

This essay is still a draft, nearing final on 1 January 2019

ACETIC AESTHETIC_ The Beauty of Indifference

CHANGEchance_ The Duchamp Paradigm

By L. Brandon Krall

TAKE ONE

*...What I have in mind is that art may be bad, good or indifferent, but, whatever adjective is used, we must call it art, and bad art is still art in the same way that a bad emotion is still an emotion...*¹

The expression “In matters of taste there is no dispute” is derived from the Latin epigram, *de gustibus non est disputandum*.² The French language has the expression, *à chacun son goût* translated, “to each his own taste,” the common expression in English is, “there is no accounting for taste.” This basic idea expresses a simple *thought thing*³ declaring individual preferences in matters of taste to be not negotiable, as they are necessarily unique. The concept is ubiquitous in the colloquialisms of many languages and cultures, it revolves around the concept of “taste” which refers to the eating of foods and products of culture. Taste is widely believed to be the guiding principal of positive and negative value judgements. Most people do not question the nature and definition of aesthetic judgments, they are constantly forming assessments and making decisions as they navigate their daily lives. Each person defines a unique aesthetic when faced with a range of choices and options from self-presentation to self-awareness. Streams of personal choice are perpetuated by the individual process of selection, decision and judgment made in encountering the material world.

Not good or bad taste, but indifference to ‘taste’ was the subtle and brilliant zero degree in aesthetics that Duchamp discovered when he decided to choose and inscribe a *readymade*,⁴ which made it possible to declare standards of aesthetic valuation. A conjunction both of philosophic and religious importance resides in this awareness. It is an “ascetic aesthetic” derived from Cartesian thought, mixed with Pyrrho of Elia, Taoist and Zen consciousness. The prescription of *indifference* deconstructed, observes no fixed truth or declarable value in aesthetic discourse; in eliminating judgment based on taste an equivalent to defining zero in mathematics was achieved. It is therefore of tremendous importance to grasp what Marcel Duchamp contributed to the philosophy of aesthetics by intuitively discovering, designating

¹ *Session on the Creative Act*, Convention of the American Federation of Arts, Houston, Texas, April 1957.

² Latin maxim, Wikipedia:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/De_gustibus_non_est_disputandum

³ A “thought thing” was described by Duchamp as a *cervellité*, or “brain fact” as translated by Joseph Mascheck; page 75, “Duchamp in Perspective.” The word was invented by Duchamp, and appears in one of the notes from the *Green Box*. The author uses a similar concept, referring to a “thought thing” translated directly into Latin as *res cogitans*.

⁴ *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, Pierre Cabanne, trans. by Ron Padgett, Da Capo Press, New York, 1987 p. 35. French first edition, 1967.

and inscribing the objects he called *readymades*⁵ a word which is itself a variation of popular consumer jargon. The term "ready-made" was in fact itself a readymade. This expression was in the air as a consequence of the development of early Twentieth Century consumer culture. The period roughly from 1900 to 1920, was the same period during which Cubism was becoming widely known, as well as the theories associated with thermodynamics in the sciences. Walter Benjamin was writing about the advent of consumer culture and the phenomenon of the arcade. Benjamin's brief analysis of the aura of works of art is underlying Duchamp's proposition that works of art have life spans.⁶ and his comments on the use of the gaze, the repeated viewings of the Mona Lisa, ref. Supporting a widespread intuition that pertains to seeing and being seen.

Marcel Duchamp, Notes, avant-propos par Paul Matisse, preface par Pontus Hulten, 1980, 1999, Edition Flammarion, Champs Arts, Paris. 68 recto and verso: pp.41-42

notes generale : (pour un tableau hilarant)...

Peinture de *précision* et beauté d'inifférence...

L'ironisme. d'affirmation = Différences avec l'ironisme négateur dépendant du rire seulement.

★ ★ ★

The number of modern and contemporary artists and art historians who have acknowledged and developed the influence of Duchamp in their practices and discourse is extensive. A selection follows for... Jasper Johns the hinge pictures, Bill Anastasi theory of jarry, Rebecca Horn quotes, Robert Smithson quote...

Mike Bidlo, Gavin Turk,

Historians including John Golding, Thomas McEvelley and Harold Rosenberg.

Duchamp: Private and Public by Harold Rosenberg, (1906-1978)⁷

★ ★ ★

PLAY and WORK

Duchamp began his conversation with Pierre Cabanne⁸ by congratulating himself on never having worked for a living, even as an artist. "I haven't known," he said, "the strain of

⁵ Marcel Duchamp found and inscribed objects from among those sold widely in various marketplaces. These became designated after a delay of over a year as *readymades*, circa 1913-1915.

⁶ Something he says is a pet idea he believes himself.. see Cabanne.

⁷ Rosenberg, Harold. (1975). *Art on the edge: Creators and situations*. New York: Macmillan.

⁸ Pierre Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, ed. Robert Motherwell (New York: Viking Press, 1971).

producing, painting not having been an outlet for me, or having a pressing need to express myself. I've never had that kind of need—to draw morning, noon, and night, to make sketches, etc." Duchamp's dislike of work was probably a matter of temperament, but it became one of principle, too. When his interviewer listed the products of what was evidently Duchamp's most fruitful time, 1912-13, in which a dozen of his most important creations emerged, among them *The King and Queen Crossed by Swift Nudes*, *Virgin No. 1* and *Virgin No. 2*, *The Passage from the Virgin to the Bride*, *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*, Duchamp's only response was "Ugh!" Contrasting himself with his followers among young vanguardists today, he emphasized that he had always done "as few things as possible"—an effective antidote to the "easy art" that some of his innovations have inspired.

Duchamp's strategy in regard to work involved a complex evaluation of the nature of art in our time. People like to think that art is the mystery of creation, but, Duchamp pointed out, the artist, as a person active in society, is a "man like any other. It's his job to do certain things"—in the case of the painter, "things on a canvas, with a frame." Duchamp said that he had always been drawn to the notion of the artist as a craftsman—a term more venerable than "artist." This was a reversion to the traditional idea of making, and it provided him with a stand against the romanticism of his friends the Surrealists. But he then brought into play a fact that totally undermines any identification of modern art with medieval craft. The contemporary artist, he noted, "doesn't make things for people; it's the people who come to choose things from among his production." pp. In the case of Duchamp, however, the antagonism he arouses is an essential element of his role, and even, if one wishes, of his greatness and profundity. He may be fulfilled as a myth; he is genuinely important as an issue. To situate him in the conflict in which he has been engaged is the only way to draw him back from the otherworld of public relations into the actual history and outlook of art today, and from empty worship of a publicity-swollen Name into appreciation as a force still active in determining the future of culture.

...Today, Duchamp, as the most potent leftover of radical thinking and practice in art between the two wars, continues to personify the problems of art in modern technological society, and to serve as a reminder that not one of these problems has been solved. For this reason, he remains the primary target of those critics and artists whose interest lies in restoring art to a "normal" continuity with the masterpieces of the past. Fundamentally, the issue is a cultural-political one.

... His rejection of taste, for example, is related not only to his observation that taste leads to mechanical repetition in choosing but to the meaninglessness—in the absence of a social elite—of choice based on taste. The idea of a one-person authority on taste is no less absurd than *Mona Lisa* with a mustache.

... Fun and Eros were to the reticent Duchamp qualities as necessary to art as clarity was to Mondrian. Henri-Pierre Roche, an old friend, said that Duchamp's "finest work is his use of time." Yes, but that fine use includes wasting it. A Dadaist cannot be too concerned about how he manages his life. He cannot hoard it, and must let it amble at random; the only consistent program he is allowed is keeping free of chains.

Duchamp accepted almost any means to pay his way (he even functioned briefly as an art critic) except that of becoming a professional artist. Enslavement by art, he was convinced, is no different from enslavement by other tyrannies of work. On this path his disciples refused to follow him, thus separating them selves from him on the central issue of art as the unlimited practice of freedom ("I believe," he said to James Sweeney, "that art is the only form of activity in which man as man shows himself to be a true individual"). With his friends and enemies combined in pursuit of professional goals, Duchamp emerges neither as hero nor as wrecker but as the ruminant and solitary note-taker engaged in the constant circling—to bring his past into focus with his imagination—that produced *The Bride, Valise, and Given*. He did not change the situation of art, but he did explore with the most realistic acuity what art could be, and could not be, in the twentieth century—thus what it was possible for the artist to create without falsifying himself.

MD"A point which I want very much to establish is that the choice of these 'readymades' was never dictated by an aesthetic delectation. This choice was based on a reaction of *visual* indifference with at the same time a total absence of good or bad taste ... in fact, a complete anesthesia" (his italics). Cabanne ?

MD"The individual, man as man, man as a brain, if you like, interests me more than what he makes, because I've noticed that most artists only repeat themselves. . . . They have that old habit which inclines them to do one painting a month, for example. Everything depends on their working speed. They believe they owe society the monthly or yearly painting." Cabanne ?

Importance of 'slow art' the delay the act of recognition, facture workmanlike approach to making art followed by unlearning to draw... breathing



In aesthetics Duchamp realized the idea of a kind of zero, the point of choice made by each of the creator and the spectator or participant. Raymond Duchamp-Villon [1876 -1918] was an exceptional Cubist sculptor. An organizer and on ___ committee, wrote the following notes⁹ for the Salon d'Automne of 1911, the first year Marcel his younger brother of 11 years, exhibited for the first time.

"...the question of reality in its connection with possibility, the question which remains a great source of anguish, is resolved [in Duchamp's work] "by slightly straining the laws of physics and chemistry." There can be no doubt that an effort

⁹ Raymond Duchamp-Villon, Intro. by George H. Hamilton, notes Wm. C. Agree, M. Knoedler & Company, Inc. 1967, Walker and Company, NY. Manuscript Notes, Part III and Manuscript Notes, Part III and V, pp. 111-112.

will be made in the future to rediscover the rigorous chronological order of the discoveries in the realm of plastic expression to which that method was to lead Marcel Duchamp. Future generations can do no less than make a systematic effort to go back up the stream of Duchamp's thought and carefully describe its meanderings in search of the hidden treasure which was his mind, and through that mind what is rarer still and even more precious, the very spirit of his period. What is at stake here is a profound initiation into the most modern way of feeling, where humor presents itself as the implicit condition of the work..."¹⁰

Realism for Courbet and reality is always being stripped by every generation_ Hermes the naked man the Greek statues Return to classicism after WWI in Cocteau...

Duchamp-Villon wrote this in 19__ and he continues, conveying his thoughts and approach to history and art facture, expressing his refinement and sensibility.

"I don't believe one can offer a satisfying explanation of an art form, whatever the perspective of time may be, and the assurance it gives of avoiding mistakes. Certain remarkable men have devoted themselves to the problem, and other to each work by each of the great artists and each of the schools now considered classic. But this doesn't prevent each of us from studying them and understanding them in our own way, which has nothing to do with theirs. Today the violent discussions which accompanied the appearance of Cubism are the same which disturbed our fathers in the great days of Impressionism; they recur every time remarkable personalities must assert themselves. The key to the problem is right there, rather than in ingenious theories: the feeling for art arises from the encounter in a work of art of two personalities, the artist's and the spectator's. This does not necessarily imply any communion between them. Quite to the contrary, there is a violent collision between the one's conventional learning and the other's spontaneity. But the effective presence of the creator in his work is the indication and proof of its value. That's exactly why I could, at the beginning and without knowing them, be attracted by the Cubist painters, and that's why little by little I could understand their aesthetic and better appreciate it..."

*Part V. The sole purpose of the arts I neither description nor imitation but the creation of unknown being from elements which are always present but not apparent.*¹¹

Part VI. Plastic art is no longer solely concerned with what in life is visible; it tries to realize the process of thought. The whole difficulty is in adapting its techniques to this new conception... It seems that today we should achieve an effort of will capable of translating the power of life in action...

¹⁰ Andre Breton, Histoire de l'Humor Noir, p. 221. give the French and my translation///

¹¹ Raymond Duchamp-Villon...

Duchamp wrote note #83 which he included in the counterpart to the *Large Glass*, the *Green Box* of 1934. He posed the question, "Peut on faire des oeuvres qui ne soit pas d'art" which translates, *Can one make works but that are not of art.* In contemplating this question many post studio artists have expanded the field of art and non-art. This subtly introduces the more demonstrative and physical approach to cultural productions called, "anti-art." One almost misses it, but with the critically necessary approach of the "not" Duchamp swept away entrenched classicism, a bourgeois attitude toward what is considered "beautiful" in works of art that are collected and admired. Duchamp doubted "posterity"¹² and the popular approbation given to conspicuous consumption in the arena of works of art that are valued for their price and popularity.¹³ To avoid social mediocrity and commercial interests, a sense of art taken in the fabric of [imbued to] the communities of artists through Kandinsky's writings among others... aspiration toward unique and clear perception_ At one time the definition of "modernity"¹⁴ which characterized so many artist's and their utopian visions of the future in the early twentieth century...

One must add to this conception of the "Not" Andre Malraux's brilliant recognition and exposition, his introduction of the concept of the individual's *musee imaginaire*,¹⁵ Translated into English as, *The Museum without Walls*. This brilliant observation was derived from the recognition of a major discontinuity between actual works of art and the images of them that are reproduced in printed matter. that exists in each person's consciousness; taken in by their interests, idea and enjoyment of works experienced live and through reproductions, according to their individual vectors of interest. The historians and those who write about and debate cultural production, known to some degree as critics, their points of view are diverse and vary as broadly as imaginable. The range of different approaches to creation and the appreciation of all art forms relies on the expressed points of view of their authors. By "doubting everything, even the word to be,"¹⁶ Duchamp was able to expose for those willing to face this truth, that widely followed and collected, art based on "taste" was not good based on logical grounds. In aesthetic discourse there is no truth function for decisions based on taste other than that of their expositors; e.g., Clement Greenberg's preferences and directives, were evolved through his interpretation of Kantian theory of art in a historical progression. Greenberg in fact derived his critical ideology and defined a personal angle of identity through the interpretation and appreciation of paintings by his contemporaries in the matrix of the cultural period in which he was living. Taste was then and continues to be a criterion of value for the majority of people. It is a social directive and an economically delineated force; among "collectors" who is buying what. Taste will

¹² Posterity theory...

¹³ Use a Rembrandt for an ironing board.

¹⁴ See: MODERNIST MYTHS of R. Krauss

¹⁵ Andre Malraux wrote novels and reportage and serves as the Minister of Culture in France, his trilogy on art was published as https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le_Musée_Imaginaire

¹⁶ BBC interview of 1959, link: <http://www.untitled-enterprises.net/BBCtranscript-1959-Krall.pdf>

always remain subtle, a chameleon like reality. Its only truth-value exists when it is understood to be self-limited.

Critic-historians with a penchant for applying psychoanalytic methodology and cathectic libidinal actions to the works and purported intentions of artists, e.g., Marcel Duchamp project personal interpretations, not facts. These misunderstandings, while widely admired and followed and accepted without question by many. In the article, "Index I..."¹⁷ a conception of indexical development of bodies of art works by a selection of artists including _____ establishes its premises in a discussion of Duchamp's *Large Glass*. While the concept of "indexicality" is brilliantly applied to many of the artists works observed in the 70s, it is a fact that the *Large Glass* has no fixed meaning and can only be understood as it is, *inacheve*,¹⁸ or unfinished. The idea that the *Large Glass* is the expression of a failed sexual encounter stated here. This assertion coming from some of the principal art historians and critics must be challenged... so that truth as stated in print will be reconsidered and reflected by posterity onto other screens of consciousness.

Rather it a playground for the *celebratrice* and a future groom with their counterparts the Bride and the Bachelors, Occulist Witnesses, et alia may interact. The situation is multi-dimensional and involves multiple worlds in the expanding and unknown spacetime of the universes. Who the viewers and engaged participants are in the mental and physical realms may be, it is they who are playing the game and inventing its strategies. We are talking about the human condition in the 21st century, not like a game of chess or any known sport. Recognition involves taking the position of the other players and proceeding with and without rules.

The bride might also be a bachelorette, the *celibat* or bachelor ending up a groom and the Groom, who grind the chocolate himself, for use perhaps in a mousse, or a cake or for a cup of hot chocolate? The *Large Glass* is a game and a delay *inacheve* ...but never would like to re-present the character of MD and to re-place him in the matrix of a vastly talented matrix of creative men and women in an explosively developing technological and cultural evolution. Burgeoning and supportive cultural milieu.

Less than 100 years ago the world was technologically speaking a relatively simple place. To have running hot and cold water, and gas for lighting and heat were luxuries available to wealthy people in urban centers. The steam engine advanced the industrial revolution and the ability to transport equipment and the spread of technology. The gas driven automobile telephone and the elephone and automobilews were a scarce luxury... there was barely electricity; heating and water systems that include modern plumbing... The incandescent light bulb ___ was preceded by street lights running with gas, and in the home oil or carosene lamps. The telephone did not become widespread until _____, the

¹⁷ Index I: Seventies artists... Rosalind Krauss...

¹⁸ Definition...

television in the ____ and before that people congregated in theatres and public places for speeches, readings, concerts, and dramatic productions of all kinds.

Feminism and pacifism were among the most discussed topics in the early twentieth century. Women had entered the work force during the First World War by necessity, as young men, often newly married, were killed by the millions. However it was the influenza pandemic of 1918 that killed by some estimates between 20 and 40 million people¹⁹, men and women and children were killed indiscriminately. As wage earners women were able to throw off the social expectations and entrenched sexism in every level of society. The conditions of being confined to the home and child rearing, and to be treated themselves as chattel, without voting or property rights changed dramatically and rapidly in that devastated time.

His acetic aesthetic was formed when he moved to New York after the outbreak of World War I in 1915 by the milieu of the roaring twenties, rising the skyscrapers and the Ash Can School in America until 1918 when he moved to Brazil for what ended up being only 6 months. Duchamp returned to Paris in 1918 immediately, upon the death of his brother Raymond Duchamp-Villon and his friend Guillaume Apollinaire, each died from combined war injuries and the 1918 influenza epidemic. He arrived just in time for Dada, which only he and Man Ray represented in New York in 1916, and by then in its later stages to be followed by the advent of Surrealist meetings in Paris where he lived until ____ into our current state not unlike that of the early 20th century during the First World War.

A consequence of the massive death and destruction wrought by World War I, was the extreme break with tradition that occurred for women as a whole. In joining the work force, to aid the war effort, the vital force of liberated women *en masse*, simply crushed the mold of societal expectations that had prevailed for centuries. The awakening of individual women from the closet of gender as destiny, allowed such exceedingly creative women as Meret Oppenheim, Lee Miller, and Elza Schiaparelli to achieve world recognition. Oppenheim had made fur lined bangles for Schiaparelli and was wearing one, sitting at the Café Flore in Paris with Picasso and Dora Maar, when the idea for the fur lined tea cup and spoon was suggested, and she realized it for a Surrealist exhibition a short time later. Yet, while she was a muse and lover to Man Ray for a time, and considered an ideal 'child-woman' by the Surrealists not Oppenheim, nor any other woman artist is named in the *First Surrealist Manifesto*. It is a marvelous, delirious but stridently pro masculine tome throughout. After over a decade of depression, Oppenheim stated, *For women, the implications are that they have to live their own female life as well as the female life that men project on them. Thus, they are woman times two. That's too much.*²⁰

¹⁹ United States Department of Health and Human Services: <http://www.flu.gov/pandemic/history/1918/>
Stanford University: <https://virus.stanford.edu/uda/>

²⁰ Meret Oppenheim, 1975, quoted at the Moderna Museet website; seeking clarification of source from them.

It would be expedient to say, that the desire to strip the blinders and imposture from society's eyes, and to provoke a general revision of moral behavior, is a shared motif in all three artists' works; eros and humor were the weapons they used. *"The basis of everything is eroticism, but nobody talks about it..."*²¹ Duchamp spelled this out in his work, and in interviews he expressed as historical precedent and strategic influence, the "Realism" of Courbet. In, *Givens: 1st, The Waterfall, 2nd, The Illuminating Gas*, Duchamp directly 'quotes' Courbet's shockingly realistic oil painting, *Origin of the World*. This observation is a logical conclusion when comparing the two works and viewing the stereoscopic photographs of female genitalia that had been in circulation in French artistic circles since the 1860s, exemplified by those of Auguste Belloc. They are now on view at the Metropolitan Museum of Art as part of the exhibition, *Gustave Courbet*.

Critic-historians who assign meanings as if they were facts where purposeful ambiguities exist, even ignore the stated deflections Duchamp occasionally made, when necessary. Libidinal and sexually oriented works that take Duchamp pieces for a point of departure have become a monstrous Hydra, where Freudian and cross-gender practitioners follow each other in droves. They reinvent for themselves from artist's work, without regard to what may be considered the veracity of Duchamp's intentions. Marcel Duchamp was known to have accepted, without comment, the wide range of opinions that were expounded on his works and himself; a very **Zen**²² attitude.

Texys By and About MD

By providing a textthe following collection from among Duchamp's interviews and statements a close reading yields sparkling clarity of the artist's intent and given that he has a "mediumistic" practice. By taking what many construed as abandoning art for the condition of living as his form, Duchamp transmitted clear signs of unclouded intelligence.

This first essay in *CHANGEchance_ The Duchamp Paradigm* is meant to act as a kind of proof by providing a core set of statements by Marcel Duchamp himself, through dialogs, interviews and in short pieces of his own writing. Duchamp's notes have been published in several editions and these are subject to extended contemplation and study; they are not addressed in this essay. If one were to imagine taking a narrative tour of the years 1887-1968 from a broad social and technological point of view, the life span of Marcel Duchamp takes as the central axis for a re-visualization of the evolution of human social realities. The powerful and generally misinterpreted value of *indifference* and the deployment of *thought things* demonstrated in the works, actions and *cervellités* of Marcel Duchamp have cast a

http://www.modernamuseet.se/feature/2004/MO_ManRay/template1.asp?lang=Eng&id=2173&bhcp=1

²¹ Marcel Duchamp, source in catalog.

²² A. Keneas obituary, NY Times Oct. 1968.

bridge for creatives in the arts, sciences and in socio-cultural existence *per se* to arrive at unique and perpetually changing event horizons.

*Each second, each breath is a work which is inscribed nowhere.*²³

The recognition that life is art, that breathing is the most profound recognition of existence of ephemerality was expressed in actual words in an interview with Jean Antoine in 1966, two years before Duchamp died in 1968. He was the arrow pointing at the light, quick ideas flashing a green on the horizon as the sun sets, and then it is gone, but remains bright in the minds eye.



²³ M. Duchamp, see booklet, find source...

TAKE TWO_ The Social Milieu

*The word ludic in Latin ludo, means to jouer to play, which is a thing to live for. You play chess and you kill but you don't kill much, people live after being killed you see in chess but not in normal wars. Yeah it's a peaceful thing it's a peaceful way of understanding life. Play anything else not chess alone but all games, all games. Play with life then you are just as alive and more alive than people who believe in religion and art.*²⁴

Marcel Duchamp

Marcel Duchamp was a man of his times, a phenomenal span of years from 1887 to 1968 bridging the 19th and 20th centuries and encompassed by the First and Second World Wars. Dwell on these thoughts dear Reader, and you may recognize that his generation were the initiators, participants and witnesses of unprecedented social and technological revolutions, and that by 1968 the digital age was almost a reality, but not quite. Duchamp's generation were born when the *Belle Époque* and Newtonian physics evolved into the Twentieth century with automobiles, telephones, aviation and television. Their generation engaged at first hand in both World Wars, each of which was unspeakably horrific, destructive and tragic. To render the human characters who acted in life and to project a vision of the way they inhabited and invented it is an attempt to reconstitute a cultural time and place, something like a world. They must then be seen in the matrix of their times, in an expanded view, evolving as allied independents within the milieu of creative beings, writers, intellectuals, poets, architects, filmmakers, scientists, musicians, dancers and visual artists who formed interconnected communities in Europe, America and beyond spanning the First and Second World Wars (1914-1918 and 1939-1945) and the rapid advances of industrialization, socialization and technology.

His feet were in the Belle Époque and Paris at the rise of Cubism and he lived both in America (New York City that is), with a spell in Buenos Aires, and in France all his life. One of the great problems for historians in every field is to try to render truth, objectively and insightfully. To re-project a vision and make apprehensible the characters that inhabited and invented a cultural time and place; to reconstitute something, like a world. It might be argued that artists are always the people in a society who seek to enlighten and revise, to change the world. In Europe from 1916 to 1929 artists were violently opposed to the social and bourgeois normative behaviors that continue to restrain women and a free-spirited creation and a changed social awareness.

²⁴ Transcribed from a film, "Jeu d'échecs avec Marcel Duchamp," shot in 1968 by Jean Clair.

It is impossible to separate Man Ray and Marcel from their objects, or *objets*. Perhaps the beginning of assemblage in the modern period was in *Beautiful as the fortuitous encounter on an operating table of a sewing machine and an umbrella.*²⁵

international creatives who must be seen in the matrix of their times, in an expanded view, evolving as allied independents within the milieu of intellectuals, scientists, filmmakers, poets, musicians and visual artists, who sought originality and to redirect, refine and realize ideas in the visual and plastic arts. These formed a social network of interconnected communities in Europe and America before, during and after the fertile and massively tragic period of the First and Second World Wars (1914-1918 and 1939-1945).

The blond wig that HMD is shown wearing in MR photograph was from MR studio, a prop used for occasional parties, etc. Teeney would never have worn such a thing... The Mae West craze, Schiaparelli fashions and the torso in her atelier... Man Ray perfume bottle of a lamp with top was painted into his masterpiece, "title"

The ROARING TWENTIES_ flappers, end of the corset – text on feminism
WWII 1939-1944 What it was like just before the war, the movies as escapism, see book on Women in films and rise of fashion industry...

Art deco, aesthetic of industrialization, machines cars futurist typography...use of technical sources offended "high art" subject matter... realism of Courbet.. stereoscopic images of female sex... Advent of public libraries, urban transportation, automobiles, Telephones Radio Movies, Lumieres, Edison electricity, lights, talkies 1928, the Jazz Singer Al Jolson in Blackface ! Civil Rights of Women, Blacks and people of color
Developments in Medicine_ the ampoule, Running Water and Gas for light and cooking
Birth control pills Legal Abortion Divorce laws Educational opportunity Prevalence of brothels and prostitution Legal inheritance
Paradigm shift in science from ether based to thermodynamics, from the spiritualized world to an expanding universe and existentialism. MD always injected humor when possible; he added levity to the seriousness of society about living so naturally he would invent a playful physics. He is said to have laughed when he played chess, the knight was not a "braying ass" but a chevalier with a cowlick.



TAKE THREE_ Universality

²⁵ *Beau comme la rencontre fortuite sur une table de dissection d'une machine à coudre et d'un parapluie.* Citation, Conte de Lautreamont, Songs of Maldoror, 1869

*Heracleitus says, you know, that all things move and nothing remains still, and he likens the universe to the current of a river, saying that you cannot step twice into the same stream.*²⁶

Socrates

Fundamental truth flickers in the light of lived experience; it is found through all time as human beings perceive it. In the ancient wisdom of Heraclitus and in the *uncertainty principle* in atomic physics. Expressed through complex mathematical calculations by Werner Heisenberg²⁷ the uncertainty principle supports philosophic principles that govern the perception of reality in the course of daily life, whether the subject is atomic particles, phase transitions or running errands. There is no “objective fact” in human life when popular consensus cannot definitively verify subjective judgments. Consciousness exists in the matrix of change. In the processes of perceiving changing conditions and passages and their application or relevance to the individual. This is the nature of the reality from which aesthetic discourses have evolved and aesthetics and philosophy have become twin-like, just as Marcel Duchamp was as much a philosopher as he was an artist-chess master. Assimilating the fields of philosophy, history and aesthetics was developed and achieved through a series of thinkers in their written works. A sequence of philosopher-aestheticians from Johann Joachim Winckelmann²⁸ to Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel,²⁹ to Immanuel Kant’s, *The Critique of Judgment*, of 1790³⁰ from which Twentieth Century art historians including Clement Greenberg and Rosalind Krauss brought forth their own unique series of thought. It is an interdisciplinary field of “thought things” combining literary and living voices.

Where is the groom in the *Large Glass*, and the bachelorettes ?

Artists are characterized by the fact that they produce physical works in some form. Appreciators, critics, historians, theorists, reviewers and journalists are the receivers and transmitters of ideas. Their thoughts about the works of artists with a frequency touched on in, “The Shape of Time”³¹ artists in dialog) and the receivers which are the people who appreciate, looking at and think about what art is. To Duchamp the concept of posterity

²⁶Plato, *Cratylus*, 402a. Statement attributed to Socrates in dialog with Hermogenes. Plato in *Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 12 translated by Harold N. Fowler. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1921.

²⁷The concept is explained in detail for laymen and the “observer effect,” transposed to state that each experiment is a unique reportage. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uncertainty_principle

²⁸ Wikipedia, 1 October 2015 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Joachim_Winckelmann

²⁹ Wikipedia, 1 October 2015 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel

³⁰ In this elaborated philosophical text Kant discusses the basis of knowledge and understanding and identifies “taste” as a defining measurement in aesthetics. *The Critique of Judgment*, 1790 [the text is provided online by Liberty Fund, Inc. at this link <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/1217>]

³¹ Kubler

occurred and was contemplated as a form of judgment passed on the works of an era by the collective awareness. Taking this further one may suppose that 'posterity' is an operative concept; the ever-changing mass unconscious that determines what is popular and what is accepted as "good" or "the best," as these values are presented by cultural institutions.

Ideal of modernism... early Twentieth Century... Avoid social mediocrity and commercial interests, a sense of art taken in the fabric of [imbued to] the communities of artists through Kandinsky's writings among others... aspiration toward unique and clear perception_ At one time the definition of "modernity"³² which characterized so many artist's and their utopian visions of the future in the early twentieth century... Philosophers and scientists are underlining facts that support the concept of unique perception as the only valid criterion of truth. A paper titled, *Color Realism and Color Science*,³³ demonstrates that each person sees color uniquely. So, despite a general consensus that objective fact can be established based on individual taste; they cannot. Collective observation and recording of cumulative subjective preferences in continuously changing cultural trends at every level, from popular to abstruse, are the basis of majority value judgments. Languages are also a continuously changing form of human culture and fruitful analogies can be drawn with aesthetics in that new words and uses of expressions are taking place. "Posterity" might then be understood to be the observed present of a current state of the mass subconscious manifested in the products of human production in every field and in a temporal narrative.

Duchamp's choice of industrially produced, ready-made objects, is directly linked to the industrial age into which he was born. Tremendous shifts in perception were occurring in the sciences, arts and philosophy. A transition from Newtonian theory to atomic physics was underway. Agricultural settlements and expectations were being updated rapidly to industrial production; it was the industrial revolution. Communication systems were revised when the letter post was revised by the invention and widespread use of the telephone and the appearance of telegraph messaging. From the discovery and evolution of still photography to the first talking pictures in 1928. Discoveries in medicine included that of x-rays and it was not until 19__ that penicillin was discovered and made widely available to combat often mortal, and debilitating bacterial diseases.

All of these changes were talking place while the subjects of major social and critical interest was the liberation of women, their legal rights, the nature of their social roles which were completely altered by the devastations of the First World War. Transformations were so potent throughout the course of Duchamp's life span (from 1887 to 1968) that it is daunting to look at these 82 years and consider the extra-rapid personal and cultural advances in architecture, dance, theatre, film and literature that were taking place around the world. All of these were paralleled by medical and technological evolutions, and everything was directly and adversely altered by the devastations of World War I, World War II and the War in Vietnam.

³² See: MODERNIST MYTHS of R. Krauss

³³ <http://web.mit.edu/abyrne/www/ColorRealism.html>

An act of choice was the essential determining factor establishing that a work was of “art,” was discovered when Duchamp invented ready-mades. A thought jotted and reproduced in the *Green Box* is reflected in note #83: “peut on faire les oeuvres mais pas de l’art”.³⁴

Political climate, the Ash Can School with John Sloane on Washington Square Monument declaring Greenwich Villag a separate ???

Duchamp’s contribution of the *ready-made* and his statement, “on ready-mades”³⁵ were a point of liberation for art to become idea based and not based on emotional generation inaugurated conceptualism in establishing that choice is the fundamental element of all art. No good or bad taste, but indifference to ‘taste’ was the subtle and brilliant zero degree which Duchamp discovered for art, and thus he made it possible to declare standards of aesthetic valuation. If it is the decision to make pottery or to create a digitally triggered environment, or if it is to design a city or an experiment to test the movement of nutrinos, the activity is inherently conceptual.

Paradigm shifts in the sciences [Painleve films] and in the arts became known between 1887, the nineteenth century and beginning of industrial revolutions in many countries and 1968 witness to advent of the pill, anti-war demonstrations....

steam engine, etc.



³⁴ *A’ l’Infinitif*, 19__ Also known as the White Box.

³⁵ MD