

ARTIST'S CHOICE:  
**BETHAN HUWS**

**01.03.2024  
– 01.09.2024**

Où sont les

**KUNSTMUSEUM  
LIECHTENSTEIN**



## ARTIST'S CHOICE:

### **BETHAN HUWS**

The second artist in the *Artist's Choice* series, Bethan Huws (1961 in Bangor/Wales, lives in Berlin) has been invited to curate an exhibition themed around Marcel Duchamp.

The title of this format references a series launched by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1989 in which artists were invited to "select, juxtapose, and comment on" works from the collection. Experiencing our own collection from new perspectives, reflecting on it and "re-energising" it, is our motivation for entrusting curatorship to artists. The first artist invited to the format launched in 2023 was Martina Morger.

The show is dedicated to the work of Marcel Duchamp. Bethan Huws has been devoting her attention to Duchamp since 1999, translating this research into various works since 2007. Huws' own, decidedly humorous oeuvre is laced with wordplay, ideograms and symbols that fascinate her in Duchamp's work. Her artistic practice is aimed at rendering hidden allusions visible in a variety of forms, whether it be texts, work notes, sculptures or video installations. This approach affords insights into the dense web of references and allusions, revealing Duchamp's subtle linguistic and visual ambiguities along with his fine humour. In this way, Huws succeeds in reflecting on the historiography of art from the perspective of a contemporary artist. At the same time, she plays with artistic identities by interweaving her own ideas and views with those of Duchamp.

The exhibition not only includes works from the collections of Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein and the Hilti Art Foundation but also features a number of the artist's own works along with a new group of works developed specifically for this show.

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Dear Visitors,

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

Four new videos were produced specially for the show: the first is on *Fountain*, 1917, which is what brought me to study Duchamp in the first place, 23 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 their original aim. To a great extent, and in the spirit of Duchamp, the exhibition questions what we see.

The majority of the works by Marcel Duchamp are displayed on three large tables that are normally reserved for my own works. The French word for table, *table*, has special significance for Duchamp; the principal works here are the *Boîte-en-valise*, 1941–68, the *Green Box*, 1934, and the *White Box*, 1966.

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

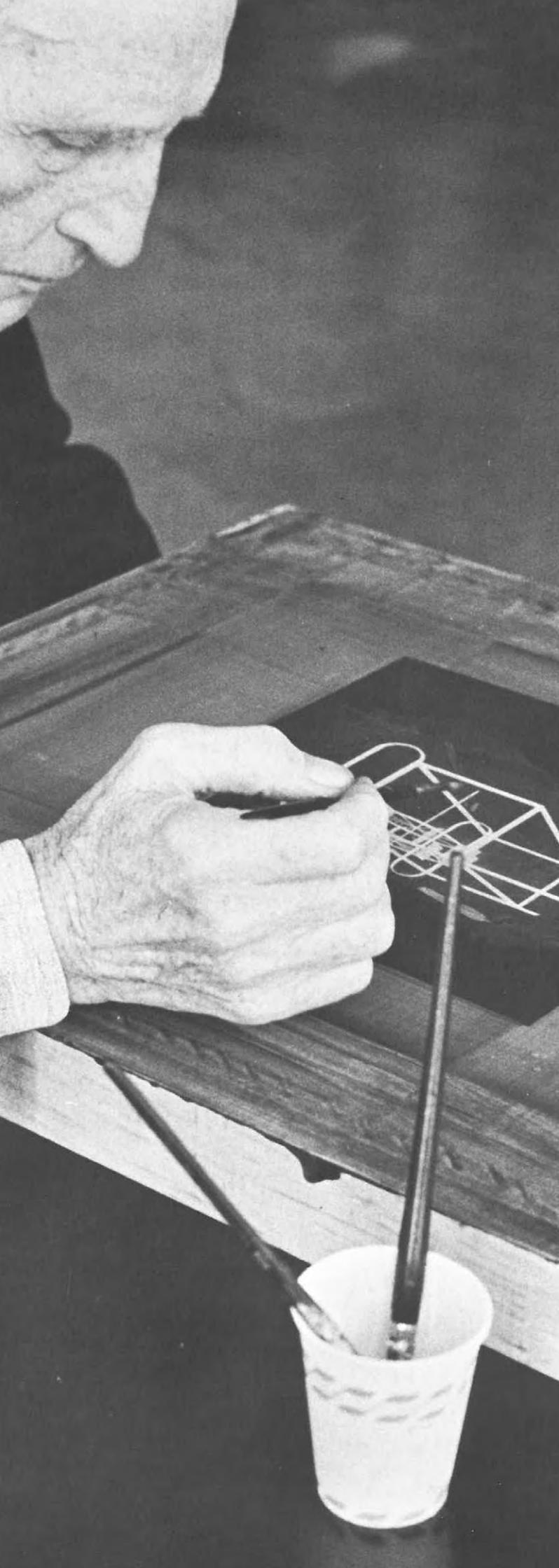
presented here, as a representation or image of a 'decision', which is probably the reason for its universal success. The *White Box* and *Suite of Transparent Shadows*, 1967, by Marcel Duchamp are also displayed here.

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*, 2017/23, 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 its actual size. A reproduction is pinned to each, as we see in museums when works are out on loan, and in this booklet they are written about as if they were here.

Bethan Huws

Artist and curator of the exhibition



### Table 1/3

#### MARCEL DUCHAMP

1887 in Blainville-Crevon, France – 1968 in Neuilly-sur-Seine, France

#### 1

#### À l'infinifif (la Boîte blanche), 1966

In the Infinitive (the White Box)

Facsimile offset lithograph reproduction of 79 notes concerning the *Large Glass*, boxed in a plexiglass case with a reproduction of *Glider Containing a Water Mill in Neighboring Metals* on the cover, silkscreen on vinyl, mounted on plexiglass

Closed: 33 × 28.5 × 4 cm

Ed.: 141/150

Published by Cordier & Ekstrom, Inc., New York, 1966

7 × folders in black card

French homonym\*:

*Chemise* (= 'folder') *chemise* (= 'shirt'). *Chemises noires* – 'blackshirts' – metonymically designates fascists; fascism rose in Italy during World War I

Speculations = 15 items

Dictionaries and Atlases = 9 items

Color = 10 items

Further References to *The Glass* = 5 items

Appearance and Apparition = 4 items

Perspective = 16 items

The Continuum = 17 items

Total = 76 items

Normally the number of items is quoted as 79, but if you count the number of pieces that are grouped together (by pin or by tape) as a single item, then the total comes to 76. Raymond Duchamp-Villon, Duchamp's sculptor brother, was born in 1876. He died prematurely of his war injuries at the age of 41, in 1918, and although little-known, he is considered to be one of the pioneers of Cubism.

The series of Boxes starts in 1941, and the *Combat de boxe (Boxing Match)* drawing inside the *Box in a Valise* measures 41 cm high (to my knowledge, there are no other instances of this number in the work).

Olive-green labels

Since antiquity, the olive branch has been a symbol of peace. In addition, considering Duchamp's interest in popular culture, it is hard not to think of *Olive Oyl*, who was created in 1919 as part of the so-called *Thimble Theatre*. In the 1930s she became a star when she got engaged to *Popeye*, a strongman who ate spinach – including the can – through his pipe!

On the cover there is a reproduction of *Glider Containing a Water Mill in Neighboring Metals*. D is the fourth letter of the Roman alphabet and the first letter of Duchamp's family name, and it is also the symbol for *dame* 'queen' in French chess notation.

French homophones: D (= letter); *dé* (= dice, the emblem of chance after Mallarmé); *des* (= some) + the English word 'day'.

French idiom: *Le Système D*, literally 'system D'. The D stands for *débrouiller* and describes a person's ability to manage something on their own terms, using the means at hand – something the French are particularly proud of. In the *Green Box* (table 3) there's a note that accompanies the *Glider Containing a Water Mill in Neighboring Metals* that reflects this spirit: "Cheap construction. Tin, cords, iron wire. Eccentric wooden pulleys. Monotonous fly-wheel. Beer professor". But it is not until *Étant donnés*, over 20 years later, that we see the 'system D' in full swing.

\* Homonyms are spelled the same, homophones are pronounced the same, each having different meanings. In French, there are several examples of a variety of homophones, e.g. *ver*, *verre*, *vers*, *vert* (worm, glass, towards, green).

## 2

### Les Amants, 1967–68

The Lovers

Nine etchings on Japan vellum in a linen-covered box, which Duchamp engraved to illustrate *The Large Glass and Related Works*, vol. II, by Arturo Schwarz

Plate: 34.7 × 23.3 cm; sheet: 42.5 × 25.5 cm

Ed.: 64/95 (135) + XV A.P.

Published by Galleria Schwarz, Milan

- A) *Morceaux choisis d'après Cranach et "Relâche", décembre 1967*  
(Selected Details after Cranach and "Relâche", December 1967)
- B) *Après l'amour, décembre 1967*  
(After Making Love, December 1967)
- C) *Morceaux choisis d'après Rodin, janvier 1968*  
(Selected Details after Rodin, January 1968)
- D) *Le Bec Auer, janvier 1968*  
(The Gas Lamp, January 1968)
- E) *Morceaux choisis d'après Ingres (I), janvier 1968*  
(Selected Details after Ingres (I), January 1968)
- F) *La Mariée mise à nu ..., février 1968*  
(The Bride Stripped Bare ..., February 1968)
- G) *Morceaux choisis d'après Ingres (II), février 1968*  
(Selected Details after Ingres (II), February 1968)
- H) *Roi et reine, mars 1968*  
(King and Queen, March 1968)
- I) *Morceaux choisis d'après Courbet, mars 1968*  
(Selected Details after Courbet, March 1968)

The last or ninth letter – (I) – is outside the frame of the chessboard/art in life.

An etching (French *eau-forte*, literally 'strong water'). Duchamp's maternal grandfather, Emile Frédéric Nicolle, was a painter and engraver, and the family home had many works adorning the walls.

French homonyms

*Neuf* (= 'nine'); *neuf* (= 'new', an important concept for Duchamp)

In Duchamp's system of coordinates, odd (French *impair*) numbers are an index for the individual (as opposed to the universal or group). 9 *Malic Moulds*. The queen is worth nine points in chess. Nine months gestation for a human baby; in 1911 Duchamp became a father to a baby girl.

*Fourreau* (= 'slipcase'); *fourreau* (= 'scabbard', a sheath for the blade of a sword or dagger)



3

**Table 2/3**

**MARCEL DUCHAMP**

1887 in Blainville-Crevon, France – 1968 in Neuilly-sur-Seine, France

3

**De ou par Marcel Duchamp ou Rose Sélavy (Boîte-en-valise), 1968**

Of or by Marcel Duchamp or Rose Sélavy (Box in a Valise)

A folding-out box covered in green leather and lined with green linen, containing a selection of miniature reproductions of works in various media.

Closed: 38.5 × 41.9 × 9.9 cm

From series G (Nos. 296–311)

The *Box* comes in a series of seven, lettered from A to G. The seventh and final sacrament is Marriage which, with Holy Orders, is part of the sacraments of service. In chess, the letter G is where the king's knight stands at the start of the game.

The *Box* comes in a choice of three colours: red, green and white (bone or buff), which corresponds to the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdom in Duchamp's Trinitarian system.

When you lift the lid to open the box, the first thing you see is the capital letter M, a letter which forms a homophone with the imperative 'love' (*aime*) in French. It is drawn with four wooden slats – slats which were commonly used in French homes to carry surface electricity

across plaster walls. Inside the V of the letter, and arranged over four lines, is the title: *De ou par / Marcel Duchamp / ou / Rose Sélavy (Of or by / Marcel Duchamp / or Rose Sélavy)*.

When you lift up the M to open out the box, the M flips over to read as a W on the verso. At home amongst his family, Guillaume Apollinaire was known as Wilhelm.

Seven 'made in France' violet stamps.

Eight French flaps, also known as gate folds or cover flaps in bookbinding terms.

Nine framed works.

Ten black-and-white reproductions.

Sixteen double pages (bifolia). In chess, each side starts with 16 pieces: eight pawns, two bishops, two knights, two rooks, one queen and one king (16 occurs in other places). And within the total of 16 black double pages, we have one white page and one partition.

In addition, there are a further 16 reproductions of various works including *Fountain*, the *Large Glass*, *Glider ...*, and so on inside the *Box*.

The grand total coming to 32; there are 32 pieces in chess, 16 on each side.



4

**4**  
**Rotoreliefs (Disques optiques), 1935**

Rotoreliefs (Optical Discs)  
 Set of six offset lithographs on cardboard in plastic case, instruction manual on tin foil. To be viewed as they rotate at 33 1/3 revolutions per minute.  
 Diameter: 20 cm each  
 Series 133

Front | Back  
 Rotorelief No. 1 *Corolles* | Rotorelief No. 4 *Lampe*  
 Rotorelief No. 2 *Oeuf à la coque* | Rotorelief No. 3 *Lanterne chinoise*  
 Rotorelief No. 5 *Poisson japonais* | Rotorelief No. 6 *Escargot*  
 Rotorelief No. 7 *Verre de Bohème* | Rotorelief No. 8 *Cerceaux*  
 Rotorelief No. 9 *Montgolfière* | Rotorelief No. 10 *Cage*  
 Rotorelief No. 11 *Eclipse totale* | Rotorelief No. 12 *Spirale blanche*

*Corollas* | *Lamp*  
*Boiled Egg* | *Chinese Lantern*  
*Japanese Fish* | *Snail*  
*Bohemian Glass* | *Hoops*  
*Hot Air Balloon* | *Cage*  
*Total Eclipse* | *White Spiral*

With the exception of *Lamp*, right at the beginning, the verso designs are abstract.

*Corolla* means all the petals of the flower as a group.  
*Hoop* (1) a circular-shaped figure or ring (2) as in gymnastics.  
 English idiom: to run rings around someone, meaning to outwit.  
*Bohemian Glass*: Bohemian glass or crystal is one of the finest in the world and is produced in regions of Bohemia, also known as Czech Republic, Eastern Europe. Artists and students have, since George Sand, also been known as Bohemians.

If you look at the numbered system on the discs, there's something odd right at the beginning. We go from 1, on the front, to 4, on the back, then 2, 3, then we jump to 5, which doesn't make sense. But if we change strategies and add the numbers up instead, the total comes to 78. If you now reverse the numbers, we get 87: the year of Duchamp's birth (1887).

**5**  
**Cover for "VVV Almanac for 1943", nos. 2-3, March 1943**

Includes "Twin-Touch-Test"  
 27.8 x 21.9 x 1.4 cm

In 1916, when Henri-Pierre Roché landed in New York and met Duchamp for the first time, he nicknamed him "Totor", a name that stuck for a lifetime. *Tort* is a French word and means 'wrong'. Just think of *Rongwrong*, the periodical they did together with Beatrice Wood in 1917.

There are three works that include the letter T in Duchamp's oeuvre: the earliest is in the *Boîte-en-valise* (table 2). If you look at its profile, you will see an upturned T; the second is the three Ts we have here in the *Twin-Touch-Test*; and the third is in *Faux vagin* (*False* [or *Fake*] *Vagina*), 1962-63, his own Volkswagen car number plate which has two letter Ts set side by side (49 36 TT 75).

French homophones  
 T (= the 20th letter of the alphabet)  
 Té (= 'T-square'; I used a T-square to straighten out a bookshelf)  
 Tes (= 'your'; what belongs to you, your shoes)  
 Thé (= 'tea', an infusion of roasted leaves)

A tau cross is a T-shaped cross, also called a Saint Anthony cross. We often see this type of cross represented in medieval and Renaissance paintings.

A hexagon denotes a polygon with six sides and, by analogy, a fortified building composed of six bastions. In 1934 Charles de Gaulle referred to metropolitan France as "the hexagon", due to the rough resemblance of the territory to its shape. There are numerous hexagons in Marcel Duchamp's work, both before and after 1934, the earliest being the hexagonal nets of the three draft pistons in the top, *Bride*, part of the *Large Glass*. The sixth sacrament is Holy Orders which, with Holy Matrimony, is part of the sacraments of service.

5 prizes ... The fifth of the seven sacraments is the Anointing of the Sick.

4 holes ... The fourth of the seven sacraments is Reconciliation, also known as Confession or Penance. The fourth and fifth sacraments are the sacraments of healing.

Amen.

## 6

### **Covers for “La Septième Face du Dé: Poèmes-Découpages” by Georges Hugnet, 1936**

The Seventh Face of the Dice: Cut-out Poems

Embossed print

29 × 21.3 × 1.3 cm

Ed.: 196/250

Published by Éditions Jeanne Bucher, Paris, May 1936

On the cover we see a reproduction of *Why Not Sneeze Rose Sélavy?*, 1921. The original work consists of a small, three-dimensional bird cage, modified into a rectangle, painted white, and filled with 152 marble cubes, which are in fact small stones that prevent limescale in kettles. It is a work I directly relate to the poet Guillaume Apollinaire, via one of his poems: *Calligramme en forme de morceau de sucre* (*Calligramme in the shape of a sugar cube*). Apollinaire died on 9 November 1918 at the age of 38, not directly from his war injuries, but from the flu epidemic that ravaged Europe. I would say that the change of colour from the original white to the present tarnished yellow state would be symbolic of the poet's premature death.

Six knots in raffia

The sixth sacrament is Holy Orders which, with Holy Matrimony, is part of the sacraments of service. Raffia comes from the leaves of the Raphia palm; because of the harmonious arrangement of its stems and leaves, similar to rays, the palm has since antiquity been associated with the myth of the Sun. Apollo was the personification of the sun in ancient Greek mythology.

Year: 1936

Number 36 occurs in other places in Duchamp's work and is associated with four French idioms, the principal being *voir trente-six chandelles* 'to see thirty-six candles', which figuratively means to be stunned or hit hard by something.

314 copies, 90 unnumbered pages

The third of the seven sacraments is the Eucharist which, with Baptism and Confirmation, is part of the sacraments of initiation, and is also the central sacrament of the Roman Catholic Church. World War I began on 28 July 1914. Nine is aligned with the odd, the individual (not the group), personified by the 9 *Malic Moulds* in the *Large Glass*.

Title: The seventh face of the dice – the seventh sacrament is Holy Matrimony which, with Holy Orders, is part of the sacraments of service, therefore the 'seventh face' doesn't exist other than in our heads. The connection between things is ours and ours alone.

## 7

### **Uncut Proof of “Allégorie de genre”, 1943**

Genre Allegory (George Washington)

Photolithograph, untrimmed; die-cut sheet folded over embossed sheet

28.5 × 21.8 × 1.1 cm

Published in *VVV Almanac for 1943*, no. 4, New York, February 1944

In this work, Duchamp turns the map of the United States a quarter of a circle (90°) west and gives the border between Canada and America – which is quite flat – the profile of George Washington, the first president of the US. He now faces east towards the rising sun. There are not that many profiles by Duchamp that face east (the majority face west). During Latin Mass, the priest faces the altar, which traditionally faces east, where the sun rises, as a symbol of Christ's Second Coming.

English idiom

'The die is cast' is an English idiom meaning that a process or course of action has been started and cannot be stopped or changed. The expression comes from Latin *Alea iacta est* ('the dice has been thrown'), which was apparently said by Julius Caesar when he crossed the Rubicon and invaded Italy in 49 BCE.

English homophones

Die: singular of dice; dye: the substance you colour textiles with; die: to stop being alive.

The 13 stars represent the number of original US colonies. The stars on the US flag have six points, while here they have five points. All the stars in Duchamp's work, with the exception of one, have five points.

The US flag has had 13 alternating horizontal red and white stripes since its outset in 1715: seven red and six white. Here, the six white lines are transformed and become six blood-red, vertical stripes: a landscape is changed into a portrait.

The truth about the US from its foundation, as Dawn Ades justly said, “was bound up with violence (whether the War of Independence, the Civil War or the genocide of the North American Indian.)” Thirteen is considered to be an unlucky number.

The six vertical lines drawn from top to bottom, from north to south, from reason to sense. The sixth sacrament is Holy Orders which, with Holy Matrimony, is part of the sacraments of service.

*Étoile* (= ‘star’), *et toile* (= ‘and canvas’) and *est toile* (= ‘is canvas’) are homophones in French.

‘Genre’ is borrowed from Latin, meaning (1) birth; race; beings that have a common origin and natural resemblance: *le genre humain* (2) a style of painting depicting scenes from ordinary life, typically domestic scenes, which is particularly associated with 17th-century Dutch and Flemish artists.



8

### Table 3/3

#### MARCEL DUCHAMP

1887 in Blainville-Crevon, France – 1968 in Neuilly-sur-Seine, France

8

#### **La mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même (Boîte verte), 1934**

The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (Green Box)

Board box covered with suede, contains 94 facsimiles of drawings and notes on Duchamp's *Large Glass*, 1915–23  
Closed: 33.3 × 28 × 2.5 cm

Ed.: 256/300 + XX

Published by Éditions Rose Sélavy, Paris, 1934

The standard edition is made out of cardboard covered in imitation suede. It was published by the artist himself, giving the address “Éditions Rose Sélavy, sises [registered office] 18 rue de la Paix”.

English homophones

Peace, the opposite of war; piece, the part of a whole.

World War I began on 28 July 1914 – the day of

Marcel Duchamp's 27th birthday – and ended on 11 November 1918.

The *Green Box* contains 93 manuscript notes, plus one coloured reproduction.

Beatrice Wood was born in 1893. She was a lifelong friend of Duchamp and co-edited, with him and Henri-Pierre Roché, *The Blind Man*, nos. 1 and 2 as well as *Rongwrong* in 1917. Wood was an important ally and witness to what had gone on behind the scenes during the *Fountain* scandal.

Month: September is the ninth month in the Gregorian calendar.

Season: autumn or Fall is the third season of the year.

There are exactly 514 points that draw out the title on the front cover of the *Green Box*, arranged over six lines. The fifth of the seven sacraments; the five senses (traditionally there are five of them) in Duchamp's system of coordinates. And the number 14 is of course aligned with the beginning of World War I.

Eucharist, meaning thanksgiving, is also known as Holy Communion, Blessed Sacrament and the Lord's Supper. It is the third of the seven sacraments and, with Baptism and Confirmation, is part of the sacraments of initiation. It is the central rite in the Roman Catholic Church.

There is an analogy between the torn, ripped pieces of paper – some are torn in the round, others with one or two right angles – and the act of breaking the bread practised in the Catholic Church.

## Photography

Nowhere do we see Duchamp conceptually structuring his work better than in the many photographic mises-en-scène that use his own person as subject.

In the French historical dictionary, *phot-(o)* is an element taken from Greek, meaning 'light', said in particular of daylight, stars, flames or eyes, and is used for a 'luminous spot' and, figuratively, 'public life' and 'light of truth'.

### JOHN D. SCHIFF

1907 in Cologne, Germany – 1976 in New York, NY, USA

#### 9

#### Portrait of Marcel Duchamp, 1957

Vintage print

25.4 × 20.7 cm

Whenever he was asked whether he still considered himself to be an artist because of his professed inactivity, Duchamp was fond of saying: "I'm a man, quite simply: a breather."

There are a great many photographs of Marcel Duchamp looking directly into the lens of the camera, cigar or pipe in hand, with smoke billowing all around him, and there are many tobacco- and smoke-related items in his work.

*Surrealist Intrusion in the Enchanters' Domain*, 1960, has a French tobacconist's sign (French *carotte de tabac*) on its cover.

*Pipe for Donati*, 1946, his Cubist pipe, which is the carved bowl of a pipe (in nine angular planes, while the 10th has the hole where the tobacco is placed).

*Dom Pérignon Box*, c. 1965, contains, among other things, a "Sheffield English Type No. 5" cigarette box.

*The Seventh Face of the Dice*, 1936 – the luxury edition features three handmade roll-your-own cigarettes, with their accompanying shadows on its cover.

The front cover of *View*, vol. 5, no. 1, 1945, features the red ring (French *bague* or *goulot*) of a wine bottle with steam coming out of it, pointing away from us into outer space, with Duchamp's military papers as its label.

These are all related to the etymology of the French word *esprit*, from Latin *spiritus* 'breath'; 'air'; 'respiration'; 'spirit'.

10

**Portrait of Marcel Duchamp, 1957**

Vintage print  
20.6 × 13 cm

In contrast to the first image, which is straight and direct, this appears to me to be the representation of a warped or twisted spirit.

**ARNOLD S. EAGLE**

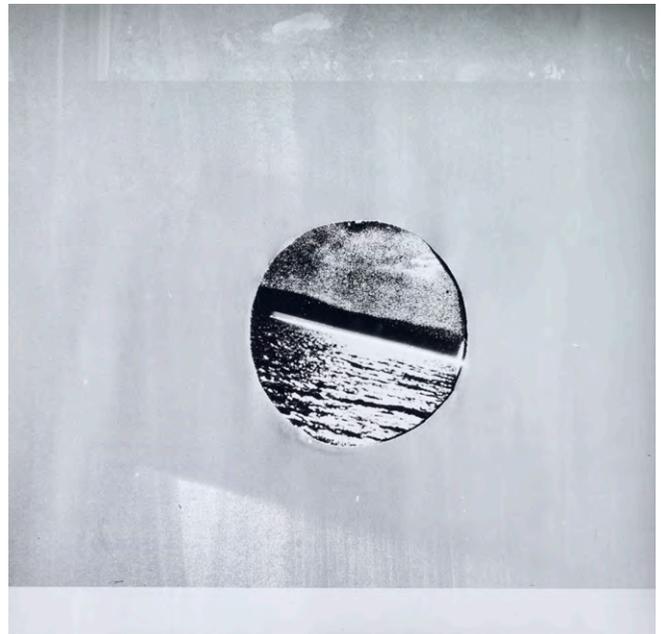
1909 in Budapest, Hungary – 1992 in New York, NY, USA

11

**Marcel Duchamp Filming Disks, c. 1945–46**

Black-and-white photograph  
20.5 × 7.6 cm

In the sequence of photographs, we see Duchamp preparing to film the black and red *Corollas* (recto of *Lamp, Rotoreliefs*, table 2). Black and red occur in his work, notably in *Monte Carlo Bond*, 1921, in the red-and-black-striped *Waistcoat*, 1957, and in *Chinese Lantern* (*Rotoreliefs*, table 2). His use of black and red, which is a somewhat sinister combination, brings to mind representations of God the Father by Lucas Cranach the Elder – *Paradise*, 1530, for example. We mustn't forget that Duchamp had already acknowledged the influence of Cranach on the flesh colours he used for *Bride* in 1912.



12

**MARCEL DUCHAMP**

1887 in Blainville-Crevon, France – 1968 in Neuilly-sur-Seine, France

12

**Le Rayon vert, 1947** (printed 1981)

The Green Ray

Silver gelatin print, photograph by Denise Bellon; photograph of the installation *Le Rayon vert* in the exhibition *Exposition internationale du Surréalisme. Le Surréalisme en 1947*, Paris, 1947, approx. 16–28 cm in diameter, designed by Duchamp and executed by Frederick Kiesler 17.7 × 17.9 cm

Green rays are meteorological phenomena that occasionally occur around sunset or sunrise. When the conditions are right, a green spot is briefly visible above the sun's upper edge; it usually lasts for no more than a few seconds.

*The Green Ray* (1882), a novel by Jules Verne

Two uncles, Sam and Sib, want their niece, Helena Campbell, to marry an unbearable pseudoscientist named Aristobulus Ursiclos. She diplomatically refuses to do so before seeing the Green Ray which, according to Scottish legend, will tell whoever sees it their true sentiments. So they all embark on a journey in search of the Green Ray. What the two uncles do not predict, however, is that on their adventure they will meet Oliver Sinclair, a young painter who will ruin their plans. Finally, they do

manage to see the Green Ray, except for Helena and Oliver, who at that moment are gazing into each other's eyes and miss the whole event.

The green ray phenomenon became known to the general public because of the novel's immense success.

13

### **Suite d'ombres transparents, 1967**

Suite of Transparent Shadows

16 screenprints in white on acetate for *Marcel Duchamp ou le château de la pureté* by Octavio Paz, book and portfolio slipcased in black cardboard

each 24 × 18 cm, frame: 83 × 107 × 5 cm

Ed.: 68/100

Published by Éditions Claude Givaudan, Paris, 1967

In photography, a negative is an image – usually on a strip or sheet of transparent plastic film – in which the lightest parts of the subject appear dark, and the darkest areas appear light. Here, the order is reversed; the darkest parts appear white. In other words, Duchamp turns what is normally negative (dark) or bad into what is positive (light) or good – something he has been doing since *Nude Descending a Staircase* in 1912.

16: There are two players in a game of chess, one having what are called the white pieces, and the other having black pieces (...) both players start with 16 pieces.

100: The French homophones: *cent*, meaning 'hundred'; *sang*, meaning 'blood'; *sans*, meaning 'without'; plus three conjugated forms of the verb *sentir*, meaning 'feel'. In the French historical dictionary, the first meaning of *cent* is 'a great many'.

Dimensions: 24 × 18cm

24: hours in a day.

18: World War I ended on 11 November 1918.

### **JACQUES VILLON (GASTON DUCHAMP)**

1875 in Damville, France – 1963 in Puteaux near Paris, France

### **MARCEL DUCHAMP**

1887 in Blainville-Crevon, France – 1968 in Neuilly-sur-Seine, France

14

### **First Communion Menu, 1909**

Etching and aquatint on paper

20 × 17.3 cm

One of nine known pieces

Etching and aquatint by Duchamp and his brother, the painter Jacques Villon, 26 May 1909. Nine impressions are known to exist – one of them a proof of the first state before the etching plate was reduced to an oval.

This is the first communion menu for Magdeleine Duchamp, Duchamp's youngest sister.

"The dolls show Villon's hand – maybe I did the cake," says Marcel. In it we see three cherub-like figures dancing jovially in abstract space, carrying a huge, tiered cake precariously on a plateau, which is topped with a veiled, banner-like bride triumphantly holding a candle. In the etching we see the influence of Arnold Böcklin's *Magna Mater (Great Mother)*, 1868, a mural that is in the Natural History Museum in Basel.

### **First Holy Communion**

The First Holy Communion occurs at around the age of seven or eight, when the child reaches the age of reason and is considered to be morally responsible. It takes place during the Easter period, at the 11 a.m. mass on the second or third Sunday of Easter. The girls wear a white wedding dress and veil, symbolising purity, and the boys wear a suit and tie and sometimes a tuxedo – their Sunday best. Duchamp is often seen wearing a shirt, tie and suit in his work *White Box* (table 1). It's a ceremony where the child for the first time receives the Eucharist: the bread and wine symbolising the body and blood of Christ.



BETHAN HUWS

1961 in Bangor, Wales, UK

15

**Où sont les toilettes, s'il vous plaît?, 2018**

Where Is the Bathroom, Please?

Neon tube, transformer

8 × 173 × 3.8 cm

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Tschudi, Zuoz–Zurich

Private collection Switzerland

This (French) sentence makes us laugh because we immediately understand which toilet is being talked about (which is itself an act of inference).

16

**Winter (or Reason), 2018**

Acrylic globe, ceramic urinal, water, polystyrene, plexiglass, electric motor, metal

146 × 107.5 × 107.5 cm (overall)

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Tschudi, Zuoz–Zurich

There are many references to winter and winter-related items in Duchamp's work.

(Winter meteorologically starts on 1 December and lasts for three months; astronomically it starts around the 21st of that month).

*Pharmacy*, January 1914, is a winter landscape.

*In Advance of the Broken Arm*, 1915, his first American ready-made, is a snow shovel.

The *Green Box*, 1934; note: "buy a pair of ice-tongs as a Rdymade".

The *Box of 1914*, his first box of notes, mentions a mirrored wardrobe. In French, *glace* meaning 'mirror' and *glace* meaning 'ice' are homonyms.

*Glider Containing a Water Mill in Neighboring Metals*, 1913–15, which was variously called *Glider*, *Sledge* and *Chariot*.

*Why Not Sneeze Rose Sélavy?*, 1921: the objects were either painted white or are white. We sneeze when we have a cold, usually in winter.

*Rotary Demisphere (Precision Optics)*, 1925. Written on the outer copper rim of the half sphere: *Rose Sélavy et moi esquivons les ecchymoses des esquimaux aux mots exquis* (Rose Sélavy and I dodge the bruises of the Eskimos with exquisite words).

The *White Box*, 1967 (table 1) features the *Glider Containing a Water Mill in Neighboring Metals* on its front cover.

And then there are the many works that name the month of January, not only the year, including the above-mentioned *Pharmacy*, plus all the works that are named in the season of winter.

Duchamp was born and brought up in Normandy, north-west France. If you look up the word *Normand* in the French historical dictionary, it means 'man of the North'.

In cartography and geography, the letter N represents North; *2 personnages et une auto (2 People and a Car)*, 1912, the second work (a drawing) following *Nu descendant un escalier*, features the capital letter N.

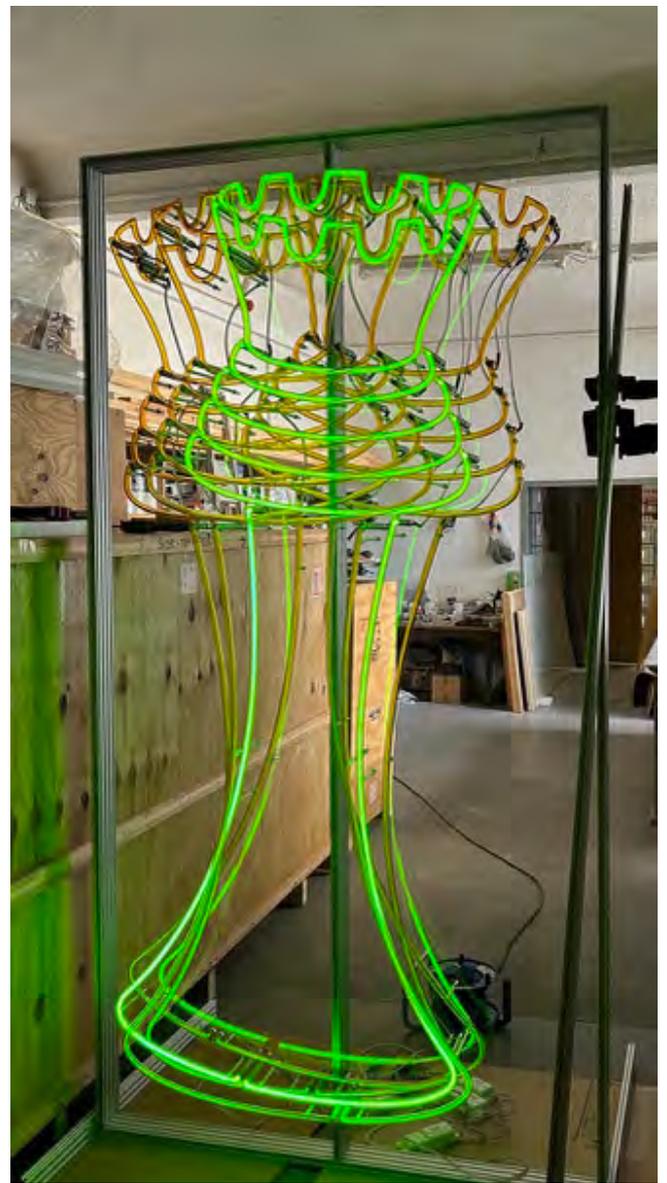
The northern hemisphere is the coldest part of the planet – the many demispheres and half circles, including the head of the *Bride* in the *Green Box* (table 3) in the topmost part of the *Large Glass*, “boughs frosted in nickel and platinum”, which he describes as an icicle, belong in this category.

The artist's studio traditionally uses northern light.

The Northern Renaissance features strongly in Duchamp's work. *Netherlandish Proverbs*, 1559, by Pieter Bruegel the Elder probably inspired the *Large Glass* and all the French idiomatic expressions used there. *The Resurrection of Christ*, c. 1512–c. 1516, by Matthias Grünewald (the right wing of the *Isenheim Altarpiece*) and *Témoins oculistes* which is its 'carbon copy'. The ground plan of *Étants donnés* and the *Annunciation Triptych (Mérode Altarpiece)*, c. 1427–32, by the studio of Robert Campin at the Metropolitan Museum in New York. The *Seven Sacraments Altarpiece*, 1445–50, by Rogier van der Weyden probably inspired Duchamp's use of the seven sacraments to structure his work, and so on.

All instances of the colour white belong to this category.

And degree zero, which is not only the freezing point, but also an amount or level that functions as the baseline for anything.



17

### 17 **Neon Queen, 2017/23**

Neon tube, plexiglass, aluminium, transformers

260 × 165 × 23 cm

Courtesy the artist

“The queen, for example, would be a fusion of the design given to the rook and bishop, since – in both power and movement – she combines their characteristics. As the rook is blue and the bishop is yellow, the queen is naturally green, since she combines their colours.”

– Marcel Duchamp

In the 1920 letter to his brother-in-law, Jean Crotti, we learn of Duchamp's plans to design and commercialise a colour-coded chess set. The design (not the colour) is his own and is taken from the 1918–19 Buenos Aires chess set, where the queen – unusually – is taller than



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the king. In the traditional Staunton chess set, the king is the tallest piece on the board. In addition, Duchamp's queen has four rings around her neck (in contrast to the king's three) and eight peaks on her crown. Her body is trumpet-shaped, like the rest of the pieces with the exception of the knight and the rook.

18

**Untitled (Piss off I'm ...), 2004**

Aluminium, glass, rubber, plastic letters

75 × 50 × 4.5 cm

Courtesy the artist / Private Collection Switzerland and France

This word vitrine is speaking from the point of view of the urinal: "Piss off I'm a fountain!" In light of the fact that too many people see only the urinal and forget about its title: *Fountain*.

19

**Riding Between the Lions, 2017**

Neon tube, transformer

70.5 × 180 × 4 cm

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Tschudi, Zuoz–Zurich

This neon takes its title from a small note by Duchamp in the 1980 Paul Matisse collection of notes, published posthumously, and is a word play on 'reading between the lines'. The English idiomatic expression means to infer a meaning that is not explicitly stated – hence what's written in the neon sentence – and is something we do on a daily basis.



20

20

**Fountain, 2001/11**

Colour inkjet print on paper, Hahnemühle Photo Rag 308 gsm, glass and wood frame

161 × 194.5 × 5 cm

Courtesy the artist / Private Collection Switzerland

The sound and sight of clean, running water evoked by *Fountain*, 1917, lend themselves easily as a metaphor for speech – speech, no matter what it is, is always illuminating. The same idea is reflected in *Given*: 1. *The Waterfall*, 2. *The Illuminating Gas* – a title we already find in the *Green Box* notes (table 3) and which, 23 years later, becomes the title of Duchamp's last work. Anne d'Harnoncourt had already remarked on the ear and eye relation in the title of *Étant donnés* as far back as 1987.

21

**Field of Gentians, 2023**

Embroidery, glass, wood

52.5 × 57 × 4 cm

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Tschudi, Zuoz–Zurich Private Collection Switzerland

"*Sacre du printemps ou la crasse du tympan*"  
(*The Rite of Spring or grime on the eardrum*)

– Marcel Duchamp

*Jeux de mots* – Note 232 from *Marcel Duchamp, Duchamp du signe suivi de Notes*, edited by Michel Sanouillet and Paul Matisse (Paris: Flammarion, 2008), p. 382.



21

On 29 May 1913, *The Rite of Spring* (*Le Sacre du printemps*) – the ballet by Russian modernist composer Igor Stravinsky – was premiered at the *Théâtre des Champs-Élysées* in Paris. The premiere was one of the most scandalous in history – hence the “grime on the eardrum” comment by Duchamp, who was himself used to scandal from the reception of *Nude Descending a Staircase* in 1913 in New York, to the refusal of *Fountain* in 1917, to the first showing of *Étant donnés* in 1966.

The fourth of the seven sacraments is Reconciliation, also known as Confession or Penance and, with the Anointing of the Sick, it is part of the sacraments of healing.

The four seasons: spring, summer, autumn, winter. Spring is one of the four temperate seasons; the season begins on 20 March and lasts until 21 June in the northern hemisphere.

Spring, river source, well. Spring, the ‘bed springs’ in *Tu m’* with all the colours of the rainbow (French *arc-en-ciel*, quite literally ‘bow-in-the-sky’, which Apollinaire modified poetically to *arc-en-terre* ‘bow-on-Earth’).

22

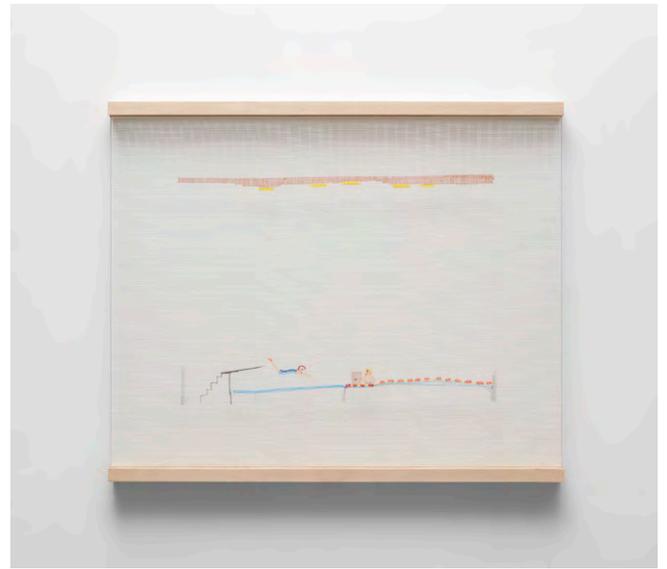
### The Swimming Pool, 2023

Embroidery, glass, wood

68.5 × 81.5 × 4 cm

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Tschudi, Zuoz–Zurich

“Cubism interested me for only a few months. At the end of 1912 I was already thinking of something else. So it was a form of experiment, more than a conviction. From



22

1902 to 1910, I didn’t just float along! I had had eight years of swimming lessons.”

– Marcel Duchamp

The first of the seven sacraments is Baptism and, with Confirmation and Eucharist, it is part of the sacraments of initiation, often symbolised in Christianity by three drops of water, a scallop shell, the colour blue, or water-related items.

Water, earth, air and fire make up the four elements of matter and are part of Duchamp’s system of coordinates.

*Glider Containing a Watermill in Neighboring Metals*, 1913–15.

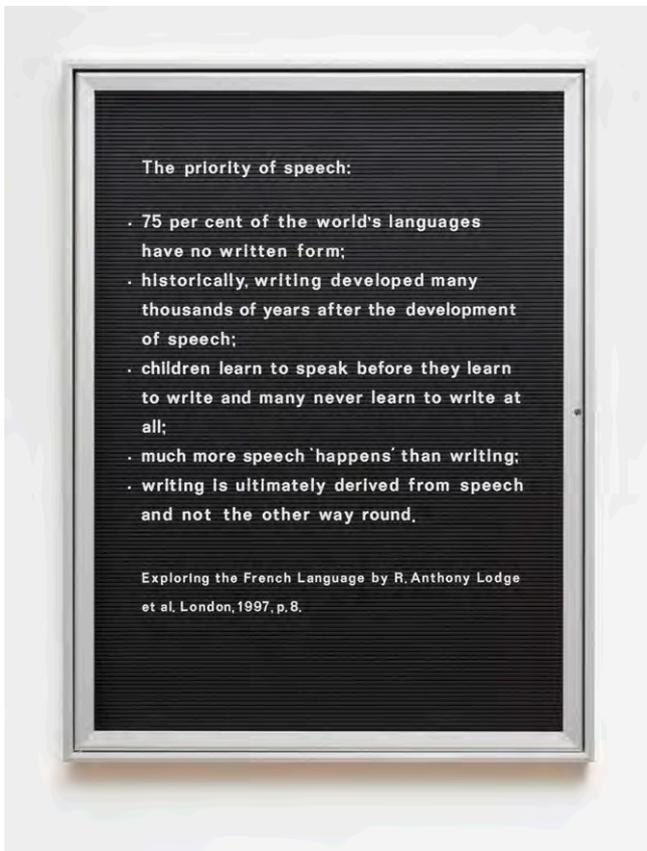
*Fountain*, 1917, can easily be thought of as a baptismal font, which is traditionally placed near the entrance of the church. This takes me straight to the door of *Étant donnés*.

*Bouche-Évier* (*Sink Stopper or Plug*), 1964, an art medal.

*Tu m’*, 1918, the real, three-dimensional bottle brush or holy water sprinkler (French *goupillon* covers both meanings) that protrudes precariously out of the canvas: “I baptise you in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost”, while drawing out the sign of the cross, which in chess is also a sign used to say that the king is in check.

A tap that stops dripping when nobody is listening to it. The photograph of Teeny and Duchamp with the waterfall.

*Douche* (French, meaning ‘shower’), which is an abbreviation for Duchamp in relation to his self-portrait in the *douche* with a discreetly drawn erection in pencil.



23

#### French homophones

*mère* (= 'mother') and *mer* (= 'sea', which forms a homophone with the English 'see' [French *voir*] and C – the third letter of the Latin alphabet: just think of the two reversed letter Cs in *Fresh Widow*, for example.)

Three quarters of the Earth's surface is covered in water (liquid), while the other quarter is dry land (solid). You'll observe many such proportional divisions in Duchamp's work. Here we have the female torso in the *Twin-Touch-Test* (table 2).

*Eau* ('water') and O – the 15th letter of the Latin alphabet, along with the eight homophones that ensue.

23

#### Untitled (The priority of speech ...), 2010/16

Aluminium, plexiglass, rubber, plastic letters  
100 × 75 × 4.5 cm

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Tschudi, Zuoz–Zurich  
Government Art Collection, UK

"Deeply engrained in European consciousness is the belief that writing is a superior form of language to speaking. With the spread of literacy in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the ability to read



24

and write became a touchstone of the educated, even of the intelligent person. So, a person who cannot write properly is nowadays regarded as educationally and even (...) cognitively deficient. (...) Attribution of a high value to writing has meant a corresponding reduction in the value attributed to speaking – speaking is regarded by many people as an inferior form of language to writing."

– R. Anthony Lodge et al.  
*Exploring the French Language*  
(London: Hodder Arnold, 1997), p. 5.

This word vitrine, which quotes from the same book, addresses such prejudice. Today, fortunately, linguists give priority to speech.

24

#### The Marriage, 2023

Embroidery, glass, wood

61 × 71.5 × 4 cm

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Tschudi, Zuoz–Zurich

"One is unity, two is duality and three is the rest."

"(...) number one is unity, number two is the couple, and number three is the crowd."

– Marcel Duchamp

The seventh and final sacrament is Holy Matrimony (the seven sacraments are represented by the seven *Sieves* in the *Large Glass*) and, with Holy Orders, it is part of the sacraments of service ("life as a waiter," a remark by Duchamp in the Pierre Cabanne interview, refers to life at the service of others).

In the 1921 three-quarter portrait by Man Ray of Duchamp dressed up as Rose Sélavy, we see him holding up his collar coquettishly with both hands, and on his fingers we clearly see not one, but two engagement rings: one on his right hand (the king's side in chess) and the other on the left hand (the queen's side in chess).

In the *Marieé (Bride)*, painted by Duchamp in August 1912 during his stay in Munich, and here reproduced on the left-hand wing of the *Box in a Valise (table 2)*, we see three distinct figures: the tallest stands in the middle, a little behind the other two. This is the bishop, I imagine, who brings together the smaller male and female counterparts in an act of union or Holy Matrimony. The figure in the foreground who later becomes the *Bride* in the upper part of the *Large Glass* resembles a straightened-out middle ear: with the stapes at the top, then the incus, the malleus, and finally the eardrum, like an inflated sack at the end.

*Wedge of Chastity*, January 1954, his wedding gift to his second wife, Teeny

*The Passage from the Virgin to the Bride*, July–August 1912 Munich

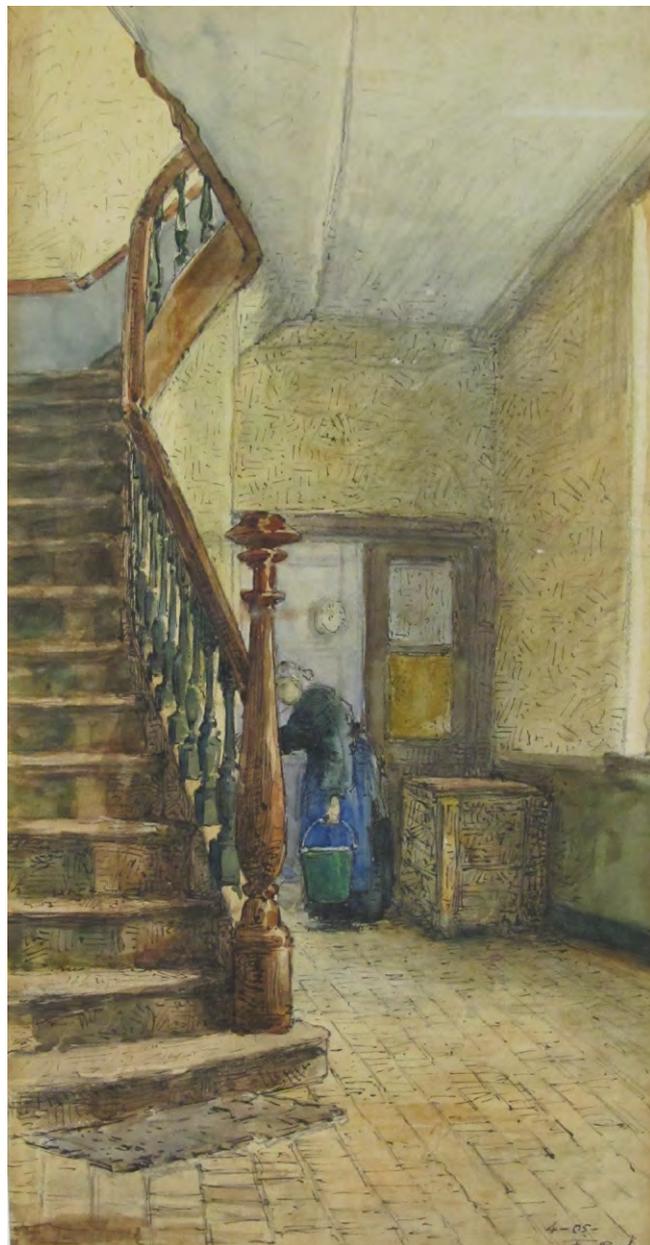
*Bride*, August 1912 Munich

The title of the *Large Glass*: an interpretation  
*The Bride (= language) Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors*  
 (= by those ones who don't even know that they have one), *Even*.

“When tobacco smoke smells also of the mouth that exhales it, the two smells marry by the *inframince*.”

– Marcel Duchamp

A marriage or union of love, whether it is between people or things.



25

**25**

### **Nu descendant un escalier, 2023**

Nude Descending a Staircase

(François Bulens [Brussels, 1857–1939], *Vieil escalier d'une maison au Sablon*, 1905)

Watercolour and ink on paper, glass and aluminium frame

57 × 37 × 4 cm

Courtesy the artist

The founding moment for conceptual art, an art concerned primarily with thinking, is on 18 March 1912. On the day of the press review of the *Salon des Indépendants* in Paris, Marcel Duchamp decides to withdraw his painting, *Nu descendant un escalier, n° 2*, which was destined for the Cubist room. Through his two artist brothers, he has heard complaints that his work has “too much of a literary title” and that “a nude never descends

the stairs, it reclines”. Duchamp’s brothers suggest that he changes the title, but as this is written directly on the canvas, it is an integral part of the work. Duchamp characteristically says nothing, jumps into a taxi, removes the work from the exhibition, and the rest is history.

**26**

**Four Videos, 2024**

Video installation in four parts

HD RED transferred to video, colour, sound (loop)

Courtesy the artist

Fountain / Marcel Duchamp

11 minutes 19 seconds

Ready-made / Marcel Duchamp

11 minutes 18 seconds

Guillaume Apollinaire / The relation between  
Marcel Duchamp and Guillaume Apollinaire

18 minutes 19 seconds

General / Marcel Duchamp

12 minutes 53 seconds

Producer: Thierry Hauch

Production management: Rob Crosse

Director of photography: Moritz Friese

Lighting technician: Eli Börnicke

Sound recordist: Jordi Braut

Editor: Rob Crosse

Sound design and mix: Jochen Jezussek

Colourist: Caio Amado Soares

Produced by Dieter Association Paris in co-production  
with Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz

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© Bethan Huws

**27**

**Reading, 2024**

Performance

A young person sits on existing public seating, somewhere in the museum’s exhibition rooms, reading quietly (not out loud); occasionally they lift their head to look around them.

“On what does the reader base their interpretation of the writer’s intended meaning?

(...) We strive to recognize the regularities of discourse structure present in the text. We bring to bear on the text the whole of our resources of sociocultural knowledge. We supply any links missing from the text by making the inferences we consider necessary. The net result is as Yule (...) says: Our understanding of what we read does not directly come from what words and sentences are on the page, but from the interpretation we create, in our minds, of what we read.”

– R. Anthony Lodge et al.  
*Exploring the French Language*  
(London: Hodder Arnold, 1997), p. 175.



## WILHELM LEHMBRUCK

1881 in Meiderich/Duisburg, Germany – 1919 in Berlin, Germany

28

### Torso der Grossen Stehenden, 1910

Torso of the Large Standing Nude

Stone cast

Height: 118 cm

Hilti Art Foundation, Schaan

In 1913, Guillaume Apollinaire writes about Marcel Duchamp in *The Cubist Painters*: “Allow me to make an important observation here. Duchamp is the only painter of the modern school who today (autumn 1912) shows any interest in the nude (*The King and the Queen Surrounded by Swift Nudes*; *The King and the Queen Traversed by Swift Nudes*; *Nude Descending a Staircase*).”

Following Apollinaire's strong defence of *Nude Descending a Staircase*, Duchamp continues the theme of the nude throughout his life. The first of his works related to this topic – and one that is always overlooked by art historians – is a very conventional-looking female nude; others include the *Bride*, her flesh colour inspired by the nudes of Lucas Cranach; the reference to the nude in the title *La mariée mise à nu par ces célibataires, même* (*The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*); the creation of Rose Sélavy in 1920 and all the pieces that will be signed in her name thereafter; the works that are flesh-coloured; the two studies for *Étant donnés* and the life-size female mannequin lying on a bed of twigs in this final work.

In Duchamp's work, the nude, nature or the primary state contrasts with cloth, culture or the secondary state.



29

## PABLO PICASSO

1881 in Málaga, Spain – 1973 in Mougins, France

29

### Femme dans un fauteuil, 1932

Woman in an Armchair

Oil on canvas

92.1 × 73 cm

Hilti Art Foundation, Schaan

During the last part of his life, Duchamp produced two works with Spanish references: the Spanish door of *Étant donnés (Given)*, 1946–66, and the Spanish greetings card *Pollyperruque*, 1967, as well as two works with German references: *Faux vagin (False [or Fake] Vagina)*, 1962–63, which is his own red Volkswagen number plate, and a 5 Deutschmark German stamp with the *Mona Lisa*, c. 1967.

Guillaume Apollinaire supported many artists, including Duchamp, but what you might not know is that he was also one of the first supporters of Pablo Picasso.

In the *Boîte-en-valise* (table 2), Duchamp includes a reproduction of the *Bateau Lavoir (Laundry Barge)*, an unremarkable oil on cardboard from 1910. The

dimensions he gives on the label (64 × 0 × 72) do not correspond to the original work, like all the labels in fact. I've heard no other scholar mention this. The dimensions are not changed so much that they draw attention to themselves, which is characteristic of Duchamp. Now 64 (which occurs in other places within the work) is a chess-related number, and 72 I have yet to place, unless it's the inversion of 27, which is the year he married Lydie Sarazin-Levassor – which did not last long, they divorced six months later – plus Duchamp was 27 when the war broke out, which could be a connection. But here is the point: from April 1904 until September 1909, Picasso had his studio at *Bateau Lavoir*, named as such because it resembled the ramshackle laundry barges on the Seine. The building had neither gas nor electricity. Apollinaire visited him there a lot and become an important ally and spokesperson.

## THOMAS STRUTH

1954 in Geldern, Germany

30

### Paradise 29, Rio Madre de Dios, Peru, 2005

Chromogenic print

165.7 × 255.4 cm

Ed.: 9/10

Hilti Art Foundation, Schaan

## GREEN

Green is the colour of vegetation and it is a secondary colour, made by mixing blue and yellow. It is of medium wavelength and is considered to be cold. It is the colour that occurs most often in Duchamp's work and belongs to his animal, vegetable, mineral Trinitarian system. It is a colour associated with language via vegetable fibres, paper, linen, cotton and flax. Normandy, where Duchamp was raised, is a luxuriantly green region and many of his early paintings were painted there. Green is also one of the Catholic liturgical colours, worn during the period called 'ordinary time', which stretches between Easter and Christmas. It is meant to represent hope in the resurrection of Christ.

Springtime, youth, vitality, resurrection and renaissance.

There are several hues and differing tones of green in Duchamp's work, but most are from the *vert de cuivre* category: *La Boîte verte*; *Boîte-en-valise*; *La Boîte alerte*

(a wordplay on letter box and alert box); *Waistcoat*, Spring 1957 – the green wool version he gave to his wife Teeny; *Tu m'*, 1918 – the suit sleeve of the pointing hand is green; Hotel Green in *Signed Sign*, 1963.

The queen in the *Colour-Coded Chess Set* is green, and she is – unusually – taller than the king.

In a photograph, c. 1957, by Michel Sima, we see Duchamp standing with his hands on his hips, which is something women characteristically do, and he is dressed in an emerald-green shirt. There is a second instance of emerald green in *Self-Portrait in Profile*, 1957/1963.

*The White Box*, 1966: the labels are olive green

*Rotoreliefs*, 1935: an unusually light green

*Fresh Widow*, 1920: vert-de-gris, a sea-green copper

*Vegetal* 'vigorous' (French historical dictionary)

## JOSEF ALBERS

1888 in Bottrop, Germany – 1976 in New Haven, CT, USA

### 31

#### **Homage to the Square, 1959**

Oil on Masonite

121.5 × 121.5 cm

Hilti Art Foundation, Schaan

## YELLOW

Yellow is one of the three primary colours, along with red and blue, and is part of Duchamp's Trinitarian system.

The *Box of 1914*, the first box of notes: A world in yellow / the bridge of volumes / above or below the volumes / to watch the bateau-mouche go by.

French homophones

"One word from the queen pain in the kidneys"

(notes 47–166)

*Reins* (= 'kidneys'; the kidneys filter waste products from the blood into the urine)

*Reine* (= 'queen')

Reine (= the name of one of the most beautiful villages in Norway)

*Green Box* note: the third sentence after the title *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even* is the enigmatic phrase "a world in yellow".

The main component of *Fountain* is a urinal (urine is yellow), and Duchamp often referred to it later in life as his "urinal/fountain".

In Duchamp's *Colour-Coded Chess Set*, the bishop (French *fou*, which means 'fool, madman, lunatic, maniac, nut') is yellow.

The last lozenge in *Tu m'*, 1918, the one with the real hexagonal bolt through it, is yellow.

French idioms

*Rire jaune*, literally 'laugh yellow', meaning to force a laugh.

*Un jaune*, literally 'a yellow', has a range of meanings – from strike-breakers to collaborators – and historically goes back to the depiction of Judas wearing yellow clothes, which in turn relates to Duchamp's feelings of betrayal in 1912.

*Jeune* (= 'young') *jeûne* (= 'fasting, abstaining from food') – a French homophone.

Duchamp was 24 years old in 1912, when the *Nude Descending a Staircase* incident happened.

## LUCIO FONTANA

1899 in Rosario, Argentina – 1968 in Comabbio, Italy

### 32

#### **Concetto spaziale, Attesa, 1966**

Spatial Concept

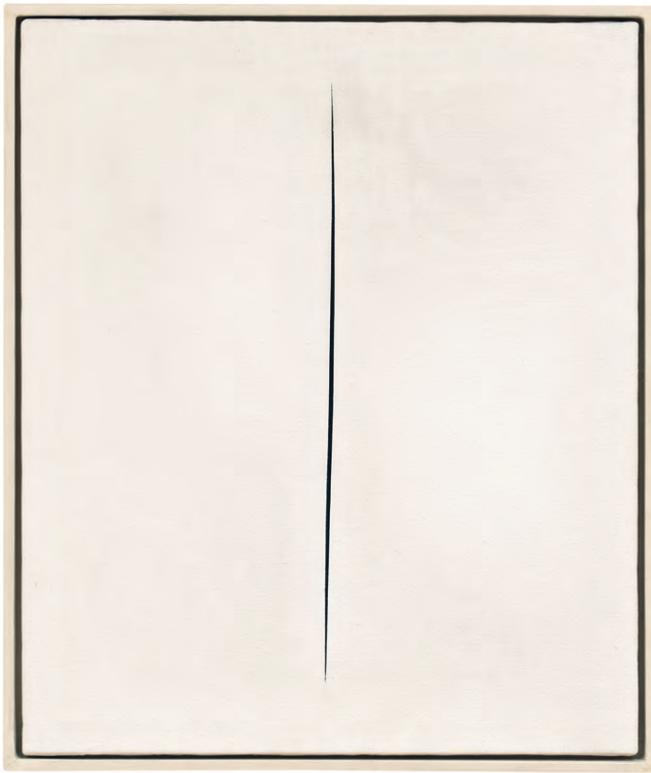
Watercolour on canvas

55.6 × 46.2 cm

Hilti Art Foundation, Schaan

In 1949 Lucio Fontana is working in his studio and is not happy with how one of his paintings is going, so he destroys it. He takes a knife and slashes right through it; in the end, he decides to keep it.

The representation (or image) of a decision – that's what I see in the *slash* of Fontana.



32

The bishop in the traditional Staunton chess set has a cut (or slash) in its head, a feature that Duchamp decides to integrate in his many adaptations and modifications of his own chess pieces.

French homophones

*Trancher* (= 'to cut', which figuratively in French means 'to decide')

*Tranchée* (= 'trench'; the war of 1914–18 was a war of trenches)

*Tranchet* (= 'skiving knife', a tool used to cut leather)

In the French historical dictionary, you will see that *trancher* means to cut something in three (Holy Trinity).



33

THOMAS STRUTH

1954 in Geldern, Germany

33

**Kölner Dom, Köln, 2007**

Cologne Cathedral, Cologne

Chromogenic print

209 × 168 cm

Ed.: 7/10

Hilti Art Foundation, Schaan

[Due to a loan, this artwork is not on display]

*"Église exil l'église en exil"*

(Church exile the church in exile/the church we exile)

*Jeux de mots* – Note 211 from *Marcel Duchamp, Duchamp du signe suivi de Notes*, edited by Michel Sanouillet and Paul Matisse (Paris: Flammarion, 2008), p. 376.

Non-belief is itself a form of belief, in other words, when exiting one belief system or, figuratively, a church, we enter another. This is similar to the *"The Non-Dada"* statement by Duchamp written on a religious pamphlet in 1922. After 1912 Duchamp vowed that he would never

join a group again and founded a church for one, so to speak.

“*Maladie de Messie*  
*Machine à dire la messe*“

(Sickness of the messiah/messy  
machine to say mass)

*Jeux de mots* – Note 209 from *Marcel Duchamp, Duchamp du signe suivi de Notes*, edited by Michel Sanouillet and Paul Matisse (Paris: Flammarion, 2008), p. 376.

A pun on messiah and messy. If you're unable to think because it is so unordered inside your head, then you need a machine to say mass (= something you repeat unthinkingly).

*Martyr c'est pourrir un peu* [Jacques Prévert]

(Martyr is to laugh a bit/to die a bit)

*Jeux de mots* – Note 237 from *Marcel Duchamp, Duchamp du signe suivi de Notes*, edited by Michel Sanouillet and Paul Matisse (Paris: Flammarion, 2008), p. 383.

A martyr is a person who is killed because of their religious or other beliefs.

## PIET MONDRIAN

1872 in Amersfoort, Netherlands – 1944 in New York, NY, USA

34

### **Tableau No. VIII with Yellow, Red, Black and Blue, 1925**

Oil on canvas

53.2 × 46.2 cm

Hilti Art Foundation, Schaan

[Due to a loan, this artwork is not on display]

The three primary colours – red, yellow and blue (primary colours are the source of all others) – form part of Duchamp's Trinitarian system (Holy Trinity: God in three persons).

There are four works that feature the three primary colours:

*Couple de tabliers de blanchisseuse* (*Couple of Laundry's Aprons*), 1959, consists of a pair of potholders (small, usually square pieces of quilted material for protecting the hands when removing hot pans from the cooker); a male and a female, both with their respective sexual organs, are made out of the same red, blue and yellow chequered fabric.

*Sculpture-morte* (*Dead Sculpture*), 1959, is part of a triptych. In it we see the white palm of a hand, which is a cauliflower, with a real taxidermied fly on it (most people see a face, due to the Arcimboldo reference). The composition is made out of a variety of *turrón* (Spanish equivalent to marzipan) fruits and vegetables. Edouard Manet's *The Dead Christ with Angels*, 1864, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York is referenced here. The two angels supporting the dead Christ with open palms are dressed in the three primary colours; the angel on the right-hand side is in a yellow dress with two blue wings, and the angel on the left-hand side is in a red dress. It is a painting of immense natural beauty, which was severely criticised at the time for the realistic depiction of a religious subject. The contrast between the grotesque and the beautiful is a subject that would have interested Duchamp.

*Dom Pérignon Box*, c. 1965, consists of an actual Dom Pérignon champagne box containing a number of slides and a variety of boxes. The slides reproduce a single scene: the scene we see through the two 'peepholes' in the door of *Étant donnés* (*Given*). The primary colours appear here in the canary-yellow box marked "Color Transparencies"; the red plastic box for the larger-format slides; and the blue sky of *Étant donnés* on the slides themselves.

*Les Amants* (*The Lovers*), 1967–68 (table 1) consists of a sequence of nine etchings on the theme of *The Lovers*. The fifth etching combines elements from two different paintings by Ingres: *Virgil Reading the Aeneid*, 1812, and *The Turkish Bath*, 1852–59 (modified in 1862), the first of which takes the three primary colours as its theme.

## ALEXEJ JAWLENSKY

1864 in Torschok, Russia – 1941 in Wiesbaden, Germany

35

### Landschaft bei Murnau, c. 1910

Landscape in Murnau

Oil on canvas

33.2 × 41.2 cm

Hilti Art Foundation, Schaan

[Due to a loan, this artwork is not on display]

Nabi, borrowed from Hebrew 'prophet, man inspired by God'. At the end of 1888 the French plural *nabis* became the name of a group of artists who wanted to regenerate painting like the prophets had regenerated Israel. The group, from 1888 to 1900, searched for the sacred in the work of art, and found inspiration in medieval stained-glass windows, Japanese prints and the work of Gauguin. The Nabis opened the way to what would later be called *fauvism*.

This painting by Jawlensky, who was introduced to the flat style of the Nabis by the painter and monk Jan Verkade, brings to mind *Paysage*, 1911, a painting by Duchamp, which in turn is evocative of the two coloured reproductions of paintings (ready-made or not) in the *White Box* (table 1), particularly the light pink, pale blue and green landscape with the three boats.

## MAX BECKMANN

1884 in Leipzig, Germany – 1950 in New York, NY, USA

36

### Mann im Dunkeln, 1934

Man in the Dark

Bronze (cast between 1958 and 1968)

Height: 56.7 cm

Hilti Art Foundation, Schaan

[Due to a loan, this artwork is not on display]

The unknown (vs the known)

When something is an experiment, is done for the very first time, in other words: new. We do not know exactly where we are going; we are left largely in the dark.



36

French idiom: *depuis la nuit des temps* (literally, 'since the night of time'), meaning that something happened such a long time ago that we can know nothing about it. It is likely to have biblical origins, as the Bible states that before the creation of the world there was night and chaos.

Before 1912, when Duchamp was still painting, in order to reduce the size of a stretched canvas, he simply painted two black bands – either down each side or straight across the top and bottom.

*Roue de Bicyclette (Bicycle Wheel)*, 1913: the black wheel (in contrast to the white stool).

*The Blind Man*, no. 1, 1917. On the front cover of the journal, we see a blind gentleman walking his dog and feeling his way with a stick, no doubt inspired by *The Parable of the Blind*, 1568, by Pieter Bruegel the Elder. *The Blind Man*, no. 2, 1917.

*Fresh Widow*, 1921: the eight black windowpanes.

*Tu m'*, 1918: in the sequence of coloured lozenges, the small, more distant ones in the back are black, while they get progressively larger and lighter towards the front.

*Étant donnés (Given)*: the pitch-black space between the door and the brick wall.

(Or the many shadows in his work)

English homophones

Night/knight

Mourning/morning

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*Où sont les toilettes, s'il vous plaît?*, 2018 (detail)

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