Taking Note of the Past
with an Eye on the Future
1923-1934

When Duchamp arrived in Paris, he must have been greeted by some of his friends as a bona fide artistic genius, for that, more or less, was the assessment expressed by André Breton in an article that had appeared a few months earlier in the magazine Littérature. Breton, who had met Duchamp at the Café Certa in Paris during the fall of 1919, found the artist to be “extremely cordial,” with “a face of admirable beauty.” But even before their meeting, Breton had known about Duchamp’s exceptional intelligence, which, he said, “from the time I had heard of it, I expected to be wondrous.” When they eventually met, he was not disappointed. In his article, Breton placed Duchamp at the pinnacle of various movements in contemporary art, although he noted that the artist resisted affiliation with any of them. “Could it be,” he asked his readers rhetorically, “that Marcel Duchamp arrives more quickly than anyone else at the critical point of any idea?”

Subsequent issues of Littérature published the results of alleged telepathic communications between the poet Robert Desnos and Rosé Sélay, puns that Breton found exceptional “for their mathematical rigour,” and for “the absence of the comic element.” Indeed, he admired these jeux de mots so much that he proclaimed that “words have stopped playing,” and “are making love.”

Duchamp, however, did not believe that all of the puns reflected his literary sensitivities. “Some of them were truly great,” he wrote to his brother from New York, “but most of it was a little too obvious and was a lot more Desnos than me.” Nevertheless, the idea of transmitting his writing telepathically intrigued him. “I know a photographer here who does photos of ectoplasm on a male medium,” he told his brother in the same letter. “I had promised him to go to his performances and I got lazy but I would have enjoyed it very much.”

Breton’s admiration for Duchamp’s literary production extended to his art, although before 1923 he had few opportunities to see very much of it. In the first of his two articles on Duchamp in Littérature, he mentions only two works by title, both of which were by then in private collections in America: The King and Queen Surrounded by Swift Nudes (Arensberg Collection; now Philadelphia Museum of Art), which he said was an advance towards Futurism, and the Chocolate Grinder, which, although he does not note that there were two versions of this painting [2.7, 2.13], he linked to Dada. But the work that intrigued him most was “that glass painting to which Duchamp will soon have given ten years of his life, which is not the unknown masterpiece, and concerning which, even before its completion, the most beautiful legends are current.”
Shortly after Duchamp returned to Paris in 1923, leaving the Large Glass in New York permanently unfinished, Breton learned that it might be possible to acquire an early study for the work on glass from the collection of Raymond Duchamp-Villon (who had died during the war). So he wrote a letter to the wealthy couturier Jacques Doucet, for whom he had worked as a librarian for a number of years, but whom he was also beginning to advise on his growing collection of modern art. The study was the glissière [2.14], which Breton described as “the modern trajectory’s extreme point in the domain of painting.” An assessment Doucet apparently found sufficiently convincing, for he immediately acquired the work and, after Duchamp set it into a special hinged metal frame, displayed it proudly in his luxurious apartment on the avenue du Bois in Neuilly.

In Europe, unlike in America where he was habitually identified as painter of the Nude Descending a Staircase, Duchamp was best known as a painter who had given up painting, an artist who had stopped making art in order to play chess (something Breton mentioned in his Littérature article). Indeed, when his boat docked at Le Havre, Duchamp took a train directly to Brussels where, other than for occasional trips to Paris, he remained for some eight months, playing chess nearly every day. He participated in the Tournoi National Belge, where he took some pride in having placed third in the competition. Upon his return to Paris, he continued to play chess and, as if to distance himself even further from the contemporary art scene, he continued to refuse to exhibit his work and resumed his interest in optics. This time he worked out a series of spiral patterns that were intended to generate a sensation of depth when spun; Duchamp gave seven of these studies on paper to Picabia [4.1], in whose possession they remained until his death in 1953. A more resolved and finished disk, Carollas [4.2], is probably similar to the type that Duchamp is known to have made two years earlier and which he mounted onto the rim of a spinning bicycle wheel and filmed with his own camera. Like most of the other disks in this series, Carollas is composed of circles aligned concentrically so that when the entire composition is spun, the illusion of a rotating spiral is convincingly achieved (oscillating in two directions, both toward and away from the viewer simultaneously).

It seems no coincidence that Duchamp began to pursue an interest in optics immediately after having completed his last oil on canvas composition [3.26], experiments that began in Buenos Aires in 1918 [3.28, 3.29, 3.30] and continued in New York [3.39, 3.40, 3.41]. Just as the ready-made had presented an alternative to traditional...
sculpture, after having decided to give up painting, Duchamp might have sought out (consciously or unconsciously) an alternate mode of artistic expression, one that, nevertheless, still pertained to the concerns of traditional painting. Indeed, it could be argued that perspective and optics are the single most important concerns of all figurative painters, and if Duchamp engaged in these activities, he might well have seen himself investigating the techniques and acquiring the skills for an occupation he would not himself pursue, but which, with his acquired knowledge, he could from now on help others to perfect (which may be the reason he had a card printed up listing “Precision Oculism” as a service offered by Rose Séavy). 6 “You might say it was a sort of replacement, medically speaking,” he later explained, “it was a compensation for my poor retina condemned to inactivity.”

Concurrent with Duchamp’s interest in optics were his ongoing literary experiments, seemingly separate endeavors that he would soon ingeniously combine. In the spring of 1924, fourteen of his puns—most of which had already appeared in a variety of vanguard literary publications—were printed on the back cover of The Wonderful Book: Reflections on Rose Séavy [4.3], a publication by Pierre de Massot, a young French writer and colleague of Breton’s who had also known Duchamp. Although the twenty-page booklet was printed in Paris, its English title probably owes its source to a letter written to Henry McBride by Alfred Stieglitz, who, upon the appearance of Duchamp’s Same French Moderns Says McBride [3.54], sent a letter to McBride that began with the words: “It’s a wonderful book.” 8 McBride, in turn, probably passed on these sentiments to Duchamp, either verbally or in the form of a letter. Although Massot is identified as the book’s author, the pamphlet hardly needed one, for other than an “Introduction by ‘A Woman of No Importance’” (a possible allusion to Rose Séavy), all of the pages are blank except for the names of the twelve separate months of the calendar year printed at the top of each page. The introduction provides an explanation for how the book came into being:

Pierre de Massot determined from this day to write a wonderful book on MARCEL DUCHAMP. But at each attempt he was overwhelmed by the difficulty of such a task. To speak about the youth, the evolution, the work and especially the life of Marcel Duchamp without blundering! Might not one well hesitate? Anybody would hesitate! The thing is impossible.

Apparently, Massot thought it would be more in keeping with his subject to abandon any effort to make sense. Quoting a comment made to her by a “lazy, naughty little boy,” this “woman of no importance” concludes her introduction with the following statement: Un livre agréable à lire doit toujours être illisible (“An agreeable book to read should always be illegible”). Apparently, even Gertrude Stein, who was not particularly known for the clarity of her writing, agreed. “I was looking to see if I could make Marcel out of it,” she is quoted on the title page, “but I can’t.”

At about the time that this publication appeared, Duchamp approached Jacques Doucet and asked the collector if he would finance the construction of a second optical machine, something along the lines of the device he had made three years earlier in New York [3.39]. But rather than create the illusion of a compressed space, as the earlier machine had done, this new device was intended to achieve precisely the opposite effect: when spun, a series of concentric circles painted onto the surface of a spinning hemispherical dome was designed to create the illusion of an added dimension [4.4]. Once Doucet agreed to the proposal, Duchamp began construction almost immediately, although various complications would delay completion of the machine until the fall of 1924. 9 Even before it was finished, however, the Parisian public was given a preview of its appearance in the form of a sketch by Man Ray, which was photographed and, with Doucet’s permission, reproduced as an inset illustration to the July 1924 issue of Picabia’s 391 [4.5]. The sketch not only showed the concentric circle design that Duchamp painted onto the surface of his hemisphere, but surrounding it, in Man Ray’s hand, appeared the words Rose Séavy et moi esquivons les ecchymoses des Esquimaux aux mots exquis (“Rose Séavy and I escape from the bruises of the eskimos in exquisite words”), one of Duchamp’s
4.4 *Rotary Demisphere*  
(*Precision Optics*)  
1924  
motorized construction:  
painted wood hemisphere,  
fixed on black velvet  
disk, copper collar with  
plexiglas dome, motor,  
pully, metal stand  
Museum of Modern Art,  
New York; gift of Mrs.  
William Sisler and purchase

4.5 Project for the *Rotary Demisphere*  
(disk by Duchamp,  
inscription by Man Ray)  
1924  
(inset illustration for  
391, July 1924)  
BICl Art Space, Kyoto
most melodic and amusing play on words (which, with a minor variation, had already appeared a few months earlier on the back cover of *The Wonderful Book:* 4.3).

As Duchamp saw it, like his earlier optical device, the *Rotary Demisphere* also fell into a category of “Precision Optics,” and as with the earlier experiment, in order for the optical effects to function precisely, viewers were instructed to stand directly opposite the machine at a distance of exactly one meter (only from this position does the spinning hemisphere achieve the desired effect). One of the last details to be worked out in the construction of this machine pertained to the fabrication of a metal housing that was designed to support the glass globe and cover the projecting wood hemisphere upon which the spiral was painted. On October 31, 1924, Duchamp sent a letter to Doucet describing this protective covering, which his patron had not yet seen. “On a copper disk,” Duchamp wrote, “at the edge and all around, I had a saying engraved by an engraver—geographer—who did a remarkable job for me.” In an earlier letter, Duchamp told Doucet that he found the lettering on this copper housing indispensable, “especially,” as he put it, “in order to avoid the kitchen utensil effect which red copper always has.” The lettering, however, was meant to do more than simply eliminate the utilitarian associations imposed by the choice of material; rather, the similar sounds of repetitive syllables create an aesthetic rapport with the pulsating action generated by the rotating spiral, which at least one author later likened to “copulatory motions.”

In the same year that Duchamp worked on the construction of this machine, he devised a system of wagering in roulette whereby his earlier experiments with the laws of chance [i.e. 2.6 and 3.25] might be profitably applied to the gambling tables of Monte Carlo. It appears that he first tried to work out the details of this system with the help of Picabia, who, in the spring of 1924, joined Duchamp in the south of France, where he had gone to attend a chess tournament. On March 31, 1924, from his hotel in Nice, Duchamp wrote to Doucet describing his attraction to the gambling halls of Monte Carlo. “I spend most of the afternoons in the game rooms,” he wrote, “and I haven’t the least temptation. All that I lost there was done in full consciousness and I have not yet been seized by the ‘over-excitement’ of the playing hall. Everything about this life amuses me very much and I will explain to you one of my systems upon returning.”

Apparently, the system Duchamp was trying to work out was based on nearly endless throws of the dice, whereby profit was accumulated only through an excruciatingly gradual basis. “Every day I have won steadily,” he reported in a letter to Picabia, “small sums—in an hour or two. I’m still polishing the system and hope to return to Paris with it completely perfected.” But the system was so time-consuming and boring that it tested even Duchamp’s renowned patience. To Picabia he described the operation as “delicious monotony with the least emotion,” but to Doucet he wrote: “the slowness of progress is more or less a test of patience. I’m staying away even or else am making time in a disturbing way for the aforementioned patience ... I’m neither ruined nor a millionaire and will never be either one or the other.”

In spite of the equivocal success of this system, Duchamp decided to expand upon its principles and profits by simply increasing the amounts wagered. In order to raise the funds required to finance a more ambitiously conceived operation, he issued thirty shares of stock in his company at an assigned value of 500 francs each, repayable to investors with 20 percent interest over the course of a three-year period. Ownership in this company was established by purchase of a bond, a legal document that Duchamp himself carefully designed and issued [4.6]. The bond featured a diagrammatic overhead view of a roulette table, crowned at the summit by a photocolloged portrait of Duchamp by Man Ray. But Duchamp’s features in this photograph are barely distinguishable; his head is completely enveloped in layers of shaving lather, his hair peeked into a pair of devilish horns, intended, perhaps, as a commentary on the devious nature of this enterprise. Its mock legality was further emphasized by a pun—*moustiques domestiques denistock* (“domestic mosquitoes half-stock”)—which was repeated in green ink in a continuous pattern on the background of the bond. According to the “Company
Statutes" printed on the verso of this document, annual income was calculated according to a "cumulative system, which is experimentally based on one hundred thousand throws of the ball."

In order to attract prospective investors, Duchamp sent a sample of the bond to Jane Heap, editor of The Little Review, in hopes that she might consider publicizing the venture in her well-established American literary journal. Heap described the bond in the 1924/25 issue of the magazine, advising readers: "If anyone is in the business of buying art curiosities as an investment, here is a chance to invest in a perfect masterpiece. Marcel's signature alone is worth much more than the 500 francs asked for the share." Heap clearly placed Duchamp's work in high regard, for the next issue of The Little Review featured on its cover Man Ray's illustration of the Rotaty Demisphere and its surrounding pun [4.7], reproduced not from Man Ray's original gouache drawing, but from the insert that had appeared a few months earlier in 391 [4.5].

Not long after Heap had received a notice from Duchamp about the bond, she sent an unnumbered example to Ettie Stettheimer, Duchamp's good friend and supporter from the time of his first visit to New York. "I promised to act as his advance agent," Heap explained in an accompanying letter, adding "he [Duchamp] perhaps has some shyness in asking his good friends direct." Stettheimer apparently agreed to lend her financial support, for in March 1925, Duchamp wrote to his old friend, noting an important difference between the bonds that carried a legal stamp and those that did not: "Thanks for taking part in my scheme," he wrote. "I have sent you yesterday a bond by registered post which is the only valid one of those you have seen because it has been stamped. If you have another (by Jane Heap I suppose) keep it as a work of art but the 20 percent will be paid to you on the one which I am sending you at the same time as this letter." The distinction Duchamp makes is important, because although all copies of the bond bear the signatures "M. Duchamp" (identified as "an administrator") and "Rrose Sélavy" ("President of the Administrative Council"), only the numbered bonds bearing a fifty-centimes stamp were to be considered legal documents, officially entitling their owners to collect a share in the dividends of the company. The stamps on these legal notes are identified with numbers corresponding to the issue of the bond, and each bears the initials of the company's president: "R.S." Simply by having observed the professional activities of his father, who earned his living as a notary (see Introduction), Duchamp would have been familiar with the procedure that was customarily followed in order to establish the legal tender of a document.

Duchamp's activities as an "artistic notary" of his own work might have taken on an added significance in the early part of the following year, for on February 3, 1925, his father died unexpectedly at the age of 76 (five days after his mother). Only a few days earlier, Duchamp had written to a friend to report that he had sold ten bonds, and it seems that he managed to raise about $600 from investors in his new company. With the bond he sent to Doucet, he wrote: "I have studied the system a great deal, based on my bad experience of last year. Don't be too skeptical, since this time I think I have eliminated the word chance. I would like to force the roulette to become a game of chess. A claim and its consequences: but I would like so much to pay my dividends." In March, he sent Doucet a postcard from Monte Carlo, reporting that he was "delighted with the results (on paper)," but in December he wrote again, returning only fifty francs on his investment, the first, and, so far as is known, the only dividend to be paid by this defunct company.

Although Duchamp never succeeded in forcing the roulette table to work like a game of chess (among the few board games that, other than the initial selection of pieces, involves no chance), he did combine these two seemingly opposing concepts in his design for the poster of the Third French Chess Championship [4.8], which was held during the first week of September, 1925, in Nice. The image shows a cluster of approximately eighteen cubes suspended in space against the enlarged head of a chess king rendered in a pale pink silhouette. The position of the cubes—their three visible sides colored black, white, and beige—was determined, as Duchamp later explained,
by tossing them into the air and taking a picture. "By introducing more chance in chess and reducing the chance factor in gambling," he said, "the two activities could meet somehow." Subsequent historians have linked this poster to illustrations used to visualize the fourth dimension, while it should also be noted that the technique used by Duchamp in creating this image curiously mimics the process used by Hans Arp years earlier in a series of collages entitled *Squares Arranged According to the Laws of Chance.*

Just as Duchamp had earlier linked a visual image to a pun [3.33], it was around the period that he made this chess poster that he first gave one of his puns visual form. Above the words *Nous nous cajolions* [4.9]—which could be translated as "we were petting one another"—Duchamp drew the figure of a large woman holding the hand of a child (a nounou, or nanny) next to the image of a lion in a cage (a cage aux lions, or lions' cage). Below the inscription, he mounted a photograph taken a few years earlier (by Man Ray?) of graffiti on the wall of a bathroom stall in the Lincoln Arcade Building. The vulgar inscriptions and drawings in this image were likely intended by association to place Duchamp's words and drawing into the same class, thereby debasing the artificially elevated status usually accorded works of art, just as he had earlier taken a urinal out of this same context (a bathroom) and elevated it to the position of art [3.16].

With the inheritance received after the death of his parents, Duchamp decided to make some calculated investments in the art market. In January 1926, he purchased eighty paintings, drawings, and watercolors by Picabia directly from Picabia himself. The works he selected were intended to represent all phases of the artist's production, from early Impressionist paintings, through to Cubist, Abstract, and mechanical compositions painted in New York and Paris, to his most recent experiments in fusing figurative elements with optical imagery (a number of which bear a curious resemblance to Duchamp's work of the same period). The paintings were purchased with the idea of auctioning them off in a public sale at the Hôtel Drouot, an event that took place in Paris on March 8, 1926. Although it has not been previously noted, the sales catalogue, which featured a relatively straightforward art-historical summation of the various styles of Picabia's work by Rrose Sélavy, was designed from cover to cover by Duchamp himself [4.10]. As in his earlier design for the Société Anonyme publication of McBride's writings [3.54], Duchamp distinguished between various divisions within the catalogue by providing the titles of Picabia's paintings in a variety of markedly distinct typefaces. The result is a publication whose strikingly unconventional appearance sets it apart from the visually uninspired catalogues that—to this very day—accompany sales at the Hôtel Drouot. The sale itself was exceptionally well attended and resulted in a great financial success.

During the summer of 1926, Duchamp decided to combine the pulsating action of his spirals with the melodic cadence of his puns in a film, wherein ten separate disks bearing spirals would alternate with nine disks inscribed with puns [cf. 4.1 and 4.2 with 4.11]. Most of the puns had appeared in earlier publications, but here, by attaching small-scale marquee letters to the surface of a cardboard disk, which was in turn glued to the surface of a 78-rpm record, their text was arranged in the pattern of a corkscrew or spiral, matching the pattern generated by the spinning spiral disks. The process of making the film was laborious and time-consuming, for in those days film speed was so slow that moving images tended to blur. It was necessary, therefore, to shoot the entire film frame by frame, placing each disk on a phonograph and moving it only a millimeter at a time before opening the
camera lens for the next exposure. “It took us a week or ten days to do it,” Duchamp later recalled. “It was a little jerky at times, because we didn’t do it very well.”

The finished film, made with the assistance of Man Ray and Marc Allégret, was given the title *Anémic Cinéma* [4.12]. The title is not only an amusing anagram (à la Aresnberg), but, some might argue, appropriate, for during the entire seven minutes of the film’s duration, the audience is subjected to a continuous viewing of revolving spirals, the pulsating action of which could easily cause some members of the audience to become nauseated, or anemic. The film ends with the copyright of Rose Sélavy, whose signature and thumbprint are also provided, indicating not only originality on the part of the film’s author (in the 19th century thumbprints were discovered to be unique in all individuals), but the special inventive qualities of the film itself, for which the author claims legal protection under existing copyright laws.

After the successful sale of Picabia’s work, the next art investment in which Duchamp became involved required more money, but, because the investment was shared, it carried less risk. During the summer of 1926, Roche informed Duchamp that it might be possible to purchase 27 sculptures en bloc by Brancusi from the estate of John Quinn, who had died two years earlier in New York. Although Roche feared that the investment might not pay off, they eventually decided to purchase the works together (with additional financial assistance provided by Mrs. Mary Rumsey, the wealthy wife of an American sculptor). In October of 1926, Duchamp traveled to New York, where he not only helped to organize an exhibition of Brancusi’s work at the Brummer Gallery, but where he planned to assist Katherine Dreier in the installation of the International Exhibition of Modern Art at the Brooklyn Museum, a show that Duchamp had helped Dreier to organize a few months earlier in Paris.

On the day of Duchamp’s arrival in New York, he ran into an old friend, Charles Demuth, whom he must have told about his concern in moving the *Large Glass* from Katherine Dreier’s apartment to the Brooklyn Museum, where it was scheduled to be placed on public view for the first time. “Having used glass so often,” remarked Demuth, “seems to have added difficulties for the Future,” to which he added: “He [Duchamp] would, of course.”[22] But the glass arrived at the Brooklyn Museum unscathed, where, not far from a sculpture by Brancusi and two small sculptures by Naum Gabo, it was placed in the center of a large gallery which contained, among other things, works by Cesar Domela, Fernand Léger, and Piet Mondrian (paintings by these three artists can be seen through a frontal view of the glass: 4.13). The show was an unqualified success; before it closed at the Brooklyn Museum, it had been viewed by approximately 52,000 people, and subsequent showings were well attended in New York, Buffalo, and Toronto—although because of their frailty, Duchamp’s two works on glass (not only the *Large Glass*, but *To Be Looked at*... [3.28], which Dreier then also owned) were omitted from the extended venues.[26]

The Brancusi exhibition was also considered a success, although Duchamp experienced some
DÉSIGNATION

1. Le Zèbre
2. Route à Moret
3. Effet de négl. sur les bords de l'Yonne par le Soleil
4. New York - Barcelone - Paris
5. la Procession à Séville
6. New York
7. Paris
8. Catch as catch can
9. Force comique
10. Español
11. Mantilla blanche
12. Español, fondo rosa
13. Profil
14. Español, fondo azul
15. Toréador, orejeta rouge
16. Portrait de Mme Sarah Bern.

17. DÉLIRE SEXUEL
18. CETTE MACHINE CORRIGE LES MŒURS EN RIANT
19. PRENEZ GARDE À LA PEINTURE
20. NOVIA
21. HORLOGE
22. SERPENTINS
23. PLAISIR
24. RÉSONATEUR
25. Secteurs à trois lames
26. Obturateur
27. Mecanique
28. Radio Concerto
29. Céllier à pressoir
30. Cuirette tournante
31. Catalogue des Tableaux, Aquarelles et Dessins par Francis Picabia Appartenant à M. Marcel Duchamp 1926 auction catalogue (cover and selected pages) Francis M. Naumann
difficulty in clearing the works he brought with him through US Customs. In order to promote cultural exchange, works of art were considered free of duty, but the federal customs officials who inspected Brancusi's sculpture refused to accept the strange-looking pieces of marble, wood, and bronze as works of art. Ironically, Duchamp, who years earlier had openly challenged traditional definitions of art, was now placed in a position of having to defend a more traditional concept of sculptural form. He enlisted the aid of Henry McBride, but even this outspoken defender of modernism failed to convince the authorities. In the end, a compromise was worked out by allowing the sculptures to pass, just so long as it was clear that those pieces remaining in the United States would be subject to a duty of 40 percent.

On December 20, 1926, while the Brooklyn exhibition was still on, but a few days after Brancusi's show at Brummer's had closed, Duchamp succeeded in arranging for Anémic Cinéma to be shown at the Fifth Avenue Theater in Manhattan. With the exception of a handful of friends, whom Duchamp specifically invited to attend, few (if any) members of the general public would have been capable of understanding Duchamp's subtle French puns, so the film went largely unnoticed. A few days later, Duchamp traveled to Chicago to install the Brancusi show at the Arts Club, where C.J. Bulliet, a journalist for the Chicago Evening Post, seized the opportunity to ask Duchamp a few questions about his work, particularly about the rumor that he had quit painting. "Because if he should paint again," explains Bulliet, presumably echoing the artist's position, "he would merely repeat himself, so what's the use?" He then quotes Duchamp directly: "All painters should be pensioned at 50... and compelled to quit work. The government should see to it that the retired painters live on their pensions, and do not work clandestinely and secretly. Another sideline job for the prohibition enforcement department."27

Upon his return to New York, Duchamp attended the sale of works from the estate of John Quinn, where we know he made a number of other art investments, purchasing two drawings by Picasso and one by Derain. On the day of his departure, a journalist for the New York Times interviewed Duchamp on the question of Brancusi's work being considered art. "To say that a sculpture by Brancusi is not art," Duchamp quipped, "is like saying an egg is not an egg."28 The comment was loaded with an obvious double entendre, for Brancusi's work, particularly his ovoid white marble sculpture of a child's head, New Born (Philadelphia Museum of Art, Arensberg Collection), was often compared by critics to the shape of an ordinary chicken egg.

Upon his return to Paris, Duchamp settled into new quarters on the rue Larrey, where just before going to New York he had taken the lease on a small two-room apartment. Man Ray, who helped Duchamp to partition off the room, said the space was located "on the seventh floor of an old building in an unfrequented quarter of Paris."29 The most unusual feature in this sparse decor was the design of a single door in the main studio [4.14], which served to close the entrance either to the bedroom or to the bathroom, but not to both rooms at the same time. "I was living in a tiny apartment," Duchamp later explained. "In order to take full advantage of the meager space, I thought to make use of a single door which would close alternately on two door jams placed at right angles. I showed the thing to some friends and told them that the proverb 'A door must be either open or closed' (il faut qu'une porte soit ouverte ou fermée) was thus
found caught in the act of inexactitude. But one forgets the practical reason that dictated this measure and they only think of it as a Dada provocateur."

During the next three years, Duchamp’s artistic activities nearly ceased altogether as he became more seriously involved in chess, participating in a number of tournaments throughout Europe. In June of 1927, he also married for the first time, taking a young 24-year-old woman, Lydie Sarazin-Levassor, as his bride. The action shocked many of Duchamp’s closest friends, most of whom voiced their protest privately in a wild exchange of letters. Lydie was introduced to Duchamp by Germaine Everling, Picabia’s wife and a friend of Lydie’s from childhood. Everling explained to Duchamp that Lydie’s father, a wealthy automobile manufacturer, was seeking a husband for his daughter (presumably so that he could keep a mistress, in accordance with an agreement that had been established with his wife). Knowing that Lydie would be assured an income from her father, Duchamp agreed to the marriage, warning, however, that he needed to maintain his independence. At first they lived uncomfortably in Duchamp’s studio on the rue Larrey, until Lydie eventually found a proper apartment of her own. At the end of October 1927, less than four months after their marriage, Duchamp announced that he wanted a divorce (which, after a period of obligatory separation, became legal).

Having regained his status as a bachelor, Duchamp settled back into his studio on the rue Larrey and found renewed comfort in his simple life. “I have arranged my studio here to live, so perfectly,” he explained in a letter to Dreier, “that I don’t see why I should ever make any effort toward ‘more money’ as it costs me very little to live this way.” On the same day he wrote to Stieglitz, applauding his decision to keep three paintings by Picabia after a recent show, for, as Duchamp noted (even though he had done reasonably well himself a few years earlier in selling work by the same artist): “Picabia is one of the few today who are not a ‘sure investment’.” He went on to explain that he found the market for works of art in Paris deplorable. “Painters and
Paintings," he said, "go up and down like Wall Street Stock." A few months later he would echo these sentiments in a letter to Dreier, who had informed him that she planned to cease all activities for the Société Anonyme. "The more I live among artists," he said, "the more I am convinced that they are fakes from the minute they get to be successful in the smallest way... Don't name a few exceptions to justify a milder opinion about the whole 'art game.' In the end, a painting is declared good only if it is worth 'so much.' — It may even be accepted by the 'holy' museums — so much for posterity." He concluded by telling Dreier that it is only on account of her that he bothers to express these opinions. "I have lost so much interest (all) in the question that I don't suffer from it," he said. But, he added, "You still do." When Dreier wrote again a year later and proposed having Waldemar George write a book about him, he responded sternly: "You must understand my attitude toward the book is based upon my attitude toward 'art' since 1918... it can be no more a question of my life as an artist's life: I gave it up ten years ago; this period is long enough to prove that my intention to remain outside of any art manifestation is permanent."

In February of 1930, Duchamp was invited to participate in an exhibition of collages organized by Louis Aragon for the Galerie Goemans in Paris. In an apparent relaxation of his position against showing his work, he submitted an example of his assisted readymade, Pharmacy [2.11], the Belle Halaine, Eau de Violette perfume bottle [3.48], and a Monte Carlo Bond [4.6]. Also, for this exhibition, Duchamp made a second version of the L.H.O.O.Q. [4.15]; but rather than use another postcard, Duchamp purchased a large color reproduction of the Mona Lisa, which he altered in the same fashion as the original work [cf. 3.33]. Curiously, in the exhibition, both versions of this work were shown, as if, for the first time, Duchamp wanted to seize the opportunity to openly question the value of an original versus a replica (particularly interesting in this case when, even before the differences are considered, it must be acknowledged that both the original and replica are reproductions to begin with).

Throughout the remaining months of the year, Duchamp worked feverishly writing a book on chess with Vitaly Halberstadt, a German chess master. He had presented the book for publication by the Nouvelle Revue Française, but when they declined the offer, he approached the publishing house of Edmond Lancel in Brussels, who not only agreed to print the book, but wanted it to appear with parallel texts in three languages: German, French, and English. "I intend to do 12 copies on good paper," he explained in a letter to Dreier, "and sell them as 'deluxe editions,' numbered and signed, to help the publisher."

Indeed, although the book would not appear for some two years, the final publication—entitled Opposition and Sister Squares Are Reconciled—was issued in both hardbound deluxe [4.16] and regular paperback [4.17] editions. The deluxe books were released in thirty signed (by both authors) and numbered copies, while the regular edition had a print run of approximately one thousand copies. Over the course of a two-year period, Duchamp worked on the design and layout of the book, which featured a continuous run of chess diagrams, many of which were printed on both sides of translucent paper in order to fully explicate the various nuances of their complex treatise.
Opposition and Sister Squares Are Reconciled
1932 book by Duchamp and Vitaly Halberstadt (designed by Duchamp) deluxe edition (cover and interior page-spread) 
Private collection, on extended loan to the Philadelphia Museum of Art
For the cover, Duchamp used Brancusi’s camera to take a picture of his and Halberstadt’s names cut from a stencil, as well as the book’s title, seen from a raking angle, showing the letters fading off into perspective space (an illusion accurately reproduced on a strip wrapped around the book’s cover). In spite of all the effort that went into its design, few found the contents of the book to be useful. “But the games in which it works,” Duchamp later explained, “would interest no chess player. Even the chess champions don’t read the book, since the problems it poses really only come up once in a lifetime.” Indeed, virtually everyone who has bothered to review this book agrees with this summation, but few have noted the significance of its purpose vis-à-vis Duchamp’s attitude towards his own work and the artistic process in general. As the title indicates, the book’s intention is to reconcile the alleged differences that had developed over the years between positions of opposition and the concept of sister squares, just as Duchamp’s introduction of the readymade unavoidably questions, and thereby serves to reconcile, the differences that exist between works of art and those things in the world that are not considered works of art.

In the fall of 1933, Duchamp returned to New York to organize a second Brancusi exhibition at the Brummer Gallery, where he was again approached by a journalist and asked questions about whether or not Brancusi’s work could be considered art. Avoiding the question, Duchamp preferred to make a comment about one of his pet peeves: art and money. “In Paris we have inflation in painting,” he said, “just as you have it over here in dollars, only ours has been going on since the war. Artists, once having found a formula for painting, have used it for making money, selling their stuff like so many beans.” The problem, as he sees it, can be partially blamed on the artist’s ego. “It is not any more what I, the artist, feel,” he said. “The head is there to translate what the eye sees.”

Duchamp left New York at the end of January 1934, and less than two weeks after his arrival in Paris, he wrote to the Arensbergs about his plans to issue a facsimile edition of his notes for the Large Glass (in a heretofore unpublished letter of sufficient importance for the theme of the present study that it is worthwhile quoting here nearly in full):

I just started to put together an edition of notes and documents about my glass “The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even”—I would like to compile all my notes written in 1912, 13, 14 and 15 on the subject and have them reproduced in facsimilie (using collotypes which really give a very good idea of the originals, particularly for handwritten notes).

I also would like to reproduce the main paintings and drawings used for the composition of the “Bride...”

So would you be kind enough to arrange for a good photo of the Chocolate Grinder (1914; the one with posted threads) and to send it to me at once; I would like to have 2 prints, one rather dark and the other one lighter, to choose from (dimensions of the photos 9 to 10 inches x 10 to 11 inches approximately; printed on glossy paper)

I plan to publish 500 ordinary copies of this edition (100 Francs each).

My intention is to gather all these photos and papers cut like the originals inside a cardboard box (approximately 14 inches x 10 inches) with the title on the box.

There would be approximately 135 notes and a dozen photos.

Since the edition of collotypes is very expensive, I thought I would ask ten real friends to purchase a deluxe copy of this edition for $50.00—

Of course, this deluxe edition would be as beautiful as possible, with, I hope, a color photograph, special paper, luxurious box, etc. and would be limited to 20 copies (including the 10 that wouldn’t be commercialized)

So I’m starting with you my dear Walter and I’m asking you if you can help me with $50.00 to produce this edition — if you answer me in the affirmative as soon as possible, I’ll be able to start — The photo of the Grinder is not as urgent as your yes; the money, too, can wait until the publication comes out next July —

That’s my “hobby” for the moment. Although Duchamp had, in a manner of speaking, “published” a selection of his notes for the Large Glass exactly twenty years earlier, The Box of IB14 [2.18-2.21] was made from photographic prints and limited to only five examples. Just exactly what it was that inspired Duchamp to create this new facsimile edition is difficult to say,
although as early as September 1932 Breton had printed a selection of Duchamp’s unpublished notes in a special Surrealist Number of This Quarter, claiming (probably in order to justify the context) that these notes would be of “considerable documentary value to surrealists.” In May of 1933, Breton published three of these same notes in his magazine, Surréalisme au service de la Révolution, emphasizing the fact that he believed the notes were of “considerable value” for the “entirely new light that they cast on their author’s preoccupations.” In both articles, Breton took great care to record the appearance of the original document, indicating strikeouts, word changes, the use of different color ink, and other editorial marks that could not be retained in the typeset transcription (problems that would be automatically eliminated if the notes were reproduced in facsimile, a factor that might have contributed to Duchamp’s decision to publish them in this fashion). A few years later, Pierre de Massot took credit for having been among the first to suggest that Duchamp find a way of making these notes more accessible.

Considering the various complications Duchamp must have encountered in securing photographs and arranging for these notes to be printed, it is remarkable how few details of the finished publication differ from his original plan. In the end, he reproduced only 93 manuscript notes and drawings (as opposed to the 135 mentioned in his letter to the Arensbergs), and 300 copies of the regular edition [4.19] were printed (and not 500, as he had originally planned). He did produce twenty deluxe copies [4.20], one of which was immediately reserved for the Arensbergs, whose generosity and cooperation made the publication possible.

Even though the printing techniques available to Duchamp at that time are far fewer than those available today, the quality of the reproductions is extraordinary. Each of the notes he selected for the final publication were individually photographed and reproduced as colotypes, a printing process that, as he notes in his letter to the Arensbergs, produces a convincing facsimile, but is very expensive. Duchamp oversaw every step in the printing process at the firm of Vigier & Brunissen in Paris. When the colotypes were ready, he prepared templates to echo the outer edge of each note that was irregularly torn, and used the template to tear the printed paper into the shape of the original note. Needless to say, this was a painstaking and time-consuming process (particularly considering the numbers involved), one that Duchamp himself later described: “I had all of these thoughts [notes] lithographed with the same ink as the originals. To find paper of absolutely identical quality, I had to scour the most improbable corners of Paris. Then three hundred copies of each litho had to be cut out, using zinc templates which I had trimmed against the periphery of the original papers. It was a tremendous work and I had to hire my concierge...”

In addition to the notes, Duchamp also included colotype reproductions of paintings and other works of art that related to the Large Glass: The Coffee Mill [2.3], The Passage from Virgin to Bride (Museum of Modern Art, New York), The Bride [2.5], the second version of the Chocolate Grinder [2.13], the Glider [2.14, shown in a 1924 photograph by Man Ray of Duchamp lying behind it), To Be Looked At... [3.28], the Oculist Witnesses drawing [3.42; reproduced from the dark, ink-coated side of the carbon on yellow paper], and Dust Breeding [3.43]. For most of these works, Duchamp had to write their respective owners and request professional photographs, usually asking them, as he did in his letter to the Arensbergs, to provide prints of varying exposures so that he and the printers could choose the one that best served their needs. Along with the black-and-white colotype reproductions, Duchamp also prepared a color reproduction of the 9 Malic Mails.
the study on glass from 1914–15 that was then in Roché's collection [2.15]. In order to facilitate the coloring process, Duchamp prepared a stencil and colored each print by hand. This technique—known as pochoir coloring—was a somewhat archaic yet accurate and reliable method for coloring reproductions that Duchamp would make frequent use of in years to come.

As for the Large Glass itself, which had shattered three years earlier when being transported from storage to the home of Katherine Dreier, Duchamp decided to use the photograph that had been taken while the work was on exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum [4.13], before the glass had been broken.43 For use in the box, however, Duchamp wanted the three paintings that could be seen through the glass diffused in intensity, so he enlisted the assistance of Man Ray, who, years earlier, had developed a considerable skill in using the airbrush while working as a layout and graphic artist in New York. On the surface of several prints that he enlarged specially for this purpose, Man Ray carefully taped off selected details and sprayed a thin layer of white pigment to the areas he wanted to tone down. Three trial proofs for this process were recently discovered [4.18], which indicate the degree of labor required for every facet of the box's production. The final collotype was printed twice the size of the other reproductions and, therefore, had to be folded in half (conveniently along the horizontal line that separated the upper and lower portions of the glass) for inclusion in the box.

As he had promised in his letter to the Arensbergs, the box made to contain these notes was luxurious. It was made of cardboard but covered in green flocking, which is why the finished publication is commonly referred to as La Botte Verte, or The Green Box. The official title is stenciled in a white dot pattern on the cover:

**LA MARIÉE MISE A NU PAR SES CELIBATAIRES MEME.** In the deluxe edition [4.20], this dot pattern is made by holes punched into the verso of the cover, thereby reversing the letters, a subtle though cryptic suggestion that the meaning of its contents can only be attained through some sort of effort at decipherment. Over these letters is attached a large “M” cut from thin copperplate; this letter is matched by an equally large “D” on the back cover, providing, of course, the artist's initials. The deluxe copies differ from the regular edition in other respects as well; the **Dedulst Witnesses** is printed on glossy photographic paper, and the **B Malic Moids** pochoir is framed under glass and attached to the inside of the back cover of the box, where the name of the special recipient is provided with the same hole-punched dot pattern that is used on the cover. Each of these deluxe copies also contains an original note or drawing, which, outside of being attached by a small paper clip to the facsimile, was not otherwise identified.44

Before the box was completed, Duchamp issued a "Bulletin de Souscription" [4.21], providing a cursory description of the publication and indicating that it had been produced in two editions, one in 300 signed and numbered copies for the general public, and 20 deluxe (each of which contained an original manuscript note). The form included a facsimile of his note on the **Chocolat Grinder**, an appropriate selection to demonstrate the capabilities of the colotype printing process, for it shows a faithful reproduction of the handwritten script in black ink on graph paper (the same paper that had been used for the original note), as well as underscoring in blue crayon and highlights in red. Finally, the form indicates that orders should be directed to Rose Sélay, 18 rue de la Paix (the address of Duchamp's bank). Once all of the cardboard boxes were ready, in both the
The Bride Stripped Bare
by Her Bachelors, Even
or The Green Box
September 1934
deluxe edition dedicated to
Maria Martins (included in this box is a copy of
The Blind Man [3.17] and a preparatory drawing for the
Large Glass [2.9])
The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; gift of Phyllis C. Wattis

The Bride Stripped Bare
by Her Bachelors, Even
or The Green Box
September 1934
facsimile notes for the
Large Glass in a green
ticked cardboard box
regular edition
Philadelphia Museum of Art;
The Louise and Walter
Arensberg Collection
regular and deluxe editions, Duchamp placed the collotype notes into each box in an intentionally random sequence, which, for anyone who wanted to read the notes and relate them to the Large Glass, made any attempt at their organization the responsibility of individual readers. As a result, Duchamp achieved precisely the effect he desired. The notes are clearly understood to be an integral part of the Large Glass, a quick-and-ready guide through its labyrinthine narrative, yet their lack of organization prevents us from “reading” the subject in a logical fashion from start to end. As a result, we are thwarted in our efforts to comprehend the work as a coherent whole, thereby effectively diffusing whatever visual (what he would later call “retinal”) appeal the unfinished work might otherwise have possessed. Finally, each box was signed by Duchamp on the inside spine, but with time most of these signatures were absorbed by the green suede material of the box and have disappeared, an appropriate (though probably unintentional) occurrence for an artist whose work, to many, appeared increasingly elusive.

The official date of publication for the Green Box was September 1934, and shortly after its appearance, Duchamp sent one of the first deluxe copies to Katherine Dreier, who, of course, owned the Large Glass itself. “Well dear your amazing book has arrived!!!!,” exclaimed Miss Dreier. “It is one of the most perfect expressions of Dadaism which has come my way. I was terribly amused at myself—how annoyed I was when I saw all those torn scraps—and of course the glass was broken!!!! At first it seemed to me that I just could not bear all those torn pieces of paper—and then I woke up to the fact—how right Dada is to jolt us out of our ruts and make us face the situation—what is more important—the matter or the form.” Although her initial reaction was one of confusion, she eventually found the publication intriguing. “In time I am sure that I will enjoy it as I did the Mirors,” she said, “for I recall how disturbing they were to me at first.”45

The Parisian public seems to have reacted more favorably. Sales were good, so much so that within four months Duchamp could tell Dreier that he had recovered most of his printing costs. At least one review was written, by Dorothy Dudley, an American author and translator who wrote under the pen name of Clos Vert (apparently, about ten years earlier Duchamp had an affair with her sister, Caroline Reagon).46 Dudley began her article by explaining to her readers that the publication “is a book such as the publishing world has not seen before,” something, she said, “that would give a new impetus to book manufacturer[ing].” She goes on to explain its more unusual features. “The book, bound in green suede, is not really a book but a box, and not really a box but a book.” Although the contents of this publication will require some thought on behalf of the reader, she explains, it’s well worth the effort:

And what will this miscellany give you for the trouble of perusal and deciphering? Literally speaking, the research from concept to finish that related to the theme of this Retard en Verre. But more than that, the volume suggests the existence of a mechanical-physical set of symbols for the modern artist to work from; just as the Gothic artist had a religious set from which to construct windows and frescoes.

The student of mechanics and physics, granted an equal imagination with the purely aesthetic reader, will doubtless succeed best in solving the Duchamp puzzle box. But it will repay likewise the lay-delver like myself, if he is fascinated by a blend of three elements—mind, novelty and style; indeed by the Duchamp philosophy, which appears here as a proposal of indifference wedded to Precision, of Chance in the company of Intention.47

The review concludes with a warning. “You may say this book is nonsense,” writes Dudley, “but it is nonsense that makes sense. Perhaps it is a retard in books, a regulator, a corrective, to decorators too exuberant over their modern, with
whom surfaces have become more important than structure. In other words the streamline more important than the destination." Duchamp, to whom a copy of the review was sent, liked it. "You made something very sensible," he wrote in a note to her. "Let's hope your editors appreciate it."48 Apparently, they did not, for the review never appeared.

In December of 1934, however, the first major article on the Large Glass appeared, written by no one less than the founder and principal spokesman for the Surrealist movement, André Breton, and published in the sixth number of the glossy Surrealist magazine Minotaure. After a careful review of the notes and photographs contained in the Green Box, Breton, who had not actually seen the Large Glass itself, was nonetheless capable of concluding that this was one of the most important works of art made by any living artist. "This work [the Large Glass] represents, at the very least, the trophy of a fabulous hunt through virgin territory, at the frontiers of eroticism, philosophical speculation, the spirit of sporting competition, and the most recent data afforded by the various sciences, by lyricism and by humor."49

In his article, Breton told his readers that the appearance of the notes will now make it possible for the world to understand the importance of the Large Glass. This publication, he said, "suddenly transformed the crest of this wave into a blade in front of our eyes, and the blade lifted long enough for us to glimpse the incredibly complex components of this vast machinery which drove it." He goes so far as to compare the importance of Duchamp's accomplishments to the invention of the printing press. "The practice of drawing and painting gave him the impression of being a confidence trick aiming at the stupid glorification of the hand and nothing else. And if the hand is the main culprit, how could one agree to be the slave of one's own hand? It is preposterous that drawing and painting should still stand today at the point where writing stood before Gutenberg."

To feature Breton's article, the editors of Minotaure asked Duchamp to provide a design for the cover. He submitted a montage of his 1923 disk Coralles [4.2] set against a detail of Man Ray's 1921 photograph Dust Breeding [3.43]. These elements were then overlaid in red, causing their combination to look like a telescopic view of Mars floating above a lunar landscape [4.22]. The title of the magazine was given in white lettering, intentionally laid out so low at the bottom edge of the cover that only the top half of the word MINOTAURE is visible, a cunning visual illusion that compels most viewers to grab the lower part of the cover and turn the page. If the magazine is flipped over, the back cover reveals another work by Duchamp, this time the head of a bull or minotaur produced in the fashion of a Rorschach ink blot experiment (with slight alterations); although the magazine did not acknowledge Duchamp's authorship of this image, it was a custom to allow the same artist to provide a design for the front and back covers, which allows us to attribute this work to him.50

For technical advice and assistance in all aspects of the printmaking process, Duchamp could always consult with his brother Gaston (Jacques Villon), who over the years had developed considerable expertise in this medium. At around the time when the Green Box appeared, Villon was just completing a series of large color engravings he had made over the course of the previous decade after paintings by modern French artists, and he decided that a work by his brother should be included in this group. So, in 1934, Villon prepared a color aquatint etching of Duchamp's Bride [2.5], a print that was released in an edition of 200 copies, signed by both Duchamp and his brother.51 In addition to the regular edition [4.23], twenty deluxe copies of this aquatint were pulled on Japan paper [4.24], each of which was accompanied by a pencil drawing of a horse's head in the lower right margin. The colors in this aquatint are remarkably accurate, considering the fact that neither artist would have had access to the original painting, which was then in the collection of Julien Levy in New York.

The differences that exist between a reproduction and an original work of art are matters that would soon become of great interest to Duchamp, who, over the course of the next five years, would systematically undertake to reproduce his most important works, which at first he planned to present in the form of an album, but which would soon expand into the Boîte-en-valise, his famous portable museum in a suitcase.
**4.22 Miniature**  
winter 1934–35  
magazine: front and back covers  
Ronny van de Velde, Antwerp

**4.24 The Bride**  
1934  
aquatint made by Jacques Villon and Marcel Duchamp  
deluxe edition (1 of 20), which contains the drawing of a horse's head in the margin by Duchamp  
Ronny van de Velde, Antwerp
André Breton, “Marcel Duchamp,” *Littérature*, n.s., no. 5 (1 October 1922), pp. 7-11; trans. by Ralph Manheim, Robert Motherwell, ed., *The Dada Painters and Poets: An Anthology* (New York: George Wittenborn, 1951), pp. 207-11. The article was illustrated with a photograph of dust accumulating on the surface of the Large Glass (3-43), below which appeared the caption: “The domain of Rose Selavy/How it is Arid/How it is fertile/How it is happy/How it is Sad.” The image was further identified as having been taken from an airplane by Man Ray.


Duchamp to Gaston [Jacques Villon] and Gaby, December 25 [1922] (Marcel Duchamp Archives, Villiers-sur-Grez). The year of this letter can be determined with certainty because Duchamp mentions that his brother’s exhibition at the Société Anonyme opened on December 16th, and Villon’s first show in America was held there from December 16, 1922 through January 10, 1923 (brochure by Walter Pach). Ectoplasm (from the Greek *ektos* and plasma) is a mysterious protoplasmic substance that was believed to flow through the bodies of mediums (see Nandor Fodor, *Encyclopedia of Psychic Science* [London: Arthurs Press, 1933], pp. 113-17). It was a very popular topic of discussion in the early 1920s, as is evidenced in a Krazy Kat cartoon published in June 1922 (documented in Patrick McDonnell, Karen O’Connell, and Georgie Riley de Havenon, *The Comic Art of George Herriman* [New York: Abrams, 1986], p. 220). I am grateful to Linda Henderson for having drawn my attention to both of these bibliographic citations on ectoplasm.


For a reproduction of this card, see Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson, eds., *Salt Seller: The Writings of Marcel Duchamp (Marchand du sel)* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 105.


Stieglitz to McBride, December 3, 1922 (YCAL); quoted in Cooper & Caumont, “Ephemerides,” entry for 12/03/22. If McBride relayed Stieglitz’s words to Duchamp by letter, the letter itself no longer survives (far after responding, Duchamp disowned almost all of the correspondence he received).

Although Duchamp presented the finished construction to Doucet on November 8, 1924 (see Cooper & Caumont, “Ephemerides”), the date customarily given for the completion of this work is 1925 (see L. 159, S. 284, and J.C. 137). The error seems to have been caused by a misreading of the information provided on a sketch for the Rotary Domesphere (Philadelphia Museum of Art: L. 158, S. 282), which Duchamp dated 1925 (providing the date of the inscription, and not the date of the drawing).

Duchamp to Doucet, October 31, 1924, and October 21, 1924 (BLJD).


Duchamp to Doucet, March 31, 1924 (BLJD).

Letter dated only “Thursday 1924” (BLJD; trans. in Sanouillet and Peterson, eds., *Salt Seller*, p. 187). In this letter Duchamp describes some of the difficulties he has encountered in establishing the operating details of his system, particularly with the martingale, a gambling system in which the stakes are doubled after each loss. “The problem consists in finding the red and black figure to set against the roulette. The martingale is without importance. They are all either completely good or completely bad. But with the right number even a bad martingale can work and I think I’ve found the right number. You see I haven’t quit being a pointer, now I’m sketching on chance.”
This attribution was drawn to my attention by Ronny van de Velde, and I am in complete concurrence with his opinion.

From an unpublished interview with the Jonis family (1953), transcript, p. 86.

Quoted (without providing a source) in Cooper & Caumont, “Ephemeredes,” 10/20/26.

In a letter to his brother, Duchamp reported on the success of both exhibitions: “The Brancusi exh. has been open since the 17th. Big success—we’ve already made more than 150,000 Francs on sales... The Brooklyn exh. is a great success too, in the vein of ‘art today,’ but 5 times better and diversified” (Duchamp to Gaby and Gaston [Jacques Villon], November 24, 1926 [Marcel Duchamp Archives, Villers-sous-Gravié]). For more on the Brooklyn exhibition, see Ruth L. Bokun, The Société Anonyme’s Brooklyn Exhibition: Katherine Dreier and Modernism in America (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1982, chap. 5).


Duchamp to Dreier, November 5, 1928 (YCAL).
with Marcel Duchamp."
The Dudley sisters—Caroline (whose husband was a military
man), Katherine (who married the French writer Joseph
Deltell), and Dorothy (who mar-
rried Harry Harney)—were from
Chicago, where van Vechten
knew them from his school
years there around the turn
of the century (information
replayed to the author by Bruce
Kellner, October 18, 1995).

47 Cloe Vert, "Paris Letters," November 3, 1934 (Special
Collections, The Getty Center
for the History of Art and the
Humanities, Los Angeles, CA; hereafter referred to as
GCHAH).

48 Duchamp to Dudley, dated on
"Mardi," but probably written
in November 1934, shortly
after Dudley completed the
writing of her review (Special
Collections, GCHAH).

49 André Breton, "Phare de La
Marinière," Minotaure no. 6
(Winter 1935), pp. 45-49;
included in André Breton,
Le Surréalisme et la peinture
(Paris: Editions Gallimard,
1965), trans. in part by Ralph
Manheim under the title
"Lighthouse of the Bride," in
Breton, Surrealism and Painting
(London: Macdonald and
All quotations cited here are
from the portions excerpted
and translated by Cooper &
Cuemont, "Ephemerides,"
12/05/34.

50 In the latest edition of his cata-
logue raisonné, Arturo Schwarz
points out that Duchamp
signed a copy of this issue
under the image of the mino-
taur; see The Complete Works
of Marcel Duchamp (New York:
Delano Greenidge Editions,
3rd revised and expanded ed.,
1997), cat. 443, p. 732. Earlier,
the drawing of a bird made
for Minotaure was incorrectly
attributed to Duchamp (see
Charles Goerg, "Focus on
'Minotaure'," in Focus on
Minotaure: The Animal-Headed
Review, exh. cat., Musée d'Art
et d'Histoire, Geneva, 1987,
p. 11 [cat. 128]).

51 In the early 1920s, Villon was
approached by artists who were
associated with the gallery
Bernheim-Jeune and asked if he
would make a series of engrav-
ings after well-known modern
paintings. For approximately
ten years, he made some forty
prints after paintings, each of
which were signed by Villon
and, whenever possible, by the
artist of the painting (see
Daniel Robbins, ed., Jacques
Villon, Harvard: Fogg Art
Museum, 1976, p. 120). See also
Jacqueline Aubert and Charles
Perussaux, Jacques Villon: Les
Estampes et Les Illustrations:
Catalogue Raisonné (Paris,
1950), cat. no. 672.