94 Marcel Duchamp, *Box in a Suitcase*, 1936–41, cardboard, wood, paper, plastic, 40 × 37.5 × 8.2 cm. Paris, Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne.

Marcel Duchamp: Paradoxical Promoter of His Art in the United States (1942–1960)

Scarlett Reliquet

The question of their fame, partly related to the question of the critical reception of their work during or after their own lifetime, has always preoccupied creative artists. The relationship to time and to what will remain of an oeuvre and a life—once it is over—is often a key concern during that life. No artist, regardless of when they lived and worked, is ever completely uninterested in the image they leave behind.

What was Duchamp's relationship to fame in general? What, fundamentally, was his attitude to his work, to his acceptance by museums and to his value on the art market? And how did that attitude evolve over time, notably once he moved to the United States in 1942? What should we make of the paucity of explanations by Duchamp early in his career, followed by his later concern to provide keys to an understanding of his work? How should we interpret his interest in the design of his exhibitions, and in the layout and typography of the books and catalogues in which he was involved? What should we think of his interest and curiosity about the work of his contemporaries (Brancusi and Picabia, whose works he collected and promoted) and of the younger artists who became his friends (notably pop artists)? What factors contributed, from 1960 onward, to what Pierre Cabanne, who interviewed Duchamp at length in 1966, called a kind of laissez-faire and endless self-indulgence? Finally, what should we make of the fact that his first retrospective in Europe took place in London in 1966 ("The Almost Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp," Tate Gallery), roughly ten years before the one in Paris in 1977?[1] Was there some kind of reticence toward Duchamp on the part of the French public, and, if so, where did it originate?

1 The Duchamp rooms of the Philadelphia Museum of Art opened in 1954 thanks to the donation of forty-three works by Louise and Walter Arensberg; a Duchamp retrospective was organized in Philadelphia and MoMA in New York in 1973.

The answers are multiple, and often ambiguous. One thing is sure, namely that on many occasions Duchamp contradicted his own declaration that "the artist doesn't know what he's doing" (1960).[2]

Duchamp's renown in the United States, where he lived on and off from June 1915 to the Second World War, then permanently from his wartime exile in 1942 onward, was notably built on the network of the country's still-young museums and private collections of modern art. He integrated into America as soon as he arrived, lodging with Louise and Walter Arensberg, his long-time patrons and collectors. Two years earlier, in 1913, America had made a fuss over his famous painting of *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2* (*Nu descendant un escalier, no. 2*)[3] when it was exhibited at the Armory Show: that specific moment, marked by the scandal of newness and rupture, constituted the linchpin of Duchamp's relationship with the country and even, it might be said, with the question of his relationship to notoriety. The incident of the Armory Show scandal[4] guided Duchamp's behavior for the rest of his "career," giving him an aloof, even suspicious attitude toward fame, especially when it arrived suddenly. Later, when critic Henry McBride interviewed him during the "Duchamp Frères et Soeur" show at the Rose Fried Gallery in 1952, asking if it were possible for him to dodge fame,[5] Duchamp replied that fame vanishes as suddenly at it appears, so it wasn't worth bothering about such things. But that kind of answer is probably easier to give once you're already famous.

When it comes to the exact place where Duchamp's reputation emerged and grew, we know it wasn't France. Marc Décimo has referred to the trauma of the withdrawal of his *Nude Descending a Staircase* from the 1912 Salon des Indépendants, as demanded by Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger. Regarding that rejection, Duchamp commented, "The incident triggered in me a complete revision of my values, without me even realizing it."[6] Even in 1954, Duchamp's fame in France remained limited. "Who's that?" the editor of *Arts*, André Parinaud, reportedly asked when Henri-Pierre Roché and Alain Jouffroy

2 Georges Charbonnier, *Entretiens avec Marcel Duchamp* (Marseille: André Dimanche, 1994).

3 *Nude Descending a Staircase (no. 2)*, oil on canvas, 57⅞ × 35⅛ in. (147 × 89.2 cm), Philadelphia Museum of Art.

4 The painting of *Nude Descending a Staircase (no. 2)*, which depicted a conventional subject (a nude) in a cubist, mechanistic manner, uniformly shocked American critics. Mocked and caricatured by the press of the day, the work was considered both provocative and incomprehensible. This artistic scandal delighted Duchamp and was not unrelated to his move to New York in 1915.

5 Henry McBride, "Duchamp du monde," *Art News* 51, no. 1 (1952), p. 33.

6 Marc Décimo, review of Marcel Duchamp in Munich 1912, Helmut Friedel, ed., exh. cat. (Munich: Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus München, 2012) in Critique d'art (November 2013), https://journals.openedition.org/critiquedart/5419, accessed November 2018.

93 Marcel Duchamp, *The Chess Players*, 1911, oil on canvas, 50 × 61 cm. Paris, Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne.

suggested that he publish an interview with Duchamp in his magazine.[7] That was the year the Musée National d'Art Moderne in Paris bought *The Chess Players* (*Les joueurs d'échecs*, 1911), a painting that had belonged to Jacques Villon and was the first work by Duchamp to enter a French public institution (fig.93).

Even today Duchamp and his oeuvre remain, in a way, unloved by the French public despite various attempts to present his work to a broad audience, as witnessed by recent exhibitions.[8] Thus the United States, although he wasn't born there, have definitively adopted him as one of their own, to the point where museums usually identify him as "Marcel Duchamp, American artist, born France." This profile reflects his nationality, since he acquired American citizenship in 1955 after having

7 The interview appeared in *Arts*, no. 491 (1954). See Henri-Pierre Roché, *Écrits sur l'art* (Marseille: André Dimanche, 1998), pp. 253–55.

8 "Marcel Duchamp: La peinture, même, 1910-1923," curated by Cécile Debray, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 2014; "ABCDuchamp, l'expo pour comprendre Marcel Duchamp," Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen, 2018.

applied for it in 1947, although that is not generally acknowledged by French museums, which persist in considering him a Frenchman.

Duchamp is known for having managed to escape the laws of the art market, just as he initially rejected other rules and conventions of society related to marriage and the need to support a family, by making a living from his income as an artist.[9] He found himself faced with a dilemma: adopt the status of an accepted artist who aspires to some kind of recognition from his peers, which means occasionally selling works to collectors and museums, or choose the status of "anartist"[10] who seeks to produce an oeuvre while turning his back on all the rules and artifices of "the system." As Harriet and Sidney Janis put it, "Here is the core of the inner drama, the conflict between acceptance and rejection that is the basis of Duchamp's philosophic and aesthetic rationale. He resolves it by accepting both sides as concomitant parts of reality."[11] The attitude of total independence that Duchamp wanted to maintain throughout his life could be summed up by an incident from 1916, while he was working on *The Large Glass* (*La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même*, or *Le Grand Verre*). He was offered—via Man Ray, who reported it in his autobiography—$10,000 by New York art dealer Alfred Knoedler for his annual output, even if that meant just one painting. Duchamp turned it down.[12] He remained loyal to this principle throughout his life in the two spheres of medium (don't remain attached to painting) and money (don't depend financially on a dealer). He wound up, however, bending the rule sometimes, as when he allowed Arturo Schwarz to produce editions of his readymades.[13]

Self-restrained yet calculating

Duchamp tried to transcend this paradox by remaining on the sidelines, even while attentively following the game. He who declared that the future of art was futureless constructed a brilliant future for himself, without deliberately trying. It is hard to describe his "method" for

9 Marcel Duchamp married Lydie Sarasin-Levassor on June 7, 1927, but it was a brief marriage since the couple divorced on January 28, 1928. He was wed a second time, on January 16, 1954, to Alexina Sattler, with whom he lived until he died.

10 Duchamp invented the word "anartist" as contraction of "artist" and "anarchist."

11 Harriet and Sidney Janis, "Marcel Duchamp, Anti-Artist," *Horizon, A Review of Literature and Art* XII, no. 70 (October 1945), p. 264.

12 "I said no, and I wasn't rich, either. I could very well have accepted ten thousand dollars, but no, I sensed the danger right away." Marcel Duchamp interviewed by Pierre Cabanne, in Pierre Cabanne *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, trans. Rod Padgett (Boston, MA: Da Capo Press, 1987), p. 106. See also Man Ray, *Self-Portrait* (London: Penguin, 2012), p. 234.

13 In 1964 the Schwartz Gallery in Milan produced new editions of eight copies each of thirteen readymades that were no longer extant.

ultimately achieving fame, but he clearly managed it while remaining self-restrained yet calculating—chess having represented, in this context, an escape and distraction from life as well as a metaphor for it. In every instance, Duchamp adopted an approach that kept him on the fringe of the art system, saving him from having to devote himself to it exclusively, excessively. While his abandonment of painting surprised and discouraged some of his early admirers, it was certainly his most courageous act and the one that favorably sealed his fate as an artist. Some commentators, such as his first biographer, Robert Lebel, wondered if Duchamp's almost systematic recourse to derision largely helped to save him from self-mystification.[14] Humor, irony, and witticisms in particular were central elements of Duchamp's method. But not everything rested on this approach—far from it.

The question of money and the profitability of his artwork, notably thanks to the production and sale of multiples, arose at that time, namely the years of the *Boîtes-en-valise* (fig.94), done between 1935 and 1941 (and up to 1968 for later series), whose production and sale put Duchamp in direct contact no longer just with friends and supporters such as Peggy Guggenheim, Katherine Dreier, and the Arensbergs, but also with American galleries and museums. It is easy to argue that Duchamp did not truly wish to make a business of his artwork once we read, in a 1952 letter to Roché, that he had had twenty-five *Boîtes-en-valise* made and "hope[d] to get rid of them quickly," as though the goal was not to get the highest price but to distribute his work and make it more widely known.[15] In that letter he also mentioned that for each box he received seventy dollars of the $125 price set by his dealer. These "boxes in a suitcase"—which Duchamp viewed as a "catalogue … of almost all [his] work" or as "a box in which all [his] works would be mounted like in a small museum, a portable museum"[16]—contained sixty-nine items that were miniature reproductions (on a 1:3 scale) of Duchamp's works, plus one original work.[17] They demonstrate Duchamp's interest in museums as well as his underlying critique of that institution. While they provide proof that, right from the start, he liked to think about a commercial outlet for his art—on this occasion, at least—the *Boîtes-en-valise* also wittily jeered at museums, making an elegant "mock(up)ery" of

14 Robert Lebel, *Sur Marcel Duchamp* (Paris: Trianon, 1959). Translated into English by George Heard Hamilton as *Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Grove Press, 1959).

15 Letter from Duchamp to Henri-Pierre Roché, March 15, 1952, in Scarlett Reliquet and Philippe Reliquet, eds., *Correspondance, Marcel Duchamp–Henri-Pierre Roché, 1918–1959* (Geneva: Mamco, 2012).

16 Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson, eds., *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp* (Boston, MA: Da Capo, 1989), p. 136.

17 There are around 300 copies of Duchamp's *Boîtes-en-valise*, divided into seven series numbered A to G, each different and handmade by Duchamp (or, later, by his entourage), up to 1968.

galleries and the art market system insofar as these boxes were multiples while simultaneously being originals. And while they largely contributed to the dissemination and therefore to the notoriety of Duchamp's work, they also directly alluded to a salesman's suitcase, to "commercial travelers," a theoretically unflattering allusion that nevertheless pleased Duchamp because it debunked the role of artist. As Harriet and Sidney Janis pointed out, the *Boîtes-en-valise* had the advantage of offering the beholder a retrospective view of Duchamp's oeuvre, a composite portrait of the artist.[18] The boxes thus saved time for anyone who wanted to grasp Duchamp's work in a glance, "summing up" both the artist and his oeuvre.

Beyond this famous series and its significance, it might be argued that the main motivation for readymades in particular, and multiples in general, resides in the desire to avoid the pitfall of the "original artwork," one of the foundations of artistic value and commercial success, which has become a golden rule of the market. It should nevertheless be acknowledged that Duchamp changed his mind later, notably in 1964 when he agreed to the production of a limited edition of replica ready-mades—as well as *Three Standard Stoppages* (*Trois stoppages-étalon*) and *Fresh Widow*—in collaboration with Milanese art dealer and critic Arturo Schwarz.

Duchamp's reply to Calvin Tomkins on the marketing of his ready-mades was clear. They were not made "with the idea of producing thousands of them. It was really to get out of the exchangeability, I mean the monetization, one might say, of the work of art. I never intended to sell my readymades."[19]

Duchamp's skittishness with regard to the art market was notorious. In his correspondence with Roché, he made many critical comments about the people who wanted to do business with his art. In one letter, Duchamp mentioned the opening of a gallery in Hollywood by Bill Copley and John Ployardt, commenting in a later letter, dated May 9, 1949, that the pair had spent $70,000 in one year. On May 29, 1949, he even described Copley's venture as "disastrous," judging it to have been risky and dangerous. In the letter of May 9, he had furthermore told Roché that "the reason is also that I have less and less desire to ham it up and play along with the speculative market in paintings in Paris (and New York)."[20] In a 1952 letter, Duchamp went so far as to tell Roché of his serious doubts about his personal ability to sell his art. "The sales

18 Janis, "Marcel Duchamp, Anti-Artist" (note 11).

19 Calvin Tomkins, *The Afternoon Interviews* (Brooklyn: Badlands Unlimited, 2013), p. 26. The interviews were conducted in 1964.

20 Letter from Duchamp to Roché, May 9, 1949, in Reliquet and Reliquet, *Correspondance* (note 15), p. 91.

game is really one played by merchants, and neither you nor I know how to play. … I have no 'market' in the 'merchant' sense of the term."[21]

One old, still-notorious incident seems to sum up Duchamp's dissident attitude toward the art market. Just after receiving an inheritance following his parents' death, he carefully organized the sale of a fictional "Marcel Duchamp collection" at the Drouot auction house in Paris in March 1926, playing on the art market system.[22] Assembling major works from Picabia's studio, Duchamp later had fun describing the auction as an "amusing experience," stressing that "until then, no one had had the idea of showing Picabias to the public, let alone selling them, giving them a commercial value."[23]

Shitting under myself

As to exhibitions that could help establish his reputation just like any other artist, Duchamp's attitude was categorically hostile. "I see no point in shows that burn rather than serve a purpose."[24] When it came to Roché's numerous attempts to promote the artist's work, Duchamp warned, "I beg you to avoid all exhibitions and events regarding me, I wish to remain in peace. The family show revealed the danger of poking my head up."[25] When Duchamp was asked to attend a show at La Hune bookstore in Paris to celebrate the launch of Robert Lebel's recently published biography of him—and for which he produced a now famous poster of his own silhouetted face—he replied in a telegram sent from Cadaqués on May 4, 1959, with the laconic phrase, *JE FAIS SOUS MOI* [Shitting under myself]. In its radical, scatological tone, this res-

21 Duchamp to Roché, April 11, 1952, in Reliquet and Reliquet, *Correspondance* (note 15).

22 The sale on March 8, 1926, included "eighty paintings, watercolors, and drawings by Picabia belonging to Mr. Marcel Duchamp." The twenty-eight-page catalogue, designed by Duchamp himself, listed eighty lots and reproduced fourteen works. Over the signature of Rrose Sélavy, Duchamp described the stylistic development of Picabia, his old buddy who participated in hatching this new kind of auction: with the money inherited from his parents, Duchamp decided to make some calculated investments on the art market. In January 1926 he bought eighty canvases, drawings, and watercolors directly from Picabia. The works selected were supposed to represent every stage of his career. The auction was successful, generating substantial profits. Buyers included André Breton and Tristan Tzara. See Francis Naumann, *Marcel Duchamp: The Art of Making Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, exh. cat. (Ghent: Ludion Press, 1999), p. 103, repr. (no. 107) p. 104.

23 Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp* (note 12), p. 73.

24 Letter from Duchamp to Roché, January 23, 1950, in Reliquet and Reliquet, *Correspondance* (note 15).

25 Duchamp to Roché, April 26, 1950, in Reliquet and Reliquet, *Correspondance* (note 15), p. 131. "The Duchamp family show" was how the two letter-writers referred to the exhibition "Duchamp Frères et Soeur: Oeuvres d'Art" at the Rose Fried Gallery in New York, February 25–March 31, 1952. The show made a splash and received attention from the press.

ponse echoed the telegram that Duchamp sent to Tristan Tzara, *PODE BAL* [Balls to you], when invited to attend the Dada Salon in 1921.

Duchamp carefully sought to avoid other traps in addition to the art market, such as the aesthetic appeal of painting on the beholder. He tried to avoid what he called the "retinal" effect of impressionism.[26] He made the radical decision to stop painting in order to avoid repeating himself, as he felt too many artists did. In an interview with Alain Jouffroy done in 1964 and included, that same year, in Jouffroy's book *Une révolution du regard: A propos de quelques peintres et sculpteurs contemporains*, Duchamp explained why he stopped painting in the following terms: "I stopped half out of laziness, half out of lack of ideas, because … I don't paint just to paint. I've never considered myself a painter in the professional sense of the word."[27]

Not dwelling on fame, all the while remaining attentive to it: Duchamp chose his allies and partners with caution and parsimony. He limited his actions and the places destined to receive his works. He relied on knowledgeable friends and collectors of his work, whom he met on his arrival in the United States, notably Peggy Guggenheim, Max Ernst, Frederick Kiesler, the Arensbergs, and Katherine Dreier, not forgetting Alexina (Teeny) Sattler, who became his wife in 1954.

First Papers

On arriving in the United States on June 25, 1942, Duchamp stayed, for roughly one month, with Robert Allerton Parker and his wife Jessica Daves, then with Peggy Guggenheim and Max Ernst at 440 East Fifty-First Street. He began making his fifty boxes (a deluxe edition of twenty boxes followed by an edition of thirty that did not contain an original artwork), thanks to needed materials and documents sent from Paris to New York in the same convoy of ships that carried his friend Peggy's art collection. The financing of the *Boîtes-en-valise* project first came from Roché, based on an agreement with Duchamp, following their joint purchase of a batch of Brancusi sculptures from one of the auctions of John Quinn's estate. Duchamp explained in a letter to Roché, dated January 17, 1941, that each box required three weeks of work and that he was finding it hard to obtain leather (during wartime, that is) for the outside case. He expressed his concern about potential sales and was specifically working on the deluxe series, thinking that the

26 Otto Hahn, "Marcel Duchamp, *L'Express*, no. 684 (1964), pp. 22–23.

27 Alain Jouffroy, *Une révolution du regard: A propos de quelques peintres et sculpteurs contemporains* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), p. 117.

first takers were more likely to be rich clients—the first box of the edition was done for Peggy Guggenheim, and was shipped to the United States via Grenoble and Marseille.[28] Duchamp is to be congratulated for his shrewd decision to give his first box to the collector who would later become legendary, but who had not yet opened her London gallery (dubbed Guggenheim Jeune in a nod to Bernheim Jeune). Was Duchamp's gesture a way of thanking Peggy, his kind-hearted American hostess who was also helping to finance Varian Fry's unflagging commitment to the Emergency Rescue Committee? (The committee, founded in 1940, housed and exfiltrated from Marseille [via Fry] at least 2,500 people including many artists and writers, until Fry himself left for the United States in October 1941.[29]) This hypothesis cannot be dismissed, nor can the more trivial one of Duchamp's need to support himself, which he attempted to do during this entire period by seeking out well-heeled clients liable to buy his "boxes."

Duchamp moved to Fifty-Sixth Street, where he rented a separate room in the twentieth-floor penthouse of Frederick and Steffi Kiesler from October 1942 to October 1943.[30] Frederick Kiesler was an Austro-Hungarian stage designer who notably devised the presentation of the *Boîte-en-valise* first exhibited at Guggenheim's Art of This Century gallery, whose interior decoration and exhibition design was also Kiesler's doing.[31] Furthermore, the list of Duchamp's solo (or semi-solo) shows—five, at the rate of roughly one per year from 1942 to 1946—plus his inclusion in fifteen group shows during the same period, reveal his extensive activity in this sphere.[32]

One of the most famous exhibitions was "First Papers of Surrealism" (fig. 95), held from October 14 to November 7, 1942, in a wing of the Whitelaw Reid Mansion (now the New York Palace Hotel) located at 451 Madison Avenue. Duchamp contributed to the exhibition design and the catalogue. It was not only the biggest show of surrealist works ever displayed in the United States, but also the one that announced the arrival in America of artists who had left war-torn Europe. The title referred to the administrative documents ("papers") required for

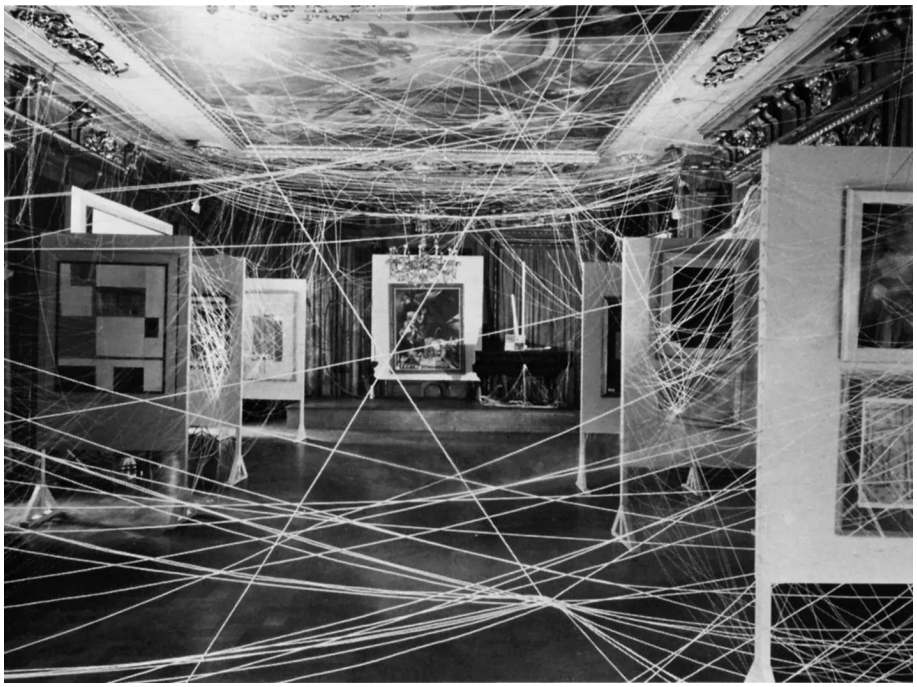
28 Scarlett Reliquet and Philippe Reliquet, *Henri-Pierre Roché: L'enchanteur collectionneur* (Paris: Ramsay, 1999), pp. 203–4.

29 See Martin Schieder, "The Transatlantic Crossing By Ship Into Exile During World War II: From Heterotopic Experience to Aesthetic Reflection," in Uwe Fleckner, Maike Steinkamp and Hendrik Ziegler, eds., *Der Künstler in der Fremde: Migration – Reise – Exil* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), pp. 283–305, especially pp. 292–95.

30 Francis M. Naumann and Hector Obalk, eds., *Affectionately, Marcel: The Selected Correspondence of Marcel Duchamp*, trans. Jill Taylor (Ghent: Ludion, 2000), p. 230.

31 On the history of the gallery (1942–47), see the monograph edited by Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands, *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2005), based on the Kiesler archives at the Frederick Kiesler Center in Vienna.

32 For the list of exhibitions, see Nauman and Obalk, *Affectionately, Marcel* (note 30), p. 228.



95 John D. Schiff, installation view of the exhibition "First Papers of Surrealism," showing *His Twine* by Marcel Duchamp, 1942, gelatin silver print, 19.4 × 25.4 cm. Philadelphia Museum of Art.

authorization to make the journey and to enter the United States. The income from admission tickets to the show was donated to the children of French prisoners. This was yet another reason why the exhibition was a political event in itself. The opening night was made famous by the installation of a giant labyrinth of twine on the ceiling and among the display panels, devised by Duchamp with the help of Breton, Sidney Janis, the latter's young son Carroll, and a gang of a dozen children. The labyrinth spurred numerous interpretations of Duchamp's intentions. The most conclusive outcome of this mischievous installation, which placed great emphasis on the role of the beholder, was to generate a lot of talk about the show and Duchamp,[33] who thereby joined the famous community of surrealist artists in exile: Breton, Ernst, Masson, Lam, Matta, Tanguy, Duthuit, Lebel, Claude Lévi-Strauss, the Walbergs, and others.

33 On this subject, see Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous: Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dali, and Surrealist Exhibition Installations* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003) and Vick John, "A New Look: Marcel Duchamp, His Twine and the 1942 First Papers of Surrealism Exhibition," in *toutfait.com. The Marcel Duchamp Studies Online Journal*, 2008, http://www.toutfait.com/a-new-look-marcel-duchamp-his-twine-and-the-1942-first-papers-of-surrealism-exhibition/#N_3_, accessed November 2018.

"20th-Century Art from the Louise and Walter Arensberg Collection" (1949)

Duchamp's relationship to his work and his fame underwent a shift after his 1954 marriage to Alexina (Teeny) Sattler, the former wife of art dealer Pierre Matisse, himself the eldest son of artist Henri Matisse. This marriage played an important role in the construction of Duchamp's American reputation.[34] Given the fabulous history of the Pierre Matisse Gallery (1931–89) and its success at selling art to the biggest American collectors of the day (Walter P. Chrysler Jr., A. E. Gallatin, Joseph Hirshhorn, Duncan Phillips, Joseph Pulitzer Jr., Nelson A. Rockefeller, and James Thrall Soby), it is impossible to exclude the hypothesis that Duchamp also benefited from it, via Teeny. Furthermore, the fact that, once they were married, Teeny began conserving documentation on Duchamp's activities—notably his correspondence, as witnessed by the estate's archives—is indicative of her professionalism in this sphere. The new attitude is proof that Duchamp—in conjunction with his wife—henceforth paid greater attention to what he called "things," and to everything liable to constitute a reliable record of his work.

Duchamp's loyalty was certainly another asset in his successful career in the United States. When he arrived in New York on June 15, 1915 (having avoided the draft due to a heart murmur), at the invitation of Walter Pach, he was introduced by Pach to the Arensbergs, who housed him until he moved to 1947 Broadway. It was at the Arensbergs' place that he first met the entire American avant-garde and other Frenchmen living in New York (notably Henri-Pierre Roché). They would become his main patrons. In a letter to his sister Yvonne Chastel, sent on September 21, 1944, Duchamp wrote that he had not seen the Arensbergs since 1936, their move to California and their failing health having made a meeting impossible since his return to America in 1942.[35] On October 17, 1944, the Arensbergs deposited their collection, including thirty-seven works by Duchamp, with the University of California. But the deed of gift stipulated that the university would erect a building to house the museum, which ultimately proved unacceptable.

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34 Alexina Sattler was the daughter of a well-known ophthalmologist who headed a hospital as well as a clinic; in 1929 she married the art dealer Pierre Matisse, after having toyed with an artistic career herself. Matisse, after a brief training in Paris (where he notably worked at the Galerie Barbazanges-Hodebert), left for New York in December 1924. In November 1931 he opened his own gallery in the Fuller Building, running it successfully for over fifty years until his death in 1989. Matisse notably organized the "Artists in Exile" show in 1941. Whereas his gallery represented European and American surrealists, Matisse's clients were the major American collectors and museums. Sattler and Matisse divorced in 1949. She inherited a large number of artworks from him, which remained in her possession.

35 Naumann and Obalk, *Affectionately, Marcel* (note 30), p. 241.

An exhibition titled "20th-Century Art from the Louise and Walter Arensberg Collection" was organized by the Art Institute of Chicago from October 20 to December 18, 1949. Exhibits 52 to 81 in the museum show were works by Duchamp, the two most heavily represented artists being him and Brancusi. The Arensberg collection contained almost three-quarters of Duchamp's works. In a letter he wrote to Roché on November 14, 1949, Duchamp explained that he had been invited to Chicago and had spent three pleasant days there. He visited the show twice (the second time in early December). "The Arensberg show is truly remarkable. Brancusi has an entire room, and so do I, an entire room for my works." His second visit to the room featuring his works reinforced the favorable impression: "Did I tell you that I was struck by the freshness and good condition of most of my canvases, seen in the museum's strong lighting?"[36]

This was a period when Duchamp wondered whether it would be better to sell his youthful works (paintings and drawings from 1909–10) to French or American collectors. These works, incidentally, were unsigned, so Jacques Villon signed the attestations. Duchamp notably offered them to Walter Arensberg, who finally bought two. The artist stated that, "Those two things will above all contribute earlier dates to the chronology of my paintings in his collections."[37] In a letter to Roché dated June 13, 1950, Duchamp claimed that the Arensbergs were "delighted" with this purchase. It is worth noting that Duchamp himself, on Roché's advice, set prices on those of his early works that remained to be sold. That was also the year—1950—that Duchamp, as a trustee of the Arensberg Foundation, gave his approval to the donation of the Arensberg collection to the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

On October 27, 1950—seven years before the deadline they had set themselves for donating their collection—the Arensbergs finally contacted the museum in Philadelphia and began negotiations that were successfully concluded in 1951.[38] The museum's Duchamp rooms were officially opened on October 16, 1954, and featured eighty-eight works including photos, objects, drawings, and so on. Duchamp thereby entered the museum world by gathering his works in a single place, demonstrating his determination to concentrate, rather than scatter, his oeuvre.

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36 Letter from Duchamp to Roché, December 8, 1949, in Reliquet and Reliquet, *Correspondance* (note 15).

37 Walter Arensberg bought two oils on canvas, *Church at Blainville* (1902) and *Portrait of Marcel Lefrançois* (1904), both now in the Philadelphia Museum of Art. See Reliquet and Reliquet, *Correspondance* (note 15), p. 108.

38 Aware that they were getting older, the Arensbergs wanted to make arrangements for a final home for their collection, but did not live to see the opening of the Duchamp rooms in the Philadelphia Museum of Art on October 16, 1954. Louise died in 1953, Walter on January 29, 1954.

For an artist, museums constitute a step toward fame. And this issue was crucial to Duchamp, whatever he may have claimed. Which raises the question of the compatibility between Duchamp's incontrovertible attraction to museums and his sincere distaste for self-exhibition, while ultimately winding up as a hallowed artist in a museum. When asked by Robert Lebel about the very word "museum," Duchamp replied with one of his familiar dodges: "I use the word in the sense of hospice or asylum for the blind, the deaf-and-dumb, the elderly, and the mad. Because museums are made for artists, right? … Furthermore, isn't it better to be shut up if you're mad, whether dead or alive? It's too dangerous outside."[39]

The Large Glass

On many occasions, Duchamp showed that he was highly interested in the question of museums, simultaneously as a commemorative institution and a site of (re)presentation. His personal involvement inspired him to found the Société Anonyme, Inc., with Katherine Dreier in 1920. Dreier was another great art patron and collector of Duchamp and Man Ray (fig. 96). The Société Anonyme was the United States' first, self-proclaimed, museum devoted to living artists. Experimental right from the start, the museum initially occupied a two-room apartment on West Forty-Seventh Street in New York. Its collection grew to roughly 800 items, and in 1941 it moved to Yale University, enriching the collection of the Yale University Art Gallery. The Société Anonyme folded in 1950, after having organized over eighty exhibitions in pursuance of its goal to disseminate modern art, making it available to all. Although Duchamp wrote thirty-three entries for the catalogue of the collection donated by Dreier, published in 1950, he only actively participated in the management of the collection and the museum until 1928, leaving Dreier at the helm. However, it was as executor of his friend's will that he oversaw part of the dispersal of Dreier's collection after she died in 1952.

It was Dreier who bought Duchamp's *Large Glass*, and who commissioned his last painting, *Tu m'* (1918). In 1944 she and he published, in collaboration with Roberto Matta Echaurren, a major explanatory article on *The Large Glass*, titled "Duchamp's Glass: An Analytical Reflection." And it was Dreier again who decided to place *The Large Glass* on long-term loan with the Museum of Modern Art in New York, from May to October, 1944. The loan was part of an ambitious group show, titled "Art in Progress," to celebrate the museum's fif-

39 Entry for "Musée" in the glossary of the catalogue of the 1977 Duchamp retrospective at the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

96 John Schiff, *Interior View of Katherine S. Dreier's West Redding Home, "The Haven"—Library with Marcel Duchamp's The Large Glass and Tu m'*, 1941. New Haven, CT, Yale University Art Foundation.

teenth anniversary. The head curator of painting and sculpture, James Thrall Soby, who also oversaw the exhibition, allotted *The Large Glass* an important place in the show. It should not be forgotten that the glass had cracked while being moved sometime between 1927 and 1931, and that this show was its first appearance since its restoration in 1936. Its display at MoMA, after such a long absence, indeed sparked surprise.[40] As a logical consequence, MoMA bought Duchamp's *Passage from Virgin to Bride* (*Le Passage de la vierge à la mariée*) from Walter Pach in December 1945; it was the first Duchamp painting to be bought by a museum, for that matter. In comparison, the Musée National d'Art Moderne in Paris

40 "Art in Progress: 15th Anniversary Exhibition, Built in the USA," May 24–October 22, 1994, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

bought its first Duchamp, *The Chess Players* (1911), from Jacques Villon in 1954. Appointed executor of Dreier's estate following her death on March 29, 1952, Duchamp sought to bequeath *The Large Glass* to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, as he explicitly stated in a letter to Roché dated May 7, 1952.[41] That is what transpired in 1953. Moreover, Duchamp arranged for several other donations of works from Dreier's collection to various museums. He was very active and fully aware of the fact that his own works had to be assembled and concentrated in a single museum. He demonstrated that he could be very consistent and coherent on this issue.

Curator/critic

Duchamp's solo shows and participation in group exhibitions (in which he was heavily involved), like his contributions to magazines, formed the basis of his reputation, which literally ballooned once he agreed to give dozens of interviews.

For his exhibitions, he would find a beguiling theme that struck people's minds and sparked curiosity. He was included in the "Duchamp, Duchamp-Villon, Villon" show—which he mischievously dubbed "The Duchamp Family"—held at Yale University from February 25 to March 25, 1945, later traveling to other university museums in Virginia, California, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, and Maine. When it came to another exhibition along the same lines, which he organized at the Rose Fried Gallery in February to March 1952, titled "Duchamp Frères et Soeur: Oeuvres d'Art," Duchamp admitted that it required a lot of his time (he contributed to the organization and edited the catalogue). His explanation of the show's success was ironic: "It was popular because the Americans display family spirit."[42] Yet on January 15, 1952, he had written to Dreier, regarding interviews leading up to the show, "The circus continues."[43] Five years later he participated in a large exhibition on the same theme, "Three Brothers" (Jacques Villon, Raymond Duchamp-Villon, and Marcel Duchamp), organized by the Guggenheim Museum in 1957 and curated by its then director, James Johnson Sweeney.

Duchamp also provided editorial advice for several issues of the magazine *VVV*, published between 1942 and 1944.[44] Edited by David Hare

41 Letter from Duchamp to Roché, May 7, 1952, in Reliquet and Reliquet, *Correspondance* (note 15), p. 139.

42 Duchamp to Roché, March 15, 1952, in Reliquet and Reliquet, *Correspondance* (note 15), p. 129.

43 Naumann and Obalk, *Affectionately, Marcel* (note 30), p. 306. It was Duchamp's last letter to Dreier, who died on March 29, 1952.

44 Three issues of *VVV* were published, one of which was a double issue: 1 (June 1942), 2–3 (March 1943), and 4 (February 1944).

with the assistance of Breton, Duchamp, and Ernst, *VVV* was one of the few publications to disseminate surrealist works. Art, poetry, sociology, anthropology, and psychology were featured in the various issues, each of which was made unique by contributions from the likes of Ernst, Breton, Giorgio de Chirico, Matta, Lévi-Strauss, and Tanguy.

At the request of *Vogue*, in 1943 Duchamp designed a cover for the commemorative Independence Day (Fourth of July) issue, *Genre Allegory (George Washington)*, but the editors turned it down. The work, bought by Breton,[45] has remained famous for its superimposition of three images: a profile of George Washington, a map of the United States, and the star-spangled banner. Duchamp's articles and contributions to magazines considerably enhanced his renown. In this respect, the March 1945 issue of *View* published an anthology of notes by Duchamp on his work, comprising fifty-four richly illustrated pages, including a poem called "Flag of Ecstasy." Duchamp also designed the front and back covers. Contributors included Breton, Soby, Gabrielle Buffet (Picabia's wife), Man Ray, Meyer Schapiro, and Frederick Kiesler, who produced a foldout of Duchamp's apartment that was inserted into the issue. In April 1952, Winthrop Sargeant published an article in *Life* magazine titled "Dada's Daddy. A New Tribute to Duchamp, Pioneer of Nonsense and Nihilism," clearly attributing paternity of the Dada movement to Duchamp.

So it is clear that Duchamp constructed his own critical legacy, often after the fact, through public statements and the many interviews he granted in the last ten years of his life. During that period he continued to manage his own fate, monitoring and shaping the way people talked about him and his work.

For example, he participated in a three-day symposium on modern art at the San Francisco Museum of Art from April 8 to 10, 1949 (fig. 97), where his *Nude Descending a Staircase* was exhibited. All sessions were recorded (totaling nine hours) and transcribed (amounting to forty-one pages), if never published. Duchamp also agreed to be interviewed by James Johnson Sweeney (1900–1986), then director of the Guggenheim Museum and former head of the department of painting at MoMA (1945–52), at the pace of two hours per week during a six-month period. The book was never published, but the many hours of recordings were used for a series broadcast on the NBC television network starting in January 1956 (30-minute segments). Similarly, during the "Dada 1916–23" show at the Sidney Janis Gallery in New York, held in 1953 and featuring twelve works by Duchamp, he granted a long interview to three members of the Janis family (never published, either).

45 The work was reproduced in issue 4 (February 1944) of *VVV*, the magazine of the "surrealists in exile," and was immediately bought by Breton, then living in New York.

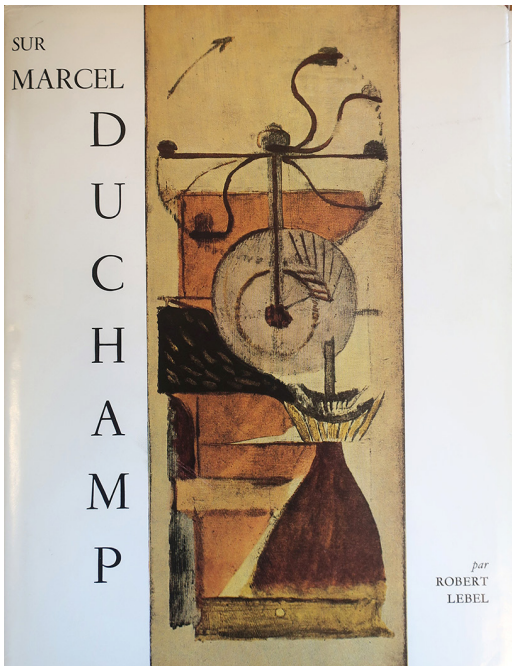
97 Round Table on Modern Art in Session, San Francisco, April 8, 9, and 10, 1949.

Sticking to a public, institutional framework, Duchamp gave an eight-minute talk on "The Creative Act" on April 5, 1958, at the convention of the American Federation of Arts in Houston.[46] In this speech he analyzed the subjective mechanism behind the making of an artwork, ascribing an important role to the spectator, to the eye that the beholder brings to the work.

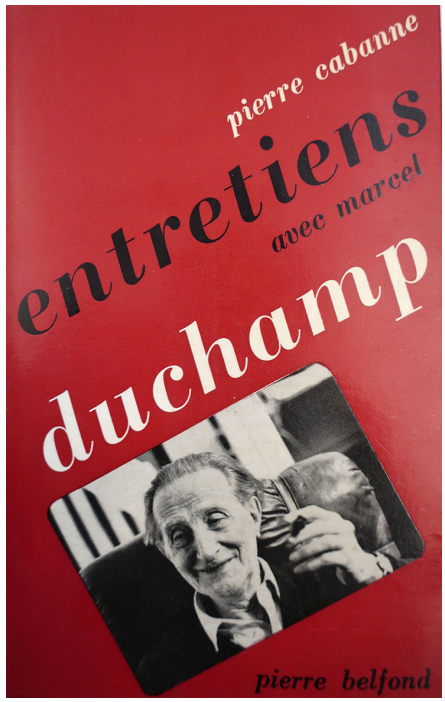
In the same vein, this author would argue that the publication of Robert Lebel's monograph on Duchamp in 1959 (fig. 98) was a watershed moment, after which a new phase began. As an expert in the history of art and museums, Lebel carried out many preliminary interviews while researching his book. So only after years of preparation was *Sur Marcel Duchamp* published, constituting the first book and catalogue raisonné of his work. American art historian George Heard Hamilton, then head of the art department at Yale, was recruited by Duchamp to translate the monograph into English, published in November 1959 by Grove Press. A further contribution to better knowledge of Duchamp within art circles was the complete translation of the contents of his *Green Box* (*Boîte verte*) by the same George Heard Hamilton and British pop artist Richard Hamilton.[47]

46 The original text of "The Creative Act" was published in *Art News* 56, no. 4 (1957).

47 *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*, translated by George Heard Hamilton in collaboration with Richard Hamilton, published in December 1960 by Percy Lund Humphries in London and by George Wittenborn in New York.



98 Cover of Robert Lebel, *Marcel Duchamp*, Paris/London, 1959.



99 Cover of Pierre Cabanne, *Interviews with Marcel Duchamp*, Paris, 1967.

Thus from 1960 onward Duchamp became a desirable and admired figure, courted by the most prominent contemporary artists.[48] His concessions to the establishment even prompted him to accept honors, awards, and degrees. For example, he was elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters in New York on February 2, 1960; the next year he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Humanities by Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. Pierre Cabanne, who interviewed him at length in 1966 (fig. 99) and questioned him on this stream of awards, asserted that Duchamp was delighted by it.[49]

48 Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg went to the Philadelphia Museum of Art between spring 1957 and fall 1958. Johns, who would play chess with Duchamp and Teeny, bought a work by Duchamp at that time. Several shows were devoted to Duchamp's legacy and his influence on pop and conceptual art, notably "Dancing Around the Bride" at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2012–13, the first exhibition to explore the links between Duchamp and four of the greatest postwar American artists: John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Jasper Johns, and Robert Rauschenberg.

49 "In 1963 Marcel was delighted to discover that universities were willing to pay him to deliver a lecture on himself. Using slides of his work, he recalled his career and improvised descriptions of works with great wit." Michel de Caso, "Marcel Duchamp, les ready-made et la peinture, II: Ready-made et esthétisme," *La page rectoversée*, no. 24, http://www.rectoversion.com/contact_lapage24.htm, accessed November 2018.

Duchamp delivered a brief paper to a symposium titled "Should the artist go to college?" held at Hofstra College in Hempstead, Long Island, in 1960. In this paper he celebrated *The Unique and Its Property* by Max Stirner, a young Hegelian considered to be one of the major anarchist thinkers of his day. Duchamp also gave an address on the question of "Where do we go from here?" in 1961 at the Philadelphia Museum College of Art, in which he concluded that "the great artist of tomorrow will go underground."[50]

This period of interviews notably included Duchamp's first televised dialogue, recorded on December 12, 1960, with the popular journalist Mike Wallace, known for his caustic interviews of celebrities.[51] The interview was broadcast on January 18, 1961. Given the high number of homes equipped with televisions by that time, and the number of programs on art, Duchamp's notoriety was an incontrovertible fact from that date onward.[52] This period, when television first became a tool in presidential election campaigns, was pivotal. In the interview, Wallace brought up Duchamp's abandonment of the medium of painting, and his reasons for doing so. Duchamp argued that there could be "no actual final value attached to painting, because the aesthetic value changes in[to] money value [*sic*]." As evidence, he cited the price of $240 for which he sold his *Nude Descending a Staircase* in 1913 and the $40,000 for which the same painting was insured at the time of the interview.

Reviewing the twenty-odd years of Duchamp's life after he moved permanently to the United States (1942–60) helps to show how, during a crucial period, the artist slowly acquired a renown that ended in the consecration of his work and his person, under his own amused gaze. That is what his old friend Roché further confirmed when he asserted, "Duchamp is the most untamed, most impulsive embodiment of a free lifestyle, doing exactly what he wants every minute, without being a slave to fame or fortune, and without hurting others."[53]

50 Quotation taken from Duchamp's talk at the Philadelphia Museum College of Art, March 1961, translated by Helen Meakins and first published in a special Duchamp issue of *Studio International* 189, no. 973 (January–February 1975).

51 An earlier broadcast, though not in the form of a dialogue, and titled "Conversations with Elder Statesmen," had in fact featured excerpts from Duchamp's discussion with James Johnson Sweeney in July 1955 (broadcast July 15, 1956).

52 Naomi Sawelson-Gorse, "On the Hot Seat: Mike Wallace interviews Marcel Duchamp," *Art History* 23, no. 1 (2000) p. 45.

53 Taken from a tribute to Duchamp written for a planned but never-produced exhibition at the Galerie Louis Carré in 1952. See Roché, *Écrits sur l'art* (note 7), pp. 231–33.