

# '17 FOUNTAIN



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## CELEBRATING THE DUAL ANNIVERSARIES OF...

**Marcel Duchamp's Fountain** {100 years}  
**and Armitage Shanks** {200 years}  
**in 2017 the year that Hull is City of Culture.**

Edited by Barnaby Haran and Jill Howitt.

Introduction by Jill Howitt.

With essays by Helen List, Paul Minott, Dave Ellis, Barnaby Haran and Tony Rheinberg.

Fountain17 is a collaboration between Armitage Shanks and Hull School of Art and Design with exhibitions in Hull, London and Stoke in 2017.

Fountain17 is sponsored by Ideal Standard and Hull School of Art and Design, Arts Council Britain and Hull City of Culture.

*Armitage  
Shanks*

**Hull School of  
Art and Design**  
Est. 1861



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## FOREWORD

One of the many rewarding aspects of being a part of Hull UK City of Culture 2017 is seeing at first-hand the extraordinary creativity, wealth of ideas and projects being produced by people across the city.

This includes 60 very different projects that we have supported alongside the Big Lottery Fund through our Creative Communities Programme. This has resulted in artists and local people of all ages coming together to make new work, ranging from visual arts to performance.

Fountain17 is one of these, with emerging and established artists, from Hull and further afield embracing the spirit of one of the key figures in modern art, Marcel Duchamp. This collaboration between local employer Ideal Standard, Hull School of Art and Design and members of Hull's arts community has evolved from the connections made between art, industry and place.

The starting point for Fountain17 is a coincidence of dates: 1817 and the start of Armitage Shanks, a brand owned by Ideal Standard, which manufactures urinals; 1917 and *Fountain*, the presentation (and rejection) of a 'readymade' manufactured urinal as art by Marcel Duchamp; and 2017, the year that Hull is UK City of Culture.

Duchamp's gesture was highly controversial and represented a major shift in art. He questioned the very foundations of art and his influence and impact is explored in the essays and artworks in this catalogue and the exhibitions and performances taking place from 1 April at the Brodrick Gallery and the art spaces along Humber Street - Studio Eleven, Kingston Art Group and the recently opened Humber Street Gallery in Hull.

In the spirit of Duchamp, Fountain17 also seeks to challenge conventions and hierarchies and to embrace chance - to be open to the possibilities created by collaboration between organisations, individuals and cultures that might not normally work together. It features a range of artforms, including sculpture, performance, painting, film and of course urinals. Some more well-known artists were invited to be involved because of links with Hull and their work having a particular synergy with the project.

Neville Gabie is an alumni of Hull School of Art and Design and Lemn Sissay performed the Martin Luther 'I have a dream speech' at the 2013 Freedom Festival. Other artists come from Hull and Fountain17 has endeavoured to provide creative opportunities for

as diverse a group of creative practitioners as possible. This includes work by students from Hull School of Art and Design, Hull College, South Holderness College, Ganton School, Bude Primary School and prison learners from HMP Humber.

Fountain17 will travel to London, as part of Clerkenwell Design Week, then to Stoke, as part of the Stoke Biennial celebrations. In Stoke, it is being presented in the Gladstone Museum, close to the Ideal Standard factory in Armitage, which has been central to the project.

With Hull having played host to *Blade*, which might also be called a readymade, I very much hope that people will enjoy Fountain17, which offers an insight into where it all began,

**MARTIN GREEN**  
DIRECTOR - HULL UK CITY OF CULTURE 2017



## INTRODUCTION

Jill Howitt, Hull School of Art and Design.

In this piece of writing I would like to introduce Fountain17, and explain how the project arose, as well as our hopes, intentions and processes. I would also like to discuss the essays and some of the artworks presented in this catalogue and relay how writers and artists have responded to our simple but open brief—namely, to pick up the creative baton and make work inspired by Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain*. However I would like to begin and end this account with some discussion of the context for Fountain17, which is Hull's tenure as City of Culture.

At the time of writing, 2017 has just begun and Hull has experienced two successful events in the 'Made in Hull' season of City of Culture. The year began with fireworks and a week of outdoor projections including a screening of images representing key moments from Hull's history, which was spectacular and moving. Down the road, projected on to the side of the C4DI building was Hull artist Quentin Budworth's *Hullywood*. People from Hull were invited to appear as their film heroes and heroines and Quentin photographed these appropriations, recreating key moments from iconic films, now firmly located in Hull. Cultural projects in places often spark debate about local voices and opportunities versus external contributions (and impositions); *Hullywood* loosens the boundaries and hierarchy between cultural producers and viewing audiences (viewers become stars). This is an important message for a culture programme based in Hull—a city which has, in the past, sat at the bottom of several social and education league tables. Fountain17 also endeavours to challenge social and cultural hierarchies; emerging and established artists are working and exhibiting together, at least half of whom come from Hull. We are also celebrating an object that started its life as ordinary, overlooked, and

even bad taste before being promoted and transformed into an iconic and canonical art piece. And Fountain17 meets (or goes to) *Hullywood* as Quentin plans to recreate a moment from 1963 when Duchamp played chess with a nude woman (the artist Eve Babitz) at a retrospective exhibition at the Pasadena Museum of Art (Marcel Craven also explores the relationship between film, chess and Duchamp in his film for Fountain17 entitled *Impasse*).<sup>1</sup> In 2015 I visited a public art work in Bristol by Theaster Gates called *Sanctum*. In conceiving Fountain17 I was influenced by Gates' construction of an extraordinary space which housed over 1,000 performers from 'every corner and community of Bristol'.<sup>2</sup> Claire Doherty from Situations (who facilitated *Sanctum*) described this work as a 'stepping back and sharing of the platform for creative expression'.<sup>3</sup> Creating relationships and opportunities is at the heart of Fountain17; and it is certainly central to Quentin's work as he continues to find new ways to give a voice and a presence to those who normally lack them.

The spark for Fountain17 was ignited by a conversation between Tony Rheinberg (marketing manager for Ideal Standard—who have a base in Hull) and myself when we discovered a coincidence charged with meaning and possibility: that the 100 year anniversary of Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* (a urinal adjusted and presented as art) and the 200 year anniversary of Armitage Shanks (a brand owned by Ideal Standard who manufacture urinals) were to coincide in 2017; the year that Hull was to be City of Culture. We thought how appropriate it would be to celebrate this synchronicity by inviting artists to respond to Duchamp's infamous work through their own creative practices. The project unfolded from this chance encounter and the connections between these disparate worlds

<sup>1</sup> In addition Duchamp played chess in the film, *Entr'acte* (1924) by René Clair (with Man Ray) and again 40 years later in the French film *Game of Chess*.

<sup>2</sup> Rowan Lear, 'Theaster Gates in Bristol: "A Collaboration with a City"' in *Artists Newsletter* (2/11/15) <https://www.a-n.co.uk/news/theaster-gates-in-bristol-a-collaboration-with-a-city> [Accessed on 1/12/15]

<sup>3</sup> Hettie Judah, 'Theaster Gates: 'If the city is ill then I have a subject, a patient' in *The Independent* (18/10/15)

<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/features/theaster-gates-if-the-city-is-ill-then-i-have-a-subject-a-patient-a6696956.html> [Accessed on 20/10/15]

continued to form and reveal themselves. There has been investigation of a possible link between Armitage Shanks and *Fountain*, through manufacture, design influence or industrial provenance. Helen List has researched this history in her essay for this catalogue, 'Displaying a Urinal: The Bedfordshire Design as an Object for Appropriation in 1917'. However I should begin with some of the basics regarding Duchamp, Armitage Shanks, and Hull.

Marcel Duchamp was a ground-breaking French artist who invented the 'Readymade'; pre-existing manufactured objects, presented for exhibition in a gallery. The most famous of these was a Bedfordshire urinal flipped on its back (so that the back normally fixed to the wall sits horizontally on a plinth and the bowl of the urinal stands vertical, unfamiliar, and unfunctional). It was also signed R. Mutt and renamed *Fountain*. This was a precise series of manoeuvres that separated and distinguished the everyday object from its cultural alter ego.<sup>4</sup> The provocative and innovatory nature of this intervention, the challenge to convention, and the consequences for the art world have been much debated in the intervening 100 years. As Fountain17 artist Neville Gabie (who has made a functional drinking fountain from a urinal) comments, 'in effect we have all been drinking from the conceptual legacy of that urinal'. *Fountain's* impact and continuing influence and significance underpin our artists' responses and are examined in these catalogue essays. For example Paul Collinson tackles Duchamp's rejection of 'retinal' painting and of the priorities of art in 1917 by recreating the infinite and sublime vista of Casper David Friedrich's *The Wanderer above the Sea of Fog* (1818) as a diorama inside an Armitage Shanks urinal. Josh Lloyd makes aesthetic

decisions, balancing colour, surface, and texture on wooden structures that recall urinal dividers. Jeff Fisher has made a drawing of a tap from Duchamp's house (Duchamp died brushing his teeth) with the artist's reflection visible on the metal surface, which perhaps represents Duchamp's ongoing presence and influence.

In 2003 Hull was famously voted the worst place to live in Britain and is certainly a city that has suffered from the demise of the fishing industry and the closure of some of its docks. The closure of St Andrew's Dock, home to the trawlers since 1883, has been described as a 'symbolic and defining moment of (this) collapse'.<sup>5</sup> However the North Sea ferries still operate from Hull, and Alexandra dock has recently been developed for the assembly of wind turbines as Hull aims to become a centre for renewable energy.<sup>6</sup> Ten years after achieving the worst place to live accolade the city put in a successful bid to be the second UK City of Culture. This model of culture-led regeneration derives from the success of Glasgow and Liverpool (European Cities of Culture 1990 and 2008) and the perception that through culture a place might be transformed and regenerated. This is a familiar claim within the context of deindustrialisation particularly in northern towns such as Hull. In 1998 Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott (MP for Hull East for 40 years) set up an Urban Task Force to create an 'urban renaissance' led by architect Richard Rogers an advocate of cultural regeneration who claimed that 'new vitality has been achieved in many city centres through lottery-funded cultural infrastructure'.<sup>7</sup> Hull already has a unique cultural profile with a tradition of temporary, experimental, artist led initiatives that have connected art and place in unexpected ways. The 2017 celebrations include revisiting the work of

organisations such as Hull Time Based Arts, for example the *ReROOTed* exhibitions and events.<sup>8</sup> Dave Ellis reflects on this recent history of experimental artists and groups working on the edge — geographically and culturally; he is uniquely placed to tell this history which is available in full on our website and which is summarised for this catalogue. This provides a starting point for a history/archive that can be added to and brought up to date.

If *Fountain* is our catalyst and Hull our context then Armitage Shanks represents making and manufacture; the realisation of ideas through the transformation of materials. In 1817 Thomas Bond, a brick maker in the village of Armitage, built a bottle kiln and began manufacturing tableware sold under the name Armitage Ware. Armitage Ware merged with Shanks, a Scottish ceramics manufacturer and created Armitage Shanks. In 1998 Ideal Standard purchased Armitage Shanks which remains a brand within the Ideal Standard portfolio and is used primarily to market washrooms and bathrooms within Commercial sectors. The Armitage Thanks campaign was initiated to raise £200,000 for charity to mark the 200 year anniversary of the brand.<sup>9</sup> Tony Rheinberg reflects on the history of Armitage Shanks as it intersects with social, industrial and design history in his essay for this catalogue, and Helen List explores the evolution of the Bedfordshire urinal and the relationship between its display as designed/commercial object and its presentation as work of art.

These constituents: Art (Duchamp), Industry (Armitage Shanks) and Place (Hull) form the foundations of our project and Fountain17 explores the relationships between the three elements—Art and Industry, Art and Place, Industry and Place, as visualised through the overlapping circles of a Venn diagram.<sup>10</sup> The essays in this catalogue examine these

intersections. Barnaby Haran explores the Austrian designer and architect Frederick Kiesler's concept of Correalism; a 'unifying nexus' in relation to Duchamp's *Large Glass* (1915-23) which, Kiesler claims, connects art, design and industry. Kiesler's celebration of interconnectedness is also relevant to *Fountain* in its dual role as both (or neither) functional mass-produced object and unique art work.<sup>11</sup>

The collaboration between artists, educators and industry allowed us to learn from each other's cultures and methods. Artists visited the factory in Armitage; the only large-scale ceramic manufacturing plant left in Britain and some had the opportunity to make their work at the factory alongside experts Andy Perry, Mike Heaton, Chris Marritt and Mick Horne. We were drawn to the combination of handcraft skills required in carving and mould-making and the intimate knowledge of materials and processes necessary to create distorted forms that will 'right themselves' in the single firing process when clay is liquid and vitreous, and liable to sag or collapse. Craft skills and knowledge coexist with precise automated processes where, for example, robots demould and remove the fragile ceramic forms prior to firing. Some artists directly responded to this; Jesc Bunyard recorded the factory noises to create part of her *The Sound of Duchamp's Fountain* and Neville Gabie wanted his piece to celebrate the factory process. Hull artist Sarah Pennington responded aesthetically to experiences of speed, precision, and gracefulness that she witnessed on the factory floor. The combination of the handmade alongside the manufactured has synergies with *Fountain*, a mass-produced object transformed into a unique artwork. We saw parallels between our process and the production line where we might visualise a form or an idea moving along a conveyor belt subject to many interventions and contributions on its way. Dom Heffer's painting *The Interferor* references the manufacturing

<sup>4</sup> See Arturo Schwarz, 'The Philosophy of the Readymade and of its additions', in J. Mundy, ed., *Duchamp Man Ray Picabia*, London: Tate Publishing, 2008, p. 125.

<sup>5</sup> David Atkinson, Steven Cooke and Derek Spooner, 'Tales from the Riverbank: Place Marketing and Maritime Heritages', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 01/2002, 8 (1), p. 27.

<sup>6</sup> As part of this development programme ABP commissioned 6 public sculptures to occupy the rerouted public footpath. Five of these were completed by Hull School of Art and Design students or alumni, one of whom, Pete Coates, is also a Fountain17 artist.

<sup>7</sup> For more information about the Urban Task Force see: [http://www.richardrogers.co.uk/Asp/uploadedFiles/Image/2832\\_urban\\_task\\_force\\_research/1999/RSHP\\_A\\_JS\\_2832\\_L\\_E\\_MP.pdf](http://www.richardrogers.co.uk/Asp/uploadedFiles/Image/2832_urban_task_force_research/1999/RSHP_A_JS_2832_L_E_MP.pdf); Richard Rogers, 'Delivering the Urban Renaissance', in *The Guardian*, 27 July 2002 <<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2002/jul/21/regeneration.comment>> [accessed 1.2.15].

<sup>8</sup> This is described as a guerrilla take over and includes old and new work, conversation and debate. 24<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> March 2017. Humber St Gallery, Hull.

<sup>9</sup> Fountain17 are contributing to this as half of all sales go to our charities- Bowel Cancer Research and Hull Samaritans

<sup>10</sup> John Venn the inventor of Venn Diagrams was born in Hull. He also published *The Logic of Chance* in 1866.

<sup>11</sup> Barnaby Haran, 'Window Space: Frederick Kiesler's Correalist Reading of Marcel Duchamp's the *Large Glass*'.



process; the conveyor belt as well as revealing the process of its own production. Assemble were keen to contribute towards Fountain17 because of their interest in craft and mass production as well as their intention to redesign the toilet.

In keeping with the multidisciplinary nature of Duchamp's work—'a field where language, thought and vision act on one another'—Fountain17 features pieces by artists, poets, designers and musicians.<sup>12</sup> In this catalogue we have grouped the exhibits in to four categories of works that respectively use a urinal, sculpture, 2D (painting, print, photography) and performance. The exhibition features works that employ words in conventional and unconventional ways. This is of particular interest for graphic designers; Paul Minott has explored Duchamp's seldom examined relationship with graphic design in his essay for this catalogue and his artwork for the exhibition.

Duchamp's work moves between the literary and the visual and is often accompanied by written texts and enigmatic titles. He experimented with words as sounds and as signifiers of meaning by using homophones; for example *Fresh Widow* (1920) is built on the aural connection with 'french window'. Girst compares this to creating a readymade, 'decontextualizing and displacing words in subversive ways, not unlike the mass produced objects that were chosen as Readymades'.<sup>13</sup> Duchamp was also concerned with the visuality of words as we see in his careful selection of typographic or handwritten captions, titles, and explanations. Alan Kitching has created a letter press print of the letters MD from woodblocks that recalls early 20<sup>th</sup> century posters. Words have been characterised as 'matter' and 'concrete material' (Robert Smithson) and 'material' (Lawrence Weiner).<sup>14</sup> Russell Coleman and

Rob Walton have created words from concrete made from crushed urinals; an intriguing relationship between signifier and signified, where the word is the thing it represents.

*Fountain* draws attention to the place of objects in our lives—their purposes, meanings and power. In her essay Helen List explores *Fountain's* first life, considering its value and meaning as a designed utilitarian object, and quotes Sherry Turkle's discussion of a partnership forged between person and object. This idea connects to Jasleen Kaur's reflection on and Assemble's reconsideration of the ergonomic design of the toilet. We also create stories and project our inner worlds onto the things that surround us, and when objects become commodities we desire and fetishise them. An object can represent a part of us or can stand for someone or something lost. Donald Winnicott defines the transitional object that eases separation in early childhood. In the lead up to Fountain17 we visited Cornelia Parker's curated show *Found* at the Foundling Museum.<sup>15</sup> There is a relationship between found and readymade objects; both include an element of chance and have their own history and influence. Amongst the permanent exhibits are 18th century tokens that mothers left behind with their children at the Foundling Hospital (for identification purposes). I was reminded of this when Lemn Sissay proposed his piece for Fountain17. Lemn has recently gained access to his Social Service's records; like the stories in the museum Lemn was separated from his family and until recently his childhood records were lost to him. He has chosen to make this story public by transferring the text from the reports on to urinals: the objects will stand for and reveal painful childhood moments and experiences of loss and separation. These themes of lost and found,

and revealed and concealed, resonate with Annemarie Tickle's process of wrapping and binding a urinal in material, immersing it in dye before unwrapping and displaying the material that bears the trace of the object it once covered and contained.

Many other Fountain17 artists have explored social issues, categories, and inequalities. Sarah Pennington creates female forms (objects of desire) from upturned urinals and toilets (functional objects used by men) thereby developing the theme of gender identity and fluidity that runs through Duchamp's work. Adrienne Cameron re-imagines the classical *Three Graces* as three urinals connected by a string of beads. Fountain17 has prompted conversations about female and unisex urinals and how to design for our non-binary experiences of gender today. Fashion students have designed corsets inspired by *Fountain*, including a unisex corset. Jasleen Kaur explores cultural identity and hierarchies through contrasting the efficient but 'primitive' Asian squat toilet with the 'dignified' but un-ergonomic Western seated toilet. Many of our artists explore the potential of the ordinary, the mundane, and the overlooked, as Johnstone observes; 'commitment to the everyday can indicate a desire to give a voice to those silenced by dominant discourses and ideologies'.<sup>16</sup> Desmond Brett focuses on the forms of freshly ejected chewing gum often found attached to the bottom of urinals and Sam Larter makes aesthetic compositions from humble scouring pads, sponges and cloths. On such interrelations between art and the everyday, Jason Gaiger writes that 'the effectiveness of the Readymades resides in the way in which they hold open the space between art works and mere real things'.<sup>17</sup>

Fountain17 creates a relationship with the past and with history and explores the legacy of Duchamp's intervention. Collingwood claimed that a past thought is always rethought within the context of present thought. How much can we reclaim or re-enact the past from our current vantage point? In the early days of Fountain17 we visited *The Crab Walk* in Sunderland.<sup>18</sup> The exhibition included artists' responses to Malevich's *Black Square* (on the occasion of its own 100 year anniversary) and quotes Gunter Grass's proposal for the need to 'look backwards to be able to move forwards'.<sup>19</sup> Several of our artists have drawn attention to the circumstances of 1917. Greg Hayman references the iconic battlefield photographs with their vertical dark lines of trees against a white ground of snow. Textiles student Christine Smith references wounds to the human body, stitched and repaired, through embroidery on bandage. She contrasts the claim that 'the First World War was the war to end all wars', with the reality of the intervening 100 years.

However our relationship with *Fountain's* and other histories isn't with a finite concept revisited, but with an idea still open and incomplete. David Webb, writing about public art, proposes a challenge to art as an 'independent moment' and to the linear narrative by which art objects are designed, made, received, and interpreted; so that the creative process continues beyond the construction of the work.<sup>20</sup> Duchamp suggested that the making of art is a relational event involving artist and viewer. In *The Creative Act* (1957) he proposed that 'all in all the creative act is not performed by the artist alone; the spectator brings the work in to contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications and thus adds his

<sup>12</sup> Paul Wood, 'Art of the Twentieth Century', in Jason Gaiger, ed., *Frameworks for Modern Art*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press in association with the Open University, 2004, p. 35.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Girst, *The Duchamp Dictionary*, London: Thames and Hudson 2014, p. 149.

<sup>14</sup> See Robert Smithson's *A Heap of Words* (1966), and Lawrence Weiner produced a text based work for Hull as part of Artstranspennine98 called *Hull Horizon*, which has been reconfigured, resited in Bury and renamed *The Horizon is now at the Edge of the Water*.

<sup>15</sup> The exhibition took place between May-September 2016. For more information see, <http://foundlingmuseum.org.uk/cornelia-parker-wins-apollo-awards/>

<sup>16</sup> Stephen Johnstone, 'Recent Art and the Everyday', in Johnstone, ed., *The Everyday, Documents of Contemporary Art*, London, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Whitechapel Gallery and The MIT Press, 2008, p. 13.

<sup>17</sup> Jason Gaiger, 'Interpreting the Readymade: Marcel Duchamp's Bottlerack', in Jason Gaiger, ed., *Frameworks for Modern Art*, Newhaven and London: Yale University Press and the Open University, 2004, p. 88.

<sup>18</sup> The exhibition was curated by Ned McConnell and NGCA curator George Vasey and was shown in Sunderland between October 2015 and February 2016.

<sup>19</sup> The Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, 'The Crab Walk' <<http://www.ngca.co.uk/home/default.asp?id=225&prnt=18>>

<sup>20</sup> David Webb, 'Art and the Space of Relations' in IXIA, *Desirable Places: The Contribution of Artists to Creating Spaces for Public Life*, Article Press, 2004, pp. 18-19.

contribution to the creative act'.<sup>21</sup> Duchamp's critique of the authority of the author aligns with later essays by Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault.<sup>22</sup> If the viewer's interpretative response is extended to include production then we can view Duchamp's piece as the starting point for a new set of creative responses—like a game of Chinese whispers *Fountain* was a response to a manufactured urinal, which in turn inspired further appropriations and interventions. Julian Jason Haladyn states: 'for Duchamp, the artist cannot be responsible for what becomes of the artwork – how it may be interpreted or understood'.<sup>23</sup> This collaboration between artist and viewer is key to Fountain17.

Fountain17 has been framed by several principles. The project has developed from a chance coincidence and in its evolution we have tried to be open to the unpredictable and unforeseen. Margaret Iverson quotes Walter Benn Michaels in her examination of artists who use chance strategies—'we recognise the replacement of the desire to do something with the desire to see what will happen'.<sup>24</sup> We wanted to create opportunities for new creative work, celebrate the cultural profile of Hull and support emerging artists. We sent out a call for artists (with a proposal and selection stage) and directly invited some established figures— whose work connects with the project and/or who have links with the city.<sup>25</sup> We have over 40 artists taking part ranging from recent graduates to Turner Prize winners, over half of whom are from Hull. There is an education and community exhibition running parallel to the professional exhibitions represented in this catalogue; showcasing work from students at the Hull School of Art and Design, local schools and learners from HMP Humber, and facilitated by artist and student-run workshops. This exhibition has its

own catalogue and commentary by student Lucy Howson; it has been inspirational to see this work develop and hear conversations about Duchamp in seminars, studios and corridors. Fountain17 has evolved through collaboration and generosity. As well as working together, Tony Rheinberg and I are also husband and wife. In both partnerships there has been a spirit of making something new and unexpected from unlikely ingredients.

City of Culture has already brought art and industry together in innovative and unusual ways. On Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> January *Blade* appeared in Victoria Square, Hull. *Blade* is a 250ft wind turbine blade and a public artwork. It was manufactured nearby at Alexandra Dock where Siemens and ABP manufacture, assemble and distribute wind turbines. The artist Nayan Kulkarni conceived of it as an artwork. *Blade* spans the square—fixed to the ground at one end and rising slightly into the air, allowing people to walk underneath in the middle and buses to drive underneath at the far end. Thus it is not quite as disruptive as its distant relative Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc* (1981).<sup>26</sup> Elegant and incongruous, this is the largest fibre glass object cast from a single mould in the world, so its vast surface with smooth transitions from light to dark (like an empty canvas or page) contrasts with surrounding activity. *Blade* draws attention to its changing appearance as you walk around and underneath it, heightens awareness of how it appears to others elsewhere, and has ignited debate about what is art. Unlike other deindustrialised northern cities Hull never acquired any large public art or developed its waterside locations during the 'regeneration boom' (from late 1980s to the financial crisis of 2007/8). *Blade* seems related to large monuments to industrial heritage such as

*Angel of the North* (1998) by Anthony Gormley. However, it is the consequence of a different set of relationships between culture, place and industry. *Blade*, like *Fountain*, is a Readymade—a manufactured industrial object placed at an unfamiliar and non-functional angle (for its original purpose), which is enjoying a second life as art. Both are provocative, challenging and out of place in their new contexts.

Fountain17 has been informed by current, 'post regeneration' models for public art. 2017 provides an important opportunity to experience and study the claims that culture can contribute to the identity and health of a city. It means that Hull will be a focus for debates concerning how art and artists work in, and benefit, a place.

<sup>21</sup> Cited in Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson, eds., *The Essential Writings of Marcel Duchamp*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1975, p. 138.

<sup>22</sup> Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', *Aspen Magazine*, 1967, *Image, Music, Text*, London: Fontana Press, 1977; Michel Foucault, 'What is an Author', 1969, in *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*, Paul Rainbow, ed., New York: Penguin, 1991.

<sup>23</sup> Julian Jason Haladyn, *On "The Creative Act"* <<http://toutfait.com/on-the-creative-act/>> [accessed 16.3.16]

<sup>24</sup> Margaret Iverson, 'The Aesthetics of Chance' in Iverson, ed., *Chance*, London, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Whitechapel Gallery and The MIT Press, 2010, p. 24.

<sup>25</sup> For example Neville Gabie is an alumni of Hull School of Art and Design and Lemn Sissay performed the 'I have a dream speech' at the Freedom Festival in Hull in 2013.

<sup>26</sup> Serra's metal wall spanning the Federal Plaza in New York was removed following public debate.



## DISPLAYING A URINAL: THE BEDFORDSHIRE DESIGN AS AN OBJECT FOR APPROPRIATION IN 1917.

Helen List, Manchester Metropolitan University.

This is a rare occurrence, a commemoration accorded to an artwork in its own right, but Marcel Duchamp's 1917 *Fountain* is entirely deserving of its centennial celebrations. Characteristically, as a concept deployed within his thinking over several decades, there are various interlocking strands engaged and also some degree of obscurity to trouble the investigator. This essay responds to Fountain17 by considering the origins of the urinal itself, the fixture that Duchamp re-appropriated as an art-work by submitting it under the pseudonym of Richard Mutt to the first New York show of the American Society of Independent Artists.<sup>1</sup> Two questions may be addressed: firstly, what associations might be ascertained for a piece of sanitary ware in 1917? And secondly, what can be observed of a urinal and of the particular design employed here, the 'Bedford', a plumbed, wall-mounted curved basin with a high back and either a concave or (in this case) a "lipped" or protruding front? Arising from these lines of inquiry, one may also work to identify something of the significance found within this design object and commercial product which Duchamp so successfully re-conceived.

In the first instance, we should observe the offensiveness of a urinal in 1917, rejected by the exhibition's committee and not actually exhibited, which even risked prosecution through the publication of Alfred Stieglitz's photograph and the justifying essay in the *Blind Man* journal, which was distributed by hand, rather than through the mail. The care with which Stieglitz's photograph re-allocates the object

as an abstract ceramic piece may be argued as a necessary imperative in this context. William Camfield's comprehensive study highlights both the significance of this image and Louise Norton's 'Buddha' article in the *Blind Man* swiftly repositions the urinal as an aesthetic object, an extension of the artistic canon.<sup>2</sup> Norton's text is prefaced by a shorter commentary 'The Richard Mutt Case' (hereafter 'RMC'), a more succinct discussion of the submission, which is considered to be written either by, or with the contrivance of, Duchamp himself. In 'RMC' exhibition and suitability are addressed, and I would want to emphasize this section: 'Now Mr. Mutt's fountain is not immoral, that is absurd, no more than a bathtub is immoral. It is a fixture that you see every day in plumber's show windows'.<sup>3</sup>

A urinal is also located here as an object of ceramic sanitary ware, and sanitation, i.e. the comfortable and effective disposal of human waste and the provision of clean washing or drinking water, were amongst the major legislative and engineering achievements that marked the arrival of the modern state in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>4</sup> By the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century both the United Kingdom's global production and the United States' domestic markets were the world leaders in providing sanitary products to meet the needs of these systems. In this period, the emphasis had also shifted from basic hygiene to sanitation as a consumer experience; the bathtub mentioned above was a luxury design object which came as part of a specially furnished room, one that proclaimed the affluence

<sup>1</sup> As Duchamp did not directly acknowledge the submission in 1917, and also in writing to his sister attributes the urinal to "Une de mes amis" (Francis M. Naumann and Jill Taylor, eds. *Affectt Marcel: the Selected Correspondence of Marcel Duchamp*, London: Thames and Hudson, 2000, p. 47) the question of female contributor or alternate artist has arisen, the candidates suggested being Louise Norton or more recently, Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven (Irene Gammel, *Baroness Elsa: Gender, Dada, and Everyday Modernity*, Cambridge MA: the MIT Press, 2002; Glyn Thompson, *Duchamp's Urinal? The Facts Behind the Façade*, Leeds: Wild Pansy Press, 2015). However in this study, a concentration upon the *object* itself only serves to emphasise the clarity and purpose behind the action of the submitting artist, so that it emerges as a considered gesture, consistent with Duchamp's own artistic activities. Moreover, despite investigation, there emerges no actual account or evidence for a joint or alternative authorship. Duchamp's own female emphasis must thus be suggested as more likely an indication of the attention to gendered fluidity that would include his later Rose Sélavy persona; therefore this article retains his attribution.

<sup>2</sup> William A. Camfield, *Marcel Duchamp Fountain*, Houston: Menil Collection, Houston Fine Art Press, 1989, pp. 33-43.

<sup>3</sup> Arturo Schwarz, *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp*, Volume 1, London: Thames and Hudson, 1989, p. 650.

<sup>4</sup> Michelle Allen-Emerson, Tina Young Choi and Christopher S. Hamlin, *Sanitary Reform in Victorian Britain*, Part 1, Volume 1, London: Routledge, 2012.

and sophistication of its users. Moreover, within its own sphere, sanitary ware was also exhibited to the public, not only in shop windows, but also at international exhibitions (for example, Shanks of Barrhead, the Scottish manufacturer, took a stand at the Glasgow International exhibition of 1901), occasions at which both art and manufacture were on display. These immaculate tiled spaces and their curved and polished ceramic or glass contents or discrete metal pipework and taps were an entirely new domestic aesthetic for the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, one that can be suggested as fetishizing hygiene for its own sake. They existed in retailer's show-rooms ('plumber's shop windows') or in the lavish catalogues provided by sanitary ware manufacturers (Fig.1). In this sense, the elite sphere of the art gallery, occurring here in its most avant-garde incarnation, was already juxtaposed by another arena of exhibition, one with its own assertive narrative of modernity and its own visual aesthetic. It only remained therefore for a perceptive Duchamp to highlight this available proximity of association. However, Duchamp's 'RMC' commentary *also* reminds the reader of the content and function of ceramic form, ingeniously re-defining the bathtub as indecorous, by implying its naked content. The content of 19<sup>th</sup> century sanitation was *dirt*, and the fetishized shining surfaces which functioned to address its management were also inevitably associated with the bodily excretions and odours that the very process of sanitary reform had identified as dangerous to health.<sup>5</sup> As one traces the growth of centralized sanitation or the advent of the designated private bathroom, there is a corresponding shift in perceptions of acceptability over other people's dirt. In particular around 1917 sanitation was still a luxury and a cultural preference, so for those



Fig 1. Catalogue: Stand No: 81 Industrial Hall. Shanks & Co Ltd, Tubal Works & Victorian Pottery, Barrhead. Glasgow International Exhibition 1901.

inhabiting a sphere that excluded dirt, its continued presence elsewhere was now rendered acutely apparent.<sup>6</sup> A further sardonic comment in 'RMC' that America's only works of art were her plumbing and her bridges would have struck a chord in 1898 with the architect Adolf Loos, who eulogized American bathroom fittings as the epitome of a progressive culture, and complained of the inferior washing facilities and habits of his native Germanic contemporaries.<sup>7</sup>

In this particular Readymade, Duchamp, the European commentator in the States, turned the critique back onto the confident culture of superior sanitation, testing its elevation of one sphere of civilization in relation to its aspirations in another.

The ordinary location of a urinal would be any public or institutional space, redirecting an ancient and odorous urban habit, and re-aligning it as one component within the silent functioning of a municipal drainage system. Duchamp only submitted the simple ceramic form, and thus decided not to employ the attendant cistern, pipe-work, taps and valves, drains or half-cubicle structure that were part of the 1917 user's experience. In this respect the audience for *Fountain* are not only obliged to turn it 90° in order to re-construct its function, but must identify this element and the possible placing of its user's dirt from the curves and drainage holes of the ceramic form alone. Technologically speaking, 19<sup>th</sup> century sanitation was hydraulic design in its experimental years, and moreover the public urinal was troubled by vandalism and the corrosive and odorous qualities of urine, as well as with the indiscipline of those users who sprayed outside the bowl or failed to flush afterwards. Foul air was more than a mere inconvenience in this respect, but an urgent health matter to 19<sup>th</sup> century experts, who classified air-borne contagion as a significant hazard.<sup>8</sup> Designers also laboured to create a space providing privacy for the individual user, whilst discouraging the emerging sub-cultures of homosexual assignation.<sup>9</sup> A long series of experimental patents in both the United Kingdom and

the States provide a narrative of efforts to address these issues through commercially viable designs; the market for the public urinal was an increasingly lucrative one by the 1880s, funded by the deep pockets of institutions and local authorities.<sup>10</sup>

A brief note in Duchamp's 1914 the *Green Box* indicates his prior interest in the urinal, and here there would have been a standard two approaches available.<sup>11</sup> The 'Bedford' design emerges in the United Kingdom during the 1860s, urinals had previously used a shallow basin form, but by 1864 the curved high back and sides were added. Designers of this period also specifically patented the popular lipped front of *Fountain*, which innovation enabled the user to stand closer into the bowl; by the end of that decade the essential features of the ovoid wall-mounted urinal basin were established as a standard.<sup>12</sup> This preference in bowl design is traceable through the patents applied for the surrounding hydraulics, cleaning or flushing mechanisms or stall designs. Whilst these were the subjects of experiments, the bowl itself (depicted in patent diagrams with varying degrees of skill) remained the consistent feature. This feature was adaptable to corner sites, and was available equally with a concave or a lipped front by the end of the century or also undertaken more cheaply in cast-iron. American urinals followed a similar pattern, with the 'Bedford' design replacing earlier bowl forms from the 1870s onwards, but with an even greater concern for the ventilation and cleaning of urinal spaces.<sup>13</sup> However in 1887 Shanks (always at the forefront of technological change) patented the first

<sup>5</sup> Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, London: Routledge, 1966, p. 36; William Cohen, *Filth: Dirt, Disgust and Modern Life*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005, pp. xi-xxxiv.

<sup>6</sup> Ian Scott Todd, 'Dirty Books: Modernism and the Toilet', *Modern Fiction Studies*, vol. 58, no. 2, Summer 2012, pp. 194-200. Alison K. Hoagland, 'Introducing the Bathroom, Space and Change in Working-Class Houses', *Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum*, vol.18, no.2, Fall 2011, pp. 15-33.

<sup>7</sup> Albert Loos, *Ornament and Crime: Selected Essays*, Michael Mitchell, ed., Riverside, California: Ariadne Press, 1998, pp. 82-88.

<sup>8</sup> John Duffy, *The Sanitarians: A History of American Public Health*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992, pp. 67-69 for the early 19th century hazard of "miasma" and pp. 186-187 for the later "sewer gas" in US reform thought.

<sup>9</sup> D. L. Pike, *Subterranean Cities: The World beneath Paris and London, 1800-1945*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005, pp. 232 - 235.

<sup>10</sup> Kevin A. Morrison, 'Spending a Penny at Rothesay; Or, How One Lavatory Became a Gentleman's Loo', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, vol. 36, no. 1 2008, pp. 79-94.

<sup>11</sup> 'One only has: for female the public urinal and one lives by it', Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson, *The Essential Writings of Marcel Duchamp: Salt Seller, Marchand du Sel*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1975, p. 23.

<sup>12</sup> British Library, Patent Office Ref: 18640162, 186402194, 186401627 and 18681002.

<sup>13</sup> United States Patent Office 1874:156980, 1879: 211078 and 1885:329806 and Catalogue "G," illustrating the plumbing and sanitary department of the J. L. Mott Iron Works, New York, 1878, pp. 93-102.

commercially viable form of 'slab-urinal', re-thinking the basic problem to produce a body length inclined surface, which would be better accessible to draining and cleaning. These monumental edifices would dominate public provision at the turn of the century, and Shanks' commentary on their 1887 invention clearly anticipates that the basin will be superseded and reduced for 'private' usage.<sup>14</sup> However for all the popularity of the slab urinal in the pre-war period, when Shanks were the major supplier, the basin persisted, and by the 1920s it would again dominate the market, albeit with a fuller form and a higher-sided receptacle. It was described as a 'Bedford' urinal in the 1900s by George Howsons and Edward Johns, two of the principle manufacturers based at Hanley and Armitage respectively, with no apparent reason as to why a railway junction town north of London should be so distinguished: Duchamp therefore took up an old design form, one that had been standardized across several decades of use and which was also characterized by its persistent core features and by its repeated acknowledgement and deployment by successive inventors. Although ergonomic design as such would only be defined in 1949, the lipped form can be observed as an early effort to adjust a design to the human body to facilitate the key criteria, namely functional efficiency, ease of use, comfort and health.<sup>15</sup> It is a product of industrialization rather than a craft-object, but as a manufactured object it is an organic solution which emerges from both the patented initiatives and also the combined experiences of several 1860s makers of ceramic sanitary ware, rather than the deliberate design enterprise that the slab-urinal would be. It is not an entirely efficient form, never entirely free of the lingering

problem of unwanted residue, but for its users it would appear to carry the associations that Sherry Turkle divines in *evocative objects*, which reach out to the user 'to form active partnerships', influencing the mind, or embedding themselves in the expectations of users.<sup>16</sup>

Returning to *Fountain*, the actual urinal of 1917 is only available to us through Stieglitz's foreshortened image, and also through two images of the same object hung near the ceiling of Duchamp's studio, out of the reach of viewers. It is, as Dalia Judovitz observes, the exemplar of an object which emerges through later reproductions and commentary, through 'displacement' rather than through the original basin itself.<sup>17</sup> Duchamp's account of purchasing the urinal at Mott's showrooms must be rightly observed, as Glyn Thompson states, a fiction after the event, because a trade showroom would not have enabled such a transaction.<sup>18</sup> However, all the relevant retailing outlets of New York and beyond would have been available to him in 1917, so that speculation as to where the purchase occurred is redundant; rather it is the very mention of Mott's, so long after the event, and even after the disappearance of the firm, which is of interest. Duchamp still wished to reference the 'plumber's show-window', and Mott's surviving catalogue literature places a unique and emphatic emphasis upon the show-bathroom, at which grouped products are open to public viewing.<sup>19</sup> In this respect it must be observed that the 1917 urinal is not as modern as that date would imply. As Duchamp himself would encounter, when returning to the object in 1950 and in 1964, the design had so completely disappeared that a reproduction was needed to retrieve it.

During the later 1900s there is a shift in the manufacture of British sanitary ware, whereby greater precision is evident in the standardization of forms. Moreover, the designs remove mouldings and other excess detail in favour of smooth finishes, and the shift was accompanied on urinals specifically by a fuller and more bulbous white form. This was a confident industry, re-creating its aesthetic and brand identity at the forefront of global design and architectural style. Duchamp's 1917 urinal, with its shallower bowl, its clear use of a moulding on the rim, and also its use of a recessed concave bead running parallel with the wall-setting (so effective in Stieglitz's photograph—it sits under the date 1917) is a design which pre-dates this shift, and should be rather identified as dating back as far as the 1890s.<sup>20</sup> The mouldings on the older design were not merely ornamental, but designed to catch and direct excess urine or condensation, facilitating cleaning of the basin.

Within the sanitary industry, there is a *flow* between past and present, especially when the needs of multiple users are served across a global range. The most up-to-date designs are sold alongside those of several previous decades, because the model is viable as long as the market still exists.<sup>21</sup> Thus in 1914, for example, Johns at Hanley ran two catalogues side by side—the one G with the more ornamented designs of the 1890s, and the other F with the newer plain designs. Each group of designs was in active production, but with slightly lower prices for the older products (Figs 2 and 3). Older catalogue drawings can be imprecise, but the 1917 urinal is not dissimilar in form to



Fig 2. Flat-backed Lipped Bedford Urinal  
Edward Johns Catalogue G (1910):  
Originally 1890s.



Fig 3. Flat-backed Lipped Bedford Urinal  
Edward Johns Catalogue F (1914).

items within Shanks' and Johns' catalogues of the earlier period.<sup>22</sup> In 1888 Mott's (whose earlier speciality was iron-work) imported this design of porcelain urinal from the United Kingdom, but by 1908 they undertook their own production.<sup>23</sup> Thompson identifies the most likely American source of the urinal as the Trenton Ceramic works in New Jersey, a company whose manufacturing methods were more rudimentary. Trenton's 1910 catalogue includes both a named Bedfordshire model, and also, uniquely, a partial indication of the recessed convex beading parallel to the wall.<sup>24</sup> An earlier model from Trenton's portfolio would be a candidate, and would also correspond to the absence of a maker's trade-mark on the interior, although Mott's imported products were also blank. Overall Trenton should be considered the most likely source, but the design,

<sup>14</sup> BL.P.O. 188704969.

<sup>15</sup> Stephan Pheasant, *Bodyspace: Anthropometry, Ergonomics and the Design of Work*, London: Taylor and Francis, London, 1996, pp. 2-3.

<sup>16</sup> Sherry Turkle, ed., *Evocative Objects: Things we Think with* Cambridge, MA: the MIT Press, 2007, pp. 307-309.

<sup>17</sup> Dalia Judovitz, *Unpacking Duchamp: Art in Transit*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995, pp. 125-128.

<sup>18</sup> Thompson, p. 29.

<sup>19</sup> *Mott's Plumbing Fixtures, Catalogue "A"*, J. L. Mott iron works, New York, (1907-8) plates 1000-1043A.

<sup>20</sup> I am indebted here to the expertise of Alan Parrish at Armitage Shanks. *Catalogue of Sanitary Earthenware and Appliances*, Edward Johns and Co Armitage Pottery, undated (1890s), pp. 32-34.

<sup>21</sup> I am also indebted to Alan Parrish for this information.

<sup>22</sup> *Shanks Small Catalogue*, 1906, p. 386; *Edward Johns Sanitary Ware Catalogue G*, 1910, p. 17; and for the later designs, *Edward Johns Sanitary Ware Catalogue F* 1914, p. 70. Shanks products have the greatest similarity.

<sup>23</sup> (1888) *Catalogue "G" illustrating the Plumbing and Sanitary Department*, J.L. Mott Iron Works, New York, 1888, p. 237; and Mott's, 1907-8, pp. 413-419.

<sup>24</sup> Thompson, p. 89; and the catalogue *LM Catalogue Sanitary Pottery, Bathroom, Toilet, Kitchen and Laundry Fixtures*, Trenton, New Jersey, 1913, pp. 350-356, especially p. 351 and p. 355.



Fig 4. Howsons: Hanley, *Catalogue of Improved Porcelain Sanitary Specialists and Porcelain Fire Clay* (1908), p. 20.

and possibly even the manufacture, considerably pre-date 1917 and so an exact identification is probably impossible. A Bedford urinal was already a known and recognizable object, and only after the event (particularly after Stieglitz's photograph) would the exact form of this particular item become the subject-matter of discussion.

In retrospect, one item of evidence may also be noted for Duchamp having had acquired familiarity either with sanitary industry catalogues, or with the trade itself. The title *Fountain* has a literal association in this sphere, which is found in United Kingdom catalogues (Fig 4.), but not in American ones. It is not a drinking fountain, but a wash-basin, with or without single tap plumbing, high-backed and set at elbow height into a wall. In manufacture and in catalogues this is directly and emphatically classified *alongside* urinals, but in public usage, particularly in America, the connection is only accidental.<sup>25</sup> The application of the title takes on a fuller range of personal and intellectual connotations within Duchamp's life-span, but in 1917 this antiquated form of basin (soon to disappear from view) sat next to the urinal, available for appropriation. In this respect, examination of the original commercial context serves to underpin the precision with which Duchamp drew upon selected elements available to him within the sanitary industry, retaining or discarding them as desired.

Investigating the commercial product that Duchamp re-appropriated enables some specific conclusions. Exactness in identifying the particular model is not possible, and, equally, exact associations are not enabled by the available sources. One may judge a basin urinal improper, from gauging the broader context of sanitation and from

references to issues of odour and public use, but defining further and more specific associations (gendered ones for example) would require a much broader investigation, if speculative writing were to be avoided. Within the limitations of what this study may assess, Duchamp emerges as an informed observer of the particularities of sanitation, and also cognisant of the distinctions between American and European practice. In his use of this Readymade he borrows precisely and selectively from the associations available within modern sanitation, and in this respect makes these deliberate choices from amongst a broad and active commercial field. It is also particularly interesting to discover the extent to which *Fountain*, as an object, draws upon a traditional United Kingdom model and spans several decades of activity within the industry—this artist had clear *understanding* of commercial design.

<sup>25</sup> Edward Johns Prices book, 1908, pp. 17-18; Howsons Catalogue of Improved Porcelain Sanitary Specialists and Porcelain Fire Clay, (1908) Hanley, pp. 19-22; Johns, (1890s nd.), pp. 32-34; Johns, Catalogue G (1910), p. 17; and Johns Catalogue F (1914) p. 70.

## NEVILLE GABIE

*For Your Pleasure*  
*Urinal drinking fountain. Edition of 6.*

The influence of Marcel Duchamp on art and artists over the last century has significantly shaped our thinking. In effect we have all been drinking from the conceptual legacy of that urinal.

I wanted to make this evident in such a way that it implicates all those who choose to drink. As Duchamp did, I am playing with our thought associations with an object; what we bring to it in our already formed understanding of a specific item's use. What would it be like to drink from something we are familiar with using, but in a completely different context?

So the changes I have made are deliberately minimal. It was also essential that this *drinking* fountain was made using the same design and production methods used in the mass-production of any white chinaware. I want the work to acknowledge, even celebrate the production line. But those small changes actually required significant remodelling and remoulding.

The opportunity to spend some time in Armitage was a rare privilege and one I will treasure. My thanks in particular go to Chris and Mick for their skill, knowledge and humour in teaching me something of their trade.

One drawback, I now cannot but help scrutinise the shape, form and fittings of every urinal I need to make use of. Thanks for that!



## LEMN SISSAY

*Mountain*

Duchamp's found object *Fountain* becomes art and so are my files.

These files are government public records and yet have never been seen in public. For the first eighteen years of my life reports were written on my existence every three months. I was stolen from my family and I was experimented on. I made a documentary about this search on BBC Radio 4 in 2010. It concluded that my files had been lost by a digital company called THE IRON MOUNTAIN. I have recently received the files. I have chosen the pages to be printed upon *Fountain*.





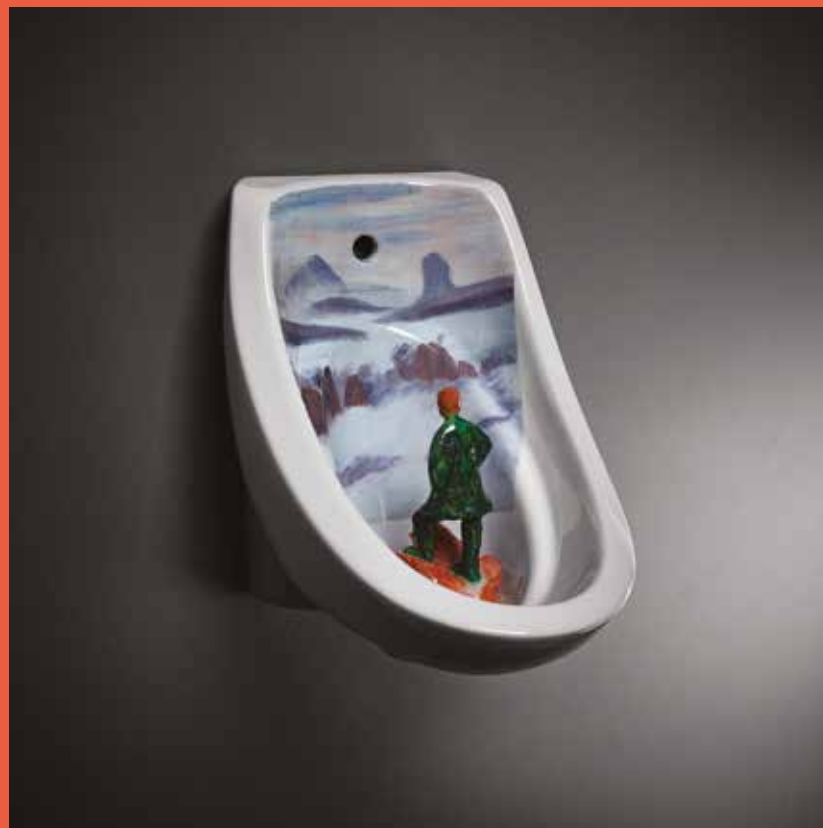
PAUL COLLINSON

*The Wanderer*

Duchamp's antithesis is one of the Modern cultural world's inaugural Romantic artists - the German landscape painter Caspar David Friedrich. Whilst one disputed the creative individual within the art world, the other exemplified the individual creative practitioner.

Friedrich's paintings are the epitome of the Romantic art movement at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup>, and start of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. His paintings were a subjective response to nature, demanding serious reflection on the then new idea of the sublime. One of Friedrich's most well know works is *The Wanderer above the Sea of Fog*, that contains this idea of the individual and the sublime; the 'wanderer' having climbed atop a mountain pinnacle to contemplate the natural world alone.

My 'wanderer' contemplates his pissoir alone.



GREGORY HAYMAN

*Passchendaele 17*

*Resurrection 1*

*Resurrection 2*

**Passchendaele 17**

The work takes as its starting point the photographs of the apocalyptic landscape of the aftermath of the bombing and destruction of Passchendaele in 1917. I have created in bronze, representations of the broken tree trunks left standing - as haunting an image as there is of World War One. These fractured trunks are fixed to the 'fountain' locating both centenaries in one artwork and creating new meaning and resonance - the futility of war and the lives washed down the drain, of society and communities broken; only a semblance remains.

**Resurrection 1**

This work has a bronze cast figure emerging from the fountain/urinal. It references the fact that artworks are born again and reworked by different artists for different times. The work also references the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the film *Trainspotting* and its second incarnation this year.

**Resurrection 2**

The two bronze figures emerging from the fabric of the porcelain signify the strength of potential to emerge from hardship. The figures are cast bronze and based on Stanley Spencer's painting of the Resurrection at Cookham churchyard. The work suggests renewal and re-emergence, but for me is located in the changing seasons and that each year life springs from the hard winter ground to begin its cycle once again.



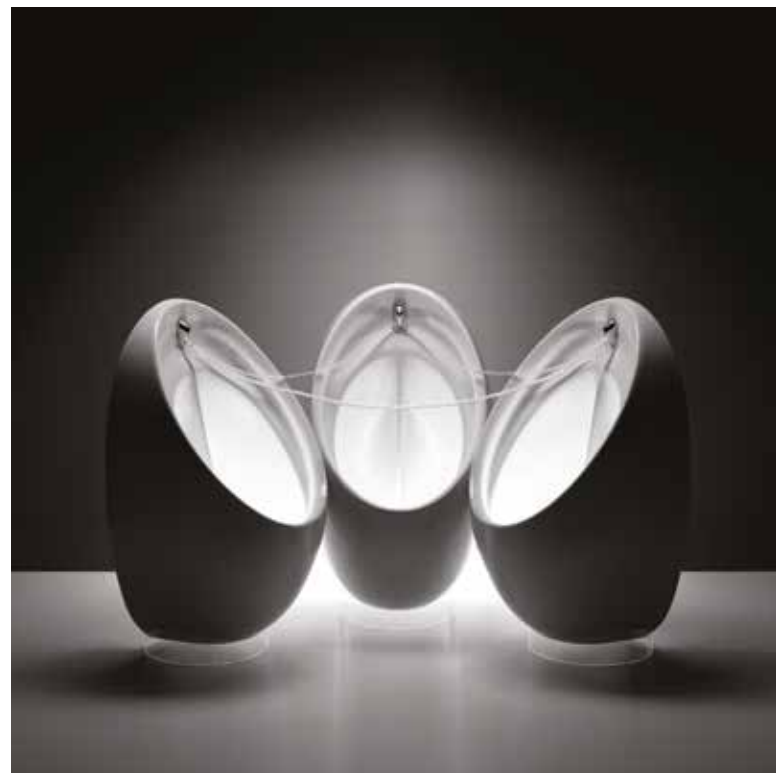


**ADRIENNE CAMERON***The Three Graces*

This work plays with Duchamp's notions of the 'liquids that love is made of'. Here the three cold and hard white porcelain urinals offer to the viewer a denuded female vulva, with the clitoris sitting proudly under the hood. This exposure makes us imaginary voyeurs. As sexuality and eroticism for Duchamp were 'the basis of everything and no-one talks about it', the anthropomorphic female form of these three readymade objects sits squarely within Duchamp's predilection for eroticism and humour. Moreover, Duchamp had a penchant for the number three: where one and two stand for the duality of male and female, and '3 is the rest'.

The work and title reference the attributes - mirth, joy and beauty - of the Three Graces of Greek mythology (often painted by Lucas Cranach and admired by Duchamp) that reflect Duchamp's enjoyment of pranks and punning in his preoccupation with the sexualized woman. Just as the Three Graces dance in a circle with arms linked, the beads linking the water inlets of the urinals suggest the ejaculations that travel along the capillary lines found in several of Duchamp's works.

The urinal model chosen for this work is Armitage Shanks anthropomorphic Hygeniq, itself a pun that Duchamp may well have enjoyed. Aptly, Duchamp's alter ego Rose Sélavy (Eros c'est la vie) wrote on a 'Question of intimate hygiene: Should you put the hilt of the sword in the pelt of the girl'? The question from this sculpture is, will you?

**BEN KELLY***MinD over MatteR**Six dollar submission**R. Mutt 1917 - B. Mutt 2017*

Marcel Dechiravit. "Marcel tore this quickly"  
Self-portrait in profile.

**Chocolate Grinder.**

On New Year's Day 1913 Duchamp was, as usual, visiting his parents, who had moved to Rouen after his father had retired. Wandering through the town's narrow streets, he came across the Gamelin chocolate shop which he had not seen for several years. The rhythmic beat of the steam engine with its balance wheel was still driving the chocolate grinder in the window as it had since the middle of the previous century. He looked at the mixer with its heavy granite wheels, and realised that this mechanism was indispensable to bachelors who are well known to grind their own chocolate. He was in no doubt that here was one of the elements of *The Bachelors' Machine* with which he wanted to confront *The Bride he had made in Munich. The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors, Even.*

Fresh Widow  
L'étoile au Front  
Comet haircut  
Art, money and shitte  
R/art  
Mutt / Mott  
Made Ready



**ADAM JOHN WILSON***Neither Recreation nor Rendition*

Each of the drawings on the surface of my urinal were created in situ and from life, using a continuous single line drawing process. They constitute a form of drawing journal that spanned several weeks' worth of my time. The qualities of each drawing vary, some more tentatively vague while others are direct and densely descriptive. This makes them as much reflection of the state of mind I was in whilst undertaking the act of mark marking, as they are a recording of the observed incidentals of an event. Some that I anticipated would be character studies revealed themselves to be more about objects, the figures of my friends or family lost in the ambiguity of the unfolding responsiveness of the drawing process.

I have found that for me, the endeavour of drawing can be equal parts gratifying and frustrating. So, the thing that makes this drawing process so compelling to engage with, is that it is driven by two contradictory impulses. Firstly to keep the constantly mobile pen in contact with the drawing surface and secondly to trace some of what I am seeing. This causes a dynamic interaction to occur between the rules of the process driven technique and the parallel intent to record and depict observation from life. By drawing this way, without pre-planning or any acute concern for representational accuracy, a balance is struck between skill and happenstance. It embraces a degree of failure to circumvent the creative paralysis caused by seeking perfection.

**JACQUI SYMONS***The Gilded Pissoir*

A highly decorative and ornate piece of artwork, *The Gilded Pissoir* directly challenges Duchamp's belief in what constitutes art. The difference between his 'readymade' urinal and the highly decorative mosaicked urinal presents and highlights the conflict between Duchamp and accepted ideas of the time - the belief that works of art were physical artefacts that 'showed exemplary craftsmanship' and were considered beautiful, interesting and inspiring.

The gold colour aims to represent our cultural obsession with the precious metal - its association with material wealth, extravagance and affluence and how using gold to make an object or within a piece of art can elevate its importance and value. But also, because the gold decorates a urinal, it questions the value of the gold, as ultimately it is just a toilet.

*The Gilded Pissoir* is a purposely overelaborate and sumptuously decorated piece of art, mosaicked in gold tile. The mosaics are cut and shaped to create a decorative and ornamental finish to the piece, with patterns mirroring the flow of water (and urine) within the bowl to highlight the urinal's actual use.



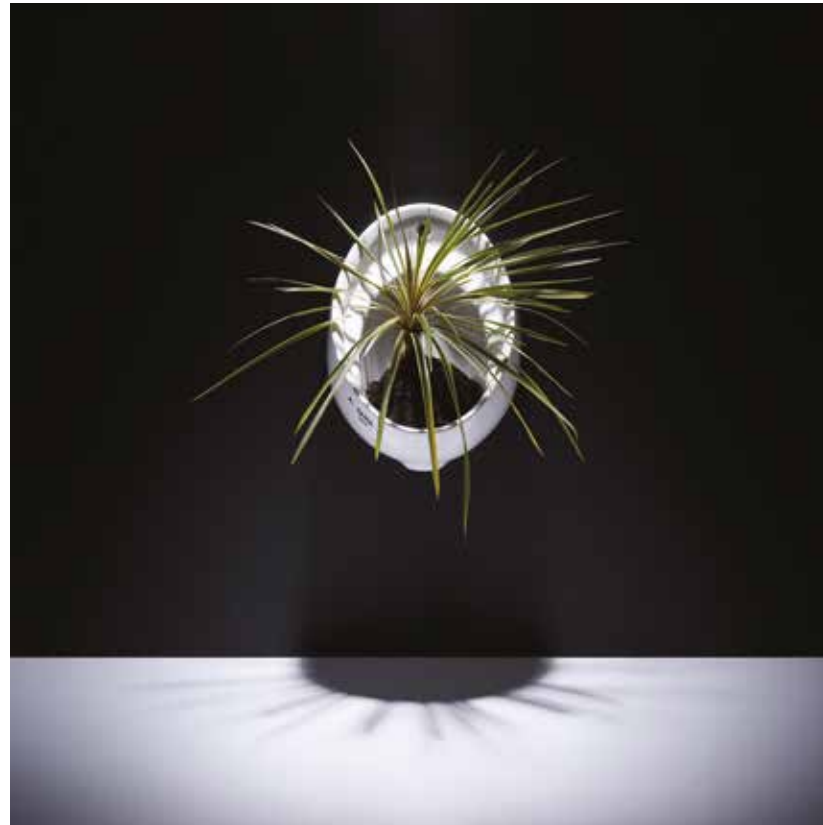
CLARE HOLDSTOCK

*Fountain*

*Fountain* is a postmodern take on Duchamp's iconic Dada *Fountain*. In the piece, a plant protrudes conspicuously from the ceramic. The presence of the plant is a continuation of the use of symbolic foliage in my recent work reflecting utopia or failed utopias in twentieth century Modernist lines of thought.

Here, a palm tree sprouts from a urinal, turning Duchamp's absurdist gesture on its head. By this point in the twenty-first century, *Fountain* has been absorbed into the trajectory of modern art history. To those unfamiliar with this canon, it can still evoke surprise, and in some cases, contention. This appropriation of *Fountain* is intended to be evocative and subversive as the by now familiar shape of Duchamp's urinal is itself subverted.

In this version of the piece, the ceramic is signed with the pseudonym "A. Hank 2017" in acknowledgment of Armitage Shanks's sponsorship of the project. This acts as an allusion to what has been disputed to be Duchamp's original play on Mott Works, a then large sanitary equipment manufacturer in his use of the pseudonym "R. Mutt" 1917."



ANDI DAKIN

*Portal to Infinity*

*In Advance of a Chimney Fire*

**Portal to Infinity**

A ship's port hole, a white glazed urinal and the wonders of twenty first century science have been brought together to generate the illusion of infinite space. As one gazes through the port hole into the urinal basin an aperture frames a deep velvet black void, a chasm without boundaries, a 'portal to infinity'.

This is not an artwork, it is a visual experience: design and science in purposeful union.

**In Advance of a Chimney Fire**

A bathroom sink pedestal with fun spirited embellishment, displays bright chimney sweeps brushes. Is the pedestal a storage solution for the brushes, or pretending to be a chimney pot, or are the utility artefacts masquerading as an ornate vase with colourful flowers?



ADELE HOWITT

*Mademoiselle Rose Selavy*

Mademoiselle Rose Sélavy was arguably Duchamp's most complicated work. A pun on 'c'est la vie', Duchamp's alter ego became a pin up of New York Dada when photographed by Man Ray. Perhaps it was one of many attempts to tease ideas about identity and self-representation. I have reacted to the ready-made urinal through adding embellishments created using hand-made traditional pottery methods. Notions of identity stream through my work and there's always an argument for the hand-made versus the ready-made. An idea that identity is fragile draws links to the materials' vulnerability. This decorative reaction to a specifically masculine product maybe considered to be feminine or does it add a layer of questioning about identity?



YASMIN YUSSOF

*Lillian Gish*

Be aware they are watching.

You believe to see but, you may have been misled.

Illusions surround us yet we still thrive in our own paradise and reality.

Not everything is black or white, nor right or wrong or good or bad.

We must weave within the seriousness to find the humour.





MARCEL DUCHAMP  
AND GRAPHIC DESIGN.

Paul Minott, Bath Spa University.

## ESSAY

## MARCEL DUCHAMP AND GRAPHIC DESIGN

This essay looks at Marcel Duchamp's relationship with graphic design in two ways. The first half of the essay considers how graphic design has provided 'extra' readings of his work beyond the traditional art historical approach. Not only can Duchamp scholarship be well served by intelligent design, it almost demands it, given the complex nature of its subject. The second half of the essay considers a selection of graphic works by Duchamp himself. Despite never having a 'professional' design practice *per se*, his work in this field was never as ephemeral as graphic works are so often assumed to be. In his abandonment of painting, Duchamp adopted strategies which pre-empt approaches taken by contemporary 'conceptual' design, whereby a private or political agenda might be concealed under the guise of commissioned work. Such a view concurs with recent scholarship, which argues that Duchamp's 'apparently marginal' activities in the curation of his own works and others, in fact occupy a more central position in his *oeuvre* than has previously been characterized.<sup>1</sup>

Marcel Duchamp features very little in the anthologies of graphic design, despite his extensive use of commercial print (as opposed to printmaking), his artful combinations of typography and photography, and his considerable engagement with paper and reproduction.<sup>2</sup> Few would realise for example that he was commissioned to design a cover for *Vogue*,<sup>3</sup> or that he was in competition with

Paul Rand to design a book cover.<sup>4</sup> One small exception to this lacuna is Thompson and Davenport's *Dictionary of Visual Language* which featured Duchamp's *L.H.O.O.Q.*, (1919) on its back cover, as it represented the *Women with Moustaches* entry inside.<sup>5</sup>

Sitting before me is a *Series G* (1968) version of Duchamp's *Boîte-en-valise*. One is struck by how much Duchamp appreciated paper, the graphic designer's primary material. A miniature museum of his key works, each item was painstakingly replicated using a combination of collotype and pochoir. The boxes (over 300 were made in a twenty year period) included technical innovations such as fold-out panels, printed celluloid, miniature urinal, typewriter cover and glass ampoule. For its time, it was a remarkable achievement and represents an early example of the limited edition multiple. On the rare occasion when any box comes to auction, it generates considerable interest and a hammer price to match.

Needless to say, my version is not an original, but a facsimile reproduction designed by Mathieu Mercier and recently published at an extremely competitive price by Walther König.<sup>6</sup> Duchamp's enigma will forever resist the mainstream, but the edition size of 5000 says something about how much this portable museum has acquired significance in recent years; its availability on Amazon

<sup>1</sup> I refer here of course to Elena Filipovic's recent publication which posits Duchamp's 'non-artistic' tasks of curation, art dealing and administration as strategic moves in the construction of his entire artistic identity. Elena Filipovic, *The Apparently Marginal Activities of Marcel Duchamp*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> The only book-length work to consider the graphic output of Duchamp, as a distinct category, is F. M. Naumann, *Marcel Duchamp: the Art of Making Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Ghent, Amsterdam: Ludion Press, 1999. It should also be acknowledged that Rick Poyner represents a lone, yet insightful voice in this endeavour, in his (sadly too few) articles concerning Duchamp in *Eye* magazine.

<sup>3</sup> In 1943 Duchamp was invited by Alexander Liberman, *Vogue*'s art director to propose a cover design for a forthcoming 'Americana' issue. Duchamp produced *Genre Allegory* in response, which combined the profile of George Washington with a map of the United States, assembled from stained bandage gauze and studded with gold stars. The disturbing image was not surprisingly rejected, and after slight modification, published by André Breton in *VVV* magazine in the same year.

<sup>4</sup> In 1956 the New York publisher Alfred A. Knopf required a dust jacket for *Modern Art USA* by Rudi Blesh. Duchamp simply provided an elegant visual pun, featuring the front and rear views of a formal dinner jacket perhaps with reference to the 'malic molds' of *The Large Glass*, entitled *Jacquette*. The proposal was rejected and Paul Rand responded with a Matisse-cum-Pollock design, typical of his modernist style.

<sup>5</sup> P. Thompson and P. Davenport, *The Dictionary of Visual Language*, London: Bergstrom + Boyle, 1980.

<sup>6</sup> *De ou par Marcel Duchamp ou Rose Sélavy (Boîte-en-valise) de ou par Mathieu Mercier*, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, Köln, 2015.

seems more remarkable still. It also represents the generous and forward-looking mindset of the Association Marcel Duchamp, who were naturally supportive in enabling this venture.

The facsimile makes no attempt to contextualise or explain 'Duchamp'; such efforts have been made many times before: scientifically, philosophically, psychoanalytically, biographically, alchemically, cabbalistically, 'pataphysically, and so forth. All have favoured vast quantities of dense writing over any other approach. For an artist who expressed a certain distrust for language's ability to explain anything, this is particularly ironic.

The use of graphic design to reframe the work of Duchamp finds its exemplar in the works of Richard Hamilton, starting with his typographic translation of Duchamp's *Green Box* notes of 1934, known as the *Green Book*, originally published by Lund Humphries in 1960. Working closely with George Heard Hamilton (no relation), and in correspondence with Duchamp himself, Richard Hamilton conveyed the spirit of Duchamp's original notes in typographic form, complete with their hesitations and alterations.<sup>7</sup> So impressed was Duchamp with the final outcome, that he gave Hamilton an etching with the inscription "*Richard Hamilton mon grand déchiffreur*" (decipherer). Hamilton understood precisely the challenge that Duchamp's notes presented; not only did the translation to English require a sensitive balance between linguistic fidelity and semantic interpretation, but the typographic treatment had to convey Duchamp's own 'mental' handwriting without losing any of its mystery.

Hamilton used the same principle in a further publication in 1999. This was his elegant book version of the notes which had been previously published by Cordier & Ekstrom in 1967, entitled '*À l'infinifif*', otherwise known as the *White Box*, which Duchamp himself had overseen. In the introduction to this second book (of the same title),<sup>8</sup> Hamilton reflected on the technological progress that had been made since 1960:

**the writer/translator/typographer/designer is free to move over the hypothetical platen of the press unhindered. QuarkXPress provides typesetting resources with limitless possibilities of text control. Bézier curves can translate Duchamp's intensely personal expression into mathematically defined lines in harmony with the objectivity of type.**<sup>9</sup>

Using a broader range of (by this time digital) fonts, and elegant vector graphics, Hamilton was able to convey with even greater subtlety than before, the fragile peculiarity of Duchamp's note making.

By 2004, further advances in vector software and wide format digital printing enabled Hamilton, working in close collaboration with the Centre for Fine Print Research at the University of West of England, to produce a 'Typo/Topographic' edition of colour prints which, much improving on his rough schematic of 1960, presented a 'translation-map' of Duchamp's *Large Glass* (1915-23).<sup>10</sup> In doing so, Hamilton completed a forty year commitment to recasting Duchamp

afresh, using graphic design as his principal tool. This body of work, in addition of course to his own reconstruction of the *Large Glass* itself, completed in 1966, has meant that in Britain at least, we have come to know Duchamp largely through the graphic interventions of Richard Hamilton.

My first encounter with Duchamp was in fact through a hefty publication by Hamilton's collaborator Ecke Bonk, in the form of *The Portable Museum*.<sup>11</sup> This is a painstaking analysis of the lengthy genesis, design development and long editioning phase of Duchamp's *Boîte-en-valise*. At the time of its publication, I recall being intrigued by what seemed like an ambiguous authorship: was this book by Bonk, by Duchamp, or by Rose Sélavy? Not only mystified by the images inside, the design and structure of the book disrupted my previous notions of what 'art history' might look like. Like Hamilton, acting as 'writer/translator/typographer/designer', Bonk had presented Duchamp in a way which was simultaneously austere and weird.

A similar tone, and a similarly ambiguous authorship, was conveyed by *De ou par Marcel Duchamp par Ulf Linde*, to accompany an exhibition of the same title at the Royal Swedish Academy of Fine Arts and Moderna Museet in 2011, which presented the lifelong engagement of Duchamp's other great decipherer Ulf Linde.<sup>12</sup> The book's elegant combination of large type, restricted colour and transparent overlays enabled Linde's unique thesis on the geometry behind Duchamp's work to be conveyed with a clarity and precision impossible to achieve with writing alone.

A similar approach was taken by Swiss graphic designer Karl Gerstner in 2003, in a book entitled *Tum': Puzzle upon Puzzle*, which attempts to deconstruct the complex 'final' painting that Duchamp made for Katherine Dreier in 1918.<sup>13</sup> Gerstner's high Modernist approach however drains this painting of its mystery; sometimes puzzles are best left alone. Much as Duchamp was unimpressed with Alfred H. Barr's deterministic approach to the 'modern art' of 1936, looking for logical causality in Duchamp's art while ignoring its chance poetics is akin to looking at the artist with just one eye (close to, for almost an hour).<sup>14</sup>

A challenge to traditional linear biography can be found in Jennifer Gough-Cooper's and Jacques Caumont's *Ephemerides on and about Marcel Duchamp and Rose Sélavy, 1887- 1968*, which appears as an appendix to the catalogue of the major Duchamp exhibition at the Palazzo Grassi, Venice, in 1993.<sup>15</sup> We learn of Duchamp's whereabouts and activities throughout his long and colourful life, in elegantly typeset and illustrated entries, but presented deliberately out of chronological sequence. This wilfully subversive approach favours coincidence at the expense of temporal logic, as if Duchamp's life can be better told in a Duchampian way. As a complete counterpoint, the two authors previously collaborated on *La vie illustrée de Marcel Duchamp* (1977), which provided an ultra-concise biography in the style of a children's storybook, complete with charmingly *naïf* illustrations by André Raffray.<sup>16</sup> While neither approach achieves the same authority of Calvin Tomkins' established biography of Duchamp, they both embrace the

<sup>11</sup> E. Bonk, *The Portable Museum*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1989.

<sup>12</sup> J. Aman and D. Birnbaum, eds., *De ou par Marcel Duchamp par Ulf Linde*, Stockholm: Sternberg Press, 2013. Designed by Oskar Svensson/Pjadad, Atelierslice.

<sup>13</sup> K. Gerstner, Marcel Duchamp: "*Tum'*" *Puzzle upon Puzzle*, Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2003.

<sup>14</sup> I refer of course to Barr's diagram for MoMA's 1936 exhibition *Cubism and Abstract Art*, which presents each 'ism' of art as a logical consequence of preceding 'isms'. In a lecture delivered at the Hood Museum, New Hampshire in 2012, Michael Taylor reiterated Benjamin Buchloh's assertion that the *Boîte-en-valise* in particular can be regarded as a critique of this tendency. The lecture can be visited at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOeXeAy-aDs> (accessed 30 December 2016).

<sup>15</sup> J. Gough-Cooper and J. Caumont, *Ephemerides on and about Marcel Duchamp and Rose Sélavy: 1887-1968*, Milano: Bompiani, 1993.

<sup>16</sup> J. Gough-Cooper, J. Caumont, and A. Raffray, *La Vie Illustrée de Marcel Duchamp*, Paris: Centre national d'art et de culture Georges Pompidou, 1977.

<sup>7</sup> R. Poyner, 'Typotranslation', *Eye*, vol. 10, no. 38, Winter 2000.

<sup>8</sup> The title page provides an English translation: '*In the infinitive*': *A Typotranslation by Richard Hamilton and Ecke Bonk of Marcel Duchamp's White Box*, The Typosophic Society, 1999, non-paginated.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, non paginated.

<sup>10</sup> P. Thirkell, 'From the Green Box to Typo/Topography: Duchamp and Hamilton's Dialogue in Print', *Tate Papers*, no.3, Spring 2005.



idea that the artist's life was perhaps his finest artwork, and use design as the means to demonstrate this.<sup>17</sup>

Thomas Girst's recent *Duchamp Dictionary*, designed by Heretic, reminds us in its introduction that while Duchamp himself didn't believe art could benefit from verbal translation, and regarded language as an 'error of humanity', he made an exception for the illustrated dictionary format.<sup>18</sup> Inspired by this, the book appears to cover every theme, work of art, publication and personage that might be useful for the general reader, with remarkable economy. Its use of highlighting for Duchamp quotes and bold text for linking to other entries leads the reader through a labyrinth both revealing yet highly compact. It contains no images of Duchamp's art itself, but compensates for this by providing illustrations which convey a Duchampian spirit (and of course gets round the expensive business of image rights). Their overall effect is a little too *Pythonesque* to my mind, and reinforces the misconception that Duchamp was closer to 'wacky' Surrealism than was ever really the case. But in its strident use of navy and fluorescent orange, the book has sought, and probably found, a younger audience which Duchamp scholarship needs. As an ironic take on the scholar's dictionary it has a contemporary, *Hipster* appeal. More than any before, this book asserts that whatever else he was, Duchamp was cool.

A similar sentiment no doubt informs the growing library of miniature hardback books being produced by Stefan Banz's *Verlag für moderne Kunst Nürnberg / Kunsthalle Marcel Duchamp*. Always in the same 14x10.5cm format, using around 200 pages, these little bricks of multilingual scholarship present a single essay focussed around either an individual Duchamp artwork, or more contemporary works which the editors believe fall within the discourse.

Each book is clothbound, suggesting a scholarly tone, but this is instantly undermined by using a forced hyphenation of foil stamped white sans serif capitals for its title, for example:

LA  
BROY-  
EUSE  
DE  
CHOCO-  
LAT  
or  
MAR-  
CEL  
DU-  
CHAMP:  
PORTE-  
BOU-  
TEILLES

This simple disruption, a little bit of oddness in an otherwise 'straight' approach, encapsulates the particular challenge and opportunity that Duchamp scholarship poses for graphic design, if it is to capture the spirit of his life and work: beautifully crafted, typographically 'wrong' but somehow right, serious but undercut with gentle humour. Too 'serious' or too 'funny', and it misses the point: getting that balance right, just as Richard Hamilton always did, ensures that Duchamp scholarship will continue to be presented in the manner it demands.

As per the *Dictionary of Visual Language* mentioned earlier, the visual metaphor is a conceptual device which

works by 'standing in' for something else; we decode the metaphor and complete the communicative process in our minds. Duchamp's insistence that 'the spectator completes the picture' clearly speaks of this process. Duchamp's 'metaphors' were perhaps more occluded than most, and spoke of themes pertaining to his private imaginary yet, set in the context of their time, perhaps yield other readings.<sup>19</sup>

Take for example his use of tobacco, smoke and paper. In 1936, Duchamp designed a pair of covers for a collection of erotic poems and collaged illustrations by Georges Hugnet, entitled *La Septième face du dé: Poèmes-Découpages*.<sup>20</sup> In typically Surrealist fashion, Hugnet's illustrations were assembled from cuttings from *Paris*, one of many pinup magazines of the time, and so combined naked women with Victorian engravings and fragments from contemporary advertising, one in particular featuring a cigarette brand. Hugnet published two versions: one in a numbered edition of 240, and a second special edition of just twenty. For this second edition, Duchamp used photographs of two cigarettes, greatly enlarged to fill the cover, making them about eleven inches in height. In both their disarming scale and mysterious banality, they call to mind Brassai and Salvador Dali's *Involuntary Sculptures*, six photographs published in *Minotaure* three years earlier.<sup>21</sup> The cigarettes are denuded of their paper thus rendering them useless; the anticipated pleasure of smoking is denied by this act of stripping. Are these a clue to the *risqué* nudes contained within? Perhaps, but the impossibility of the post-coital cigarette speaks of the limited sexual pleasure that the images inside provide; they may

stimulate desire for chocolate-grinding bachelors, but much like Duchamp's *Large Glass*, consummation will never occur. By this point, Duchamp had learnt (from Katherine Dreier) of the damage that the *Large Glass* had suffered in transit years before, but had yet to see it for himself. Produced on the eve of his return to the States to carry out its daunting repair, the cover design perhaps speaks of his private anguish that this work would be forever lost.

In 1945, the New York avant-garde and literary quarterly *View* devoted its March issue to Duchamp.<sup>22</sup> The front cover, designed by Duchamp, depicts a wine bottle (with his own WWI military service record as its label) emitting a residual plume of smoke into a starry deep blue sky, possibly alluding to his alleged pacifism.<sup>23</sup> This was the month that the US had firebombed Tokyo; by August Hiroshima and Nagasaki would be destroyed by nuclear weapons. His design for the back cover translates from the French as:

WHEN  
THE TOBACCO SMOKE  
ALSO SMELLS  
OF  
THE MOUTH  
WHICH EXHALES IT  
THE TWO ODOURS  
ARE MARRIED  
MY INFRA-THIN

<sup>19</sup> I am of course paraphrasing here. See Duchamp's *The Creative Act* as transcribed in Tomkins (1996), Appendix p. 510.

<sup>20</sup> G. Hugnet and M. Duchamp, *La Septième Face du Dé: Poèmes-Découpages*, Paris: Éditions Jeanne Bucher, 1936.

<sup>21</sup> *Minotaure*, no.1, Paris, 1933. Photographs of everyday objects presented as *Involuntary Sculptures*, including a bus ticket, a piece of bread, a distorted bar of soap and a rolled piece of paper obtained from a person described as "débile mental."

<sup>22</sup> C. H. Ford and A. Breton, *View, Marcel Duchamp Number 5*, no. 1, March 1945.

<sup>23</sup> In his biography, Tomkins makes light of this, with the exception of Duchamp's comments about warfare given to reporters on his first visit to New York in 1915: see C. Tomkins (1996) p. 153. However a compelling and sustained argument for considering Duchamp's criticism of militarism, and how it manifests throughout his life and work has been made by Kieran Lyons. In this regard, this essay is indebted to his essay entitled 'Military Avoidance: Marcel Duchamp and the Jura-Paris Road', *Tate Papers*, no.5, Spring 2006. Supportive of this perspective is also James Housefield's recent book *Playing with Earth and Sky: Astronomy, Geography and the Art of Marcel Duchamp*, Hanover, New Hampshire: Dartmouth College Press, 2016.

<sup>17</sup> C. Tomkins, *Duchamp: A Biography*, New York: Holt, 1996.

<sup>18</sup> T. Girst and Heretic, *The Duchamp Dictionary*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2014, p. 10.

Perhaps as another way of saying that there's no smoke without fire, no act of aggression can be blameless. The bottle thus becomes the smoking gun, and its bad breath lingers. In an explanation given shortly after this appeared, he is quoted as saying:

(The infra-thin) is a word with human, affective connotations, and is not an exact laboratory measure. The sound or the music which corduroy trousers, like these, make when one moves, is pertinent to infra-slim. The hollow in the paper between the front and the back of a thin sheet of paper...To be studied!... it is a category which has occupied me a great deal over the last ten years.<sup>24</sup>

This last sentence would suggest that the infra-thin was perhaps in his mind when he designed the Hugnet cover in 1936; the transubstantiation from earthly tobacco to ethereal smoke is only made possible by the thinnest of substances. In February of that year, *Time* magazine would announce: 'Last week another milestone in the galloping progress of atomic transmutation was marked by the disclosure of a few atoms of Radium E created in the laboratories of the University of California'.<sup>25</sup> This is also the year Nazi Germany reoccupies the Rhineland, Italy occupies Addis Ababa and annexes Ethiopia, and the Spanish Civil War breaks out.

The world might literally be going up in smoke! Ever concerned with dimensionality, Duchamp would later write: 'the passage from one to the other takes place in the infrathin'.<sup>26</sup> In 1960, Duchamp revisits the smoking motif in his design for a 'last gasp' Surrealist show at the D'Arcy Galleries in New York. Entitled *Surrealist Intrusion in the Enchanters' Domain*, Duchamp hangs a tobacconists' *carotte de tabac* sign above the gallery, and features an embossed image of the same for the catalogue cover.<sup>27</sup> This is the same year that France begins its nuclear testing programme in Algeria and Polynesia.

Revisiting his *View* cover of 1945, Duchamp designed a poster for an exhibition of his Readymades at the Galerie Givaudan, Paris, commencing in June 1967, just a few months after President Charles de Gaulle personally witnesses a nuclear test conducted on the atoll of Mururoa. The design features Duchamp's outstretched palm, his now trademark cigar smouldering between two fingers. The cigar emits a parodic mushroom cloud of smoke, and thus the flattened palm becomes a graphic gesture of protest.<sup>28</sup> The infra-thin once again assumes a darker expression—when matter meets antimatter, annihilation ensues.

And what are we left with but ashes, such as those collected from Duchamp's cigar at the conclusion of a banquet in 1965 held by the Association for the Study of Dada Movement? A tobacco jar, inscribed with *Rose Sélavy*, is thus transformed into a funerary urn and a late Readymade.<sup>29</sup>

Duchamp's use of smoke is just one instance where he employed a graphic metaphor to obliquely critique militarism, while simultaneously pursuing a metaphysical concept which resists precise verbal definition, one interpretation of which might allude to nuclear fission. Under the *aegis* of graphic projects which at first glance appear peripheral to his *oeuvre*, Duchamp pre-empts much contemporary graphic design which hides socio-political commentary in plain sight.

The graphic designer works in a space situated between logic and seduction, information and persuasion, telling and selling. Duchamp's graphic work explored this moment of apprehension, when logic is sidestepped by absurdity, or its corollary, when thought catches up with feeling, mentality with carnality. The moment is fleeting but both conditions are vital if art is to occur. Sometimes you can barely put a fag paper between them.

<sup>24</sup> Diary record of Denis de Rougemont in conversation with Duchamp at de Rougemont's summer house at Lake George, NY, 1945. Recorded in 'Marcel Duchamp, Mine de Rien', *Preuves* (Paris), XVIII, no. 204, February 1968. Tomkins' *Biography* (pp. 350-351) reminds us that on the morning of Duchamp's departure, Hiroshima is devastated by the world's first atomic bomb.

<sup>25</sup> Author unknown, 'Science: Radium E', *Time*, February 17, 1936.

<sup>26</sup> See Marcel Duchamp, *Notes*, arranged and translated by Paul Matisse, G. K. Hall, Boston, 1983.

<sup>27</sup> F. M. Naumann, *Marcel Duchamp: the Art of Making Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Ghent, Amsterdam: Ludion Press, 1999, p. 214.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 276.

<sup>29</sup> J. Housefield, *Playing with Earth and Sky: Astronomy, Geography and the Art of Marcel Duchamp*, Hanover, New Hampshire: Dartmouth College Press, 2016, p. 206.

**ROBIN LEVIEN.  
STUDIO LEVIEN.**

*Face to Face*

On 19<sup>th</sup> May 2016 I went to Paris with Tony Rheinberg of Ideal Standard to meet Antoine Monnier of the Association Marcel Duchamp. A long conversation over lunch at the Café Beaubourg revealed that Antoine was keen to get away from the obsession with urinals resulting from Duchamp's submission of a urinal to the New York Society of Independent Artists in 1917. Tony and his wife Jill Howitt had asked me to launch Fountain17, a call to artists to respond to Duchamp. On the train back to London I asked Tony if he could provide two clay urinals for the launch event at The BathRoom in Clerkenwell. With the help of my colleague Dave Tilbury I glued the urinals together with mastic and covered them with a black cloth. At the appointed hour I revealed my latest design concept for Ideal Standard, a face to face, fin urinal. I said that Duchamp had expressed the view that a work of art always needs a spectator, to which I added that design is also meaningless without a spectator. I asked a member of the audience, a spectator, to collaborate with me and a lady stepped forward. I gave her this hammer and asked her to smash the face to face urinal, which very reluctantly she did. Fountain17 was launched...



**RUSSELL COLEMAN  
& ROB WALTON**

*Concrete 64, concrete, porcelain from two urinals, ground spoil from china clay quarries, coffee cup and other*

*Concrete 64* is an answer to a question not asked at a symposium which didn't happen and which was not attended by Duchamp.

Or Magritte.

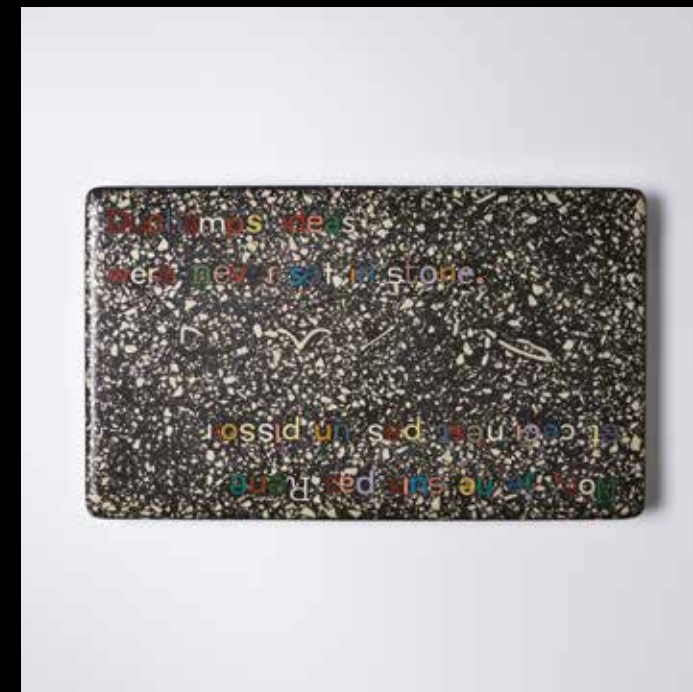
The text, celebrating Duchamp's interest in typography, aims to make the viewer/reader think about the materials used and the words chosen. It also refers to the fact that a number of influential twentieth century artists are conflated in the minds of the public. Does this matter? The art is more important than the artist, isn't it? The text plays with the understanding of *pissoir*: not a urinal at all, but the 'shield' for a urinal. To many English-speakers, because it contains the Anglo-Saxon 'piss', it is assumed to be a urinal. Duchamp played with language/s, an area in which some consider the English to be piss-poor.

The text asks the viewer to consider whether the urinal is still there. If it is broken and re-assembled in a different physical form, can it still be considered a urinal in any sense?

Duchamp loved a pun – and we have used a contemporary or current pun. It draws attention to the use of the porcelain urinals, but also to the use of concrete as a material to be used by artists and makers. We aim to promote its qualities.

Could we have moved any further away from a readymade?

Have you seen our bike wheel?



PETER COATES

*Ce Serait Idéal / This would be Ideal*

*'Instead of making it, I just use something readymade'*  
Marcel Duchamp

Marcel Duchamp used readymade objects to be presented as art in galleries.

*'Instead of buying it new, I recycle and remake'*  
Peter Ronald Coates

I use found and sourced materials; through dismantling and reassembling I give the objects a new life and present them as art.

I was inspired by the outdoor WCs, also known as 'Pissoirs', of France and the highly polished brass and copper of the public toilets on the Minerva pier in Hull.

The combination of our ageing population and the lack of public toilets, means most buildings with a WC (if you can reach them in time) only let paying customers use the facilities. With this free standing and movable WC that problem is avoided. On needing a wee, the pissoir would be steered to the nearest sink, then in the privacy of your personal urinal, you can relieve yourself and avoid the stress of not quite making it.

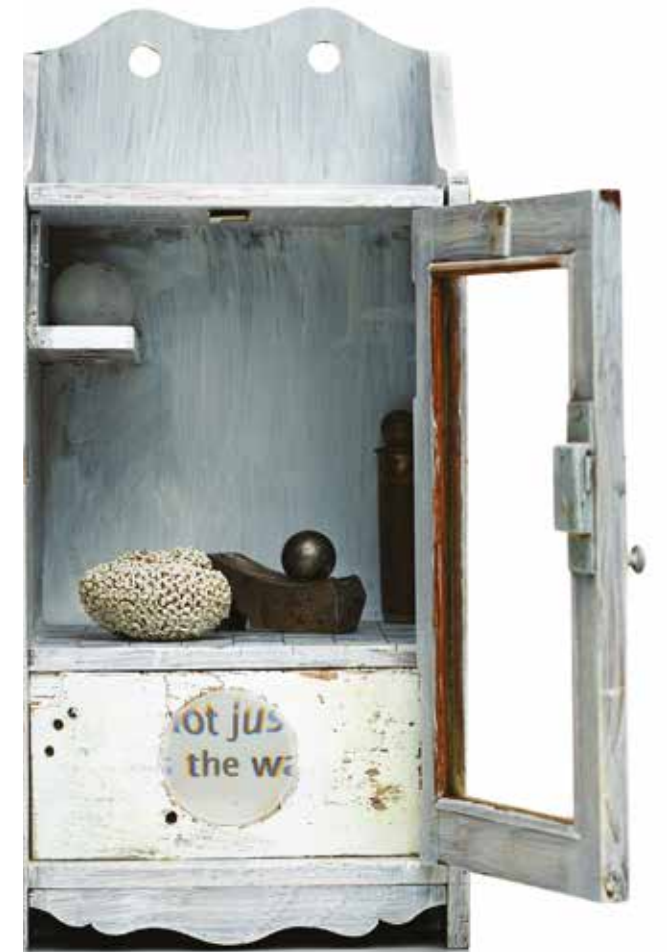


MALCOLM RACE

*Marcel's Room*

My sculpture is called *Marcel's Room* and is formed from readymades assembled to suggest a room with a tiled floor. The appearance of a chessboard and the strange forms that double as furniture resembling chess pieces, reference both a Vermeer and a Dadaist room. Duchamp is ever present as the 'giver of permission' in the use of the readymade, as beneath the room a lens reveals a truth for anyone who cares to look closely.

The piece remains white, as colour may complicate its many meanings and the whiteness helps create a place for contemplation and reflection.





## JOHN DAVIES

*Head of the Acrobat*

I am delighted to show this little 'Head of the Acrobat' in Hull where I was a student at the Art School 1964-67, a lifetime ago. Hull: a city I have such vivid memories of, as exotic as Paris to my young self, a city as I remember it of ships and trawlers, even in the centre of town. Now it's the resilience of its people that has given Hull a new identity.

I always like mould making and the appearance of the clay when it has its first thin coating of plaster; it looks 'other', as if not made by me. So glazing the head is a good way to explore this, to make something anew (and surprising).

Duchamp's 'Fountain' has been fascinating us since its creation. There are no rules for artists, it seems to tell us; except our own which we are free to break.

Note: the original 'Acrobat' figures (1981-1984) are in the collection of the Institut Valencià d'Art Modern.



## HARRY HODGSON

*IN-SANITARY*

For my Duchamp inspired piece I have created an installation, which is a section of a period public toilet wall. The ceramic dispenser is spewing out toilet tissue artwork, which captures the themes of Sex, Gender, Money, Fame and the throw away, transient and ephemeral nature of the 'Ready made' art world.



PETER AYRES

*Fount Object*  
Watercolour paper, Glue  
Beep Studio, 2017

When Marcel Duchamp put a urinal on display as *Fountain*, the intent was not solely to shock: it was also an invitation to examine a fascinating and sensuous sculptural form.

Beep Studio's *Fount Object* accepts this invitation by recreating the original object in a sensitive and fragile medium; paper.

By translating the swooping shape of the original ceramic form into sheet material, the sculpture breaks down its geometry and reassembles it anew.

Following careful geometric analysis of the original 'Fountain', a new sculpture evolved through hand sketches, physical paper models, and 3D digital tests. Stages of expansion, healing, mirroring, rippling, and simplification led to a final computer model. From this, a flat pattern was extracted, printed, and transferred to high quality watercolour paper for construction at full scale.

The finished object is both highly specific and somewhat enigmatic. Whilst the point of departure can still be found amongst its many curves, other associations with natural forms might more easily come to mind. The contrast between the crisp, fragile paper and robust but smoothly flowing porcelain heightens the pleasing tension between form and medium. This art work continues Beep Studio's exploration of the sculptural potential of paper and ceramics.



DESMOND BRETT

*Untitled*

My intention for Fountain17 is to make sculpture that presents itself as an emergent form that is neither specific in recognition nor entirely detached from a kind of figuration that embodies matter, change and possibly something protean. The work acknowledges the habit of chewing gum spat into urinals and is glazed to suggest the wetness of fresh gum impressed upon a part of the body that is seldom seen and ejected from the mouth.

Bataille's pornographic novel 'Story of the Eye' was written under the pseudonym 'Lord Auch', a name that derives from the French slang for scolding someone by sending them to the toilet. His concept of Base Materialism challenges order and his book 'The Accursed Share' presents luxury as a non-recoupable economy which is energy expended and therefore waste. The notion of human waste and the means with which it is dealt with, both at a biological and socio-economic level, is relevant to my thinking around my work, especially when considering the elevation of Duchamp's *Fountain*.

With the opportunity to work in a factory that makes ceramic ware products from clay (a colloquialism for human waste), I have attempted to make a sculpture that positions something often overlooked, intimate and hidden into a paen to chewing and thinking.





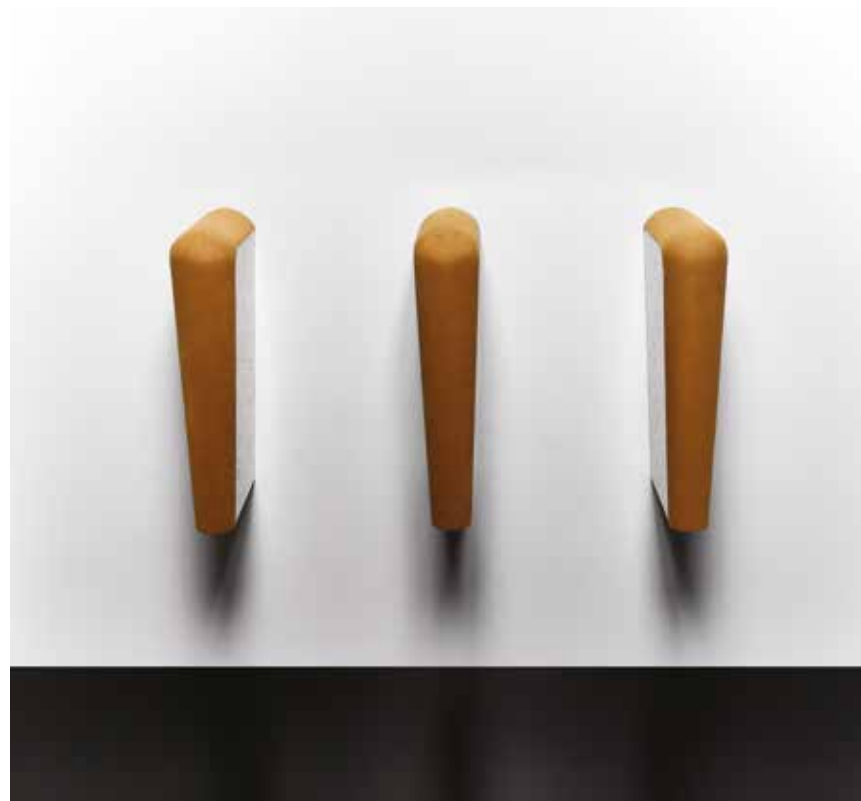
## JOSH LLOYD

*Modesty Guards*

695 x 130 x 320mm

In response to Marcel Duchamp's urinal I wanted to explore public sanitary facilities, how we interact with them and the social situations that they can create. These facilities directly correlate to urbanization and how we as a society understand and analyse our contemporary needs for hygiene. Though awareness of our needs within different cultures has differed, the necessities are still the same. Whether this is warm and cold running water, flushing systems or privacy.

Within Male facilities, most urinals are accompanied by a partition, offering privacy and protection whilst urinating next to another man, without breaking etiquette. Yet not all cultures, cities or establishments choose to implement these modesty guards, which is an example of how we as people in the modern age, have disparate responses to what is necessary.



## SARAH PENNINGTON

*Discourse Chamber*

Transfiguration of a recognised object, to highlight its intrinsic nature through an alteration of form, repetition or juxtaposition with other objects or imagery, is a feature of my practice.

This work is inspired by thoughts around the use of public toilet facilities by male and female protagonists and dominant notions of gender and characteristic differences in behaviour, roles, habits and identity; whilst illuminating the beauty in an everyday object.

An elegant form in porcelain, the readymade object of a familiar functional utensil - not a urinal but a toilet pan and pedestal - is here transformed into the ornamental object of desire, evocative of graceful classical female busts in marble where the elegant contours denote grace of nature as well as form, decorated with images to resemble chamber pots. Upturned, the form and the reading of the object is subverted from its original purpose and connotations, proposing consideration from a new angle.

Imagine the difference between the atmosphere in a ladies' washroom and in men's public urinals. In the one, the etiquette is for conversation to be avoided, in the other it flows animatedly - whether between friends who've ventured in together or amongst coincidental strangers passing comment and compliment. Some clichés persist, but how do these enlighten us as to the other skills and roles of these actors?



**JASLEEN KAUR**

*Ideal Standards*

You may see some strange objects in toilets around the UK, particularly in people's homes. Some of the items are useful and others are for decoration. Potpourri is a mixture of dried plant leaves and bark. It is highly fragranced and is left in bowls in bathrooms to keep the room smelling nice and fresh. It is not edible, do not try to eat it. You mustn't squat on a toilet in the UK because the toilets are designed for sitting. If you prefer not to make contact with the toilet seat you can hover. Please flush the toilet with your hand and not your foot.



**MIKE CHAVEZ-DAWSON**

*Duchamp's Ring(s)*

*6Hcm x 3.5Wcm x 4Dcm*

The artist will show his two miniature urinal/*Fountain* rings, that take Arturo Schwarz's 1964 versions that were sanctified by Duchamp as their starting point. One is made from porcelain & silver and the other, the *Linga-Yoni, Black Fountain* 2015 to 2017 edition, is made from black marble and gold.

Mike Chavez-Dawson has his own project 'Fountain, fountain', celebrating Duchamp's 'Readymade' and is curating an exhibition to be held at Bury Museum and Art Gallery later on this year. There will be overlaps between Fountain17 and 'Fountain, fountain' and Mike will be producing bespoke performances for both Fountain17's opening and closing ceremonies.





**ASSEMBLE**  
**ISABEL FARCHY AND HENRY STRINGER**

*Ceramic toilets: the craft of mass production*

A collaboration between Assemble, Isabel Farchy, Henry Stringer and Armitage Shanks to redesign and embellish the classic plain white toilet. The project seeks to apply traditional ceramic craft to create and decorate toilets, in the process revealing both the art of mass production and highlighting the strange social mores that drive conservatism in toilet design, an object which has remained relatively unchanged since its invention more than a hundred years ago.

'SPENDING A PENNY:  
ARMITAGE SHANKS -  
A JOURNEY FROM 1817 TO 2017'.

Tony Rheinberg, Armitage Shanks.

If there is one thing that is certain about toilets it is their power to generate humour, awkwardness, controversy, and moral discussion. In the UK this awkwardness often comes out in the British love of toilet humour. It is perhaps this humour and the recognition of our universal need for toilets that embodies much of the UK's love of Armitage Shanks—its name, its heritage and its place in the public consciousness.

2017 marks the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Thomas Bond founding a factory in the village of Armitage that began the journey of Armitage Shanks, and in this essay I intend to cover an eclectic look at the brand within bathrooms and washrooms touching on history, manufacturing, and products through the decades. This journey will include a look into how we have strayed into the world of art, Duchamp, and Fountain17 as part of our 2017 celebrations and why these apparently unrelated areas may be more relevant than one might think.

So where does the name Armitage Shanks come from? It derives from a combination of two histories: one that begins in the village of Armitage and another that originates in Scotland with a Victorian entrepreneur named John Shanks. We will begin with Armitage. It is 1817, and a strike in Stoke on Trent leads two potters proposing to Thomas Bond, a brick maker, that he should open a factory in the village of Armitage to manufacture ceramic tableware and sanitary ware. Early days were turbulent and unfortunately Bond went bankrupt within a couple of years. Subsequently the factory



Thomas Bond

moved through a number of different owners before being acquired by Salt and Swan in 1851, who began manufacturing sanitary ware in response to the rising demand for toilets.

In 1848 the Public Health Act established a Board of Health and set a framework to encourage the provision of public sewers. Up to that point sanitation was very basic, and there are numerous descriptions of poor conditions, such as the one from Robert Rawlinson, a Board of Health inspector sent up to Sunderland to assess the town's sanitation in 1850:

"There is a most filthy place between two walls from 4 to 5 feet wide, behind John Street...called the Stinking Ditch, and it is literally so. This nuisance has not been abated, for no one will own it." And further on in his report "There are very few private drains communicating with the sewers. The ordure and offensive matters from the houses are generally brought out and thrown into the streets, and perhaps principally near the gratings or gully-holes, where it remains giving forth unhealthy effluvia, until removed by the scavenger or a shower of rain. Indeed it is difficult to say where the refuse water from some of even the better class of houses finds an outlet."<sup>1</sup>

The building of sewers in many UK cities led to an explosion in the number of toilets required. Such was the success of the factory that the company exhibited in the 1855 Paris exhibition. But if Sunderland had its sewage

<sup>1</sup> Robert Rawlinson, *Report to the General Board of Health on a Preliminary Inquiry as to the Sewerage Drainage, Supply of Water, and the Sanitary Condition of the Borough of Sunderland*, London: W. Clowes and Sons, 1851, p. 93.

problems in 1850, London was not much better in 1858. The most notorious event was the Great Stink which occurred in central London between July and August during hot weather. The smell came from untreated human waste and industrial effluent washed up on the banks of the River Thames. London's sewer system emptied directly into the river and was blamed for various cholera outbreaks. Such was the stench from the sewage that the curtains of the Houses of Parliament were doused in a mixture of chloride and lime to try to abate the smell.

In 1867 the Reverend Edward Johns—a Staffordshire auctioneer—bought the company and it began trading as Edward Johns. Business grew rapidly with logistics being helped by a new railway station and sidings and the old Grand Trunk Canal (Trent and Mersey) that still runs alongside the factory (an 1896 catalogue states 'All prices quoted delivered to Railway or Canal'). America looked to be a profitable opportunity and so in 1876 the company exhibited at the Philadelphia exhibition winning a golden award for the new Dolphin toilet design. When Edward Johns died in 1893 the company was run by his son Edward Lewis Williamson Johns before being sold to the Corn brothers in 1900 for £2,600. At the time the company consisted of 'eight kilns, a row of eight cottages and 10,493 square yards of land'.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the change in ownership the company kept trading under the name of Edward Johns until 1960 when



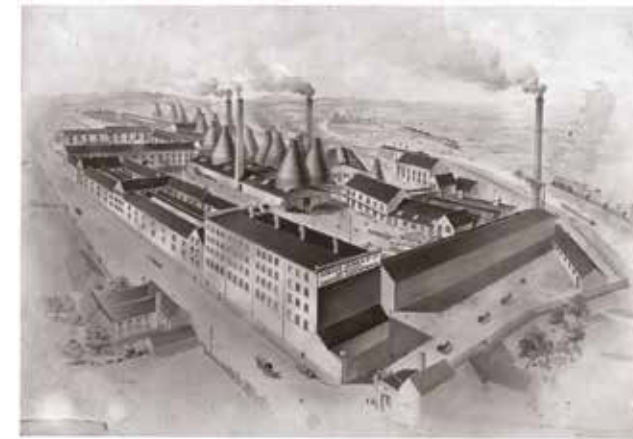
Reverend Edward Johns

it changed to Armitage Ware. There can be no doubt that the Johns family had a major impact on the company's growth and although they were clearly good businessmen they also took their social responsibilities seriously. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many employees lived in purpose built company houses.

The second half of the story begins in Scotland. In 1851, at the age of twenty-five, John Shanks set up a business in Paisley as a plumber and gas fitter. Two years later he opened a plumber's shop in Lowndes Street, Barrhead. Shanks entered the sanitary engineering business at a time when there was a growing awareness of the disease risk associated with poor sanitation. The provision of a clean water supply became a priority. He also benefited from a large number of new houses needing plumbing. He operated both establishments for two years until he decided that he was going to concentrate his efforts and activities in Barrhead.

John Shanks was very much the image of a Victorian self-made man. Starting from small beginnings he established what was to become Shanks and Co. Ltd., a largely brassware company in the early years built on inventions that he patented. One of his early inventions was a water closet with a plunger valve known as 'Number 4' which became very successful across the country. He patented it around 1864 and reportedly had to pawn his gold watch to pay for the patent fees. The success of his enterprises led to the building of a new foundry in 1866 which was named the Tubai Foundry. John's brother, a religious man, suggested the name from Genesis: Tubal-Cain was the 'forger of all instruments of bronze and iron'.

As the company developed it began manufacturing or buying in most components required for bathrooms and washrooms including brass fittings and taps for toilets, baths and other sanitary ware. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the company worked in brass, iron, sheet metal, woodwork, marble and fireclay. The one material that was still bought in was earthenware until the company acquired J. & M. Craig, Earthenware Manufacturers based in Kilmarnock at the end of the First World War.



Early image of the Edward John's factory

When Shanks died in 1895 his part of the company was worth £18,000 and in his will he left an extra day's pay for each of his workers. Shanks's reputation covered products for the complete bathroom and washroom and early catalogues show a myriad of basins, toilets, urinals and cast iron baths alongside brassware. During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the company developed a speciality in providing products for the marine market and supplied many famous

ships including the Lusitania, Mauretania, Queen Elizabeth, Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth 2, but the most famous was the ill fated Titanic. Titanic's sanitary fittings were very similar in appearance to those used ashore: 'washbasins manufactured by Shanks could be seen in public accommodations and most notably in the private baths of the 1st Class suites, being wall mounted in marble tops and back splashes with iron brackets'.<sup>3</sup> As you would expect 1<sup>st</sup> class accommodation had the most luxurious sanitary ware but the lower classes still enjoyed reasonable facilities. What was in short supply were WC's and baths, with a trip to the toilet often involving a walk to another deck or to the opposite side of the ship.

During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century both Edward Johns and Shanks developed their separate businesses with each company offering a full range of fixtures and fittings for bathrooms and washrooms. And then in August 1969 Armitage Ware acquired Shanks and the Armitage Shanks Group was formed. It may be a surprise that the name Armitage Shanks is relatively recent and yet it quickly became synonymous with bathrooms and washrooms in Britain and many colonial outposts across the world.

The new combined group formed a strong partnership and became leaders in the bathroom market during the 70s and 80s developing new innovative ideas such as Integrated Panelling Systems, where bathroom fixtures and fittings are pre-plumbed onto panels for quick hygienic assembly in hospitals and washrooms, the development of rimless toilets to improve hygiene in healthcare, and the introduction of Avocado—a colour that looks very unfashionable today but dominated the market for many years.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Bruce Beveridge, Scott Andrews, Daniel Klistorner, Art Braunschweiger, *Titanic: The Ship Magnificent, Vol. II: Interior Design and Fitting Out*, 2008, <http://www.titanic-theshipmagnificent.com/synopsis/chapter26-03/>

<sup>4</sup> Ann Treneman, 'Are We Talking Avocado Again?', *The Independent*, Tuesday 17 December 1996, <http://www.independent.co.uk/incoming/are-we-talking-avocado-again-5588253.html>

<sup>2</sup> Sam Woodberry, 'Armitage Shanks', unpublished manuscript, Armitage Shanks Archives, p. 9.





Caption here.....

In January 1980 the company became part of Blue Circle, and in 1998 the bathroom division was sold to Ideal Standard. The Armitage Shanks brand remains the commercial product brand within Ideal Standard UK today. The two company stories take us through two centuries of industrialisation, world wars, changing attitudes and into

the digital age. And today as we look back over our history and celebrate our heritage you might wonder what the relevance of *Fountain* is for us and what place does art and history have in the bathroom market?

To answer this I will go back to 1851 and a gentleman named Jennings. George Jennings was another manufacturer and entrepreneur who developed toilets and particularly early public washrooms. In fact it was from Jennings's idea of opening public toilets for the Great Exhibition that terms such as 'Spend a Penny' and 'Public Convenience' originated. So when 'we spend a penny' we are looking back to the toilet cubicle that required a penny to open the door for the 'convenience' of going to the toilet. It was Jennings who coined a phrase that still resonates today: 'the civilisation of a people can be measured by their domestic and sanitary appliances'.<sup>5</sup> Somewhere wrapped up in this sentiment are a number of thoughts and issues that help explain the relevance of *Fountain*, art, and the issues that the exhibition raises.

### Civilisation and Art

If civilisation can be defined as 'the stage of human social development and organisation which is considered most advanced' then sanitation and hygiene are an essential requirement for that advanced status.<sup>6</sup> We need to have the basics in life covered to be able to move on from simple survival and a reliable trusted sanitation system seems to be a must in a civilised society. Art is also often linked to the state of our civilization, and has been called its 'barometer'.<sup>7</sup>

There has always been a relationship between form and function within bathrooms. In the height of the Victorian development of toilets one sees entrepreneurs inventing new more efficient ways to flush toilets alongside very elaborate designs transforming functional objects into mini works of arts—baths develop clawed feet, toilets become dolphins and lions, basins look like shells. This Victorian elaborate style almost wants to disguise the functionality of the product and maybe confirms the British unease around toilets and their primary function. Through the 20<sup>th</sup> century one can detect clear design trends in bathroom design reflecting style of the time—art deco, modernism, the strong colours of the 1980s, the Retro Victorian designs of the 1990's giving way to contemporary minimalism in the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

So to have the opportunity to embrace the questions around art, urinals and toilets seems very apt 200 years after the founding of the company. In 2017 there have never been as many shapes, sizes and designs of sanitary ware available in the market. New challenges face the industry such as environmental concerns—recycling and water saving, improved expectations in hygiene, more equal facilities for the less able-bodied and how we address public facilities around gender.

Art helps us challenge assumptions and makes us look at things from different perspectives. Many of our artists have spent time in the factory working on their exhibits for *Fountain*<sup>17</sup> and during these visits it has been interesting to see how the rigours of manufacturing meet the free thinking of artists. Most have enjoyed the experience and both perspectives have benefited. We have Assemble relooking at the whole design of the toilet and how it could be improved, Kasleen Kaur examining cultural assumptions around toilets in the west versus toilets in other parts of the world, Desmond Brett making art related to the shapes of

chewing gum(the bane of anyone looking after urinals in washrooms) and Neville Gabie misappropriating the urinal by changing it into a drinking fountain!

*Fountain* is also very relevant as it uncovers incites into the company's manufacturing history. It has stimulated research into the origin of the urinal that Duchamp presented for exhibition. Clearly the design of *Fountain* is very similar to many designs within the archives of Armitage Shanks, and this influence underscores the notion that British sanitary ware led the world in quality and innovation. Both Edward Johns and Shanks exported a high proportion of their sanitary ware and it is highly likely that the design, if not the actual piece that was presented for exhibition in New York by Duchamp, came from one of the company's factories. The bicentennial presents an opportunity to reflect upon both the company's story and the social history of bathrooms and washrooms through the ages. Since toilets still impact on our daily lives as much as they have done in the past, it is fascinating to see how the attitudes of each generation are reflected in the products of their age and the ways in which they are used. In the past we see the Victorian unease of toileting expressed in discreet underground toilets, witnessing fears that the mixing of classes in public places was most inappropriate. The Victorians found even the thought of women actually wanting to use a toilet in a public place very distasteful! Yet today social issues and behaviour are still illuminated around our toilets, whether it be transgender issues, nappy changing facilities, or the limited number of public toilets.

Armitage Shanks has always been a leader in commercial washrooms and its products have been installed in buildings across the country. These range from public toilets in towns and cities, toilets in national sports stadia and theatres, through to washrooms in many of

<sup>5</sup> George Jennings, quoted in Jamie Benidickson, *The Culture of Flushing: A Social and Legal History of Sewage*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007, p. 90.

<sup>6</sup> Oxford Dictionaries: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/civilization>

<sup>7</sup> Amanda Nevill, 'Arts are the Barometer of Civilisation', *The Guardian*, Thursday 8 July 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/jul/08/arts-barometer-civilisation-spending-cuts>.





*Ceramic ware being fired in one of the long tunnel kilns at the Armitage factory*

London's new skyscrapers that define today's skyline. As the company moves into its third century of manufacturing and reflects on its past, it soon becomes evident that its history and its future are intertwined and not that different. If the company's pioneers invented, challenged, and designed new products for their times, then so too do their counterparts today. The Armitage Shanks archives are full of innovative products for hospitals, schools and washrooms. There is much evidence from written records showing new methods to improve the flushing of toilets and urinals, new ways to improve the material and glazes and new ways to increase yield and consistency.

In the UK we are lucky to still have our great manufacturing base, with the expertise to allow us to continue developing new ideas and pushing the barriers of material and process. It is this basis and experience that allows Armitage Shanks to remain innovative and continually improve the products that it markets. It would be nice to think that in 2117 the company will be still there to look back and recognise the values of the very British institution that is Armitage Shanks.

## ALAN KITCHING

*'Fountain' for Marcel Duchamp*

A letterpress print in three colours: White, Black and Silver. Printed on 350 gsm Somerset mould made paper. In an edition of 10 copies.

The work is a Monogram of the letters 'M' and 'D', and is approximately the size of Duchamp's original ceramic 'Fountain'. The work is printed from wood block letters which are well over one hundred years old. These were originally used to print posters from. They are now part of my very large collection of wood block types - and to a certain degree therefore 'found' objects.



## ANNEMARIE TICKLE

*Presence*

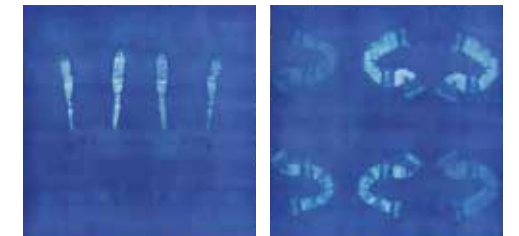
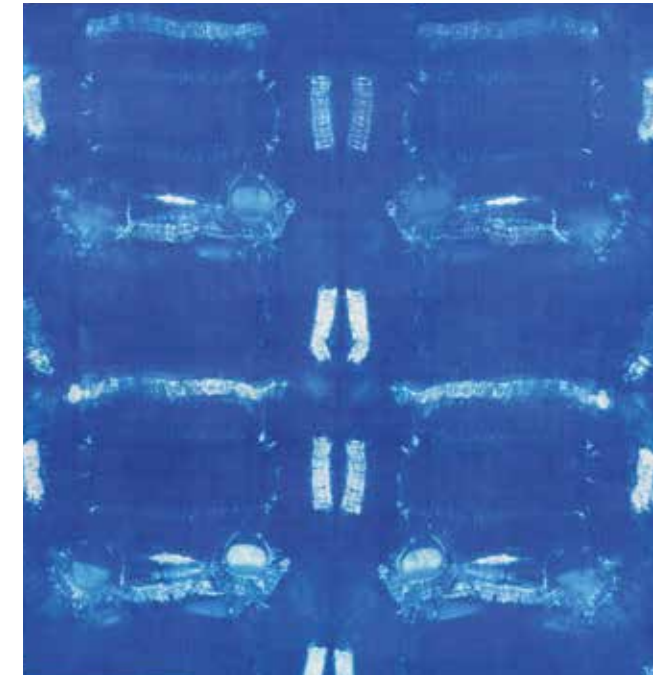
This work has been created through the connection of 3 elements:

- Duchamp's urinal and its use in a bathroom setting, which directed the choice of objects to work with.
- The Japanese textile technique of (Shibori). This resist dyeing technique involves the binding, wrapping and stitching of fabric to produce complex patterns. This introduces an element of chance as the process can be difficult to control and end results are unpredictable.
- Use of the colour blue. Blue is the colour of urinal cleaning blocks and associated with hygienic cleanliness in bathrooms. Reckitt's Blue laundry cleaner made with synthetic ultramarine was produced in Hull.

In the spirit of the ready-made a selection of everyday bathroom related objects have been wrapped in silk and stitched with dental floss as thread.

The final work may or may not reveal the nature of the bound objects to the viewer. Each will have a personal interpretation.

*'The creative act is not performed by the artist alone; the spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications and thus adds his contribution to the creative act.'* - Marcel Duchamp



## PAUL MINOTT

*The Bride Stripped Barr*

*The Genuine Bears This Signature (More Sustaining Than Meat).*

### The Bride Stripped Barr

Digitally printed glass, aluminium, nickel bolts, wooden base, rubber, emulsion paint, transfer lettering.

Duchamp was resistant to the 'isms' defined by MoMA, and had a difficult relationship with Alfred Barr Jr., its first director. By superimposing the *Large Glass* onto Barr's 'Cubism and Abstract Art' diagram of 1936, I was struck by their similarities and coincidences.

### The Genuine Bears This Signature (More Sustaining Than Meat).

Sequence of seven fake chocolate bars. Painted wood, digital print, adhesive transfers.

Duchamp's masturbatory ruminations regarding 'Appearance and Apparition' from his 'Green Box' notes his obsession with chocolate and moulds.

During his lifetime, Duchamp sailed to New York seven times, eventually settling there. I imagine with each arrival, he noticed the slight *infra-thin* changes to his favourite brand.



## ALISON FIELD

*Kaleidoscopic Aqueous I, II, III*

Digital Photographic Image on Light box.

A magnificent range of colours can be captured when reflecting light onto a film solution. An effect that maybe presented to us on a daily basis often goes unnoticed. On each occasion the viscosity of the liquid changes and as a result so does the lifespan of the film; thus each individual frame recorded is unique.

**SAM LARTER**

15 x 15cm

15 x 15cm is a series of nine collages made within a square. The size of each square is denoted by a kitchen tile. Using a photocopier and a selection of domestic items, these were transformed by creating instant combinations. The creations are an appreciation of ubiquitous everyday domestic materials and questions our obsessive use of utilitarian products.



**DOM HEFFER**

*The interferor*  
Oil and acrylic on canvas

The work comes out of a site visit to the Ideal Standard factory, which exposed me to the mechanics and logistics of mass production.

What would happen if we placed Duchamp in this context?

Huge robotic arms were tirelessly at work on the factory forecourt, one of them however, was out of commission - I was told that the arm had been 'misbehaving'. In a similar fashion, I believe Duchamp mischievously placed a spanner in the works of art - provoking us to re-tune our perceptions and delay judgments.





## LINDY NORTON

*Font*

*Hidden Secrets*

### Font

My work explores everyday objects and rooms in a reflective context. Duchamp's 'Ready Made' sculptures are objects taken out of context to amplify their intrinsic qualities: Duchamp's appointed objects reveal new characteristics in their new role.

My response was to engrave a dry point etching 'Font' as homage to Duchamp. The image contains a urinal on a plinth, rather like a font in a church. The window above the font, back lights some of Duchamp's chess pieces; chess became his major life interest. The light framed shadows on either side of the window reflect not the chess pieces as you would expect, but some of Duchamp's selected objects. The window illuminates a shrine celebrating a urinal, and light from the window forms a cross; a symbol of reverence, a place of contemplation with spiritual reflections of Duchamp's work.

### Hidden Secrets

'Hidden Secrets' is a take on Duchamp's sculpture, With Hidden Noise.

It is a box that contains several objects; the contents known only to me. The box is covered with an image of *Font*, which is a drawing of the etching. An image of a revered interior, wrapped around a hollow cube; the space within the form holds secret objects.

Therefore we have an interior, hiding another interior, hiding a secret.



## JULIAN WOODCOCK

*Armitage Pranks*

Biodiversity, Catch of the Day, Seaweed, Crab, Snapper, Marine, Lobster, Cray, Desperate, Tidal, Bowl, Drink like a Fish, Fruits de Mer, Stand, Menu, Trout, Dish, Aquatic, Quadratic, Frozen Food Trucks, Zip, Thousand Island, Slip, Trawler, Hoyle, Smut, Porcelain, Prawns, Seaside, Octopus, Quaff, Mussels, Whelk, Wave, Salty, Beach, Hasselhoff, Concept, Belief, Shellfish, Holding it in, Dada, Fishfinger, Net, Tail, Body, Fin.





**KIM THOMPSON**

*"Fountain": An Origin Story*

Infamously regarded as a 'practical joke' idea that went on to shape the future of Modern Art; an old fashioned comic strip format seemed a fitting way to tell the entertaining story of the birth of Duchamp's original "Fountain".



**ANNA BEAN**

*Splash*

*Ophelia*

*Red*

My work recalls a long tradition of staged narratives and theatrical role-playing in art. I utilise the camera and various tools of the cinema and theatre, such as makeup, costumes, props, and scenery, to create dream-worlds filled with gothic horror and surreal humour. Inspired by Duchamp's *Fountain*, my scenery became the bathroom setting within which I explored the possibilities of the transformation of the everyday.

## QUENTIN BUDWORTH & ANNA KIRK-SMITH

*'Where's my cheque mate?'*

*Photography, collage, drawing*

We've been working on a digital sketch of the Marcel Duchamp photo with Eva Babitz. The original was taken in 1963 by Time photographer Julian Wasser in Pasadena and shows Marcel Duchamp playing chess with a naked woman. The picture was supposed to celebrate Marcel Duchamp but in the end it made Eva Babitz an icon. Through our manipulations and additions to the original concept we will deal in irony and unpredictable outcomes.

By re-situating the image against a composited Hull skyline we are referencing a film made by Marcel Duchamp of himself playing chess on a rooftop with Man Ray. Anemic Cinema imagery spirals endlessly and hypnotically in the ether as Marcel and Eva play a strangely matched game between readymades and quirks of Hull.

The composite is an ironic take on the arts commissioning process, celebrity 'cultcha' and shameless borrowing.



## JEFF FISHER

*Duchamp's Tap*

I was told that on the night of October 2 1968, Marcel Duchamp, after an evening with Man Ray, died in his bathroom.

Unable to ignore the significance of the plumbing, my friend Antoine, with tremendous foresight, removed the significant tap from the fateful scene.

By dint of happenstance many years later he came to realize that I, the opportunist, was the true & rightful heir.

If you place import to the relic, the trace, the fingernail clipping of the saint, there is no end to it.

The true toothbrush, the onion ring that slipped to the floor unobserved, the lingering odour.

We are touched.



## WINDOW SPACE: FREDERICK KIESLER'S CORREALIST READING OF MARCEL DUCHAMP'S THE LARGE GLASS.

Barnaby Haran, University of Hull.

In a 1937 article in the American journal *Architectural Record*, the Austrian émigré designer, architect and theorist Frederick Kiesler celebrated Marcel Duchamp's *La Mariée mise à Nu par ses Célibataires, même*, or *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even* (1915-23), aka the *Large Glass*, as the greatest leap forward in art since the synthesis of aesthetics and science in Georges Seurat's Divisionist optical experiments of the 1890s.<sup>1</sup> The *Large Glass* is vertical diptych of two plates of glass, set within a free-standing wooden frame, upon which Duchamp painted, in oils and lead wire, a pair of obliquely analogous scenes. The cryptic motifs in these panels—the insect-like bride above 'the bachelor machine'—invoke biomorphic and mechanical forms that serve as a puzzling array of tangential and associative signifiers that may coalesce into a meditation upon the mechanics of desire, constituting a unique treatise on malfunctioning sexual relationships. Ignoring these notorious iconographical riddles, Kiesler's interest in the *Large Glass*, (and my concern here) fixed upon its material and spatial inventiveness as a designed object. He wrote that it 'is nothing short of being the masterpiece of the first quarter of twentieth-century painting. It is architecture, sculpture, and painting in one'.<sup>2</sup> As such, it was a model 'design-correlation'—a work that enhanced the interrelationship and continuity of all elements of an environment.

As a 'design-correlation', it a paradigm of a phenomenon he termed Correalism. For Kiesler, Correalism represented the harmonizing of spaces in human habitations and workspaces through innovative designs. As a partially transparent construction in space that was equally painting, sculpture,

and architectural design, the *Large Glass* emblemized Correalism's banishment of divisions and separations; Correalism, Kiesler pronounced, is 'the very stuff life perpetuates...the very power of continuity...it is continuity'.<sup>3</sup> In one of his ruminations, Duchamp insisted upon 'necessity for *ideal continuity*', and argued that in the *Large Glass* 'there is no discontinuity between the bach. machine [bachelors] and the Bride. But the connections with be *electrical*'—as Kiesler recognized, the work was continuous both within its own pictorial space and with its surrounding physical environment, being a cipher or transmitter of continuity.<sup>4</sup> For Kiesler, Duchamp's achievement in the *Large Glass* was the creation of a sui generis medium, a glass painting that diverged from stained glass, its obvious antecedent, because of its inhabiting of the interior space of its display setting (rather than the walls) as both solid object and aperture. The *Large Glass* was Correalist because it was not singly a painting, a sculpture, a design, or an architectural feature, such as a window or a partition, but a unifying nexus of all of these factors, an amalgam of disciplines into a multi-dimensional interface in midair. Some years later, Kiesler visualized the object's unique spatiality in some illustrations for *View* magazine. In a 1945 in a special issue on Duchamp, Kiesler created *Les Larves d'Imagie d'Henri Robert Marcel Duchamp*, a fold-out triptych photomontage, inscribed 'Poème d'espace dédié à H (ieronymus) Duch'amp', which depicted the artist in his 14<sup>th</sup> Street studio seated simultaneously in front of and behind cut outs of the *Large Glass* in a disjointed space framed by windows, hovering over a highway teeming with cars.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Frederick Kiesler, 'Design-Correlation', *Architectural Record*, May 1937, reprinted in Frederick Kiesler, *Selected Writings*, eds. Siegfried Gohr and Gunda Luyken, Stuttgart: Verlag Gerd Hatje, 1996, p. 38. Kiesler also discussed the *Large Glass* in a lecture at the Art Students League in New York in 1938. Kiesler's relationship with Duchamp was substantial. They met in the mid-1920s and became good friends in the following decade; Duchamp stayed with Kiesler and his wife Steffi for months in 1942; also in 1942 Kiesler designed Peggy Guggenheim's Art of this Century Gallery, which had a 'kinetic' room featuring pieces from Duchamp's *Boîte-en-valise*; they collaborated on a cover for *VVV* in 1943, which featured an interactive chicken wire attachment, which readers were expected to comment upon to editors; and in 1947 Kiesler made an eight-part portrait of Duchamp in pencil on paper.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> See Frederick Kiesler, 'On Correalism and Biotechnique: A Definition and Test of a New Approach to Building Design', *Architectural Record*, September 1939, pp. 60-75.

<sup>4</sup> Kiesler, 'Design-Correlation', p. 32; p. 36.

<sup>5</sup> Frederick Kiesler, 'Les Larves d'Imagie d'Henri Robert Marcel Duchamp', *View: The Modern Magazine*, vol. 5, no. 1, March 1945, p. 24.



Kiesler's thesis of Correalism stemmed from his time as a member of De Stijl, the Dutch avant-garde movement headed by Theo van Doesburg, which included figures such as the painter Piet Mondrian and architect Gerrit Rietveld. Galvanized in the Great War's latter years as a forum for developing an internationalist utopian blueprint, an antidote to destructive chauvinism, De Stijl espoused a synthesizing rhetoric involving the unity, continuity and balance of elements, the eradication of styles for a supra-style, and a new universal visual language appropriate for the Machine Age. Its figures forswore whimsy and ornamentation in favour of constructing anew from the 'building blocks' of pure form—essentially primary and non-primary colours and geometrical shapes—to engender an egalitarian, harmonious, and rational post-War society. Duchamp by contrast tended to avoid hypothesizing such grand utopic narratives of societal transformation, in preference for gnomic and arcane commentaries on the technical and symbolic subtleties and mysteries of works such as the Readymades and the *Large Glass*, as exemplified by the 1915 palimpsest of runic quasi-explanations entitled the *Green Box*.

Yet Duchamp communed with Kiesler and van Doesburg within the avant-garde discourse on 'fourth-dimensionality', an esoteric notion that preoccupied European artists and designers, including Cubists, Dadaists, and Constructivists, during the 1910s and 1920s. Drawn variously from metaphysical tracts by Theosophists such as P. D. Ouspensky and Madame Blavatsky on essences within and between objects as well as Non-Euclidean Geometry in Mathematics, the 'Fourth Dimension' represented an extra dimensional quality attainable through art and design that

was often referred to as the spiritual or magical aspect of an aesthetic experience. In the *Green Box* Duchamp proposed that the *Large Glass* would inculcate a fourth-dimensional experience of 'a reality which would be possible by slightly distending the laws of physics and chemistry'.<sup>6</sup> In the 1950s he told the Surrealist figurehead André Breton that 'The Bride or the *Pendu femelle* is a "projection" comparable to the projection of a four-dimensional "imaginary being" in our three-dimensional world (and also in the case of the flat glass, to a re-projection of these three dimensions onto a two-dimensional surface)'.<sup>7</sup> If for Duchamp fourth-dimensionality was immanent to the object, Kiesler's Correalist reading was concerned with its materiality and spatiality, as both picture and window. He considered the planar variation on the surface in relation to its overall Correalist harmonics:

**Normally one looks through a translucent plate glass from one area into another, but in painting an opaque picture (like this one) also accentuates the space division optically. The painting then seems suspended in midair, negating the actual transparency of the glass. It floats. It is in a state of eternal readiness for action, motion and radiation. While dividing the plate glass into areas of transparency and non-transparency, a spatial balance is created between stability and mobility. By way of such apparent contradiction the designer has based his conception on nature's law of simultaneous gravitation and flight.<sup>8</sup>**

Unlike Duchamp, Kiesler suggested socially transformative connotations for this Correalist balancing act: '...important is its spirit, guiding lost sheep and the collective her back to juicy roots embedded in nature's creative subconscious instead of encouraging them to take refuge in research and statistiching [sic]'.<sup>9</sup>

Kiesler applauded the *Large Glass's* unique assemblage, claiming that 'the structural way of painting is Duchamp's invention'.<sup>10</sup> His principle enthusiasm was for Duchamp's novel ways of working with glass, a material that for Kiesler was central to Correalist design principles for its fourth-dimensional potential. He relayed that 'translucent material such as glass, being used more and more in contemporary buildings finds its manufacturing not for commercial but spiritual reasons'.<sup>11</sup> Glass featured often in Kiesler's writings on design, especially in relation to the theme of window displays in department stores, a subject that he engaged with as both theorist and designer. His concept of Correalism developed from treatises on architecture, exhibition design, and store display techniques from the mid-1920s onwards, in magazines such as *De Stijl*, *Hound and Horn* and *Architectural Record* and in his 1930 book *Contemporary Art Applied to the Store and its Display*, as well as several attendant pamphlets and manuscripts.<sup>12</sup> As befitting his avant-garde pedigree, Kiesler considered the store window to be much more than a mere sales device, and whilst attuned to maximizing marketing potential, he proposed that these liminal spaces were Correalist meeting points between the street and the shop.

In brief, for department store windows he adapted his De Stijl-era design experiments such as the *City in Space* (1925), a model for a future metropolis that suspended in midair, and the *Space Stage* (1925), a spiraling theatre construction that eschewed proscenium for multiple viewpoints, as well as his trademark 'L and T' (Lager und Träger, or layer and beam) exhibition display system, which positioned objects in the middle of the room on orthogonal panels. In 1928 Saks Fifth Avenue department store commissioned Kiesler to design storefront displays, for which he created an elegant De Stijl backdrop that wrapped along the ground floor window spaces without partitions. He wrote in his 1930 book: 'I simply took out all the side walls which separated the fourteen windows and created a free rhythmic background throughout the entire window space. Each window seemed to continue into the next. Expansion was the basis of the rhythmic effect and continuity'.<sup>13</sup> Kiesler dreamt up myriad technologies for window displays, from the electrically illuminated 'aura frames' to 'broadcasted decorations' in which 'important news will be broadcast direct to the passer-by by means of a "screen-curtain" which will suddenly sweep down close to the plate glass, temporarily hiding from view the display itself'.<sup>14</sup>

No mere transparent divider, the window was one of many planes and surfaces including the cinema screen (such as his own 1929 design of an ocular 'screenoscope' at the Film Guild Cinema in New York, where a 'projectorscope' could, theoretically though never in practice, show films on walls and ceilings), virtual museums, the nascent medium

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, pp. 40-41.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 40.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Frederick Kiesler, *Contemporary Art Applied to the Store and its Display*, New York: Brentano's, 1930; Frederick Kiesler, *The Modern Show Window and the Store Front*, New York: Brentano's, 1930; Frederick Kiesler, 'Merchandise that Puts You on the Spot: Some Notes on Show Windows', undated typescript, Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private Foundation, Vienna.

<sup>10</sup> Kiesler, *Contemporary Art*, p. 108.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 121.

<sup>6</sup> Marcel Duchamp, *The Essential Writings of Marcel Duchamp*, eds. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson, London: Thames & Hudson, 1972, p. 40.

<sup>7</sup> Duchamp to André Breton, 4 October 1954, quoted in Linda Dalrymple Henderson, *Duchamp in Context: Science and Technology in the Large Glass and Related Works*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998, p. 81.

<sup>8</sup> Kiesler, 'Design-Correlation', p. 40.

of television, and entirely glass coated department stores. Like the *Large Glass*, television was a 'design-correlation' and bringing together sound and image to transmit a new space was also fourth-dimensional portal. Likewise Kiesler imagined, prophetically it appears, 'sensitized panels' in the domestic setting 'receiving-surfaces for broadcasted pictures'.<sup>15</sup> His 'screen sales' system would mobilize all of these technologies in the window space, and 'it will relate the whole outer world with your store and your store with the outer world'.<sup>16</sup>

In 1928 Kiesler drew a rendering of a Fifth Avenue department store that was clad in glass, with bands of colours differentiating floors. Kiesler's vision here is redolent of an electrically illuminated *Glass Skyscraper* model that was on show at the Machine-Age Exposition at Steinway Hall in 1927 (which was curated by Jane Heap, Kiesler's former collaborator), proposed by Hugh Ferriss as a tower in a 'crystal city of the future', a Theosophist corporate utopia that he mapped out subsequently as *The Metropolis of Tomorrow*, a 1929 book about an imaginary city based on contemporary New York.<sup>17</sup> The crystalline construction was a frequent model for avant-garde architects, such as Mies van der Rohe's glass skyscrapers, Bruno Taut's *Glass House* and Aleksandr and Leonid Vesnin's 1925 plans for a six-storey glass department store in Moscow. One core feature of modernist architecture was the transition from mass to volume, enabled by steel frame construction that liberated walls from load-bearing and enabled exterior surfaces in glass. The paradigm example was Walter

Gropius's Dessau Bauhaus, which also featured in the same May 1937 issue of *Architectural Record* as Kiesler's piece on the *Large Glass*, where Kiesler explained how glass was intrinsically Correalist: 'glass is the only material in the building industry which expresses surface and space at the same time. Neither brick nor stone, nor steel, nor wood can convey both simultaneously. It satisfies what we need as contemporary designers and builders: an enclosure that is space in itself, an enclosure that divides and at the same time links'.<sup>18</sup>

In this sense, David Joselit describes the *Large Glass* as both 'a medium and a membrane'.<sup>19</sup> Kiesler claimed that the materiality of the object, with its variegated textures and balance of opacity and transparency, enhanced its functioning as a 'design-correlation'. It belonged to his menagerie of Correalist glass panels that harnessed fourth-dimensionality for domestic and commercial uses. Duchamp did not argue such a utilitarian outcome, but was nonetheless intrigued by the encounters engendered by window displays in New York and Parisian department stores (or shop fronts in general— the *Fountain*, after all, was simply 'a fixture that you see every day in plumbers' windows').<sup>20</sup> He recalled in 1946 how walking around Rouen in the early 1910s resulted in an inspirational window display encounter that was a catalyst for the mechanical drawing and glass pieces that crystallized in the *Large Glass*: 'one day I saw an actual chocolate grinder working in a shop window, and it fascinated me so much I took it as a point of departure'.<sup>21</sup> In 1913 he pondered:

**When one undergoes the examination of the shop window, one also pronounces one's sentence. In fact, one's choice is "round trip". From the demands of the shop windows, from the inevitable response to shop windows, my choice is determined. No obstinacy, ad absurdum, of hiding the coition through a glass plane with one or many objects of the shop window. The penalty consists in cutting the pane and in feeling regret as soon as possession is consummated. Q.E.D.**<sup>22</sup>

Joselit considers how 'in this text the shop window embodies a monumental image of erotic frustration', which became the theme of the *Large Glass*, a non-encounter that contrasts with the Kiesler's Correalist harmonious if largely asexual union of subject and environment.<sup>23</sup> Joselit concludes from Duchamp's 1913 statement that the 'grand amorous narrative of his own "glass" might be read ... as a perversion of the department store', citing Robert Lebel who labelled the object a 'shop window', albeit a malfunctioning one that obscures what it shows: 'what strikes me when we first examine the *Glass* is the fact that Duchamp did everything to make it inconspicuous, for it is no more visible in broad daylight than a restaurant window encrusted with advertisements, through which we see the figures moving within'.<sup>24</sup> Purposefully left to accumulate

dust, the *Large Glass* was photographed by Man Ray in close-up images that look like aerial views of the Plains of Nazca or a ruined ancient city. Paradoxically, Duchamp's note 'Dust Breeding' in the *Green Box* states: 'to raise dust on Dust-Glasses for 4 months. 6 months. Which you close up afterwards hermetically=Transparency'.<sup>25</sup>

Surface, screen, slide, divider and link, the *Large Glass* for Kiesler was also 'an X-ray painting of space, material and psychic', comparable to 'an X-ray graph of a leaf'.<sup>26</sup> In this respect the object resembles both an X-ray of strange plant and machine forms, and a pair of giant specimen slices seen through a microscope. As Linda Dalrymple Henderson relays, Duchamp's interest in X-ray technologies dated from around 1911, in particular informing the creation of *The Bride* of 1912, another precursor to the *Large Glass*. She connects Duchamp's comment that he 'first glimpsed the fourth dimension' in this work to his fascination with X-rays, stating 'because four-dimensional vision was also frequently linked to "astral vision", Duchamp's *Bride*, drawing upon X-rays of internal organs as well as [the occultist] Papus's image of astral man, united science and occultism in the quest for invisible reality'.<sup>27</sup> Kiesler's analogy of an X-ray likened Duchamp's lead piping to the veins of a leaf, observing how a 'complex network of highways for the transportation of materials' in this organic form also served to 'create *turgor*, the resistance-rigidity of plant-structures'.<sup>28</sup> An accidental but fortuitous addition to the *Large Glass* was the veinous network of shatter cracks, almost anticipated by Duchamp (he later termed it a 'ready-made intention'), that prompted

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 120.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 122.

<sup>17</sup> 'The Crystal City of the Future', *Graphic*, June 11, 1927; Hugh Ferriss, *The Metropolis of Tomorrow*, 1929, Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1986.

<sup>18</sup> Kiesler, 'Design-Correlation', p. 39.

<sup>19</sup> David Joselit, *Infinite Regress: Marcel Duchamp 1910-1941*, Cambridge, MA: October, 1998, p. 138

<sup>20</sup> 'The Richard Mutt Case', *The Blind Man*, no. 2, May 1917, p. 5.

<sup>21</sup> James Johnson Sweeney, 'A Conversation with Marcel Duchamp', *NBC*, January 1956, television interview typescript, in Duchamp, *The Essential Writings*, p. 130.

<sup>22</sup> Marcel Duchamp, untitled note, 1913, in *ibid*, p. 74.

<sup>23</sup> Joselit, *Infinite Regress*, p. 138.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid; Robert Lebel, *Marcel Duchamp*, New York: Grove Press, 1959, p. 68.

<sup>25</sup> Marcel Duchamp, 'The Green Box', in Duchamp, *The Essential Writings*, p. 53.

<sup>26</sup> Kiesler, 'Design-Correlation', p. 38.

<sup>27</sup> Henderson, *Duchamp in Context*, p. 13.

<sup>28</sup> Kiesler, 'Design-Correlation', p. 41.



Kiesler to conclude how 'strange for the factualist is the magic of subconscious creation'.<sup>29</sup> This static yet also a kinetic mechanical-biomorphic apparatus, with its almost animated vectors, was for Kiesler akin to one of his mooted 'sensitized panels', a dynamic surface that might summon fourth-dimensionality. As such he judged it an ideal 'design-correlation', a template for the convergence of art and industry.

It is not difficult to trace back 21<sup>st</sup> century technologies, such as touch screens and virtual reality devices, to such avant-garde dreaming. Decades before digitization, Duchamp and Kiesler, in many formats, suggested a world of interactive windows and screens in multiple contexts; fanciful at the time, but now an Information Age reality that we consider familiar, even banal. Their works melded aesthetics and technology in unprecedented ways, and were experimental in the true sense, in that many of their ideas were, like Ferriss's designs for imaginary cities, either unrealizable prototypes or innovative suggestions for new ways of experiencing objects in space. Alongside many of their peers, from the Bauhaus to the Surrealists, they instinctively and imaginatively bridged art and industry, albeit to divergent ends. Duchamp's *Large Glass*, like *Fountain* and the Readymades in general, annihilated the opportunity for sealed-off aestheticism by insisting upon the contingency of all creativity in industrial modernity, though he was far from a social critic or engineer. A fervent synthesist and polymath, Kiesler saw in Duchamp's *Large Glass* an entirely new medium that as a 'design-correlation' would be the centrepiece of an expanded network of Correalist continuities, a fourth-dimensional window and screen, and a motif for the

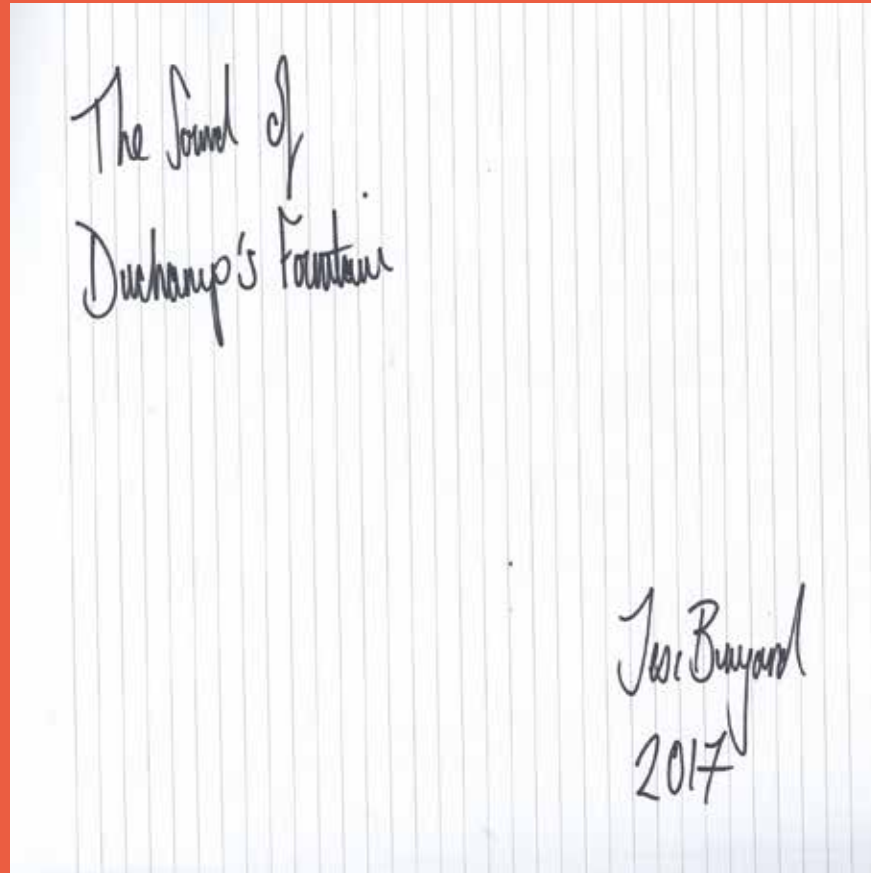
design quality that he referred to as 'Magic Architecture'. Magic Architecture, he explained, is a 'tool of realistic life . . . [the] . . . magic [of which] consists solely in the discovery of capacities in the natural ore of a being—and by refining it brings forth the latent qualities'.<sup>30</sup> And so for Kiesler, the *Large Glass* was a design-correlation that had magic properties—a glass monolith broadcasting new ways of experiencing and understanding space.

<sup>29</sup> Sweeney, 'A Conversation', p. 127; Kiesler, 'Design-Correlation', p. 138.

<sup>30</sup> Frederick Kiesler, 'Magic Architecture', unpublished manuscript, 1936, in Kiesler, *Selected Writings*, p. 34.

**JESC BUNYARD***The Sound of Duchamp's Fountain*

*The Sound of Duchamp's Fountain* is an aural journey of a urinal. The work follows a urinal from production within a factory, to its use and then to its viewing within a gallery. This includes a recording containing people viewing 'Fountain' replica at Tate Modern and sounds of the Ideal Standard factory.

**PETER AND GILLIAN BYROM-SMITH***Marcel's Last Word**Peter Byrom Smith - music**Gillian Byrom-Smith - words*

The soundscape uses both musical tone and spoken words to evoke the question, 'is this art'? As we look round the gallery space the music takes us on a slow, visual, cajoling walk around the exhibits, our minds responding to the never ending question, 'what is art'? The question remains as relevant today as when Duchamp first posed it with his *Fountain* in 1917. As we promenade we imagine we can hear peoples' thoughts as they question and answer their own perceptions of artistic reality. Also is this soundscape art? A mixture of instrumental sounds embellished with spoken questions - are these words random or organised thought? Although the music seems to be the underlying part of the work, the spoken words interject and question the music, the exhibition, the gallery and art. Only you and I can decide and give the final word; what is art?

'The artist produces nothing until the onlooker has said, "You have produced something marvellous". The onlooker has the last word on it'. Marcel Duchamp.



## MARCEL CRAVEN

*Impasse*

A short film based around a dream I had over consecutive nights about conversations and chess with Duchamp; the title explores concepts of autonomy, Duchamp's life and work, and my own. The film co-opts contextual reference points with possible outcomes and events, all is connected, all is possible.

A R M I  
T A G E  
S H A N  
K S 1 7



## MARY AHERNE

*The Beauty of Indifference*

*The Beauty of Indifference.* What do John Keats, W. H. Auden, and many contemporary poets have in common? They have all written ekphrastic poetry. Ekphrastic poetry, or poetry inspired by visual art, has a well-established history dating back to Homer's description of the Shield of Achilles in *The Iliad*. Its popularity in the Romantic period was marked by Keats's quintessential *Ode on a Grecian Urn*. Twentieth-century examples include Auden's *Musée des Beaux Arts* inspired by Pieter Breughel the Elder's *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus* and Anne Sexton's *The Starry Night* inspired by Vincent Van Gogh's painting of the same name.

In this spirit, I have written a sequence of poems in response to a number of Duchamp's works of art including *Fountain*, *Nude Descending a Staircase*, *L.H.O.O.Q.*, *Bicycle Wheel* and *Prelude to a Broken Arm*, amongst others. The title of the sequence is *The Beauty of Indifference* which makes reference to Duchamp's process of selecting his famous Readymades.



AMANDA LOWE

*R. Mutt*

I have created two songs exploring the mystery, ambiguity and playfulness behind Duchamp's signature 'R.Mutt'. One song delves into possible meanings of 'R.Mutt'; the other song takes on the persona of 'R.Mutt'.

Duchamp often made complex puns bearing several meanings and associations at the same time using different languages; and these five letters effectively created a seminal piece of art which changed how people thought about art.

In keeping with Duchamp's 'instant art' I have recorded the songs onto a mobile phone and they are exhibited/played on a screen with an elaborate golden frame around it.

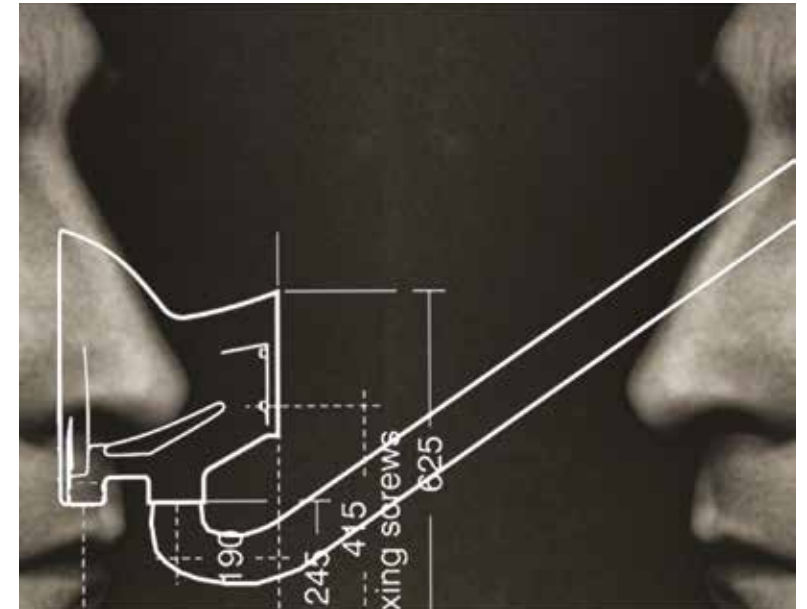
I have produced a blog, documenting the process of writing the songs: [fountain17.wordpress.com](http://fountain17.wordpress.com)



CRAIG BARBER &  
ANDREW SPACKMAN

*The Habsburgs, Alternative Facts, 12minutes*

In *Alternative Facts*, the Habsburgs perform a musical piece using toilet bowls, which they have made into instruments that resemble Alphorns. They have written a score for the performance using images of 76 noses, 74 of which belong to the most powerful people in the world as per American business publication Forbes (plus another 2 'wildcard' noses). The score plays upon an Olympic chess game between Frank James Marshall and Marcel Duchamp which ended in a draw and comprised 76 moves.



## A PERSONAL OVERVIEW OF HULL'S EXPERIMENTAL ART TRADITION.

Dave Ellis

### ESSAY

### A PERSONAL OVERVIEW OF HULL'S EXPERIMENTAL ART TRADITION

Returning to Hull by train, as I often did as a student in the early 1970s, the line would run along the north bank of the River Humber for some distance between Brough Haven and St Andrew's Dock, home of the rapidly diminishing trawling fleet, where it would veer north-east through the heartland of the ancillary maritime industries towards termination at Paragon station, the end of the line. One would look for familiar landmarks en route. This was a time before Humber Bridge construction had even begun, and the only regular way to cross to North Lincolnshire was by use of an antique paddle steamer still in regular service. There was a stretch of track which ran alongside the old municipal rubbish tip before arriving at Hessle foreshore and, if you knew where to look, you would gain a brief glimpse of a small encampment comprised of wardrobes, sofas and other discarded domestic detritus. Colourful rag flags flew from a mast, and occasionally, if the mood took him, an eccentrically attired gentleman would salute the passing carriages.

He had already acquired almost mythological status when I arrived at Hull Regional College of Art in the autumn of 1972, frequently seen riding a dilapidated but ornate old bicycle around town, he was also reputed to spend many hours sat on a stool with a fishing rod in the centre of a busy car park, although I must confess I never witnessed this. Two people who were particularly intrigued by him were Mike Bradwell, founder of Hull Truck Theatre, and Genesis P-Orridge whose artists collective COUM Transmissions, inspired by nihilism and the spirit of Dada's pioneering shock troops over half a century before, was coming to the end of its, in retrospect rather playful, reign of terror in the pubs and clubs, and increasingly on the streets of the city.

'Dada was very serviceable as a purgative', wrote Marcel Duchamp in 1946.<sup>1</sup> While never wholly associating himself with the Dada movement, he shared, if indeed did not provide, many of their more unsettling and radical objectives, largely resulting from the horrors of the First World War. These ideals would, over the course of the next half-century and particularly in response to the conflict in Vietnam, establish a series of alternative philosophies that by the end of the 1960s were increasingly adopted by creative practitioners wishing to experiment outside the existing strictures and traditions of fine art, drama, music and literature. This led to a generation more interested in new forms such as conceptualism, performance art, non-narrative film making, sound poetry, improvised music and theatre, often in conjunction with the exploration of alternative, anti-establishment lifestyles.

It was soon clear to me that Hull during that period offered something of safe haven for characters that might be regarded as inhabiting these borderlands of creative practice. The once thriving fishing industry was in terminal decline, unemployment was high, and the removal of hundreds of families to the tower blocks and satellite estates which now ringed the city meant that Victorian terraced housing in the town centre and off the main arterial roads was cheap and plentiful, if often in poor condition. Philip Larkin, librarian at the University of Hull but already in the doldrums as a poet (his last anthology *High Windows* was eventually published in 1974), had described the place as 'in the world yet sufficiently on the edge of it to have a different resonance' and this felt about right.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Herschel B. Chipp, *Theories of Modern Art: A Source Book by Artists and Critics*, University of California Press, 1975, p. 394.

<sup>2</sup> Douglas Dunn, ed., *A Rumoured City: New Poets from Hull*, Forward by Philip Larkin, Hexham: Bloodaxe Books, 1982, p. 4.



A short-lived arts lab type venture called The Brick House, founded by Barry Nettleton & Rick Welton, had already come and gone when I arrived. It was based in an old chapel building on Baker Street where Hull's "idiosyncratic sub-culture"<sup>3</sup> could hang out, but the project faced antagonism from various elements of the community averse to the hippy weirdoes ethos, plus a threatened obscenity charge following a performance by COUM Transmissions who were already effectively banned from all other local live music and performance venues. The Brick House never acquired a licence to sell alcohol, and by 1972 had seen much of its *raison d'être* superseded by the Hull Arts Centre on Spring Street, brainchild of playwright Alan Plater among others.

Mike Bradwell was one of the first of these engagingly creative 'edgy' characters that I became acquainted with. He was seeking sanctuary in the city while he quite literally got his act together. Hull Truck was an enthusiastic young experimental theatre company living on the breadline, and in order to sustain both him and the project, Bradwell also taught a theatre workshop as part of the complementary studies programme at the School of Art on Anlaby Road. He directed a memorable performance of Peter Weiss's *Marat/Sade* in 1973 which used the marbled centre court of the Ferens Art Gallery as the bathhouse of the asylum at Charenton where the Marquis de Sade was famously incarcerated. Notoriety, ever the desired staple publicity diet of those 'on the fringe,' soon attached itself to Hull Truck whose productions largely revolved around preoccupations with sex, drugs and rock'n'roll in student bed-sits and communal living spaces. A local newspaper's 'peddlers of filth' epithet suited them just fine, and by 1974,

with an extended run of their play *The Knowledge* at the Bush Theatre in west London, their reputation was made and continued to grow throughout the 1970s.<sup>4</sup> Bradwell left Hull in 1982, claiming that: 'we were the acceptable face of the fringe, and as such were perilously close to becoming the Establishment'.<sup>5</sup> Under the direction of his eventual successor, John Godber, Hull Truck went on to considerable commercial success, the lasting legacy being a new theatre building on Ferensway which opened in 2009.

1973 saw the departure from the city of COUM Transmissions' two most infamous protagonists, Genesis P-Orridge and Cosey Fanni Tutti. Neil Megson had enrolled as a student at the University of Hull in 1968 but stayed for less than a year, despite launching a student magazine (banned for carrying instructions as to how to make Molotov Cocktails) and winning a poetry competition judged by Larkin. By 1970 he was back, apparently after receiving a vision, to squat and found a creative commune on Prince Street in the largely derelict old town. One of the first to join was an east Hull girl, Christine Newby, and together they had soon changed their names by deed poll to Genesis and Cosmosis. In a three-year period COUM staged over thirty local performances, also travelling the UK and working in France and Belgium. Beginning as improvising noise/music makers, their impetus quickly moved away from cheap and broken instruments towards 'found' objects with more and more elements of live performance art. Growing shock value saw them widely banned after apparently forcing the closure of the Gondola, a city centre club, with a show entitled *Riot Control*. A life-line was thrown by the Brickhouse, but their subsequent performance, *Fairyland Powder Puffs*, had them threatened

with an obscenity charge which, although it was never prosecuted, hastened the demise of the venue and saw COUM Transmissions begin to consider the wisdom of moving on in the face of increasing police attention.

With their anarchic brand of anti-music and overt, confrontational tactics in provoking a public response, COUM Transmissions became more preoccupied with sexuality and the occult. They were not without their coterie of devoted local followers, however, and the eventual move to London left something of an alternative cultural void although several members of the original collective remained in Hull to pursue their own agendas. Awarded the supreme accolade of being called 'wreckers of civilisation' in the House of Commons, COUM Transmissions had, by 1976 with the 'Prostitution' exhibition at the ICA, achieved the widespread notoriety they appeared to crave.<sup>6</sup> From that point on much of their energy was redirected towards the proto punk/industrial art-rock band Throbbing Gristle which lasted in its first incarnation until 1981. P-Orridge and Tutti had gone their separate ways by the early 1990s.

In 1975 Hull Regional College of Art was in a position to award BA degrees in the subjects of Fine Art and Graphic Design, courtesy of the Council for National Academic Awards. A not-so-quiet revolution had been taking place in the studios and seminar rooms of the nation's fine art departments over the previous decade. The traditional study specialisms of painting, sculpture, ceramics and printmaking, were being transgressed by the intrusion of ideas around conceptualism, multi-media performance art, installation work, and experimental cinema. My own graduation

show, which took place that summer, included examples of abstract painting, 16 mm films of choreographed movement pieces, and an installation with live interaction entitled *Percussion Cubes for Four Performers*, staged at the Humberside Theatre (formerly the Art Centre), which involved elements of sculpture, sound and movement. I was somehow able to select my own supervising tutors, a dancer, a musician and a film-maker. However, I was by no means unusual in pursuing alternative directions under the umbrella of fine art at this time. Within a few years several combined creative arts courses were on offer across the UK.

Students from my own and subsequent years who chose to remain in Hull, and those returning from study elsewhere, generated an interest in such areas of activity out of which in the early 1980s grew The Open Performance Group, the Hull Film Makers Collective and an experimental musicians collective (a monster of my own creation) called Other Musics, which later began promoting new work, forging links with like-minded outfits in Leeds and Sheffield. With key members often active in all three disciplines it was not long before integrated shows of work began to take place in the city's art galleries, and an annual Hull Festival of Experimental Art ran for several years in various forms from 1984. It seemed logical to work together in terms of seeking funding and even a base for operations. From a series of meetings in draughty studios and upstairs pub rooms Hull Time Based Arts was fashioned, holding its inaugural annual general meeting in July 1985.

Celebrated in a book entitled *Out of Time*, HTBA describing itself as constantly seeking: 'to undermine easy representations, embracing the difficult conceptual territory that lies between political motivation, aesthetic concern and

<sup>3</sup> Mike Bradwell, *The Reluctant Escapologist: Adventures in Alternative Theatre*, London: Nick Hern Books, 2010, p. 119.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 132.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 193.

<sup>6</sup> See Simon Ford, *Wreckers of Civilisation: The Story of COUM Transmissions*, London: Black Dog Press, 1999.

radical experimentation', grew rapidly and soon received recognition in the form of various bursaries from the Arts Council of Great Britain.<sup>7</sup> 1988 saw the appointment of a paid co-ordinator, Mike Stubbs, and a move into our own premises at Number 8, Postergate. Covering a twenty year period until its dissolution in 2005, HTBA presented over a thousand performances, exhibitions, installations and film/video screenings in Britain and Europe, as well as commissioning more than 250 new works and provided support and a valuable creative environment for local, national and international artists to produce thought-provoking, frequently provocative experimental work in the city.

Overreaching itself in terms of scale and structure, the writing was on the wall for HTBA over the last two years of its existence, by which time other initiatives had already begun to establish themselves. Percussionist Paul Burwell first visited Hull in 1984 at the behest of 'Other Musics' to stage a performance in the Ferens Art Gallery with The Bow Gamelan Ensemble, his pyrotechnic trio involving performance artist Anne Bean and sculptor Richard Wilson. From that point on Burwell became a regular visitor and in 2000 received an Arts Council England 'Year of the Artist' award which enabled him to acquire the old Kingston Rowing Club premises on the banks of the River Hull. If HTBA had become increasingly preoccupied with conceptual, critical and theoretical concerns, Burwell's Boathouse space in contrast offered a lifeline to those who still preferred to get their hands dirty. 'Strictly speaking Hull Boathouse was not a public space, but a private one', says Jo Millett, '...however Paul Burwell's open attitude meant that

it was effectively [public] as anyone could go in for one of the events.'<sup>8</sup> His regular performance partner, Anne Bean, commented that 'Kingston Rowing Club in Hull had...an open policy where astonishing, straight-from-the-soul work has occurred'.<sup>9</sup> Using his already considerable reputation to attract his peers to collaborate with local artists, some remarkable performances took place over a six-year period before Burwell's untimely death in early 2007.

Film-maker Rob Gawthrop had arrived in Hull to teach at the School of Art (part of a Humberside College of Higher Education) in 1983. He was chair of Hull Time Based Arts from its inception until 2004, at which point, having also left the art faculty (by that time part of the newly founded University of Lincoln) he set up the Hull Art Lab in a disused potato warehouse on Humber Street, a virtually abandoned area of the old town scheduled for demolition. In collaboration with Norwegian sound/performance artist Espen Jensen and film-maker Ruth 'Bob' Levene, he established a space to enable and facilitate the development of contemporary art. Gawthrop wrote:

**Collaboration and cooperation were seen as important and we set ambitious objectives. Our curatorial policy was based on a shared concern with the contemporary, exploratory and, diverse; work that blurred or challenged boundaries, particularly between music, sound and art. Over two years we presented forty artists' works from ten countries with an accumulated audience of thousands.**<sup>10</sup>

The venture was short-lived, failing to attract sufficient funding for a further year, and the three main protagonists left the city.

Within months of their departure the financial crisis of 2008 had hit hard and all re-development projects for the area were put on indefinite hold as investment was withdrawn. Stores and warehouse spaces were suddenly available for pepper-corn rents and Humber Street rapidly filled up with artist's studios and galleries, closely followed by pop-up stores and cafes, a recording studio and a performance venue called Fruit. It was largely the initiative of this new creative community, vibrant by 2010 with regular festivals taking place along the marina and riverside, which proved attractive to the government's Department of Culture, Media & Sport when seeking a second UK City of Culture for 2017 after the initial Derry/Londonderry programme four years earlier.

In an era when the creative arts in all their manifold forms are facing severe threat from central government cuts, under investment, and the danger of being overlooked in plans for secondary education, the future looks bleak in terms of developing not only a future generation of original thinkers and makers, but also the collective will to create an informed and involved audience for anything other than high profile, populist, celebrity-led crass commercialism. In today's troubling political atmosphere only satire looks like it could be set to have a field day over the next few years.

New developments in Hull along the lines of ventures such as Hull Time Based Arts, Hull Art Lab or the Burwell Boatshed project, seem thin on the ground at present. I am sure I will be reprimanded for many deserving omissions, but to my mind at least one enterprising group of ex-art students deserve mention. They have got together to run Ground Space in an old shop and offices on the Beverley Road.<sup>11</sup> With studios on two floors upstairs, the ground floor exhibition space is already being used for film shows, poetry readings, music improvisation workshops, and live art performances. In addition, Hull Carnival Arts continue a fine tradition of outdoor community celebration on the streets of Hull along the lines established by the pioneering Welfare State International in the late 1960s.<sup>12</sup>

With regard to the spoken word, Hull's one-off ranting poet and performance artist, Yol, continues his righteous agitation and berating of conformity in a loud voice, currently involved in transatlantic collaborations with avant guitarist Miguel Perez, Yol is 'making noise alongside text/performance/visual art. He believes you can get a tune out of anything, he just prefers not to'.<sup>13</sup> Respected elder statesmen of the Hull poetry scene, John Robinson (McCray Solo Press, Scarborough) and Andy Fletcher (Wrecking Ball Press, Hull) continue to incorporate bold experiments with form and syntax in their work; meanwhile local spoken word forums such as 'Away with Words' and 'The Imaginary Garden' are opening up, with varying degrees of acceptance or reluctance, to experimental performance poetry as well as the more inevitable rap and hip-hop influences. Computer artist Brian G. Gilson is currently exploring a sub-genre of digital art that he calls 'audio-graphical composition'—

<sup>7</sup> Andrea Phillips, ed., *Out of Time: Hull Time Based Arts 1984-98*, Hull: HTBA, 1997, p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> Joanna Millett: 'Over the Horizon: Residues of Critical Art Practice in the Public Realm,' Lecture given at the Independent School of Art, Penryn, March 5, 2015, notes, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> For Hull Arts Lab, see: <http://www.robgawthrop.co.uk/index.php/organisation/organisation/>

<sup>11</sup> Eleanor Churchill, 'Down to the Ground—Say Hello to Hull's New Art Space', *Hull 2017: UK City of Culture*, April 6 2016, <https://www.hull2017.co.uk/discover/article/down-to-the-ground/>

<sup>12</sup> For Hull Carnival Arts, see <https://www.hullcarnivalarts.org.uk/>; Tony Coult and Baz Kershaw, *Engineers of the Imagination: The Welfare State Handbook*, London: Methuen, 1983.

<sup>13</sup> For Yol, see: <http://www.tegleg.co.uk/yol.html>

time-limited works that use interactive generative graphics to control digital audio synthesis. He says: 'One thing I think might be interesting is that this approach opens up the possibility of creating works for interpretive performance'.<sup>14</sup> The city's two long-standing, dedicated practitioners on the broad canvas of experimental contemporary music, John Stead and Jez Riley French, continue to plough their respective, often solitary furrows. Stead is a composer of electro/acoustic music in the modernist avant-garde tradition, he is also a *son et lumière* artist.<sup>15</sup> Riley French is predominantly active in the area of sound art and field recordings. Among a younger generation of experimentalists, SquareWaves is an improvising collective of Hull-based electronic music artists.<sup>16</sup>

It has been a relatively simple matter to pull together the threads of individuals, groups, and organizations that have carried the torch of alternative, 'edgy' art in Hull over a forty year period between 1970 and 2010, as they largely fall within my sphere of involvement and experience. It is only right that much of this activity should be celebrated during City of Culture 2017, but in writing I am mindful of the words of John Fox (a woefully undervalued and unrecognised creative son of Hull), who warns that 'nostalgia dulls reality'.<sup>17</sup> No doubt this tradition is ongoing, but perhaps I am no longer the person best placed to report and comment on it. This survey opens and closes with brief examinations of two short-lived ventures, The Brick House and the Hull Art Lab, which none the less both embodied the spirit of high-risk, edgy experimentalism in the city over a forty-year period.

With Hull City of Culture 2017 now upon us, and with it the opening of a new Contemporary Art Gallery on Humber Street, the past achievements of COUM Transmissions, HTBA, and the work of composer Basil Kirchin (1927-2005), who spent the last thirty years or so of his life working in obscurity in Hull, are being celebrated.<sup>18</sup> However, the legacies of John Fox and Sue Gill (founders of Welfare State International), Mike Bradwell, and Paul Burwell have (so far at least) not been 'officially' recognized, although Ground Gallery host a weekend of Burwell/Boathouse related events in April of this year, curated by Brian G. Gilson. This might be interpreted as part of an already burgeoning fringe representing the aforementioned idiosyncratic sub-culture—perhaps best described today as City of Hull's Culture—present for many years before 2017, and hopefully remaining active and evolving for a long time to come.

<sup>14</sup> For Brian Gilson, see: <http://www.briangilson.co.uk/>

<sup>15</sup> For John Stead, see: <http://www.eae.org/jsabout.html>; for Jez Riley French, see: <https://jezrileyfrench.co.uk/>

<sup>16</sup> For SquareWaves, see: <http://www.squarewaves.co.uk/>

<sup>17</sup> John Fox, *Eyes on Stalks*, London: Methuen, 2002, p. 4.

<sup>18</sup> Jude Rogers, 'Sound On Film: Basil Kirchin's Unsettling Sound-World', <http://soundandmusic.org/features/sound-film/basil-kirchins-unsettling-sound-world>

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## TO OUR ARTISTS:

Mary Aherne

Assemble

Peter Ayres

Craig Barber & Andrew Spackman

Anna Bean

Graham Beck

Desmond Brett

Quentin Budworth & Anna Kirk-Smith

Jesc Bunyard

Peter & Gillian Byrom-Smith

Adrienne Cameron

Mike Chavez-Dawson

Peter Coates

Russell Coleman & Rob Walton

Paul Collinson

Marcel Craven

Andi Dakin

John Davies

Dave Ellis

Alison Field

Jeff Fisher

Neville Gable

Gregory Hayman

Dom Heffer

Harry Hodgson

Clare Holdstock

Adele Howitt

Jasleen Kaur

Ben Kelly

Alan Kitching

Sam Larter

Robin Levien

Josh Lloyd

Amanda Lowe

Paul Minott

Lindy Norton

Sarah Pennington

Malcolm Race

Lemn Sissay

Jacqui Symons

Kim Thompson

Annemarie Tickle

Adam John Wilson

Julian Woodcock

Yasmin Yussof

## TO OUR EXHIBITION VENUES:

### In Hull

Kingston Art Gallery, Eleven and Humber St., Gallery on Humber St., Hull: April 1<sup>st</sup> - May 14<sup>th</sup> 2017.

### And travelling to

Clerkenwell Design Week: 23<sup>rd</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> May 2017.

The BathRoom, 99 Charterhouse St., London EC1.

The Gladstone Pottery Museum:

October - November 2017 as part of the Stoke Biennial.

Brodrick Gallery, Hull School of Art and Design, Queens Gardens.

March 27<sup>th</sup> - April 25<sup>th</sup> 2017.

**And thanks to staff and students at Hull School of Art and Design for their ongoing support and enthusiasm.**

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