165 Jasper Johns, *Target with Plaster Casts*, 1955, encaustic and collage on canvas with objects, 129.5 × 111.8 cm. Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Leo Castelli.
D’Arcy Galleries and New York Late Surrealism: Duchamp, Johns, Rauschenberg

Lewis Kachur

The D’Arcy Galleries were a blip on the screen of New York gallery history, exhibiting mostly contemporary artists on and around upper Madison Avenue for a number of years from around February 1957 to June 1968. Run by Maurice Bonnefoy (1920–1999), their more notable shows ranged from Kurt Seligmann to pre-Columbian art. Bonnefoy had been stationed in Egypt during the Second World War and amassed a large African art collection. His gallery at 1091 Madison Avenue between Eighty-Second and Eighty-Third Streets, one block east of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, was at the northernmost edge of the Madison gallery district that spread up the east side in the postwar years. The area was known more for modern art masters than for younger, new talent artists. D’Arcy Galleries were part of a postwar boom that saw the number of Manhattan galleries multiply from around ninety in 1945 to 406 in 1960.

Though without a portfolio of surrealist artists, Bonnefoy was able to persuade André Breton to sanction the first international surrealist manifestation in New York in almost two decades since the “First Papers of Surrealism” exhibition of 1942 (although there had been a major effort, “Bloodflames 1947,” at the Hugo Gallery, which included several surrealists such as Roberto Matta and Arshile Gorky). Former surrealist dealers Julien Levy and Peggy Guggenheim had, by this time, shut down their galleries, which gave Bonnefoy an opening. He wrote to Breton on January 30, 1960, announcing his move from 19 East Seventy-Sixth Street to much larger premises at 1091 Madison Avenue, as well as his intention to turn from non-Western and pre-Columbian to

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recent European art. After a lengthy correspondence, as well as extensive planning and a visit to Paris, “Surrealist Intrusion in the Enchanters’ Domain” opened at D’Arcy Galleries on November 28, 1960, with some 150 works by fifty-eight surrealists, or “enchanters”—painters and sculptors—on show until January 14, 1961. Bonnefoy was able to accommodate this large number of works in generous, meandering spaces, filling seven gallery rooms, three storage areas, and a bathroom (fig. 158). No wonder one of the associations of the exhibition was to a labyrinth. This ambitious show is usually remembered for the controversial inclusion of a large, recent Madonna-themed canvas by Salvador Dalí, which drew a scathing protest statement from André Breton and twenty-four of his Paris followers. Their manifesto “We Don’t EAR It That Way” attacked the “portentous Madonna” formally titled L’Oreille anti-matière (1958). Aside from this terrible pun, Dalí was tarred as “the fascist painter, the religious bigot, and the avowed racist, friend of Franco,” and a goateed photomontage of Gala was labeled L.H.O.O.Q.


3 Interestingly, André Breton had a ground plan of the gallery, presumably to aid in visualizing the show; http://www.andrebreton.fr/work/5660010092520?back_rql=Any%20X%20ORDERBY%20FTIRANK%20X%20DESC%20WHERE%20X%20has_text%20%22Exhibition%20Plan%22&back_url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.andrebreton.fr%2Fview%3F%f%253D1%26%26order%253Ddesc, accessed October 8, 2018.

(comme d’habitude). Apart from the latter appropriation, Duchamp was treated relatively respectfully in the statement. Dali’s Madonna remained on view, and the New York press did not register the Paris protest. Yet the show should also be recalled as the first occasion since the 1942 “First Papers of Surrealism” show in New York that Marcel Duchamp had the scope to create an overall surrealist environment. Earlier exhibitions beginning in the 1930s fostered a large degree of surrealism’s internationalism that, before these manifestations, was rather uninterested in artists of the Americas. In the case of “The Enchanters’ Domain,” André Breton’s protest and its aftermath resulted in this exhibition having little follow-up, and the planned circulating tour was canceled. Bonnefoy did not go on to exhibit any of the younger surrealist artists as he had originally intended. Scholarly analysis of the exhibition did not take place until the Breton atelier auction of 2003, when a group of nine unpublished installation photographs emerged. Recent examination of the original prints has brought out a number of interesting details, including Breton’s annotations on the back of the photographs. Further specifics of both Duchamp’s and Man Ray’s submissions are discussed below.

Duchamp and friends

Though retired from art dealing, Julien Levy still lived nearby in 1960, in southern Connecticut, with a large modern art collection. Duchamp involved his old friend, and borrowed what was most likely the largest single US loan from him, and called on Levy as an adviser and translator for the catalogue. Levy lent twenty-two works, the majority of which were for sale (fig. 159). Works by Max Ernst and the late Arshile Gorky, both of whom Levy had represented, were especially numerous. Two of the Levy loans sold, Ernst’s Savage Moon (1926) for $4,500 and Victor Brauner’s Personnages (1946) for $1,800.

Duchamp had earlier collaborated on a Manhattan gallery exhibition, Sidney Janis Gallery’s “Dada 1916–1923” show of 1953. Yet he called on

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Janis Gallery for only one work here, an important Arp bronze, *Head with Three Disagreeable Objects* (*Trois objets désagréables sur une figure*, 1930).

Duchamp worked hard to install the 150 works with Bonnefoy and poet Claude Tarnaud, and incorporated a number of whimsical features, including an old typewriter, a fish bowl, and a *Tabac* sign, also embossed on the catalogue cover as the logo for the show. Rectangular mirrors were hung between many of the works, reflecting the spectators’ gaze back at them. Authorship was downplayed, as there were no names
with the works, only the tiny flags of the artists’ nationality attached to most frames, emphasizing internationalism in their diversity. As one experienced critic complained, the alphabetical checklist was of limited utility, and the catalogue only illustrated one work per artist—sometimes not even a work on view.8

And it was a rare moment for Duchamp to create three new temporary installations for the show, even as he labored in private on his final installation, Étant donnés (1946–1966). One of the three was performative, involving live animals, and further problematized whether temporary installations count as works of art, surrealist or otherwise.

Widely regarded as “retired” from art making in this era of his career, Duchamp undertook these elaborate installations, surprising even close family relations. Their main characteristic is that they were also highly varied. The most ambitious installation was physically marginal, set up in an illuminated closet off the gallery space and just to the left of the large, ornately framed Dalí Madonna (fig. 160). It was not photographed separately among the nine installation views Duchamp had made, but its location is just visible in the one featuring the Dalí Madonna on the

right, relating to the even more ornately framed Miró Portrait of a Man in a Late Nineteenth-Century Frame (1950) to the left. Breton uniquely annotated this photograph in his characteristic green ink on the front, with the words “3 poules blanches” and an arrow pointing to the closet. A grainy newspaper photograph is the only trace of a direct view into the closet, with the three white chickens in their improvised, wire-netted coop, lit by a green light (fig. 161). Above is a sizeable supertitle, “COIN SALE,” composed of seventy-seven US penny coins glued to a cardboard mount. The words have very different linguistic senses: a logical if unconvincing vending of penny coins in English, and, in French, “dirty corner,” leading to speculation about the production of fecal matter by the three birds.9 The coins implicitly critique the venal commercialism of the art market, what Duchamp elsewhere called “the race for pennies. … the beginning of monetizing art in the social form.”10 Other, even bodily, metaphors are also possible when connecting the phrase to period titles like Coin de chasteté (Wedge of Chastity, 

9 Coates read it as French, and commented, “[I]t looked very clean to me.” Ibid.
10 In the context of the sale of works by Picabia in 1926, as told to Calvin Tomkins in 1964. See Calvin Tomkins, Marcel Duchamp. The Afternoon Interviews (Brooklyn: Badlands Unlimited, 2013), p. 35.
1954), the most recent of the two more conventional works Duchamp included at D’Arcy.\textsuperscript{11} That Duchamp placed the Dalí Madonna next to his closet hints at their growing friendship since the Duchamps began spending the summers, from 1958 on, visiting the Dalís at Cadaqués in Spain. Dalí had even agreed to Duchamp’s suggestion that he arrive at the D’Arcy vernissage dressed as a girl, an astonishing plan not in the end carried out.\textsuperscript{12} But Dalí did attend with his entourage of friends and collectors, and was warmly greeted on arrival by Duchamp. At some point in the evening one chicken escaped from the closet, and a newspaper report credits Dalí with recapturing the errant fowl.\textsuperscript{13} One might think of Dalí as the animalier of surrealism, beginning with his live snails on the passenger mannequin in the renowned Rainy Taxi (Taxi pluvieux, 1938) of the 1938 Surrealist Exhibition in Paris. Just half a year before “Enchanters,” in March of 1960, Dalí had performed in the video Chaos and Creation, which incorporated live pigs along with chicken feathers. Duchamp is even mentioned in the script, and one imagines it a topic of their summer chats in Cadaqués. While the use of live animals builds on Dalí’s precedent, the specific choice of chickens resonates most pointedly with the numerous fowl in some of Robert Rauschenberg’s most radical combines, such as Odalisk (1955–58). Duchamp knew Odalisk from their joint American Federation of Arts exhibition “Art and the Found Object” held at the Time-Life Reception Center in New York from January 12 to February 6, 1959.\textsuperscript{14} Five Rauschenberg combines of the late 1950s include various stuffed fowl; thus, they were a kind of signature material. In turn, Rauschenberg took Duchamp’s cue of live fowl and doubled their number in a later performance: Linoleum (1966) included a “costume” of an ungainly ten-foot rolling mesh chicken coop with six live chickens enclosed with the dancer Steve Paxton.

Duchamp’s second installation was the green garden hose, as ubiquitous as the Corner was tucked away and hardly visible. He snaked this hose across the floor of the many rooms of the gallery, including in front of Dalí’s Madonna. The hose hugs the left side floorboard along the length of another room, referencing two of Duchamp’s early readymades

\textsuperscript{11} I speculate on the bodily metaphor in the exhibition space in my essay “Intrusion in the Enchanters’ Domain: Duchamp’s Exhibition Identity,” in Collins Goodyear and McManus, aka Marcel Duchamp (note 5), p. 153. The second submission is Pharmacie (1914), discussed further in the present text.

\textsuperscript{12} Reynolds Morse journal, roll 568, frame 929, Archives of American Art (AAA), New York.


\textsuperscript{14} See also Kachur, Intrusion in the Enchanters’ Domain (note 5), pp. 149–50.
The child’s bicycle on the ceiling unexpectedly activates that overhead zone, as the coal sacks had in the 1938 Surrealist Exhibition. And its wheels bring to mind the upright Bicycle Wheel and Stool (Roue de bicyclette) of 1913, recently refabricated for the “Art and the Found Object” show. In both cases the wheels are de-functionalized in these readymades.

The second, “assisted” readymade included is Pharmacie (1914), a banal print of a forest landscape by an unknown commercial artist to which Duchamp added small touches of red and green, as well as his signature and date. This work was one of Duchamp’s most frequently exhibited once he began participating in surrealist exhibitions from the 1930s. Its seemingly incomprehensible title is an allusion to show globes—glass vessels of colored liquid used in display windows of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American pharmacies.15 Duchamp clarifies this in the D’Arcy exhibition by placing a by then antique and rather elaborate show globe adjacent to the work. From a letter he wrote to Breton,
we know that its liquid colors were red, green, and yellow. Thus it
provided a gloss on the touches of red and green Duchamp added to
the landscape print. Adjacency in the installation is key to the under-
lying message. Since this show globe presents a sizable sculptural form,
elevated on a socle, plus varied colors, its visual interest would appear
to verge on sculptural art in its own right. Visually overwhelming the
small Pharmacie, Duchamp thus simultaneously problematizes his own
concept of readymades.

In an adjoining room, with Miró’s Portrait visible through the doorway,
Duchamp’s hose unspools in front of facing women in works by Giaco-
metti and Masson (fig. 163). In between these two is a showcase niche
dedicated to Duchamp’s old friend Man Ray. This glass-fronted vitrine
has two clear shelves supporting five of a generous representation of
eight Man Ray works included in the show, the greatest number for any
artist, whereas most had only two. These include the classic Dada-sur-

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16 Letter from Marcel Duchamp to André Breton, December 1, 1960; in Francis M. Naumann
and Hector Obalk, eds., Jill Taylor, trans., Affectionately, Marcel. The Selected Correspondence of
Marcel Duchamp (Ghent: Ludion Press, 2000), p. 370. Since there are three segments to the globe,
Duchamp probably meant three separate colors.
realist objects *Gift* (*Cadeau*, 1921) and *Object to be Destroyed* (*Objet de destruction*, 1923) on the central shelf, flanking *Repainted Mask* (1941), a face mask that was also used in contemporaneous photo shoots. All three were borrowed from the Morton Neumann collection of Chicago. Below is the wooden sculpture *Domesticated Egg* (1930), with two drawings above, one presumably the watercolor *Anpor* (1919), lent by Julien Levy. Man Ray is thus included in a range of media and time periods, with the exception of photography, which seems not to have been represented at all in the exhibition. In this way, Duchamp utilized his relative independence in New York out of sight of the Paris group to feature two good friends who had not appeared in the “First Papers” surrealist exhibition of 1942: Man Ray and Salvador Dalí.

Duchamp’s green garden hose wends its way to an endpoint in a closed terminal room, in front of his third D’ArCY installation: what he called a “somewhat timid little invention”—an abbreviated fireplace (andirons and burnt logs) placed directly against the wall (fig. 164). This suggests a fire that had been doused by this very hose, thus uniting the two elements conceptually, just as the pseudo fire in the brazier had
been linked vertically to the suspended coal sacks in the 1938 Surrealist Exhibition. On the left are a painting by Gorky and Ernst’s sculpture *Moon Mad* (1944), both borrowed from Levy. In the center niche, works by Rauschenberg, a shaped canvas *Meditation* (1948) by Wolfgang Paalen, and Johns are interspersed with the small rectangular mirrors that were spread throughout. The Rauschenberg and Johns are the same works that Duchamp had solicited for the Galerie Cordier “Exposition inteR-natiOnale du Surréalisme” (“E.R.O.S.”) the year before, in 1959.

In Paris, however, Johns and Rauschenberg were shown in separate spaces. Here they would be united by Duchamp in the same room, flanking his own work, thus by adjacency aligning the pair, as well as himself with his two young American protégées. Their works both resonate in conception with Duchamp’s burnt logs and garden hose, as mixed media composed of readymade elements. Duchamp’s everyday readymade materials here are closer to those of Rauschenberg, whose quilt even includes a traditional “log cabin” pattern, probably a coincidental linguistic link to Duchamp’s logs. On the other hand, Johns allowed his *Target* to be placed quite low, obliquely propped in the corner, melding into blinds behind. The light between the blinds is probably another Duchamp intervention: the suggestion of sunrise or sunset, intermingling their contributions all the more.\(^\text{17}\)

Johns’s mid–1950s works with bodily plaster casting, as in *Target with Plaster Casts* (1955) shown here, as well as his related *Target with Four Faces* (1955), feature a rare process for the period, which must have struck Duchamp as uncannily similar to his own, still secret, body casting for *Étant donnés*. Even more so, Duchamp had made two plaster casts in the summer of 1959, *With My Tongue in My Cheek* and *Torture-Morte*, addressing the now fragmentary, single body part more modestly, yet quite analogously to those atop Johns’s two *Targets* (figs. 165 and 166). The framing of the foot in *Torture-Morte* (1959) further recalls the shallow box structures lined up atop these *Targets*. Duchamp could have seen them in Johns’s first show (at Castelli Gallery, January–February 1958) or on the January 1958 cover of *ARTnews*, which reproduced *Target with Four Faces*. So, too, Johns, just at the moment of planning for “Enchanters” (late 1960), was also engaging conceptually by reading and reviewing the English translation of Duchamp’s *Notes from the Green Box*.\(^\text{18}\)

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\(\text{17}\) Thus the “rayon de soleil couchant (ou levant)” of exhibition displays mentioned in the letter from Duchamp to Breton, December 1, 1960, p. 370 (see note 16). Identified by Susan Power in “Les expositions surréalistes” (note 5), p. 116.

Problematic categorization

These surrealist-exhibited early works of Johns and Rauschenberg thus should be contextualized as late surrealism as much as neo-Dada, a widely applied term of the time. Duchamp’s imprimatur no doubt added to their growing reputations and, perhaps inadvertently, brought them under the late surrealist umbrella. So, too, Johns and Rauschenberg gave new life to the Duchampian readymade, and contributed to the Duchamp revival spurred by the 1959 Robert Lebel monograph.19

The end of Duchamp’s hose implicitly points to the interchange of this adjacent trio. Their connection was recognized by the young art historian Mark Roskill, who characterized them in his review of the exhibition as distinct from “programmatic surrealism.” He wrote of an

“altogether different kind of value that Duchamp himself has had for such men as Jasper Johns and Rauschenberg.” Roskill praises both Target and Bed as already as “durable” as comparable works “in the Duchamp suitcase,” meaning the Boîte-en-valise series.20 Such a connection is prompted by Duchamp’s installation.

Duchamp was determined that this “event” not replicate previous efforts, and with his installations he succeeded in this.21 Nonetheless, the prominent New York Times and New Yorker writers both compared it to the earlier international surrealist exhibition in New York, the 1942 “First Papers” show in midtown.22 As John Canaday wrote in the New York Times, “A thoroughgoing surrealist exhibition involves more than a display of surrealist art, it must be a work of surrealist art in itself, and it was to this end that Mr. Duchamp was enlisting the services of the chickens, for which he had arranged a small, green-lighted recess of a gallery. Several goldfish, conventionally housed, were already on hand.”23 By 1960, even this mainstream critic grasped that the installation was “a work of surrealist art in itself.” It had become no longer a provocation or surprise, but rather an expected part of the spectacle.

The writer and longtime New Yorker critic Robert Coates, however, saw the installation as “a little tired,” and specified the garden hose as having less “shock value” than the flashlights of 1938, or the miles of string of 1942. He would seem to pronounce the final word on surrealism in the United States: “I participated, in a minor degree, in welcoming the 1942 exhibition, which was designed to launch the movement in this country. But the movement, as a movement, was already falling apart, and it might be said that instead of Surrealism’s taking over America, America took over the Surrealists.”24 Yet a surrealist exhibition as a work of surrealist art in itself, which Duchamp did more than anyone else to introduce, was developed further in the 1960s by the likes of Allan Kaprow and Brian O’Doherty,25 and continues to unspool ubiquitously through exhibition rooms today.

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21 In a letter from Marcel Duchamp to André Breton, November 27, 1960: “[T]he general formula doesn’t duplicate that of previous surrealist events.” In Naumann and Obalk, Affectionately, Marcel (note 16) p. 369.