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Abstract

Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968) was one of four siblings who became artists in the period of intellectual and artistic ferment that saw out the last decades of the old century and extended beyond World War I. Duchamp’s early interest was in painting and Cubism and much of his most influential work was related to Dada practice. But Duchamp was ultimately the most independent of artists—eventually becoming independent of art itself. Much of his influence derived from gestures or positions related to the nature of art, and a great deal of his fame rests on works consisting of ordinary objects altered or ‘readymade.’ But Duchamp’s masterpiece is usually held to be the glass, metal, and paint construction entitled The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (1915-23), frequently known simply as Large Glass. On the other hand the influence of Marcel Duchamp and Jean Cocteau on the use of the nude as a subject in art falls outside the usual categories of influence. Duchamp’s singular experience with his Nude Descending a Staircase (1912) was instrumental in his decision to turn from any conventional type of art career and become the twentieth-century archetype of the anti-artist. Even though the popular ‘scandal’ surrounding the painting was of a type that would have launched a more typical artistic career, and his intentions with regard to the Nude were somewhat conventional, Duchamp’s subsequent path was devoted to the exposure of art’s ways and means. The nude, however, was one subject whose dimensions fascinated him and at the end of his career he created the disturbing multimedia work Given: 1. The Waterfall 2. The Illuminating Gas (1946-66) which, in some senses, was a definitive response to the tradition of the nude in art. Cocteau, from another perspective, generated little scandal with his frankly homoerotic nudes—largely in a style derived from Picasso’s classicizing period—because they were, for the most part, available only to a very limited audience. Cocteau was primarily a writer and filmmaker and his drawings constituted only a very small portion of his artistic output. But his style of drawing was very popular and in the work that was more widely available his nudes of both sexes frequently possess a frank, playfully erotic charge. Neither of these artists created a great number of nudes but the work they did contributed, in very different ways, to the rethinking of the nude as subject. Key words: Marcel Duchamp, Dada Art, Contemporary Art, Nude in Art, Jean Cocteau.

Duchamp's Profile and Works

This Large Glass single piece, left unfinished according to Duchamp, was the subject of numerous drawings, sketches, published notes, and etchings, and occupied a significant portion of the artist's active career. It is a Dada piece in terms of its emphasis on machine imagery, chance, jokes and puns, mysterious allusions, and eroticism, as well as its notional relationship to science and mathematics. All these elements display Duchamp's connections with the so-called New York Dada movement. But the Large Glass was a work conceived apart from important Dada considerations—such as spontaneity and the rejection of reason—and it contained the germ of some of Duchamp's future ideas. Yet, like the work of all the various art movements of the 1890-1920 period, Duchamp’s singular achievement in Large Glass was the product of ideas that grew out of the political and social restlessness of the era and from the ideas developed by its writers and philosophers.

The European world had changed radically in the course of the nineteenth century with the triumph of the Industrial Revolution and the rise of new European empires. Official art and culture, largely seen as the servant of the ever-expanding bourgeoisie, "had served conservative political ends," especially in France where government sponsorship of academic art traditions led, in part, to the link between the artistic and political radicalism that opposed the old order.1

The institutionalized hypocrisy and anti-Semitism revealed in the Dreyfus Affair, which began in 1894, was highly divisive and, though not all avant-garde artists supported Dreyfus, the affair "reinforced the perception
of artists and intellectuals as defenders of ideals and moral positions irrespective of conventions.\textsuperscript{\textit{VI}} The growth of avant-garde movements throughout Europe--the various German Expressionists, the Italian Futurists, the Vienna Secession--coincided with the emergence of many new ideas in politics, philosophy, and psychology. Intensifying urbanization, the mechanization of society, and the rapid development of scientific and technical innovations produced a feeling of unstoppable change whose eventual destination was unknown but often wildly imagined as possessing possibilities that were the cause of increasing uneasiness. The materialism of industrialized society seemed to be displacing older values and the social order lacked the stability of former times. In politics Karl Marx's and Friedrich Engels' Communism and the Anarchism of Mikhail Bakunin and Petr Kropotkin held that the progressive nature of European capitalism was an illusion. In literature, writers such the playwrights Henrik Ibsen and Oscar Wilde, and the novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky "exposed the social and moral dilemmas associated with materialism," while the Symbolist poets in France began to reject the notion of a realist basis for art and promoted the "world of the imagination [as] a source of spiritual renewal."\textsuperscript{\textit{III}}

Among philosophers the most influential were Henri Bergson and Friedrich Nietzsche. The latter's ideas were based on Arthur Schopenhauer's metaphysical ideas, i.e., "that the truth of things lay behind surface reality."\textsuperscript{\textit{IV}} Nietzsche's metaphysics served as a counterweight to the increasingly prevalent, materialist-oriented positivism that argued for the discovery of truth via observation and experimentation. Ibsen, August Strindberg and, in music, Richard Wagner were heavily influenced by Nietzsche and these artists conveyed their thought "through the experiences of isolated, frustrated, or doomed individuals."\textsuperscript{\textit{VI}} Nietzsche's philosophical autobiography Ecce Homo, which presented his ideas in digest form, was popular reading among artists and after the turn of the century painters as diverse as Picasso, deep in his Blue Period, the Fauves, and the new generation of German Expressionists in Die Brücke were producing art with a new type of content. Their works were more definitively urban in character and reflected the generalized anxiety that had begun to characterize life in the industrialized world. The roots of this new sensibility can be traced back to Nietzsche's ideas as well as to general social changes that had taken place in the preceding generations. The new sensibility's sources lay in, the realization of the appalling emptiness of a world in which God, as Nietzsche had declared, was dead; in less clandestine but no less tormented sexuality; and in the pressures of mass society in which the individual discovers and maintains his integrity only with difficulty. The artistic response to these spiritual events is the often frantic search for self-expression.\textsuperscript{\textit{VI}}

In France, Bergson had, by 1889, reached the conclusion that the only source of true knowledge was "intuitive experience" and that "art was a direct revelation of such experience.\textsuperscript{\textit{VII}} Since mechanical means of representation--photography, motion pictures, sound recordings--were becoming increasingly important, the role of the arts as representational media seemed to be far less important. Bergson's lectures in the early 1900s also dealt with the notion that "the nature of experience was in a constant state of flux" and the individual's perceptions were, rather than an ordered, rational series of chosen moments, "a multiplicity of perceptions and memories" in which both the conscious and the unconscious mind played their parts.\textsuperscript{\textit{VIII}} Bergsonian instability became a subject for art as painters, some of whom attended Bergson's lectures, broke up forms into series of impressions that generated the Cubist movement.

The psychoanalytic revolution initiated by Sigmund Freud also produced a new view of human behavior centering around the idea that "behind all rational façades lurked suppressed insecurities and desires determining every response."\textsuperscript{\textit{IX}} Freud's ideas, many believed, exposed the sham of bourgeois ideals and morals, much as political theorists had done in regard to bourgeois notions of justice and individual freedom. There was also a wide interest among artists in a variety of spiritual and mystical systems, such as those of Rudolph Steiner and the Theosophists, which "encouraged aspirations toward a morally and socially responsible art," while stressing its innately spiritual nature.\textsuperscript{\textit{x}}

All the stresses and strains of life in industrialized Europe and the variety of intellectual responses to new social forms and possibilities led to numerous avant-garde movements in the arts. Cubism was one of the most influential of these and it was here that the four young Duchamps began their careers.

Marcel Duchamp was the third of six surviving children born to a bourgeois Norman family. His father was a notary and the family lived very comfortably "while the elder Duchamp accumulated a tidy fortune" from his lucrative profession.\textsuperscript{\textit{XI}} The children's maternal grandfather had been quite wealthy as well as having a serious interest in art. He too accumulated a fortune, as a shipping agent, before he devoted the remainder of his life to engraving and painting. The six children of this cultivated family were born in three groups of two. The eldest were Gaston (1875-1963) and
Raymond (1876-1918), and Marcel and his sister Suzanne (1889-1963) made up the second pair. Two sisters followed in 1895 and 1898.

The family's interest in art matured in both elder brothers who, after starting on careers in law and medicine, changed course and became artists. Gaston changed his name to Jacques Villon when he became a painter and engraver, and Raymond changed his last name to Duchamp-Villon when he became a sculptor. The precise reason for the name changes is not known, but, as Seigel speculates, it is likely that the family's great respectability might not have countenanced the sons' associates and the "sometimes immodest and risqué publications in which Gaston's early work appeared." But if the first two children had some difficulty deciding on their course in life, for Marcel and Suzanne there seems to have been no problem, "with neither seriously considering any other kind of life." And, wholly respectable or not, the children received the support of their father throughout his life. Until he died, in 1925, he continued to provide financial support to all his artist children regularly, while, "for fairness' sake, carefully subtracting each one's advances from his or her share in the inheritance."

Thus Marcel Duchamp's entry into the world of art featured none of the struggle against class expectations that faced so many children of the bourgeoisie. His comfortable circumstances, Seigel suggests, contributed to his lifelong ability to take everything in stride and the fact that he never seemed "to need the reassurance that came from belonging to a group." Duchamp's repeated decisions to go his own way relied, of course, on this kind of self-confidence but, more often than not, the nature of his plans made it necessary for him to be a solitary voice. Some ideas, such as readymades, do not merit too many repetitions and lose their impact in a crowd.

Duchamp's early work was, however, influenced by the predominant modes of the time. His earliest work shows the influence of the Fauves. But his elder brothers had become immersed in the Cubist initiative. Their Puteaux studios were the site of "regular discussions" with, among others, the painters Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger, the authors of Cubism's major theoretical work Du Cubisme (1912). Both Villon and Duchamp-Villon became successful artists. Villon had been a commercial illustrator, but his subsequent interest in Cubism was to endure. His paintings of the period 1912-22 earned him a sound reputation and, working from a strong "mathematical bias," Villon's Cubist-based works of the early 1920s were among the earliest non-objective works in French painting.

His career declined in the 1920s but he reemerged as a respected painter with "an attenuated Cubist manner" after World War II. Raymond Duchamp-Villon might have become a more important artist and was clearly developing a vigorous and inventive style when he died in the war. As Hamilton notes, Duchamp-Villon appeared to develop his approach in a manner similar to that of Marcel. The early works were less interesting in themselves "than as a series of steps by which he recapitulated the development of contemporary art and arrived at a startling reformation of the sculptural image."

In the autumn and winter of 1911-12 Marcel Duchamp worked in the Cubist mode "and appears to have absorbed fully the dictates" of the movement. But Duchamp's most ambitious work in the Cubist style failed to please. His Nude Descending a Staircase (No. 2) (1912) was an attempt to analyze movement as well as form and it constituted such a marked departure from the prevailing style that a number of the older Cubists objected and he withdrew the painting from the Salon des Indépendants of 1912. Duchamp exhibited the work at another salon and at a Cubist show in Barcelona. But he made his most significant decision when he opted to send the work to the Armory Show in New York in 1913. The painting attracted so much attention that it rapidly became one of the best known works of art in the world--usually as an object of scorn and amazement.

Disgusted with the Cubists' reception of the work Duchamp withdrew to Munich for two months and worked on, among other things, a drawing entitled The Bride Stripped Bare by the Bachelors (1912). The painting reveals Duchamp's feelings of anger and betrayal which are "directly, even naively portrayed" in the scene in which the central figure of the 'bride' is attacked by figures on either side. Inspired, perhaps, by the intensity of the moment Duchamp, who later, exaggeratedly, claimed the Munich trip had resulted in his "complete liberation," did accomplish a break with his previous interests and with the themes of the Cubists. He left behind his interest in linear motion and the dissolution of formal structures. This signaled the abandonment of art that was, in Duchamp's view, "retinal" in nature, i.e., art that "sought to communicate through the eye, not the mind."

Throughout 1912 Duchamp continued to produce paintings and sketches that concentrated on the theme of the 'bride' and the passage from virgin to bride. These works, Virgin, I (1912), Virgin, II (1912), The Bride (1912), and The Passage from Virgin to Bride (1912) worked through a number of important ideas and produced the
form of the bride herself as she was to be configured in the Large Glass. On his return to France Duchamp withdrew from the art world and took a position as a librarian in the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève. The work was very easy and afforded Duchamp the opportunity to read in geometry and perspective—two subjects that were developing great importance in relation to the Bride project. In 1913 Duchamp, who had originally planned the great work as a canvas, painted Glider Containing a Water-Mill in Neighboring Metals, an imaginary machine that would reappear in the Large Glass, on glass and began to think of the future piece in this form. Also in 1913 Duchamp drew "his first full-scale study for the project" on the wall of a rented studio and had written many of the notes that he would later publish. XXIII The war, however, eventually drove him to seek refuge in America, following the famous Armory Show and they "were almost as much remarked" as Duchamp's scandalous Nude. XXIV Early in 1915 Picabia, en route to his assignment in Cuba, deserted the French military and stayed on in New York where he "set about fashioning a metropolitan network of dealers and artists." XXV Duchamp followed a few months later and the two men rapidly became the center of "a vital mix of international talent and American patronage [that] fashioned itself into a comfortable avant-garde." XXVI Duchamp's principal patrons were Walter and Louise Arensberg, who eventually assembled the largest collection of his work. With their financial backing Duchamp did not do a great deal of painting in New York. He had begun to formulate ideas for the Large Glass in 1912 and by 1915 he had begun to realize the piece. By 1918 he painted his last canvas, a commission for the painter-collector Katherine Dreier entitled Tu M'—and abbreviated version of the expression "tu m'embrasses," or "you bore the shit out of me." XXVII Duchamp had definitively finished with painting and much of his dissatisfaction with his last work lay in the fact that it "relied upon ideas he had already developed in other works and therefore necessitated a certain degree of repetition" a practice he now detested. XXVIII But Duchamp had also become interested in other approaches to art. He was privately working on the Large Glass and in 1916 he had begun to present his readymades. These works—ordinary machine-made objects such as shovels, bottle racks, and urinals that were 'selected' and signed by the artist—made it clear that "the idea of 'Art' was produced contextually," i.e., it is art because the artist says it is art. XXIX Even more importantly for his concurrent practice in the Large Glass, the readymades were often elaborately (if sometimes nonsensically and/or punningly) titled. The inclusion of language pointed up Duchamp's belief that "meaning itself is actively produced by viewing and speaking subjects, interpellated as they are by a variety of institutional positions." XXX

But, important as Duchamp's challenges to the established order were, the goals of what came to be called New York Dada were very different from those of Zurich Dada, founded by Tristan Tzara and others. Although Duchamp, Picabia, and American artists such as Morton Schamberg and Man Ray "flouted artistic and social conventions, explored the possibilities of machine imagery, questioned the fixity of gender identities, [and] experimented with photography and assemblage" their approach was basically free of the traumatic associations that were a feature of Dada in Europe where the war continued to rage. XXXI Duchamp and the others adopted the Dada label. But the Zurich group was witnessing "the violent collapse of an entire political and cultural order, while [the New Yorkers were] in possession of the security and the means with which to imagine a new order—or a happy state of disorder" and taunted the world but made no real effort to change it. XXXII Duchamp himself said that he had approved of Dada because he thought it a hopeful sign, but he could not consider himself a true Dada artist because, "I wished to show man the limited place of his reason, but Dada wanted to substitute unreason." XXXIII Ultimately the "intentionally irrational Dada gesture" was a far cry from what Duchamp hoped to accomplish in his cherished Large Glass project. XXXIV Painting had proved too limited and Dada gestures were too irrational for Duchamp's project. He believed that "art should exercise the intellect rather than simply indulge the eye" and he found the means to develop this idea in his revolutionary work the Large Glass XXXV.

The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even is oil paint and lead wire on glass and measures 225.5 x 175.6 cm, or 109 1/4 x 69 1/8 inches. Duchamp began planning the Large Glass in 1912 and took sketches and notes with him to New York in 1915. He then worked on the piece at intervals between 1915 and 1923, when he "abandoned it as definitively unfinished." XXXVI The Arensbergs were the first owners of the work but, on moving to California in 1921, sold it to Katherine Dreier because it was believed to be too fragile to move. In 1927 the Large Glass was shattered while being returned from a New York exhibition. This was not known for a few years, however, as it remained

González E. E. - Marcel Duchamp Artist's Works Profile and Analysis on the Nude in Art Proposed By Duchamp and Cocteau
cated up. When the package was opened and the damage discovered in 1937, Duchamp repaired it, "piecing the fragments together with infinite patience and securing them between two heavier panes of glass, the whole bound in a new metal frame." XXXVII The cracks in the two original panes of glass run in complementary directions because they had been packed one above the other when the accident happened. Duchamp eventually became quite pleased with the lines created by the cracks and declared that the work was finally completed "by chance" 14 years after he had supposedly abandoned it. XXXVIII

But he had never really abandoned the work at all. The Large Glass was seldom seen after the repairs until in 1952 Dreier's bequest sent it to the Philadelphia Museum of Art where the Arensberg collection was housed. Despite its absence from public view, however, it was well known to many artists "who respected it, if only by hearsay, as one of the most problematical works of modern times." XXXIX In 1934 André Breton wrote the first important essay on the work, bringing it to the attention of a broader public, "even though he had not seen it." XIX And, despite its invisibility in its original form, Duchamp himself kept its central imagery in the public eye.

If there were any need to define the distinctly non-Dada characteristics of the Large Glass, the conceptual nature of the work and its location at the center of a web of paintings, sketches, engravings, writings and other works would offer sufficient evidence of this when compared with the spontaneity so highly valued by Zurich Dada. This network of preparation and explanation preceded and followed the work. The claim that he had abandoned it in 1923 was followed, of course, by the publication of the notes in The Green Box in 1934. Via these notes, Duchamp was able "to provide an intrinsic, even if retroactively introduced, part of the structure of the work" which, as he claimed, was predicated on the idea of delay. XL The idea of delay rested on Duchamp's location of the Large Glass as "action in a moment that never arrived" and it also described the work's "relationship to representation and meaning," but, in the long run, it also turned out to be a genuine temporal delay which was to extend much longer than anyone expected. XLI

There was also the reconstruction of the broken work in 1937, and the construction of the various Boîtes en valise, or boxes in a suitcase, which were "small, portable collections that gather[ed] together nearly all the work he had done by 1935." XLI This project, which came in a deluxe edition (of 20) with hand-colored "original reproductions" by Duchamp and an ordinary edition of 300, featured the Large Glass imagery quite prominently and occupied Duchamp on and off from 1935 until his death. XLIV There was also a 1959 drawing entitled Cols alités in which the subject matter of the Large Glass "has been removed to an arid mountain landscape [where] the invisible waterfall that activates its water wheel," which set the imagined actions shown in the Large Glass in motion, "has evidently dried up" and "the erotic machinery of the Glass is faltering." XLV This work was followed by a series of nine etchings that Duchamp made in 1965-66 for the first volume of Arturo Schwartz's The Large Glass and Other Works. In these etchings the principal elements of the work, the Nine Malic Molds, the Glider, the Seven Sieves, the Chocolate Grinder, the Oculist Witnesses, the Bride, and her Cinematic Blossoming, as well as the whole work as it was left in 1923 were replicated in three states each. The ninth in the series was a colored single-state etching entitled The Large Glass Completed (1965-66). As Wohl points out, the drawing Cols alités shows the machinery of the Large Glass in a corroding, neglected state but "still intact." XLVI In the etchings, however, the work "was taken apart, reassembled, and even completed" very near the end of Duchamp's life. XLVII

All of these works showed clearly that the Large Glass was not a dead issue for Duchamp. But the great surprise came after his death when it was revealed that he had spent the last 20 years working in secret, and in his typically desultory fashion, on his final work, Given: 1. The Waterfall 2. The Illuminating Gas (1946-66), commonly known as Given. In this multimedia work (encompassing found objects, electric light, tinted photography, and a representational, molded relief) the subject derived from "the hypothetical givens in the Preface note for the Large Glass," although the last work "did not proceed from notes or words, as the Large Glass had." XLVIII This surprising work, in which the viewer approaches a closed door and, peering through viewing holes, sees, as if through a hole in a brick wall, a naked woman, her head invisible, lying in front of a landscape with a waterfall and holding aloft a small lamp. The woman's hairless genitalia are clearly viewed between her spread legs and the whole has a certain "hyperreality, an excessive realism, which stages its eroticism as a 'too' obvious spectacle." XLIX Duchamp emphasized the hyper-visibility of the scene through the presence of the lighted lamp which is, of course, excessive in view of the very bright daylight in the scene. This trope "problematizes" the traditional equation of light and reason and the excessive illumination in the scene "makes us uncomfortable, breaking up the structure of voyeurism, its raison d'être--as the equation of sight and pleasure." XLI Thus,
Duchamp presented a work that not only ceased to rely on the sort of wordy planning and explication surrounding the Large Glass, but also escaped any possibility of explanation because, except for three people who assisted him, the work was unknown to anyone at all until after Duchamp's death. He could offer no explanations. The last work was, then, the finished version of the Large Glass, which he had refused to produce throughout his life—keeping its imagery alive and subject to the "corrective function and [the] shaping of the experience" of the work provided by his notes and repackagings. It is Duchamp's "account of all the things he thought art should not be; it is the world of the Large Glass destroyed by being finished off." Its hyperreality, lack of textual explication, and the absolute impossibility of explanation by the dead artist leave it as a piece of "retinal" art of the type that Duchamp had rejected many years before when he finished with painting.

This desire to remove the work from the realm of verbal consideration was, as can be seen in retrospect, an essential part of Duchamp's strategy in sticking to his story of having abandoned art altogether. In his interviews given in the 1950s and 1960s Duchamp was always cagey about his position as a non-working artist. To Pierre Cabanne's question about the preservationist rather than 'making' role Duchamp seemed to have assumed in those years, Duchamp said this was correct because he "had already stopped making things." But when Cabanne asked, "Had you stopped absolutely?", Duchamp merely said, "Yes, but not absolutely. It had simply stopped, that's all." Thus, from the first dawning of the idea during his stay in Munich in 1912 until after he was dead, the ideas in the Large Glass truly were Duchamp's principal artistic concern.

A brief summary of the general scheme of the piece only touches on its complicated iconography. The work was essentially planned as the conclusion to a serial narrative begun in the Virgin, I (1912) and the other 1912 works. Its summary goal was an attempt "to embody in mechanized processes that transcended those central to the art tradition. As Maharaj summarized these points, The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even was shot through with one concern: to haul out painting and drawing from where they had become bogged down—the kind of spot where writing had come to a standstill before "Gutenberg." Duchamp sought to break with modes of seeing and representing that were tied to "painterly," manual processes, with intimacies of the handmade mark and its aura. The shift was toward a discipline of eye, hand, and mind that would enact something of high-speed mechanical techniques, their robotic jerks and swerves.

The terms employed by Duchamp are arbitrary in the sense that the objects represented in the Large Glass would seldom, of their own accord, evoke such terminology. They are also slightly arbitrary in the sense that Duchamp sometimes employed variant terms in The Green Box to describe the same objects or processes. Thus the notes he provided are, as Robert Lebel put it, "explicit except that they are often at variance or even contradict each other in details."

The work consists of two horizontal rectangular panes, mounted one above the other. In the upper section the Bride, an organic-mechanical form taken from the painting The Bride (1912), floats at the left side of the pane. In the Large Glass the Bride lacks the fleshy coloring of the 1912 painting and, in Hamilton's opinion, this removes any sign that made her seem "remotely organic." Yet, in comparison with the more severely geometric forms in the lower, male, half of the composition, the organic quality of the Bride seems clear. The Bride is suspended below and to the left of her "halo" (or, as Duchamp sometimes called it, the "milky way" or the "cinematic blossoming"), the cloud-like shape, with three roughly square holes, located at the top center of the upper half. The openings in the halo reproduce the shapes achieved by pieces of gauze that Duchamp placed in front of an open window, allowing
them to be blown and shaped by the breeze. He then photographed the arrangement and used the breeze-blown shapes to create what he called "draft pistons." This was one of the instances in which Duchamp integrated chance into the work. Another such case was the eight small marks that appear below the halo (and a ninth, barely visible, inside it) which were created "by shooting matchsticks dipped in paint out of a toy pistol." Note the terms "matchsticke..." as he simultaneously attracts and repulses her suitors," who are confined to the lower portion of the work."

In the lower half of the work, the Bachelors "orgasmic frustrations" are channeled, as "illuminating gas" through the tubes that connect them to the Bachelor Machine. The imagery in this section is far more complicated than in the Bride portion. The Bachelors are represented by nine shapes that Duchamp referred to as either "malic molds" or "uniforms and liveries." These shapes, which appear at the left, above the machines known as the "water mill" and "glider," are apparently based on illustration of men's clothing found in mail-order catalogues. They represent different male occupations: "priest, delivery boy, gendarme, cuirassier, policeman, undertaker, flunky, busboy, and stationmaster." The nine figures are connected to the seven "sieves" or "parasols" that form a suspended arc over the so-called "chocolate grinder" at the center of the lower panel. The rods that connect the Bachelors with the sieves were shaped according to another of Duchamp's chance-based processes in which threads were dropped and the chance shapes they took were made into "standard" measures.

The pair of machines beneath the Bachelors consist of the water mill which sits inside the glider, sled, or chariot (three terms Duchamp used for this object). This section is reproduced almost exactly from Duchamp's first painting on glass, the Glider Containing a Water-Mill in Neighboring Metals (1913). Water was said to fall on the wheel, but the glider's movement was caused by bottle-shaped weights. At one point in the process Duchamp intended to have the glider powered by "the fall of brandy bottles, or lead weights shaped like brandy bottles," but, as wrote in his notes, he found this "much too far-fetched"--a sure indication that his glider's movement was caused by bottle-shaped weights. No other elements that were planned but were never included in the Large Glass. One is a small landscape that was to have been featured in interior of the glider, and which was somehow to have related "wheel and waterfall." Others include the two visual effects that were to be featured above the magnifying glass; one was a "boxing match" and the other was "something called the 'Wilson-Lincoln effect,'" an optical illusion that showed alternately one president or the other.

The imagined operation of the Bachelor machine consisted of the molds filling with an "illuminating gas" which was, apparently, "a mode of male sexual energy," and when the "litanies of the chariot" were sounded the gas would expand. As it expanded it would rise from the molds, lose the shapes the molds had imposed on it, and move as "spangles" through the rods to the parasols. In the parasols the gas was converted to liquid form and would experience dizziness and spatial disorientation before falling, "in a corkscrew-like trajectory," to an orgasmic splash in the bottom right corner of the Bachelor space.

The ramifications of the actions of the various elements in the Large Glass extend far beyond this brief summary. And, clearly, Duchamp developed an iconography that was uniquely his, "one that harbored meaning only within the narrowly established confines of an extremely personal, highly individualistic and self-reflexive narrative context." And within that context Duchamp was able to establish humor, irony, and meaning. Although it might be assumed that the invention of a wholly unique system of this sort was not absolutely necessary for carrying out his project of setting aside so-called 'retinal' art, it is important to note that by removing any trace of historical, traditional iconographic content Duchamp positioned the viewer entirely within his own system. This effect was, of course, reinforced by the publication of the notes which further constrained the viewer to look at the work through the lens of Duchamp's private system. And he not only created an iconography, he also developed a work process that was every bit as individualized.

Much of his inspiration for the idea of individualized processes seems to have derived from the example of the bizarre dramatic performances and fiction of the eccentric Raymond Roussel, whose Impressions of Africa Duchamp saw in 1912. Though Roussel did not expound on his method...
until 1935 (and Duchamp did not know him personally), Duchamp may have "grasped or intuited" much of it in 1912 and certainly "had plenty of time to reflect on what he had seen and to read" Roussel's works, as he certainly did, afterward.\textsuperscript{LXXI} Duchamp later credited Roussel as the inspiration for the Large Glass and Seigel's description of Roussel's method could be applied almost in its entirety to Duchamp's own:

Roussel showed how the recourse to language games and mechanical imagery, which some interpreters have taken to signify the demise of personal subjectivity in art, actually allowed his works to become the scene for developing and acting out a series of highly personal themes and preoccupations. . . . his procedure served to disguise both what these obsessions were and how powerfully they moved him, casting them in a mold of seeming exteriority and objectivity. Much of the aura of mystery and incomprehensibility that surrounds his novels and plays arises from the way these two opposing currents, personal and impersonal, flow together in his work, each serving at once to highlight and to obscure elements of the other.\textsuperscript{LXXII}

Among the many strategic, inventive processes adopted by Duchamp for the Large Glass were the operations based on what he called "canned chance," the use of an individualized type of 'science,' and the investment of certain aspects of the erotic narrative with mathematical qualities.\textsuperscript{LXXIII} One of the best examples of his chance-based operations was the "standard stoppages" which were used, for instance, in the design of the rods connecting the Bachelors to the seven sieves. Duchamp described the process under the heading, "The Idea of the Fabrication," noting that "if a [straight horizontal] thread one meter long falls from a height of one meter straight on to a horizontal plane twisting as it pleases and creates a new image of the unit of length.\textsuperscript{LXXIV} Duchamp followed this process, allowing the string to fall onto canvas surfaces. He then took an impression of the string and affixed it to glass plates, from which he prepared wood templates "duplicating the subtle twists and curves of their chance configuration" and using the results as measuring tools.\textsuperscript{LXXV} He considered this elaborate process "a joke about the meter," the standard of measure which was based on "two scratches on a platinum-iridium bar housed in a temperature-controlled chamber in the Academy of Science.\textsuperscript{LXXVI} The measuring tool devised by Duchamp was, therefore, not only based on "canned chance" but was given a mockingly fixed status even though it was intended to be employed only for the private requirements of the artist.

In addition to the establishment of a new, random set of measurements, Duchamp's method also fulfilled his desire, as he said, "to strain the laws of physics just a little" and to this end he employed an ironic science devised by the playwright Alfred Jarry which he called "\textsuperscript{LXXVII} This witty science was a science of the particular rather than the general; that is, individual exceptions ruled where in normal science generalizable rules were required. Duchamp used this type of science in the Large Glass in, for example, the operations of the glider which he said was "'emancipated horizontally' from gravity, so that it could slide without friction.\textsuperscript{LXXVIII}

The pleasant absurdities of his science were matched by the uses of mathematics in the Large Glass. His interest in genuine mathematical operations, such as the positing of a fourth dimension, was given a witty turn in, for example, imagining the fate of the individual who entered such a dimension. In the Large Glass the Bride is potentially susceptible to such a procedure and this is indicated by the halo or cinematic blossoming. As Adcock notes, blossoming is a term that can be applied to both sexual awakening and outward expansion. The cinematic blossoming refers, therefore, both to the Bride's imminent sexual initiation and her expansion into a fourth dimension. In mathematics, the "four-dimensional continuum opens and expands outward from normal three-dimensional space along axes not contained within three-dimensional space" and the Bride, who experiences the blossoming, "expands outward from a center into realms that are ninety degrees away from any direction that exists in normal space.\textsuperscript{LXXIX} Within that dimension Duchamp located various sexually charged possibilities--such as the transformation of gender and other complications that only total immersion in his system would render comprehensible.

The most remarkable fact about Duchamp's The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even turns out to be its totality: it occupied him in one form or another from 1912 to 1968; it featured an iconography that was wholly personal and unique; this iconography was explicated by its author in a manner that left many holes and contradictions intact--requiring the viewer's immersion in the piece and its textual supplements for full comprehension (which might not be possible even then); its science and mathematics were equally recondite; and it was impossible to view the work in any fixed manner. Altogether Duchamp went as far in the Large Glass as he possibly could toward creating art that replaced the centuries-old tradition in which the purely visual seemed to dominate. Then, in his reversion to representation in Given, he supplied the illusion of distance.
and space, the careful depiction of realistic detail, the color and compositional norms, the classic subject of the nude, and the elimination of intellectual content. In this work, however, the subject, the Bride stripped, is presented with a literal quality that is as brutal in terms of the way the woman is depicted as Duchamp believed representational art was brutal in and of itself. The lightness and seriousness of the Large Glass are replaced by the brutish act of trying simply to recreate what already exists.

**The Nude in Art, as Proposed by Duchamp and Cocteau**

Duchamp's early work as a painter was heavily influenced by Cezanne, the Nabis, and the Fauves but in the spring of 1911, under the influence of his brother Jacques Villon, Duchamp began to work in the Cubist mode. He reduced his palette to a few somber colors and began to experiment with the Cubist notion of 'simultaneous aspects' that had been developed by Braque and Picasso. But instead of developing a single synthesized image from a number of aspects of the woman who was his subject Duchamp "represented the same figure on different planes and in different attitudes to express more of the individual as well as the concept of Woman" (Douglas Cooper 121). Duchamp was taken up by the painters Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger and had begun to be touted as a promising artist. But at the end of 1911 he had also begun to experiment with combining the different aspects of human figures "to represent a succession of evolving movements"- -an idea that was being developed by the Futurists in Italy, whose manifesto had been published in Paris but whose work remained as yet unseen there (Douglas Cooper 121).

This work did not generate much enthusiasm among Cubist circles but Duchamp continued his experiments in his first version of Nude Descending a Staircase (1911-12). This figure still retains traces of its organic qualities and moves down a more or less realistic stairway leaving traces behind it as in a stroboscopic photograph. The figure is segmented (rather erratically) so that portions are truncated cylinders and it has a unity that makes it clear that it is a single figure. The second version of the Nude, however, eliminated any traces of the organic or realistic detail and showed successive stages of the movement so that, in effect, several figures could be said to move down the stairs. In Douglas Cooper's view Duchamp had, at this point, "turned the figure into a symbolic but seemingly powerful machine which rattles its metallic structure and devours the staircase as it descends" (124). The Nude is all planes and angles with a few dotted lines signifying axial movement. It was not, however, what the Cubists had in mind and it was rejected by Gleizes and Metzinger who were the judges of the Paris Salon des Indépendants in 1912.

Duchamp did not protest and merely withdrew the picture though, as he said later, the experience "gave me a turn" and led to his decision to leave Paris for Munich (quoted in Seigel 61). The relationship of the painting to Cubism was ambiguous at best. The Futurists idea of representing movement in a picture struck the Cubists as far less interesting than their own idea of simultaneity in which the painter sought to capture "the coexistence of a number of separate ideas or mental experiences in a single instant" (Seigel 61). In Munich Duchamp began work on the organic-mechanical figure groups that were to lead to the development of the private iconography that was to be the basis for The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (1915-23), or the Large Glass, a work that occupied most of the rest of his life and that he never considered completed.

The Nude of 1912 went on to be exhibited in Barcelona and in Paris and provoked little interest. But it was finally selected, along with three other works by Duchamp, for the 1913 New York International Exhibition of Modern Art, better known as the Armory Show, where it proceeded to cause a sensation. The "explosion in a shingle factory," as it came, among other things, to be called drew crowds, inspired cartoons and parodies, and generally provoked the greatest modern art sensation of the early part of the century. Duchamp's works sold well and collectors, particularly Walter Arensberg, began to take an interest in him. The public's reaction to Duchamp's painting was, however, a curious blend of a desire to be shocked by the novelty of modern art and titillation provoked by the title of Duchamp's work. The reaction was based in part on the public's long-standing reaction, "a complex of jealousy and suspicion," toward "artists' special access to nude bodies" (Seigel 6). Although, for the most part, people paid lip-service to the notion that art raised "nudity out of the sphere of sensuality and into that of the ideal through the body's power to stand for formal perfection" this idea had already come under fire among artists themselves (Seigel 4). In his Olympia (1863) Manet had employed his gift for irony by delving into the area between the exaltation of the pure beauty of the human figure and the mere nakedness of his model--in part as a demonstration of the changes taking place in painting itself and in part as a demonstration of the curiously hypocritical stance that the academy took in works such as Alexandre Cabanel's Birth of Venus, also from 1863,
whose eroticism was undeniable but unacknowledged. The crowds endlessly massed around Duchamp's picture at the Armory Show in 1913 were as much titillated by the idea that the 'nude' had somehow escaped their perception as they were filled with the enjoyment of observing a work that, as Clement Greenberg said, "gave people enough clues to watch themselves being startled by the 'new'" (quoted in Seigel 6).

What the curious fame of this painting meant for Duchamp, whose success in America when he arrived in 1915 still surprised him, was the freedom to develop as he wished. The rejection of the Nude by orthodox Cubists had disturbed him more than he had let on. The fact that his fellow artists, including his two artist brothers, objected to the painting as not what they felt Cubism should be made him regard "such conservative and overtly dogmatic behavior [as] an aberration, particularly for artists who purported to be more open-minded than the general public" (Naumann 27). Duchamp had already decided to take up another profession (librarian) in order to be able to work freely at his art. The unexpected New York success meant that he was free to work in America. The result was not only "a radical break from his own earlier work, but [a] definitive break from the previously established and accepted conventions of the art-making process" (Naumann 26).

In subsequent work Duchamp was little concerned with representation per se, but in his last decades he returned to the nude and once again strove, as Manet had in 1863, to demonstrate the limitations of the accepted modes of art production via his treatment of the classic subject of the female nude. In the Given piece, a lighted, three-dimensional construction that is viewed through a hole in a door, Duchamp made specific reference to Courbet's notorious Origin of the World (1866) and presented the splayed thighs of a woman who lies in a realistically constructed field near a stream, holding a lamp in one upraised hand. Her face is not visible and the "seemingly aggressive and hostile treatment to which the female figure has been subjected" is quite disturbing (Seigel 113). But at the time of his early success, as Duchamp later remarked, he had begun to feel "obscured .crushed by the Nude" and he recognized the extent to which even with "techniques that dematerialized the body so that it seemed to have little to do with sexuality" there was a strong tendency to ascribe "immorality and decadence" to artists (quoted in Seigel 4, 6). By the latter part of his career Duchamp had become immersed in demonstrating the futility of the conventions of art-making and his Given returned to the subject of the Nude in an effort to comment on both the representative in art and the eroticism that pervaded the nude subject—no matter how the artist approached it. The meticulous 'realism' of Given and the brutal display of the disembodied sexuality of the nude answer, in effect, the hordes who were so amused and so titillated by the 1912 painting.

Jean Cocteau's approach to the nude subject was certainly far less intellectual than Duchamp's but it was no less effective in focusing on the erotic nature of the representation of the human body. Cocteau's drawings display a remarkable consistency over the decades. His style seldom varied until near the end of his life when he began to design motifs for a small industry of ceramic wares and lithographs and even painted murals for a church. The style developed largely in conjunction with Picasso's development of a classicizing, linear approach to painting and drawing. Cocteau and Picasso were close friends and the writer persuaded the painter to accompany him to Italy during the First World War at the invitation of the Russian ballet impresario Serge Diaghilev. As Gertrude Stein noted, had it not been for Cocteau Picasso would never have gone; the painter "allowed others to make decisions, that is the way it is, it was enough that he should do his work" (quoted in Crosland 46).

Picasso's exposure to the classical treasures of Italy, however, had a profound effect on his work and he began to develop a simple, linear approach to somewhat colossal figures, simply attired in classicizing dress or nude, that was to characterize his work, on and off, for the next fifteen years. Cocteau's own drawings followed suit. The illustrations that now accompany his novel The Holy Terrors (Les enfants terribles) display the style as he used it in published work. The twinned profiles of his principal characters Paul and Elisabeth are shown, for example, on page 27. The pairs' shoulders are draped in indefinite pieces of cloth, like Republican busts, and their simply drawn hairstyles are also reminiscent of Roman sculpture. Their profiles feature strong noses and chins and eyes that look like the schematic carving of statues. They have a Roman gravity that is belied only by Elisabeth's eye which shifts to the side, giving her a suspicious air that appears to be directed at the viewer. In other drawings from this series, such as the depiction of the pair in the bath, the erotic charge between them is accomplished largely through the direction of their gaze and the long leg that each of them lifts from the bath in a crossed pattern that is at once comic and sexually vibrant (Cocteau 67).

Cocteau did not consider his graphic work to be merely illustrative and explained that the drawing most "formed
In effect both Duchamp and Cocteau contributed strongly, albeit in very different ways, to the deconstruction of the nude-as-subject in art. Duchamp's 1912 painting inadvertently focused attention on the prurience of audiences and raised the question of whether the ideal representation of the nude was possible and his later work demonstrated his conviction that, even if it had been possible to present realistic yet idealized nudes, neither realism nor nudity was possible may longer in art. Cocteau, less deliberately, forced the thoughtful viewer to wonder what, exactly, was idealized in the traditional female nude. If the artist's focus was on the male rather than the female form and this generated audience discomfort or surprise then how could it be argued that there was no parallel idealization of the erotic in earlier nudes?

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Notes

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