duchamp was a friend of and inspiration for the Swiss kinetic sculptor Jean Tinguely, whose manically self-destroying machine constructions surely appealed to the Dadaist strain in his sensibility. The Musee Jean Tinguely in Basel has been mounting a series of exhibitions devoted to artists especially close to Tinguely or influential upon him; Duchamp was a recent subject [Mar. 20-June 30, 2002]. A handsome book-sized catalogue accompanied the show. The exhibition itself contained relatively few works which are not familiar to those interested in the artist; many are replicas of the early Readymades and other lost works, from the series issued in the '60s, while others are examples of work originally produced as multiples. The show's particular strength was in the large collection of ancillary and documentary materials, ephemera of various kinds, some of which are little known. A few unsurprisingly rather slight works were brought forward which had evaded inclusion in Schwarz's recently updated catalogue raisonnee. (Uncertainty as to what constitutes a "work"--as opposed to other sorts of material traces of Duchamp's activities--is of course a constitutive feature of Duchamp studies, built into the structure of the oeuvre itself.)

The catalogue's principal value resides in its set of very acute and serious essays by accomplished Duchamp scholars. These include contributions by Herbert Molderings and Dieter Daniels, both centering on the problem of the Readymades and their historical resonances; by Marc Decimo on Duchamp's linguistic strategies; and by Elisabeth Bronfen on his gender manipulations, with notable reference to the postwar body casts (real or purported) and Etant donnes. Jacques Caumont republishes some extracts from the "Ephemerides" in more intelligible (because consecutive) form, with the addition of some new illustrational material.

Thus the parade of Duchampiana continues into the new century with no sign of abating, and indeed with further additions already announced. One can imagine the wry smile its mix of weighty scholarship, sometimes tortured exegesis and occasional silliness would have evoked from its subject--who complemented Lebel upon how much of interest he had learned from the latter's monograph that he himself had never known. Despite all the effort of explication, the mystery of Duchamp seems only to deepen.

Recent Duchamp Studies in French

Marcel Duchamp et la fin de l'art, by Jean Clair, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 2000.

Clair is an eminent scholar and curator in the fields of 19th- and 20th-century art, and a major contributor to Duchamp studies, who was the organizer of the 1977 Paris retrospective. This volume conveniently collects a number of important contributions previously published in various forms--catalogue essays, journal articles, conference papers and an entire short monograph--together with a new introductory chapter. The result is a book that no serious Duchamp student will wish to miss.

C'est: Marcel Duchamp dans "la fantaisie heureuse de l'histoire," by Andre Gervais, Nimes, Editions Jacqueline Chambon, 2000.

Gervais is an expert in the field of Dada and Surrealist literature and has a long track record as an impassioned Duchamp investigator. This book, containing a large number of mostly short essays ranging over the entire breadth of the oeuvre, centers on the multiple roles of language within it. Duchamp's entire verbal production--titles, puns, aphorisms, statements, interviews, stray remarks--is interrogated in a display of great erudition and (sometimes extreme) ingenuity. New interpretations and provocative suggestions abound.

Marcel Duchamp dans le collection du Centre Georges Pompidou, Musee Nationale d'Art Moderne, by Didier Ottinger et al., Paris, Centre Georges Pompidou, 2001.

France is not richly endowed with the works of its greatest 20th-century artist, most of these being on display in Philadelphia and elsewhere on the other side of the Atlantic, but the Centre Pompidou has been doing its best to make up for previous neglect. Although the larger part of its collection consists of examples from the replica editions of the Readymades and of other multiply issued or graphic works, gifts and purchases over the last years have equipped the museum with a number of original and unique works. These include the Chess Players (first version) of 1911, the Nine Malic Moulds of 1914-15, the three disquieting cast or modeled works of 1959, With My Tongue in My Cheek, Torture-morte and Sculpture-mode, and--perhaps most remarkable--the recently rediscovered plaster mold which served in the creation of Female Fig Leaf (1950) and seems to have aided in the design of the vulvar region of the female figure in Etant donnes. (66) Useful introductory and supplementary materials and informed commentaries on the individual works make this a work of interest to specialists and others.

Marcel Duchamp: Le Manieur de Gravite (Collection Actualite des arts plastiques no 100), by Catherine Perret, Paris, Centre National de Documentation Peagogique, 1998.

(1.) Sheldon Nodelman, "The Once and Future Duchamp," Art in America, January 2000, pp. 37-43.

(2.) Duchamp's most succinct exposition of this view is to be found in the text of a lecture, "The Creative Act," delivered to a meeting of the American Federation of Arts in Houston in 1957 and published in Art News, Summer 1957, pp. 28-29. It has been reprinted in several books, including Robert Lebel, Marcel Duchamp, 2nd ed., New York, Paragraphic Books, 1967, pp. 77-78; Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson, eds., Salt Seller: The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, New York, Oxford University Press, 1973, pp. 138-40; and their Duchamp du signe: Marcel Duchamp, Ecrits, 2nd ed., Paris, Flammarion, 1994, pp. 187-89.

(3.) In the ecstatic appreciation of Duchamp which Breton published not long after their first meeting, the poet describes himself as convinced in advance of Duchamp's "marvelous intelligence": Les Pas perdus, Paris, Gallimard, 1924, pp. 141-46 (English translation by Mark Polizzotti, The Lost Steps, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1996, pp. 85-88). See also Jose Pierre, Andre Breton et la peinture, Lausanne, L'Age d'Homme, 1987, pp. 46-47, 63-68.

(4.) There was one subsequent International Surrealist Exhibition, in Paris in 1965. Duchamp's replacement as co-organizer by a young disciple of Breton's, Jose Pierre, was probably due to a cooling of relations between the two old friends in the last years of their lives. (He did, nevertheless, contribute three works to the exhibition, see Lebel, p. 200, nr. 125). Duchamp ascribed this change to a growing megalomania on Breton's part, which evidently made collaboration impossible; see Francis Naumann in Francis Naumann and Hector Obalk, eds., Affectionately, Marcel, p. 194 note. The proximate cause, however, was apparently Breton's irritation at Duchamp's refusal to sign a manifesto denouncing an exhibition on the theme of "the murder of Marcel Duchamp." See pawn Ades, "Duchamp, Dada and Surrealism" in Marcel Duchamp, Barcelona and Madrid, Fundacion Caja de Pensiones y la Fundacion Joan Miro, 1984, p. 49.

(5.) See Jennifer Gough-Cooper and Jacques Caumont, "Ephemerides on and about Marcel Duchamp and Rrose Selavy 1887-1968" in Pontus Hulten, ed., Marcel Duchamp: Work and Life, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1993, s.v. 30 April 1920. The Societe Anonyme was an organization for the promotion of modern art, largely funded by Duchamp's patron Katherine Dreier, that numbered Duchamp, Man Ray and other avant-gardists among its members. Duchamp himself provided much of the leadership and intellectual guidance for its activities, including the formation of an important collection now at the Yale University Art Gallery. The exhibition featured starkly planar white walls, and Duchamp masked the paintings' ornate gilded frames with uniform white paper.

(6.) See Stephen Kinzer, "Memory Persists in a Dali Pavilion Revisited, "New York Times, Apr. 8, 2002, Section B, pp.

1, 3.

(7.) The French arbitre has a lexical range encompassing both that of the English "arbitrator," a reconciler of third parties' conflicting positions, and that of "arbiter," one who sets a standard or imposes decisions through his own authority and initiative. On Duchamp the preeminent role of Duchamp the "generator" in the actual organization of the exhibition, see Mark Polizzotti, Revolution of the Mind: The Life of Andre Breton, New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1995, p. 445. Compare Peggy Guggenheim's recollection of the event: "I was there every day with Marcel. He was putting the exhibition together," quoted in Virginia M. Dortsch, ed., Peggy Guggenheim and Her Friends, Milan, Berenice, 1994, p. 10. Duchamp worked with Breton and Eluard on the exhibition's catalogue, the Dictionnaire abrege du Surrealisme (Abridged Dictionary of Surrealism); see Jean-Charles Gateau, Paul Eluard ou le frere voyant, Paris, Editions Robert Laffont, 1988, p. 246.

(8.) The mannequins are the subject of an essay by Elena Filipovic, "Abswende Kunstobjekte: Mannequins und die `Exposition internationale de Surrealisme' von 1938," in the exhibition catalogue Puppen, Korper, Automaten: Phantasmen der Moderne, Dusseldorf, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, 1999, pp. 200-18.

(9.) In addition to the modern locus classicus, the Arcades Project of the Surrealist sympathizer Walter Benjamin, see on this much-discussed issue the particularly enlightening treatment by Christoph Asendorf, Batteries of Life: On the History of Things and Their Perception in Modernity, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993.

(10.) See Sanouillet and Peterson, Duchamp du signe, pp. 105-6; Salt Seller, p. 74.

(11.) On the significance of the imagery of the lightbulb as emblem of revolutionary modernity, see Asendorf, pp. 99-100.

(12.) See Arturo Schwarz, The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp, 3rd ed., New York, Delano Greenridge Editions, 1997, p. 227 and p. 781, nr. 511.

(13.) It is surely not accidental that Duchamp selected a mannequin with the features of the popular film actress Simone Simon, who had starred not long before in Le Lac aux dames (1935), directed by Marc Allegret (see Gough-Cooper and Caumont, "Ephemerides," s.v. 17 January 1938, n.p.). Duchamp's attention may well have been drawn to this film since its director had earlier collaborated with him and Man Ray in the production of Amemic Cinema (1926). The aquatic theme of Le Lac, a romantic potboiler, afforded the opportunity for the young actress to appear fetchingly nude. The conjunction of greenery-fringed lake and naked woman, which was evoked again in the main room of the 1938 exhibition,

would find its apotheosis in Etant donnes.

(14.) Some street names were those of actual Paris streets connected with real persons or events significant to the Surrealists: Rue de la Vielle Lanterne (where Nerval had died by suicide), Rue Nicolas Flamel (after the famous alchemist), or Rue Vivienne (where Lautreamont had lived). Others were fantasy names: Rue Faible (Weak Street), Rue de Tous-les-Diables (Street of All Devils), Rue de la Transfusion de Sang (Blood Transfusion Street), Rue d'une Perle (Street of a Pearl), etc.

(15.) The catalogue credits Wolfgang Paalen with "water and brushwood," and he was no doubt the person who distributed them. But the thematic congruence of these items with recurrent motifs of the Duchampian oeuvre, together with Duchamp's overall stewardship of the installation, strongly favors ascription of the idea itself to the latter.

(16.) H.P. Roche, "Souvenirs of Marcel Duchamp," in Lebel, p. 84. Five years later, in 1943, Duchamp would finally realize the upended umbrellas scheme, if at a smaller scale, in the shopwindow installation created at Brentano's bookstore in New York for the publication of Denis de Rougemont's The Devil's Share. The umbrellas no doubt evoke the "parasols" or "sieves" which figure in the Bachelor Machinery in the lower part of the Large Glass, but their sinister connotation of bad luck seems appropriate to the diabolic theme of the window display. "All the women will understand," remarked Duchamp cryptically (Schwarz, p. 768, nr. 489).

(17.) See the photograph by Josef Breitenbach of the 1938 event reproduced in James D. Herbert, Paris 1937: Worlds on Exhibition, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1998, p. 126, fig. 32.

(18.) Alexander Calder proposed to populate the web with paper butterflies, but the idea was vetoed by Breton. See Henri Behar, Andre Breton: le grand indesirable, Paris, Calmann-Levy, 1990, p. 349. Duchamp's reaction to this proposal, if any, is not recorded.

(19.) Kachur, p. 190. The center of the spiderweb coincides with the pubic zone of the figure. Duchamp designed both the deluxe and standard editions of Lebel's book.

(20.) On the theme of the spiderweb and the infrathin, see notes no. 9 (recto) and 24 in Marcel Duchamp, Notes, ed. and trans. Paul Matisse, 2nd ed., Boston, G.K. Hall & Co., 1983, n.p.

(21.) Gough-Cooper and Caumont, "Ephemerides," s.v. 27 September 1961, n.p.

(22.) Marcel Duchamp in Pierre Cabanne, Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp, London, Thames & Hudson, 1971, pp. 59-60.

(23.) Calvin Tomkins, Duchamp: A Biography, New York, Henry Holt & Co., 1996, p. 292. These apparently innocent pieces of domestic decor, analogous to the now-famous Door, 11 rue Larrey (1927) are--to the present at least--lost works. They are not listed in any of the catalogues of Duchamp's oeuvre, including the Schwarz catalogue raisonne even in its much-expanded third edition, and no photographs of them, if such exist, have ever been published.

(24.) The film, which was shot in Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century gallery and starred, in addition to Duchamp, Matta's wife Anne Clarke, was never finished. Duchamp is shown weaving a "cat's cradle" of string which eventually enmeshes him. Other Duchampian themes were also incorporated. The best account of this project is given in Veve Clark, Millicent Hodson and Catrine Neiman, eds., The Legend of Maya Deren: A Documentary Biography and Collected Works, Vol. I, Part Two, "Chambers (1942-47)," New York, Anthology Film Archives/Film Culture, 1988, pp. 149-65.

(25.) Martica Sawin, Surrealism in Exile and the Beginning of the New York School, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1995, pp. 222-26.

(26.) See Tomkins, pp. 323-24. Cheese also figures as an image in one of Duchamp's notes on the infrathin: see Notes, no. 26: "Gruyere with fillings for defective dentitions," n.p. Questions however have recently been raised as to the identity of the cheese on the catalogue cover: Gruyere or Emmental?

(27.) Twenty of these appear in First Papers of Surrealism, juxtaposed with illustrations of works by the artists whom they supposedly represent. They are substitute images, intentionally provocative and often notably discordant with their announced subjects in such variables as age, sex, appearance and character. Duchamp himself is represented by a WPA photograph taken by Ben Shahn, showing a gaunt-visaged woman from a sharecropper family.

(28.) Jennifer Mundy, ed., Surrealism: Desire Unbound, exhib, cat., London, Tate Modern; New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 2001; see Chapter 11, "Staging Desire," by Alice Mahon, pp. 277-91.

(29.) Gerard Durozoi, History of the Surrealist Movement, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 2002. See pp. 339-43 (on the 1938 exhibition), 401-3 (1942), 466-72 (1947), 587-92 (1959).

(30.) Elena Filipovic, Marcel Duchamp on Display: Optics, Exhibition Installations, Portable Museums, New York,

Zabriskie Gallery, 2001.

(31.) T.J. Demos, "Duchamp's Labyrinth: First Papers of Surrealism, 1942," in October 97, Summer 2001, pp. 91-119. This interesting contribution constructs an opposition--somewhat polemically overdrawn--between Duchamp and the Surrealists, especially Kiesler, that is in part vitiated by a misreading of Duchamp's conception of the "mediumistic" role of the artist as formulated in the essay "The Creative Act," which directly reverses the author's explicit position.

(32.) The 1938 exhibition is discussed in Herbert, pp. 122-60. This treatment offers considerably less hard documentation than its length would support, for it is largely concerned with assessing the exhibition's place within the author's structuralist model of the range of display practices on view in the Paris of the time. The show is also examined in Bruce Altshuler, The Avant-Garde in Exhibition: New Art in the Twentieth Century, New York, Harry N. Abrams, 1994, pp. 116-35, 151-54. See also Daniel Abadie, "L'Exposition internationale du Surrealisme, Paris, 1938," in Paris-Paris 1937-1957: Creation en France, Paris, Musee Nationale d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, 1981, pp. 72-81; and Sawin, pp. 225-30. Both exhibitions are discussed in La Planete affole. Surrealisme: Dispersions et influences, 1938-1947, exhib. cat., Marseille, Centre de la Vielle Charite; Paris, Flammarion, 1986: see Jose Pierre, "Le Surrealisme en 1938," pp. 28-41, and Martica Sawin, "Aux Etats-Unis," pp. 104-44, esp. p. 110.

(33.) Lebel, p. 175, nr. 191. On the 1947 exhibition, see Jose Pierre, "Le Surrealisme en 1947" in La Planete affole, pp. 282-319, and Cynthia Goodman, "The Art of Revolutionary Display Techniques," in Lisa Phillips, ed., Frederick Kiesler, New York, Whitney Museum of American Art and W.W. Norton & Co., 1989, pp. 71-76. On Kiesler and Duchamp, see Jennifer Gough-Cooper and Jacques Caumont, "Frederick Kiesler and The Bride Stripped Bare ..." in Yehuda Safran, ed., Frederick Kiesler 1890-1965, London, Architectural Association, 1989, pp. 62-71; on the 1947 collaboration, p. 68.

(34.) Jean-Lous Bedouin, Storia del Surrealisme, II: dal 1945 fino ai nostri giorni, Milan, Galleria Schwarz, 1960, pp. 96-99. The photograph on plate 23 is virtually the only visual evidence so far published of this component of the installation. The rather scrappy realization which it seems to reveal is perhaps attributable to the material privations still weighing on postwar Paris, as explained by Marcel Jean, History of Surrealist Painting, New York, Grove Press, 1960, p. 342.

(35.) On The Green Ray, see Herbert Molderings, "Objects of Modern Scepticism" in Thierry de Duve, ed., The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, Halifax, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, and Cambridge, MIT Press, 1991, pp. 257-75, and Marcel Duchamp: Parawissenschaft, das Ephemere und der Skeptizismus, Frankfurt am Main, Edition Qumran im Campus Verlag, 2nd ed., 1987, pp. 84-89; Schwarz, The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp, pp. 788-89, nr. 524. The "green ray" is the well-known optical phenomenon occurring at the moment of the sun's sinking beneath the horizon of the sea. The connection with Roussel has not, to my knowledge, been previously observed.

(36.) On the Juggler of Gravity, see Schwarz, pp. 789-90, nr. 525.

(37.) On Moholy-Nagy's "telephone" paintings (not in fact--but only as a theoretical possibility--ordered by telephone), see Sibyl Moholy-Nagy, Moholy-Nagy: Experiment in Totality, Cambridge, New York, Harper, 1950, pp. 43-44. He was probably inspired by a passage in the essay "Dada-Kunst" by the Dane Alexander Partens, published in Richard Huelsenbeck, ed., Dada-Almanach, Berlin, Erich Reiss Verlag, 1920, p. 89. The idea itself, certainly reflecting current discussions in Dada circles, may well have been ultimately inspired by Duchamp's own previous initiatives.

(38.) Schwarz, p. 380, pls. 132, 133; pp. 668-69, nos. 367, 368.

(39.) Letter of Duchamp to his sister Suzanne, Jan. 15, 1915, published in Naumann and Obalk, eds., Affectionately, Marcel, pp. 43-44, nr. 11.

(40.) Priere de toucher is one of a series of works on the theme of the female breast during the early to mid-1940s. The first was the collage In the Manner of Delvaux of 1942 (see Schwarz, p. 409, pl. 193; p. 765, no. 485). Apparently the first new work to be created subsequent to Duchamp's return to the United States; it was reproduced in the catalogue First Papers of Surrealism though not displayed in the exhibition itself. Two others are plaster relief studies (Schwarz, p. 786, nr. 521; p. 787, nr. 522) which have been described as studies for Priere de toucher but which more clearly resemble the nude figure of Etant donnes. See also Linda Henderson, Duchamp in Context, Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1998, p. 221.

(41.) Agnes Angliviel de la Bacemelle, Isabelle Monod-Fontaine, Claude Schweisguth, eds., Andre Breton: La Beaute convulsive, Paris, Musee National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, 1991, pp. 320-23; Gough-Cooper and Caumont, "Ephemerides," s.v. 15 December 1959. Duchamp's ideas for this installation (only some of which would be realized) include a number of elements reiterating themes of the 1938 mise-en-scene and looking forward to Etant donnes, including a moss-edged pond.

(42.) Mundy, Surrealism: Desire Unbound, pp, 284-91.

(43.) Schwarz, p. 426, pl. 210; p. 820, nr. 571 (With My Tongue in My Cheek); p. 424, pl. 208; p. 25, pl. 209; p. 822, nr. 594; p. 823, nr. 575 (Laundress's Aprons). On the Boite-alerte, see also Bernard Blistene, "Marcel Duchamp," in Daniel Abadie, ed., Donations Daniel Cordier: Le Regard d'un amateur, Paris, Musee Nationale d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges

Pompidou, 1989, pp. 181-85; and Francis Naumann, Marcel Duchamp: The Art of Making Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction, New York, Harry N. Abrams, 1999, pp. 197-98, 203.

(44.) John Canaday, "Art: Surrealism with the Trimmings," New York Times, Nov. 28, 1960, p. 36, and "Nostalgia and the Forward Look," ibid., Dec. 4, 1960, section K, p. 21; Schwarz, p. 824, nr. 577; Gough-Cooper and Caumont, "Ephemerides," s.v. 28 November 1960. Three letters from Duchamp to Andre Breton published by Naumann and Obalk throw valuable light on the installation: pp. 367-68, nr. 261; p. 369, nr. 263; and pp. 370-71, nr. 264. Duchamp's decision to include a painting by Dali in the exhibition precipitated an imbroglio of the sort endemic in the Surrealist movement. (Dali had been officially "excommunicated" from the group by Breton.) Duchamp also designed the cover of the catalogue, showing (in embossed relief) the photograph of a French tobacconist's shop sign in the form of a double-cone glass lampshade.

(45.) A hint of a deeper significance for the title is contained in a cryptic remark made in a late Duchamp interview. Asked if he had carried out many of the ideas proposed in the A l'Infinitif notes, he replied: "No, not exactly, but you can see all these notes also had almost a common character--they were always written in the infinitive tense; ... l'infinitif in French means to do things, eventually to do this which, of course, I never did." Jeanne Siegel, Arts, December 1968/ January 1969, pp. 21-22. (In reality, barely more than half of the notes are written in the infinitive.)

(46.) Marcel Duchamp, Notes and Projects for the Large Glass, ed. Arturo Schwarz, London, Thames & Hudson, 1969.

(47.) Duchamp du signe, pp. 105-41; Salt Seller, pp. 74-101.

(48.) Molly Nesbit and Naomi Sawelson-Gorse, "Concept of Nothing: Marcel Duchamp and Walter Arensberg," in Martha Buskirk and Mignon Nixon, eds., The Duchamp Effect, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1996, pp. 135-36. Cf., Gough-Cooper and Caumont, "Ephemerides," s.v. 26 March 1918.

(49.) Marcel Duchamp, Die Schriften, vol. I, ed. and trans. Serge Stauffer, Zurich, Theo Ruff Edition, 1981, reprinted 1994, pp. 121-70. (A projected second volume of this exemplary work never appeared, owing to the editor's untimely death.)

(50.) Ecke Bonk, Marcel Duchamp: The Box in a Valise, New York, Rizzoli, 1989.

(51.) See The Almost Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp, ed. Richard Hamilton, London, Tate Gallery, 1966.

(52.) The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even: A Typographic Version by Richard Hamilton of Marcel Duchamp's Green Box Translated by George Heard Hamilton, New York, Wittenborn, 1960. A detailed account of the background of this project and of the two Hamiltons' efforts (with Duchamp's approval) in realizing the typo-translation is presented by Sahat Maharaj, "`A Master of Veracity, a Cristalline Transubstantiation': Typo-translating the Green Box," in Buskirk and Nixon, pp. 60-91.

(53.) The circumstances surrounding the reemergence and publication of these notes are somewhat mysterious. It has been said that they "were discovered by Duchamp among his papers in 1964" (Francis Naumann, The William and Mary Sisler Collection, New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1984, p. 143), The foreword by Cleve Gray to a preliminary publication of some of the notes in 1966 by the Cordier and Ekstrom Gallery specified that they had recently returned to Duchamp's possession after a long period in the hands of a private collector, whose identity was later revealed to be Roberto Matta. (See Stauffer, p. 122.) Duchamp first met the Chilean painter, who became an ardent admirer, in Paris in the mid-'30s and had extensive contact with him during and after the war years in New York; when the latter may have come into possession of this ensemble of Duchamp's unpublished notes remains unknown, as does what occasioned their return. On Duchamp and Matta, see Sawin, pp. 318-23, and Tomkins, pp. 362-65. In 1960 Duchamp had affirmed to Stauffer in an interview ("Hundert Fragen an M. Duchamp," p. 290) that he had no more unpublished texts at all--"rien en reserve, ni ... a retrouver" ("nothing in reserve, nor to be rediscovered"). It seems improbable that he would have utterly forgotten about the texts that he had given or sold to Matta--or for that matter, would have been unaware of the further large body of notes that remained in his possession and would be published posthumously (Marcel Duchamp, Notes, ed. and trans. Paul Matisse, Paris, Musee Nationale d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, 1980).

(54.) Naumann, Sisler Collection, pp. 143-59. The notes had been sold to the Sisler collection by the time they were first brought to public attention in January 1965 in the Cordier and Ekstrom exhibition "NOT SEEN and/or LESS SEEN of/by MARCEL DUCHAMP/RROSE SELAVY 1904. 1964" and its accompanying catalogue. Duchamp, however, retained the publication rights and had already arranged with Cordier and Ekstrom for the notes' appearance as A l'Infinitif. See Hamilton and Bonk, "Chronology," n.p., s.v. 1965.

(55.) Hamilton and Bonk, "Chronology," n.p., s.v. 1966; Naumann, p. 272.

(56.) Many of these are enumerated by Naumann in Naumann and Obalk, pp. 10-11.

(57.) Ibid., pp. 9-10.

(58.) As suggested by Rhonda Roland Shearer, "Marcel Duchamp's Impossible Bed and Other `Not' Readymade Objects: A Possible Route of Influence from Art to Science," Art & Academe, Part I, Fall 1997, pp. 26-62; Part II, Fall 1998, pp. 76-95. See also Leslie Camhi, "Did Duchamp Deceive Us?" Art News, February 1999, pp. 98-102.

(59.) Tomkins, pp. 176-77.

(60.) Naumann in Naumann and Obalk, p. 9.

(61.) Bonk, pp. 282-83.

(62.) Francis Naumann, "Marcel and Maria," Art in America, April 2001, p. 108.

(63.) Andre Parinaud, "Interview with Marcel Duchamp," in Omaggio a/Hommage a Andre Breton, Milan, Centro Francese di Studi, and Rome, Centro Culturale Francese, 1967, p. 41.

(64.) Alice Goldfarb Marquis, Marcel Duchamp: Eros, c'est la vie, Troy, N.Y., Whitston Publishing, 1980.

(65.) Marcel Duchamp, "The Creative Act," in Lebel, p. 77. Eliot's words are from his essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919); see Frank Kermode, ed., Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot, New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich and Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975, p. 41.

(66.) Parinaud, pp. 116-17, catalogue 316. Cf., Georges Didi-Huberman, L'Empreinte, Paris, Musee Nationale d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, 1997, esp. pp. 151-92 and p. 194, no. 1.

This short book, which comes equipped with a set of slides, is part of a series intended to aid public secondary-school teachers in the presentation of contemporary art issues in their classes. It is not only a lucid exposition of major themes in the work of Duchamp as assessed in current scholarship and critical opinion, but contains enough thoughtful observations of its own--notably on the issues of temporality in the oeuvre--that it can be read with profit by experienced Duchampians. If this book is any indication of the level at which French schoolchildren are introduced to the work of one of their country's foremost artists, Americans should be green with envy.

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