"I don’t believe in art. I believe in the artist."
What Marcel Duchamp Taught Me:

he taught me to ask an unanswerable but indispensable question — ‘What is art?’

Duchamp’s afterlife is undoubtedly phenomenal and his legacy is a subject continually discussed by art historians and critics. Yet it is so deeply embedded in the practice of art that it is hard to pin down.

“So instead I asked the artists. And they responded with freedom, wit, playfulness, ambiguity and contradiction. Together we have transformed the UK’s oldest commercial gallery into an homage to Duchamp — celebrating him across the entire building a century after he created the first readymade and changed art forever.”

KATE BRYAN
Director, The Fine Art Society Contemporary

10 October – 5 November 2014

All works subject to availability

THE FINE ART SOCIETY CONTEMPORARY
“Monsieur Duchamp taught me I must strive to do only the things I feel like doing.”
“This sits in tribute to **NUDE DESCENDING A STAIRCASE, NO.2**, the brilliant Duchamp painting from 1912. In his painting, this moving figure is piled on top of itself to create an extremely busy kinetic canvas, with only a suggestion of figuration discernible through the abstraction of lines and shapes.

**PAWNS** is an attempt to echo that furore of painted figures, whilst staying true to my own approach to painting. This figure stands alone in a wide empty space, surrounded by hints towards Duchamp’s other works.”
"He opened a door that a lot of artists went through."
French Roulette Wheel, Corian base, motor and ball, 15 cm high, 80 cm ø

“Marcel Duchamp taught us that the artist of the future will simply point their finger and say ‘it’s art’ and it will be art. Anything can be art if you say it is. “Duchamp tried to ‘force roulette to become a game of chess’, but we have learnt that gambling systems, particularly the MONTE CARLO BOND, unfortunately do not work.”
Duchamp taught me if it is well made it is art.

DANIEL CHADWICK

INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENT 2001

bronze, acrylic flock
1·8 × 3·2 × 2·2 cm

“Duchamp taught me if it is well made it is art.”
“Picasso was an amazing black Arabian stallion in the paddock with all the other horses, but very special. Whereas Duchamp was more like a horse whisperer, going into the paddock and saying ‘you all “can”, but only some of you “will”’, leaving us with an amazing possibility.”
CEDRIC CHRISTIE
WALL DRAWING
2014
red chalk dust, dimensions variable
How the dust settles
on a dirt road
that leads
“There is no progress in art. There might be progress in civilisation — which I don’t believe at all — but in art, I am sure it does not exist.”
All chess players are artists—said Marcel.

2014

Brick dust and floorboard wood from the artist’s former London studio, smallest piece: 4.8 × 5.1 cm; largest piece: 12.7 × 5.3 cm
“Marcel Duchamp taught me about how perceptions of artists changed after World War Two when he wrote: ‘The profession of being an artist, was only left to a few, compared to what it is today, when a young man not having any special aptitude for anything will say, “Well, I’ll try art...” Fifty years ago we were pariahs — a young girl’s parents would never let her marry an artist.’”
“As I began to research Marcel Duchamp for this show, I found it increasingly surprising how little I actually knew about him and the individual works. I have always known the iconic, ‘big’ things about him — that he is the grandfather of conceptualism and a paradigm-shifter in terms of what constitutes a work of art — but I hadn’t realised how good his jokes were and how readily he embraced an element of chance. “So, I’ve realised that I have yet to learn what Marcel Duchamp can teach me.”
inkjet print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Bright White 310gsm paper, 111.5 x 153.5 cm, edition of 25
MICHAEL CRAIG-MARTIN

10 screen prints on Somerset Tub-Sized Satin 410gsm paper, each 100 × 45·3 cm, edition of 50

Courtesy the artist and Alan Cristea Gallery
“Duchamp taught me never to accept received wisdom, including his own, at face value.”
Work... this is work. This is hard work. Talking about work is work. Thinking is work. Words are work. Words are things, shapes. It’s hard to compose them, to put them in any kind of order. Words don’t add up. Numbers add up! Things are everywhere. Everything is something, everything has something, but not everyone has someone. It’s hard to distinguish between things, to separate things. I’m in a soup of thoughts, feelings and things, and words. Actually, it’s more like a purée... or thick and stiff, like a paté. I’m in a paté and it’s hard to move. It needs a lot of work to get out of it — or to separate it and find something in it. Thoughts, thoughts, sometimes I want to stop them, but it’s hard to stop them. It’s work. Dealing with thoughts — that’s work.”
MARCEL DUCHAMP

ESQUIVONS LES ECCHYMOSES DES
ESQUIMAUX AUX MOTS EXQUIS
1968
record/sound recording, 17.5 × 17.5 cm

OBLIGATION MONTE CARLO / MONTE CARLO BOND
1938
colour lithograph, 23 × 32 cm
“Nothing is serious enough to take seriously.”
I never got my GSCE in Art - I guess I just didn’t get it.

I mean, if you screwed up ballons of paper? Lightbulbs going on and off? Vomit on the floor of a gallery? What did it all mean? I was about to find out. Martin Creed said that when he first saw me, he was “struck by capids arrow,” and I have to admit, I felt the same.

We met backstage at a music festival - he had won the Turner prize for a light bulb going on and off, and I was just a normal girl. Conceptual Artists totally confused me - Isn’t the Turner prize like X-factor for weirdos? I said to him when we first met. He giggled and I found him instantly attractive - THE LIGHTBULB WAS SWITCHED ON.

ANOTHER LEVEL
He called me up and we agreed to go for a coffee. I felt an instant powerful connection. He was so sensitive and kind - this guy understood me on many different levels. We soon became really good friends. We bought each other presents, went to push restaurants and he took me on strange and wonderful day-trips. When we were together we didn’t need to talk that much - we would just stare at each other and smile. Words couldn’t express what he meant to me.

At Christmas time, we eventually kissed. Wow! My whole head was spinning.

I was in love with the idea, not the real thing

He was building an installation in my heart, and there was no escaping it. Every moment we spent together was so precious. We spent hours drinking wine, laughing and watching films of some girl super in love, so I just nodded and smiled.

The more time I spent with Martin the more I understood his work - it was well deep. They say that Art has the power to transform everything - well it had certainly worked on me!

Martin totally got me into Artists like Duchamp. He put a toilet in a gallery and it was totally MEANINGLESS!!

I invited my friends from the Press Gang and Martin Creed to a PRADA party. PRADA MIND GAMES

After a little while, Martin started acting cold and distant. He stopped texting me and he demoted me to number 8 in his Myspace “Top friends’ list.”

The day I had dreaded came sooner than I imagined. I knew we couldn’t hide from the TRUTH forever. He looked at me and said: “Look, I don’t want to be in a relationship. I’m like a monk, I need to focus on my work.”

I was in a desperate situation. Life without him felt meaningless. Did I mean NOTHING to him? WHY WAS HE SWITCHING THE LIGHTBULB OFF???

A week later my friend called. She told me she had seen him drinking at a PRADA party. PRADA MONK!

I imagined him sipping champagne, surrounded by adoring Art fans all out of nothing and blowing things out of proportion. I cried everyday. I couldn’t sleep, and I stopped eating.

It took weeks for me to summon up the courage, but we had to talk. We finally agreed to meet up for a coffee. The tea was terrible, but the conversation was WORSE.

The private view into my heart was OVER.

SHATTERED DREAMS
I was shaking with fear: “Was this all POINTLESS to you Martin? Did I mean nothing to you??

Maybe I was reading in to something, that wasn’t actually there??

slagging me off: Our relationship was starting to make me feel like a screwed up ball of paper (see above).

I was a nervous wreck. My friends told me I was making a drama

I FELL IN LOVE WITH A CONCEPTUAL ARTIST

And it was totally MEANINGLESS!!

Creed means ‘belief’ - I guess I believed what I wanted to...

But Martin…

“Sorry Martin, stop explaining things!!! There’s nothing left to say…

This was no joke. I burst into tears and ran away. I felt like I was running barefoot and breathless through the conceptual art gallery of my mind.

LOOKING BACK
I tried to move on, but the pain was unbearable. After all, breaking up is hard to do. He quickly forgot me, made more art and found someone else - a posh psychotherapist that I read about in the paper.

It took a long time, but I never lost true faith. And slowly, things got better. I’ve been dating my new boy Darren for three months – he’s an electrician, and he specialises in light bulbs - so he’s well qualified to deal with my condition. Occasionally I think about Martin. I hope he’s happy. Perhaps I was in love with the idea; not the real thing.

So take my advice, stay true to yourself, and don’t fall in love with a...
Duchamp taught me how to lghf777lduihf, uhgdfigbfvf and fgy8sfjkk.

“Duchamp taught me how to lghf777lduihf, uhgdfigbfvf and fgy8sfjkk.”

MIRIAM ELIA

2011
film, 2 mins 32 seconds
directed and performed by Miriam Elia. written by Miriam Elia and Ezra Elia, filmed and edited by Bob Pipe

BRITAIN’S NEW UNDERCLASS
GALATEAN HERITAGE PERFORMING
A BACHELORETTE’S BIRTH

2007

installation (knitting machine, wool),
dimensions variable

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Hubert Winter
laser beam exposures on photographic paper, each 13 × 18 cm

2007

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Hubert Winter
CEAL FLOYER

GARBAGE BAG 1996

garbage bag, air and twist tie,
dimensions variable
dition of 5 + 2 AP

“It's the thought that counts.”

Courtesy the artist and Lisson Gallery
“I was never in his class (pun intended) but Duchamp taught me that ‘there is no solution because there is no problem’. Pretty liberating — no?

“Whilst Duchamp is called the grandfather of Conceptual Art (whatever that is) I am still the kid in kindergarten, playing and unlearning. I still don’t know how much I don’t know.

“Duchamp taught me a lot about myself. I do playful ridicule for fun and get a kick out of subverting everyday objects. If what I am saying is true... Satire, Ironic and Paradox are my middle names.

“Duchamp said: ‘It’s true of course humour is very important in my life...’ ‘Humour is very serious’. (I said that).

“Duchamp had his first one man show when he was 50 years old. I wonder if his mother thought that he was a late developer, just as my mother thought about me...”

NANCY FOUTS

CORNER PAINTING 2012
(Camille Pissarro)

acrylic and oil on canvas, framed, 52 × 72 cm each side

from a unique series of 3
THE BIRTH OF VENUS
(WITHOUT VENUS)
(Botticelli)
2012
acrylic and oil on canvas, framed
79 × 78 cm
from a unique series of 3

ADAM AND ADAM/
EVE AND EVE
(Lucas Cranach the Elder)
2013
acrylic and oil on canvas,
with hinged frame
69 × 62 cm
each from a unique series of 3

THE LACE MAKER
(Vermeer)
2012
acrylic and oil on canvas, framed
79 × 78 cm
from a unique series of 3

THE GUST
(Willem van de Velde
the Younger)
2012
acrylic and oil on canvas, wire, framed
82 × 72 cm
from a unique series of 3

“Oh, one more thing, why weren't they called ‘Alreadymade’?
“And another one more thing:
‘To play is to live’.
Thank you Mr Duchamp.”

NANCY FOUTS
“What did Duchamp teach me? That humour has a place in art. That accidents can be happy and that a good joke needn't be funny, that if you want to see something you shouldn't look straight at it. And that the artist is always right.”
PAUL FRYER

THE LAST MAN

Monotype specimen book, Indian ink, framed vitrine, veneered plinth, recording of the artist, period speaker, 180 × 61 × 46 cm
“I have forced myself to contradict myself in order to avoid conforming to my own taste.”
“You trickster, your traitor, liar and seer, you opened the doors, then ran away.

A game of chance, roulette I believe, you threw down the dice but the strings fell away.

My dear, my love, I love to hate, you abandoned those you love for those you hate.

You gave up chess, gave up art, but only the last earned your fate.

The great artist of tomorrow will go underground you warned.

Today is tomorrow and the virus is integrity mourned.”
“The initial impulse of taking Duchamp’s first ‘pure readymade’, the **BOTTLE RACK**, as the subject for a still life was one of irreverent homage, to see what would happen if the hand was put back into making art at the very point from which it had been removed. To make a Chardin of a Duchamp. Yet the process of making a painting directly from life, where previously only photographs such as Man Ray’s — among a host of other photographic documents — have been taken, prompted a flow of visual references from art history which seem to stain up through the whitewash of modernism. Foremost among those are associations of religious iconography such as the crucifixion of Grunewald, the crown of thorns of Guido Reni, or the sublime eroticism of Bernini’s **ECSTASY OF ST. THERESA**. In turn, this process is reminiscent of how memory functions in relation to a traumatic event or *caesura*; attempts to erase a mental image only go to fortifying its return, its shadowy, phantom-like re-appearance — analogous to how photography has assumed the mantle of reproduction, as purely evidential document.”

**COLIN GLEN**

**PARTIALLY REMADE READYMADE**

2014

oil on linen on aluminium, 97 × 82 × 10 cm
“To do what he did has nothing to do with art.”
HENRY HUDSON

Desire, Arousal, Lubrication, Orgasm, Satisfaction

2014
Varnished plasticene
On MDF board,
37 x 47 cm
Eroticism was fundamental to Marcel Duchamp’s artistic production, but not the kind of blatant sexual iconography that makes its way into much contemporary art. Duchamp’s innuendos are instead clinical mechanisations that revolve around the anatomy of desire, taking the sex to it’s absurd mathematical conclusion. Humanity is stripped away to reveal a bare automaton.

“**A BRIDE STRIPPED BARE OF HER BACHELORS, EVEN** is the most famous demonstration of Duchamp’s fascination. The bride is basically a motor, an internal combustion engine whose gasoline is ignited by the bachelors, setting off a chain of mechanico-erotic processes that are impossible to logically analyse. Duchamp is always ahead in the game he plays with his audience, masquerading absurdity with logic and vice versa.

“His famous urinal, **FOUNTAIN**, has been interpreted by many as a female symbol. A urinal is by definition a receptacle; however Duchamp’s rotated version becomes a receptacle for the male in a sexual way. It is a man-made female object for exclusive male functions.

“**DESIRE, AROUSAL, LUBRICATION, ORGASM, SATISFACTION** is an image of one of the four recently lab-grown and successfully implanted vaginas. In its own way, the man-made vagina, can be seen as a readymade — disembodied and devoid of human connotations, yet saturated with potential functionality. The readymades are just that for art — detached mechanisms divorced from the art context in which they are placed as well as their underlying functionality.

“The lab-grown vagina also embodies the sterilisation and mechanisation of sex, where science meets the primal human instinct for intimacy and reproduction. When implanted, the vagina takes on the life of the human, but in the petri dish it is a sterile mechanism, strange absurd and alien. In the painting this abstraction is taken further still and we are reminded of that famous quote by Duchamp himself: ‘Art should grasp the mind the way the vagina grasps the penis’. \(^{1}\)

\(^{1}\) Henry Hudson
‘C’est le regardeur qui fait l’image’.

“Duchamp’s choice of the active regardeur rather than the passive voyeur or analytical observateur is a vital influence in my work: the sheer physics of light means that glass, quite literally, reflects the viewer and the context in which it is placed. Each piece aims to invite the viewer to look again, to construct their own image.

“His playful and inventive search to find expression for this underlying principle of relativity with its profound implications for classical perspective has informed the work produced for this show: the framed STAIRCASE series is inspired by the seminal painting NUDE DESCENDING A STAIRCASE, while the hot glass installations reference Duchamp’s keen interest in the new concept of a fourth dimension pioneered by the controversial mathematicians Charles Hinton and Claude Bragdon.”
As an artist whose practice frequently examines the role of portraiture today, I am particularly drawn to Duchamp’s self-portraits where he uses images of others to portray himself and those where he disguises himself as someone else. I have also used images of unidentified people and given them new identities to create ‘portraits’. For example, the majority of my paintings of dictators as children (the series **BOYS**) were not made using real photos of the tyrants as boys.

What is interesting is portraiture’s long association with truth. Such is the belief in the portrait before them, that people cannot imagine that it does not convey a real physical likeness. Where once the authority of portraiture was used to give a person stature, modern interpretations of the genre help reveal an identity that a person may choose to hide. Duchamp used Rrose Sélavy to ridicule celebrity figures like Coco Chanel who used advertising to rebrand themselves. I myself have painted Coco Chanel as a Nazi collaborator, revealing unpleasant aspects of her character in a time when women flock to associate themselves with the artificial persona of Coco Chanel the brand...

**ANNIE KEVANS**

**ANDY WARHOL IN DRAG**

2014

oil on wood panel, 50 × 40 cm
Whilst I use ‘portraits’ to create new truths, Duchamp created obscure self-portraits to cultivate an air of mystery. He presented portraits of others to represent him and had himself photographed as a woman: his alter ego, Rrose Sélavy. Andy Warhol was also known for such tactics, frequently photographing himself as a woman and adopting the persona of the mysterious female pop artist, Marisol, whom he studied closely.

“I have used a photograph of Warhol in drag as the basis for two portraits depicting both Warhol and Duchamp in similar poses.”

**ANNIE KEVANS**

**MARCEL DUCHAMP AS RROSE SÉLAVY**

**2014**

oil on wood panel, 50 × 40 cm
IDRIS KHAN

NUDE DESCENDING STAIRCASE

2014 | digital c print on aluminium, 177 × 240 cm, edition of 7

Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro
“I learned a lot from Duchamp. At the very beginning of my practice as an artist I had a very practical insight. This was that the ‘unassisted readymades’ constituted a major ontological shift in how we understood art. To me it was clear that what was usable from Modernism was to be found in this work; that if we understood that art must become a question of why, not how, it would be this work — quite separated and isolated from the Dadaist legacy — that could show us the way.

“I wrote about this at the time and my use of objects, installations, photography (as a device not a craft) and such, beginning in 1965, which became a source for many and initiated a shift in making art over the years as well as a staple of my own practice, owed much to this work of Duchamp.

“Such work, identified as appropriation and post-modernism already some years ago now, freed us from an idea of art which was concerned with a Kantian quest for the limits of traditional media (painting, sculpture, lithography et al.) Instead, rather than being about the limits of the media our concern as artists were to face those ontological questions of why, which not only became a reflection on that inherited cultural horizon which forms all of our consciousness, but underscored that, in fact, art has always been about the production of meaning. It made clear, contrary to the presumptions of late modernism, that if art was going to be more than a necktie over the couch with its meaning provided by the market, then artists had to fight for what art could be and not let it be defined by others not artists, and for other reasons.”
“I have forced myself to contradict myself in order to avoid conforming to my own taste.”
It's difficult to imagine contemporary art if there hadn't been Marcel Duchamp. He enabled me to make art that begins as an idea, letting the non-retinal to enter into the work process and its reading. His 'serious' playfulness enabled the imprinting of the instantaneous and elusive, a play between thoughts, the senses, chance and the occult.

“I remember well my first viewing of **THE LARGE GLASS** in Philadelphia. I was transfixed by the glass itself. Cracked within, it had a remarkable presence as material before I began to engage with a reading of mysterious unseen forces within.

“The subtitle **DELAY IN GLASS** lives with me in my use of glass and my interest in its play between translucency and transparency, its viscosity, its being between a solid and fluid that suspends its own mineral lineage as well as whatever layered upon it.

“My studio is a laboratory where I can experiment and create actions of transformation and a play between science and art to enable creative occurrences, somewhere between intuition and cognition.”

**MINING RESIDUE**

2014
mixed media, 36 × 37 × 34 cm
“Duchamp showed us art can be expressed in unlimited forms, an idea or concept that we engage with on our own terms and that ultimately art is in the eye of the beholder.

“The chess move is a metaphor for the decisions we make and the infinite potentiality of outcomes in this holographic reality.”
“ÉTANT DONNÉS was revealed only after Duchamp’s death. He had worked on it secretly between 1946 to 1966. I find it interesting to consider why he may have done this. It relates to many of Duchamp’s previous works in terms of its fetishistic qualities and its use of found materials.

“The difference for me is that the hand of the artist is more insistently present — as though Duchamp wished to leave a final conundrum and frustration for his artist followers and critics, refusing to be pigeon-holed. The object of desire (the ‘approximation’ of the female form) is non-realistic and unattainable, just like the landscape that Duchamp renders, based on holiday snaps he had taken combined with oil painting. Both are tantalisingly familiar but out of reach— alluring, artificial, preserved and encapsulated.”

JULIETTE LOSQ

PLAN FOR COMPOSITE DRAWING
“EN SOUS-MAIN”

2014

ink and watercolour on paper with collaged photograph, 100 × 65 cm
“Duchamp didn’t just move the goalposts, he obliterated the pitch and paved the way for others to do exactly the same thing. We’re still arguing today about ‘what is Art?’ because of Duchamp. You wouldn’t get Warhol or Emin or Turk or Hirst without him. He turned everybody into an artist. He paved the way for conceptual art, he put painting in its place. His work with ‘readymades’ influenced so many artists including me. Still a powerful force today, he pushed us to re-examine our aesthetics, our snobberies regarding art and he made it important and not just decorative.”
ALASTAIR MACKIE

HOUSE

2008

wasp nests, steel and glass base
245 × 125 × 100 cm
series of two
“Marcel Duchamp taught me that the subjects of my work are imbued in the things and the land that surround me, and that the more time I spend, but the less I do with these things, the better.”
“When I was a student I was into — you know — writing on paintings. Actually I still am, even if they’re not mine. I guess Duchamp’s defacement of the Mona Lisa L.H.O.O.Q — she’s got a hot ass or something — taught me that that was like... OK... Cool. Y’know.”
“Duchamp gave us license to hang/display what we like, to collaborate with the world and its many wonders, to give art works tantalising titles that may or not be a window into the understanding of the object in front of us.”
“An American Art dealer once recounted a story of when Marcel Duchamp came to visit a mutual friend’s house in the South of France where he was a guest that summer. He opened the door to greet Duchamp who was standing on the doorstep without a suitcase but wearing a rather large grey suit — something that seems far too hot for the climate. Marcel Duchamp proceeded to step out of the suit to reveal an exact copy underneath, which he then stepped out of to reveal another. He was also wearing three identical shirts and matching sets of underwear.”

SUE WEBSTER

“It’s not what he did, its what he chose to leave out.”

TIM NOBLE
NON ZERO ONE

SOMETHING YOU’VE ALREADY SEEN

2014

interactive performance installation
(audio in headphones)

An audio journey that explores our relationship to viewing and being viewed in the private space and the public space.

Because you are now The One That Has Gone Before who might or might not have been here when you were over there looking over here...

“Some things are indescribable, so don't describe them. Your experience is yours. Be interested, not interesting. We can never predict the results of chance and choice. It is what it is.”
“Easy on the eye is too lazy, doing what I know is too easy, seeing without thinking is irresponsible, looking without laughing is missing — something. The mind is more important than the eye, the rules are there to be broken, there is always another perspective — surprise. Strange tricks of the light, leaps of logic and flipped horizons which tease and challenge. Serious imagination which never takes itself seriously. Nothing is just what it seems — or does only what it seems to do or was designed to do or doesn't or wasn't. There is always a new way. Different is brave.”
ANGELA PALMER  SILVER CANTEEN, EVEN  2013

silver goat spine, Muira Piranga wood box, 45 × 45 × 12 cm
“I have had an absolutely wonderful life, an intensive lust for life... I had luck, fantastic luck! Not a day without eating, and I have never been rich either. Everything turned out well.”
“Duchamp taught me not to give too much credence to the status quo and make art on your own terms.”

CORNELIA PARKER
We all stand on the shoulders of giants but Duchamp’s shoulders seem that bit wider, his reach that bit broader. From him and his followers, I have learnt — among other things — about the beauty of ideas, the validity of play, when to mess with things and when to leave them alone and how elegant bicycle wheels are.
It's all one thing in the end — giving restlessness a material form.

gold tone/gelatin silver print, 18 × 22 cm, printing date unknown, photographer’s “8 Rue Du Val-de Grace, Paris” stamp, and Andre Chenue & Fils label on print verso
ALEXANDER SETON
GLORY HOLE 2013

Wombeyan marble, drilling core and dust, hardwood, 110 × 120 × 50 cm
ALEXANDER SETON

“Careful observation of material can be the best vehicle for irreverent story telling.”
CONRAD SHAWCROSS

MEASUREMENT AND CONTROL FOR THE INFINITE

2002

ply, oak, mirror, leather, 150 x 30 x 30 cm

“What Marcel Duchamp taught me: the suspension of disbelief.”

Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro, London
THE CELESTIAL METERS

2009

stainless steel, plywood, dimensions variable

CONRAD SHAWCROSS

Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro, London
CONRAD SHAWCROSS

SEVEN DAYS

2013 silver, oak box, pencil on paper,
21.1 × 131.5 × 7.5 cm

Courtesy the artist and Louisa Guinness Gallery
“The real point of the readymades was to deny the possibility of defining art.”
I went to a talk by Bruce McLean when I was at art school. Bruce said: ‘All the best artists piss about. Duchamp was brilliant at pissing about’.

I wondered whether this was a reference to Duchamp’s urinal, but it seemed to resonate with me nonetheless. Duchamp’s pissing about begat Bruce McLean’s pissing about which has now begat me pissing about.”
GERALDINE SWAYNE

NIGHT VISION 2013

12.5 x 7.5 cm
enamel on aluminium
“Dear MD,
You showed me how to take it seriously, even when it’s funny, and, in the process, however weird, that there is no ‘should’.”
“Destruction is also creation. 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.”
“He taught me that it's possible — Duchamp is a floating signifier; he personifies the poet-philosopher converting stories and accidents into cerebral prompts; he confuses, confounds and opens doors to ways of esoteric thinking and long-term musing…”

GAVIN TURK

ROTOR RINGS
2012
mixed media, 275 × 400 × 100 cm

Courtesy the artist and Ben Brown Fine Arts Photograph by Andy Keate
WHAT DUCHAMP (TRIED) TO TEACH ME...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LESSON / LECTURE</th>
<th>SUBJ.</th>
<th>TUTOR</th>
<th>P/F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. EQUATION OF LANGUAGES</td>
<td>THEORY</td>
<td>M.D</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. COMEDY, ABSURDITY AND HUMOUR</td>
<td>LIT.</td>
<td>M.D</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. CHANCE AND PROBABILITY</td>
<td>MATH.</td>
<td>M.D</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. PAINTING</td>
<td>ART.</td>
<td>M.D</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. PIPES AND CONVERSATIONAL PROPS</td>
<td>DRAMA.</td>
<td>M.D</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. AESTHETICS AND GEOMETRY</td>
<td>MATH.</td>
<td>M.D</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. EROTIC METAPHYSICS</td>
<td>PHIL.</td>
<td>M.D</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. DETACHMENT</td>
<td>PRACT.</td>
<td>M.D</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. PROBLEM SOLVING AS AN ART</td>
<td>THEORY</td>
<td>M.D</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
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<td>10. CHESS - MIDDLEGAME</td>
<td>SOC.</td>
<td>M.D</td>
<td>P</td>
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<td>11. ECONOMICS OF PATRONAGE</td>
<td>HIST.</td>
<td>M.D</td>
<td>P</td>
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<td>12. PATIENCE</td>
<td>PRACT.</td>
<td>M.D</td>
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EXTRA LECTURE ON WEDNESDAY EVENING...
"HANGING WITH PICABIA..." IN THE MAIN HALL FROM 7PM.
DRINKS TO FOLLOW.

KEITH TYSON
FOUND PAINTING
2013
"In the 20th Century, while most artists were using portraits merely as a vehicle for showcasing their own stylistic innovation, Duchamp seemed to be exploring the genre itself, often using his own image as a subject to make a point. By using portraits as a starting point, often as a proxy for identity, the narrative widened far beyond the immediate subject of the work. The idea of retaining the formal characteristics of the genre, while using it to highlight conceptual ideas, has always seemed to me the way portraiture is most likely to evolve in the future."

SELF PORTRAIT
2014
oil on canvas, 115 × 145 × 10 cm (framed)
“Death is an indispensable attribute of a great artist. His voice, his appearance, his personality – in short, his whole aura – intrudes such that his pictures are overshadowed. Not until all these factors have been silenced, can his work be known for its own greatness.”
“One hundred years ago Duchamp created the ready-made by appropriating a pre-existing object and declaring it art. Whether consciously or not, artists of all ages are still feeling the aftershocks of Duchamp’s radical and inventive approach to making and defining art. He exercised freedom of such gigantic proportions that I cannot imagine how difficult it was for the artists selected for this show to respond. They have been brave and generous in collectively celebrating the legacy of an artistic giant. I am very grateful that you have given time and energy for this exhibition. Thanks also to all the galleries for their support and to the glorious team at FAS who helped pull together an exhibition of unprecedented proportions.”

KATE BRYAN
Director, The Fine Art Society Contemporary