

Press Release

Artist's Choice:

Bethan Huws

1 March – 1 September 2024

Opening: Thursday, 29 February 2024, 6pm

Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, artificial light gallery

*Bethan Huws (*1961 in Wales) is the second artist, following Martina Morger, to participate in the Artist's Choice series launched in 2023. This format invites artists to "re-energise" the Kunstmuseum's collection.*

"Around a year ago, I was invited to curate a show based on the works by Marcel Duchamp at Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, as part of the *Artist's Choice* series. I could also introduce some of my own works and borrow works from the Kunstmuseum's collection, as well as from the Hilti Art Foundation.

Four new videos have been produced specially for the show: the first is on *Fountain* (1917), which is what brought me to study Duchamp in the first place, twenty-three years ago; the second is on the *Ready-made*, a form which we all saw come into existence; the third is on Duchamp's relationship to the poet and art critic *Guillaume Apollinaire*, a subject that has never been addressed before; and finally, *General*, which is a synthesis of my past research work on Duchamp, as published in *Research Notes* (2014).

Each work in the exhibition, from Josef Albers to Lucio Fontana, is here to say something about Marcel Duchamp, rather than to serve its own purpose – except some of my own, which were originally intended as such. Works of art lend themselves to a wide range of interpretations; this is something we artists are used to, but it does not exclude our original aim. To a great extent, and in the spirit of Duchamp, the exhibition questions what we see.

The exhibition hall is roughly divided into two coloured parts. The first part, as you enter, is white. Here you encounter my work *Winter (or Reason)* (2018), a large acrylic snow globe housing a life-sized replica of *Fountain* (an upturned white porcelain urinal), which intermittently spins on its own axis, propelling particles of polystyrene (snow) into the air. Two white neon works are also here:

Riding Between the Lions (2017), which takes its title from one of Duchamp's notes and is a word play on 'reading between the lines', and the humorous *Où sont les toilettes, s'il vous plaît?* (2018), with its obvious reference to the most famous toilet in art history. A white *Concetto spaziale* (1966) by Lucio Fontana is also presented here, as a representation or image of a 'decision', which is probably the reason for its universal success. The *White Box* and *Sequence of Transparent Shadows* (1967) by Marcel Duchamp are also displayed here.

The second part is the green part, punctuated by both the *Boîte-en-valise*, which is a green version, and the *Green Box*, which contains the facsimile notes and sketches that accompany the *Large Glass* (1915–23), along with ready-mades. Thomas Struth's magnificent *Paradise 29* (2005) – a photograph of the Peruvian jungle – is also here, as is my *Neon Queen* (2017), a large neon work based on Duchamp's unrealised *Color-Coded Chess Set* (1920), where the queen, unusually, is taller than the king and is green. In Duchamp's system of signs, green is aligned with language, and white – as you may imagine – is aligned with the immaterial spirit.

Four works – two paintings, a photograph and a sculpture – are physically absent but conceptually present: present in the mind or spirit, but not in the flesh or body, so to speak, which reflects Duchamp's thoughts on the original and the reproduction. Each is represented by a drawn outline – the sculpture by a three-dimensional volume – that corresponds to their actual size. A reproduction is pinned to each, as we see in museums when works are out on loan, and in the comprehensive visitor booklet they are written about as if they were there.”

Bethan Huws

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