SUZANNE DUCHAMP

ART REFLECTING ON A MODERN LIFE

By Emma Anquinet

Suzanne Duchamp (1889–1963), like three of her brothers, took an active role as an avant-garde artist. Throughout a career spanning five decades she expressed her personal concerns by incorporating elements of various contemporary art styles in her work. Like many artists of her generation in France, the First World War (1914–18) had a major impact on her life and work (Fig. 1).

The fourth of six children, Suzanne was one of the four artists in the family Duchamp-Nicolle. Her three older brothers were Jacques Villon (1875–1963), Raymond Duchamp-Villon (1876–1918) and Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968). Marcel and Suzanne, who were closest in age and temperament, maintained a close lifetime bond.

Beginning her education as a painter in 1905 at the École des Beaux-Arts in Rouen, near the family's home, Duchamp was introduced to contemporary avant-garde artists and movements through her brothers as well as through membership in artists' groups, including the Société Normande de Peinture Moderne and the Section d'Or. The Société Normande merged with offshoots of the Cubist movement to become the Section d'Or, whose first exhibition, in 1912 at the Galérie La Boétie in Paris, was promoted by Duchamp's three brothers. Suzanne's style was influenced by Cubism as well as by Fauvism and Post-impressionism,[1] as seen in *Jeune fille au chien/Magdeleine* (Young Woman with Dog/ Magdeleine, 1912; Fig. 2), one of two paintings she showed in the Section d'Or exhibition—though neither her name nor her paintings were listed in the exhibition catalogue. Other artists exhibiting at this event included Alexander Archipenko, Fernand Léger, Albert Gleizes, and Marie Laurencin (1883–1956), with whom she would exhibit regularly in the future.[2] Also in 1912, Suzanne Duchamp had her first exhibition at the Salon des Indépendants in Paris, again showing *Jeune fille au chien/Magdeleine* and *Intimité* (1911).

In 1911, Suzanne had married Charles Victor René Demares, a pharmacist in Rouen, and started working at his pharmacy. Although he was not present at the marriage, Marcel gave his sister his painting *Jeune Homme et Jeune Fille dans le Printemps* (Young Man and Young Girl in Spring, 1911) as a wedding gift. The numerous readings of the painting caused a lot of consternation among art historians: the Italian scholar Arturo Schwarz, for example, interpreted this wedding present, based on extensive readings of, among others, Freud and Jung, as an indication of Marcel's unconscious, incestuous affection for his younger sister.[3] On the other hand, the American scholar Francis M. Naumann has argued that, rather than seeing Suzanne's marriage as a betrayal, Marcel celebrated it in the painting, placing his sister and future brother-in-law in the positions of Adam and Eve, the world's first lovers, in the Garden of Eden.[4]

Fig. 1. Suzanne Duchamp working as a nurse during the First World War (1914-15), Hôtel des Invalides, Paris.

Nevertheless, the marriage was short-lived, and in 1914, as war broke out, Duchamp divorced her husband and moved to Paris, staying at Marcel's apartment in rue la Condamine. (Marcel was discharged from military service for medical reasons and moved to New York in June 1915.[5]) By August of 1914, the face of Paris—known for its modern, metropolitan identity—had changed: there was less social and public activity as traffic was restricted and civilians were fleeing abroad out of fear of the German occupiers. With lights turned off or blacked out to avoid aerial bombardments, the "city of

light" was turned into a city of darkness. As some 880,000 Parisian men were mobilized and sent to war, public life became more feminized: women replaced men in factories and public workplaces, and many young women, including Duchamp, volunteered in military hospitals all over Europe. Suzanne Duchamp remained in Paris, serving at the Hôtel des Invalides, one of the largest French military hospitals. Her experience at her former husband's pharmacy, especially her knowledge of the composition of medications, proved advantageous in her work. Yet nothing could have prepared her for the calamities and horrors of the War with which she would have to cope. Nurses were often the first persons to have contact with the soldiers coming in from the front, covered in mud and blood, many severely wounded, both physically—paralysis, amputated limps, facial disfigurement,) and mentally—shell shock, hysteria, delirium, and more.[6]

Duchamp's elder brother Raymond died during the War from an infection of typhus. As a young man, in 1898, suffering from rheumatism, Raymond Duchamp-Villon had abandoned his medical studies, and during his recovery he began sculpting small figurines, discovering his vocation as an artist, which he would pursue successfully in the following years. When the War broke out, he was working on what would be one of his masterpieces, *Le Cheval*, for the Salon d'Automne in Paris. Despite his fragile health, Raymond volunteered as a doctor's assistant, and in late November 1916, he became infected with typhus while caring for sick patients at a station at the front in Champagne. He died two years later, in October 1918, at a military hospital in Cannes and was buried in the family tomb in Rouen.[7]

Besides her work at the military hospital, Suzanne Duchamp continued making art, building her reputation in the Parisian quarter of Montparnasse. She kept close contact with Marcel, who informed her on the most recent developments in the New York art world. In 1916, she met the Swiss painter Jean Crotti (1878–1958), who shared a studio with Marcel in the Lincoln Arcade Building in New York. There was an instant *coup de foudre* between Suzanne and Crotti, who carried letters back and forth between the brother and sister. Crotti's close connection with Marcel Duchamp is reflected in the Dada wire portrait with glass eyes he made of Marcel in 1915 (Fig. 3). Crotti divorced his wife, Yvonne Chastel, and after the War, he and Suzanne were married, on April 14, 1919.

It was soon after that Suzanne Duchamp became involved in Dada, making the works for which she is best known. Although Paris was a center for avant-garde art and artists before the War, the Dada movement came late to that city. Dada originated around 1916 in Zurich, Switzerland—a neutral country during the First World War that had become a refuge for many modern artists—by a group of anti-war artists, including Hugo Ball, one of the owners of the Cabaret Voltaire, Emmy Hennings (1885–1948), one of its stars,[8] Tristan Tzara, Hans Arp, and the German pacifist poet Richard Huelsenbeck. The movement was propagated later on in other cities, in Berlin around 1918 and not until 1920 in Paris.

"Dada" was intended as a repudiation of the traditional world of reason and logic underlying the atrocities of the War.

Fig. 2. Suzanne Duchamp, *Jeune fille au chien / Magdeleine* (1912), oil on canvas, 36 1/4" x 28 3/4". Centre national d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou, Paris. © Suzanne Duchamp/ADAGP, Paris/ARS, New York 2017.

The Dada movement defined itself as an amoral, anti-dogmatic art movement and life form, which radically contrasted with the past—in the words of Francis Picabia: "our brain should be nothing but a blackboard."[9] Dada-artists questioned traditional notions of beauty and conformism in the art world by using provocation and humor. On the other hand, they provided art with a broader, social role as an attempt to subvert various contemporary institutions, such as industrialism, the bourgeoisie, and the official politics of the academies.

Since 1915 in New York, Marcel Duchamp, Picabia, Man Ray (Emmanuel Radnitzky) and Crotti were drastically transforming the art world with their Dadaistic ideas. Marcel shocked his contemporaries with the development of his ready-mades. He proposed that the modern artist should rediscover the importance of the concept—the mental activity of the artistic creation—rather than exclusively focusing on the physical object. According to Marcel Duchamp, the artwork only exists in relation to the outside world, to the spectator and the context in which the work is perceived.[10] By introducing his ready-mades, he questioned the absurdity of the functioning of a museum and its traditional interest in the physical object and its beauty. The artistic act is not producing the object, but choosing an object from the daily, industrial context of modern

Fig. 3. Jean Crotti, *Portrait de Marcel Duchamp* (Sculpture made to measure) (1915), lead, wire and glass, original work lost.

life and then isolating it in an artistic context that causes the object to be transformed into a piece of art whose concept is more important than its physical form.[11]

Suzanne Duchamp was acquainted with this concept early, since Marcel kept her informed about his vision and the development of his ready-mades in their regular correspondence. In mid-January 1916 he wrote asking her to preserve the bicycle wheel and bottle rack that he had left behind in his studio on rue la Condamine. He would use these items as "ready mades" and explained his artistic process to Suzanne—that he would sign these objects and give them an English inscription, thereby changing an everyday artifact into a work of art. More specifically, he proposed that Suzanne make a ready-made "from a distance" and he gave her the instructions to compose a phrase and write it at the base on the inside of the bottom ring of the bottle rack. Afterwards, she was to sign it with the inscription "[after] Marcel Duchamp." Marcel gave his sister several examples of this new art form and told her that she shouldn't understand his inscriptions in a "Romantic, Impressionist or Cubist sense."[12] Unfortunately, Suzanne was cleaning out Marcel's apartment and settling his affairs in Paris at that time, and before the letter arrived she had already thrown away these objects. The following year, on the day after the opening of the exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists in New York (in April 1917), Marcel wrote to his sister about the rejection of a revolutionary artwork, *Fountain* (1917), a urinal, which a female friend of his had entered in the exhibition under the pseudonym 'Richard Mutt.' He did not reveal his authorship of this work even to his sister at that time.[13]

Dada was introduced in Paris early in 1920—on the 23rd of January 1920, to be exact, at the Vendredi de Littérature—by, among others, Tzara, Picabia, and Jean Cocteau, inspiring Paris to expand as a center of Dadaistic absurdity, spectacle, and provocation. Suzanne Duchamp became one of the prominent members of this Parisian Dada movement. She signed Picabia's *Manifeste du Mouvement Dada* (1920) and was actively involved in many events. In the Dada exhibition and soirée at the Salon des Indépendants at the Grand Palais in February 1920, she exhibited the 'mechano-dada' assemblages *Un et une menacés* (One and one menaced, 1916; Pl. 6) and *Radiation de deux seuls éloignés* (Radiation between two separated, 1916–20) as well as the painting *Multiplication brisée et rétablie* (Broken and Restored Multiplication, 1918–19; Pl. 7).

In April 1921, Duchamp and Crotti organized a retrospective exhibition of their Dada work at the Galerie Montaigne in Paris. The Dadaistic nature of this exhibition is illustrated by the invitation: *"Pour comprendre l'incompris: soir et matin, marcher 30 minutes sur la tête. Aller vêtu seulement de quelques toutes petites roses: 2 devant et 1 derrière"* (To understand the misunderstood: evening and morning, walk 30 minutes on your head. Go dressed only in a few tiny roses: 2 in front and 1 behind).[14] The same location was used for the Salon Dada in June 1921, one of the most important Dada events in Paris (although Duchamp and Crotti did not participate). That year, Suzanne became a member of the Salon d'Automne, where she exhibited *Chef d'Oeuvre: accordéon* (Masterpiece: accordion, 1921; Fig. 4), assembling oil paint with gouache and tinfoil. The Salon d'Automne, founded in 1903 by Henri Matisse, André Derain, and others, like the earlier Salon des Indépendants, was formed in reaction to the conservative politics of the official salons. The goal was to exhibit progressive (originally fauvist) art, and with no jury these exhibitions were more accessible to artists. The Salon d'Automne did not, however, show much interest in mechanomorphism, and an article in *Comoedia* notes that the mechanomorphic works of Suzanne Duchamp, Jean Crotti and Francis Picabia were hidden in a corner, so that the public would not notice them.[15]

Although, as far as is known, Duchamp gave no explanations about her Dada work, it reflects her ambiguous postwar attitude towards modern industry and its developments. She identified herself as a modern woman, fascinated by contemporary ideas and innovations. She liked, for example, going to the cinema and making automobile trips along the Côte d'Azur with Crotti and their friends, Picabia and Germaine Everling. A fascination with technology in her imagery incorporates elements of mechanomorphism, as developed by Picabia. This art style provided a metaphor for the optimistic belief in modern industrial developments and human behavior in the 'machine age' as representing and/or

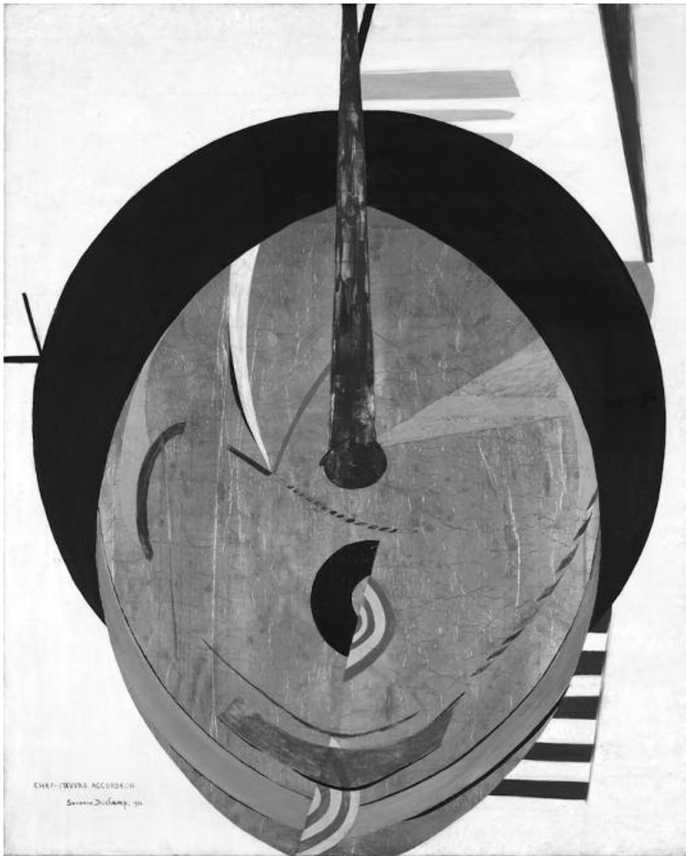


Fig. 4. Suzanne Duchamp, *Chef d'Oeuvre: accordéon* (1921), oil, gouache and tin foil on canvas, 39 5/16" x 31 7/8". © Suzanne Duchamp. Yale Univ. Art Gallery.

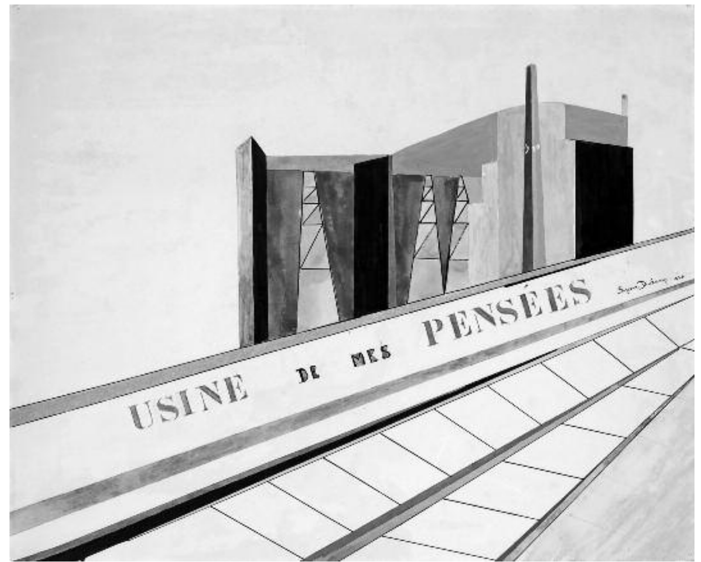


Fig. 5. Suzanne Duchamp, *Usine de mes pensées* (1920), watercolor, gouache and ink on paper, 17 3/4" x 21 1/4". Private Collection. © Suzanne Duchamp/ADAGP, Paris/ARS, New York 2017.

represented by (dysfunctional) mechanical objects. This new idiom flourished in the Dada movement, influenced by the theory of Paul B. Haviland about the new age in which men created the industrial machine and then tried to overcome its superiority by making human life itself mechanomorphic.[16]

Another important influence was the New York Armory Show of 1913, in which Marcel had debuted *Nude Descending a Staircase* (1912). Also that year he created *Bicycle Wheel on a Stool*, a kinetic work reflecting on modern 'machine esthetics.' Picabia was convinced that industry was the genius of the modern age and that a painting was the way to express modern life correctly because it communicates universal, metaphysical ideas by representing a particular reality. By integrating the machine in artistic imagery, Picabia would thus be able to provide the most suitable expression of his reality.[17]

Suzanne Duchamp was one of the first women artists in Paris to use machine-esthetics, incorporating numbers and geometrical figures, cryptic titles, and ready-made objects such as metal gears, string, and a plumb bob in her 'mechano-dada' assemblages, *Un et une menacés*, *Fabrique de joie* (Joy factory, 1920) and *Usine de mes pensées* (Factory of my thoughts, 1920; Fig. 5).[18] Her brothers were a primary influence: Raymond Duchamp-Villon had experimented with functional and visual relationships between animals and machines in his sculptures; Jacques Villon used reproductions of machines from journals and newspapers in his collages; and Marcel Duchamp was becoming an icon with his introduction of ready-mades. Eventually, she did collaborate in one of his ready-made projects: as a wedding gift, Marcel sent Suzanne and Crotti instructions for its creation. Suzanne was to hang a schoolbook on geometry on the balcony of her apartment, extracting the object from its conventional habitat and transforming it into a physical manifestation of the changing "irrational" weather conditions. She was to record the results of this process by a photograph and a painting. Titled *Le Ready-Made Malheureux de Marcel* (The Unhappy Ready-Made of Marcel, 1920; Fig. 6) she turned the photograph—and with it the rational laws of physics and traditional representation—upside down.[19]

Although fascinated by new technologies, Suzanne Duchamp was also skeptical and cautious about the consequences of these developments, partially as a result of the deep impressions left by the War and her experiences as a nurse. The disharmonic, bright-colored elements of *Multiplication brisée et rétablie* (Pl. 7) refer to the great disruptions that affected every aspect of life. A catalogue text from a 2015 exhibition titled "Shatter/Rupture/Break" at the Art Institute of Chicago, which owns the work, focuses on the words as well as the images.

> Indeed, many works suggest the fracturing of language along with pictorial conventions, as words and images no longer seemed to have stable meanings. Suzanne Duchamp's *Broken and Restored Multiplication* epitomizes this sense of linguistic rupture and disorder. Around a central image of the Eiffel Tour turned upside-down, the artist inscribed phrases redolent of the fracturing of modern society: "The mirror would shatter, the scaffolding would totter, the balloons would fly away, the stars would dim, etc…"[20]

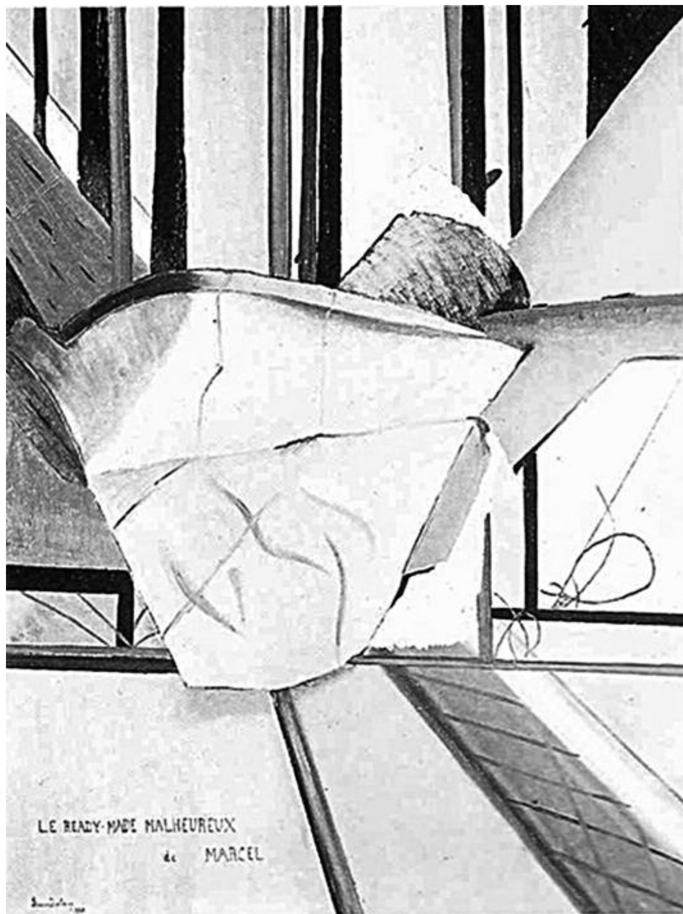


Fig. 6. Suzanne Duchamp, *Le Ready-Made Malheureux de Marcel* (1920), oil on canvas, 31 7⁄8" x 23 3⁄8". Private Collection. © Suzanne Duchamp/ADAGP, Paris/ARS, New York 2017.

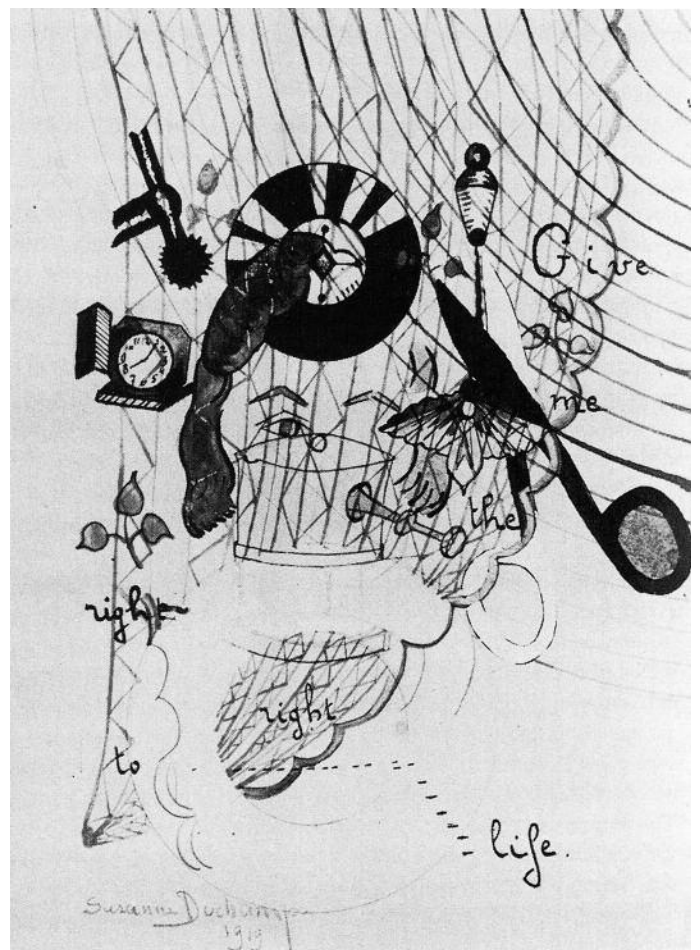


Fig. 7. Suzanne Duchamp, *Give me the right Right to life* (1919), watercolor, ink and pencil on paper, 9 3⁄8" x 7 1⁄8". Private Collection. © Suzanne Duchamp/ADAGP, Paris/ARS, New York 2017.

It is clearly an expression of the artist's personal experience of the chaotic atmosphere in Paris at the end of the War. In many ways, Duchamp's own world had "broken": the divorce from her first husband, the death of her brother Raymond, and the calamities she witnessed at the military hospital. However, the end of the War also brought a restoration in her social and artistic activities in Paris—the very center of modern life.[21]

Through many self-portraits she made throughout her life, Duchamp expressed her position as a modern artist. In *Give me the right Right to life* (1919; Fig. 7), for example, the head of the artist appears captured by a chaotic net of objects that refer to the dichotomy between the human body and nature (clothing, twigs, a moth), and industry and war (lantern, clock, machine gun). Here she encapsulates the dangerous effects of the latter on the former, drawn from her own experiences as a modern woman and an artist.[22] The cryptic title of this watercolor can also be linked to the contemporary debate on the social status of women and indicates a claim for women's rights. *Portrait de l'artiste* (1919) has similar imagery, with one eye visible and the same short hairstyle. Duchamp does not state that she takes or has this right, but that she wants to receive it ("give me"). Implicitly, the artist thus evokes an unequal (power) relationship, in which the woman takes an inferior, dependent role. This struggle was ongoing, as despite the many suffragette actions and feminist movements, French women did not get the 'right to life'—the right to vote—until 1944, toward the end of World War II.

These reflections on the consequences of modern technology and on women's status are important themes in Duchamp's work during the interbellum period. Throughout her oeuvre she incorporated various elements of contemporary art styles to convey her personal opinions and concerns on these subjects. After rejecting Dada, in 1921 Duchamp and Crotti created their own movement, "Tabu Dada."[23] As explained by them, Tabu Dada was a philosophical, amoral "religion" that communicated the mystery, "the unknowable and invisible" of the cosmos and of life, by using personalized, spiritual symbolism, giving meaning to life in contrast to the nihilistic "anti-attitude" of the Dada movement. Duchamp was convinced that the human spirit was capable of almost everything, and that art was the most suitable instrument to obtain absolute freedom of inspiration and of the mind.[24]

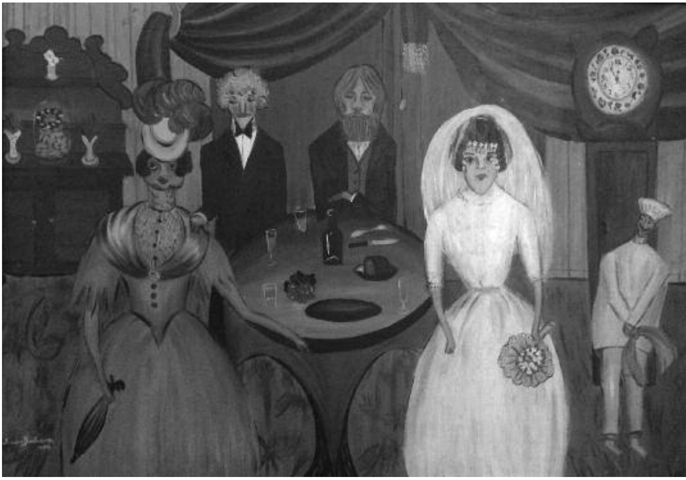


Fig. 8. Suzanne Duchamp, *La Noce* (1924), oil on canvas, 26" x 36 1⁄4". © Suzanne Duchamp/ADAGP, Paris/ARS, New York 2017.

ARieTte d'oubli de la chapelle étourdie (ARieTte of Oblivion in the thoughtless chapel, 1920; Pl. 8) exemplifies Suzanne Duchamp's Tabu Dada imagery. This complex assemblage combines cosmic elements with measurement instruments as a reference to industrial precision. In the center is a wood/multimedia profile portrait of Crotti with a glass eye—a ready-made element that refers to his 1915 wire portrait of Marcel Duchamp. With its symmetrical composition, complex symbolism, and enigmatic title, *ARieTte d'oubli de la chapelle étourdie* can be interpreted in different ways. The title itself is ambiguous. While the art historian William Camfield has pointed out that the capital letters in the title form the word "ART,"[25] Ruth Hemus explains that "ariette" is the French word for a short aria. She interprets the work as a visualization of a short music piece, where the different fonts of the letters could indicate how the words should be pronounced in a musical way.[26] This conforms with a typical Dadaistic feature: the rejection of traditional boundaries between visual arts, poetry, and music.[27] Either interpretation suggests that Duchamp used her art—whether or not specifically music—as an instrument to escape what Camfield calls the "dazzling chapel" of life, including social institutions like the church, science, and the state.[28] If the "chapelle" in the title refers to a connection between art and religion, "étourdie" alludes to the irrational aspects of both art and religion. For Duchamp, this possibly illustrates her notion of the mystical nature of artistic creation as an intellectual process to achieve a higher notion of truth and to liberate the inspiration of the cosmic soul that is menaced by the rational logic of modern science and industry.

As the 1920s progressed, Suzanne Duchamp's idiom became more figurative, characterized by an interest in what was being popularized as "primitivism." This "return to order" following the War can also be seen in the work of other modern artists like Léger and Derain, and in the neoclassicist paintings of Pablo Picasso.[29] Characterized by a fluent, graphic line, bright colors, and a seemingly unskillful use of perspective and spatial proportions, Duchamp's naïve style artworks may reflect her personal vision on daily life and social norms in a subtle way and are comparable with the work of her contemporary, Marie Laurencin, an artist she knew very well. The somber facial expressions and the gloomy colors in Duchamp's *La Noce* (The Wedding Night, 1924; Fig. 8) suggest an uncanny atmosphere. The subject appears more like a funeral than a marriage (*noce*) of two lovers. The women in front look straight at the spectator, while the men at the back—complacent or unhappy—look down at their feet. The only cheerful character is the cook in the background. This image causes a tension between the tragic and the comic in the painting, which is also visible in her portrait painting *Les petites Tarentin* (ca. 1923; Fig. 9).[30] Here again the artist suggests a cheerless atmosphere by depicting sad children under a pitiful tree.[31] By absenting 'the smile' in these paintings, Duchamp highlights in a satirical way the absurdity of the traditional codes in the art world (the portrait) and in society (marriage).

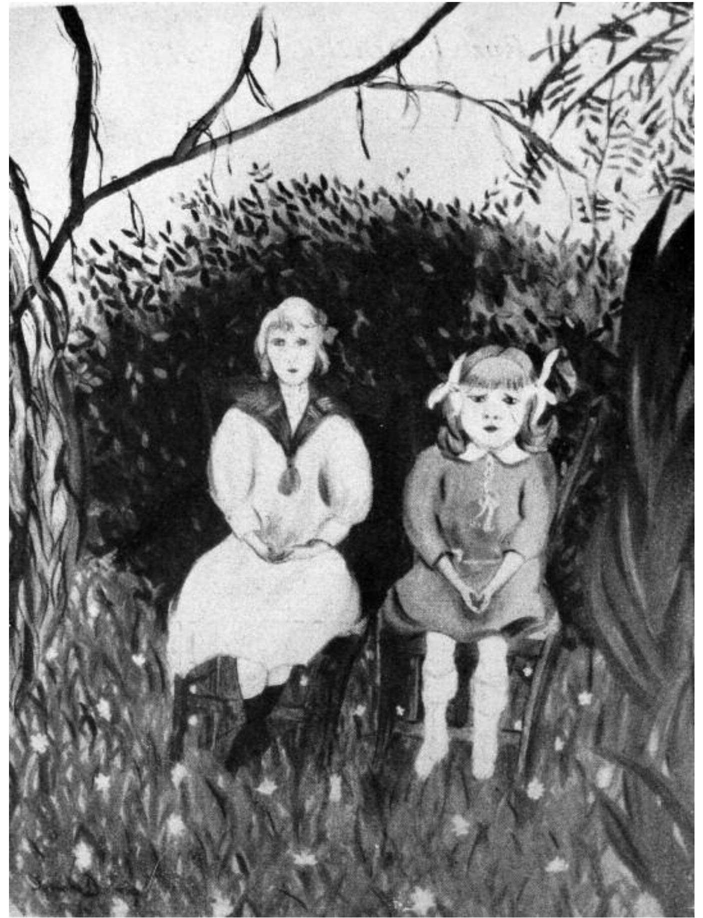


Fig. 9. Suzanne Duchamp, *Les petites Tarentin* (ca. 1923), oil on canvas, dimensions unknown. © Suzanne Duchamp/ADAGP, Paris/ARS, New York 2017.

Works such as *Give me the right Right to life* signal that Duchamp herself had become part of another important postwar development: considering the social status of women, in particular women artists. When the male population of France went off to fight, the women were left to serve on the home front, working in factories, on farms, and, like

Fig. 10. Hannah Höch, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch in Germany* (1919), photomontage with collage and watercolor, 44 7/8″ x 35 7/16″. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Nationalgalerie.

Duchamp, in hospitals. In France, as elsewhere, this led to a growing movement for women's rights, as more young women took steps toward pursuing careers outside the home. Most political and social institutions continued, however, to repress women, maintaining their inferior, "speechless" positions and traditional roles as wife and/or mother. Modern, independent women like Duchamp were considered destroyers of 'womanly virtue' and the family for choosing a professional career over their 'natural' disposition for procreation.[32]

Another work with this theme is *Force et grâce* (*Séduction)* (1920; Pl. 9), in which Duchamp examines the impact and possibilities of the contemporary technological developments on social relationships. In analyzing its abstract, geometrical forms Ruth Hemus has claimed that there is a distinction between feminine and masculine elements in this watercolor. The dark, vertical volume on the left can be interpreted as a phallus, referring to masculinity; while the half circle on the right could refer to the traditional notion of female 'curves' and thus fertility. The title seems to confirm this interpretation. The word *force*—traditionally interpreted as a male trait—is written in capitals over the first half of the word *séduction*, while *grâce* (written in a more elegant font) covers the second part of *séduction*. Hemus suggests that Suzanne Duchamp reflects in this composition on the reciprocal relation between femininity and masculinity by using words as independent, visual elements with a context relating to traditional social conventions.[33]

In Berlin, Hannah Höch (1889–1978), associated with the Dada movement there, was incorporating imagery and themes on the emancipation of women in works such as *Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser Dada durch die letzte Weimarer Bierbauchkulturepoche Deutschlands* (Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch in Germany, 1919; Fig. 10). In this photomontage Höch deconstructs conventional images and words from the contemporary media by putting them in a new relation to one another, suggesting an alternative perception of the contemporary polical, social and cultural reality. The first part of the title of this work, "Cut with the Kitchen Knife," hints on one hand to the process of cutting out the images necessary in the photomontage technique. On the other hand, it refers to the 'traditional,' domestic position of women—in the kitchen. Like Suzanne Duchamp, Höch thus reflects on her social role and personal identity as a modern, emancipated woman by referring to daily modern life, and criticizes the social-political role and patriarchal representation of women in postwar Berlin media. And like Marcel Duchamp's 'cross-dressing' as Rrose Sélavy, Höch subverts the conventional gender roles by placing an image of the head of the artist George Grosz on the body of a ballerina in tutu. The head, so prominent in *Give me the right Right to life* as Duchamp's self-identification, is rather a symbol for the traditional representation of male intellect in Höch's montage. In conventional popular imagery, even today, women are reduced to a body. By combining male and female in one surreal figure in Höch's photomontage, or by placing the head of a woman—Duchamp herself—in the center of *Give me the right Right to life,* both artists deconstruct the conventional gender boundaries and offer an alternative perception of modern women, and women artists in particular.[34]

Suzanne Duchamp took part in various associations and exhibitions in Paris for women artists. She participated in the 1926 "Femmes Peintres Françaises" exhibition at Galerie Barbazanges, organized by women artists striving to claim recognition in the official art world. Other women who showed works included Laurencin, Emilie Charmy (1878–1974), Marguerite Crissay (1874–1945), and Hélène Perdriat (1889–1969).[35] In 1937 Duchamp exhibited, along with Laurencin, Vanessa Bell (1879–1961), Natalia Goncharova (1881–1962) and Suzanne Valadon (1865–1938) in "Les Femmes Artistes d'Europe," at the Musée du Jeu de Paume, one of the biggest official exhibitions with a similar goal.[36]

During World War II, when the German army occupied France in June 1940, many artists fled abroad or to the south of France, which (until 1943) was a relatively neutral area.[37] Duchamp and Crotti were in the United States at the time, visiting Crotti's elder brother, a professor at the Ohio State University and an internationally known surgeon. (André Crotti was the head surgeon at Walter Reed General Hospital, a U.S. military hospital, during World War I. [38])

The German Occupation had drastic consequences for the French art world. During the Vichy regime of Marshal Pétain, the Nazi-backed "Aryan art" was the only acceptable standard; modern art was considered degenerate, and the salons were

Fig. 11. Suzanne Duchamp, *Untitled* (*Flowers on a table*, ca. 1942), crayon, watercolor and pencil on paper, 16 1⁄2" x 25". © Suzanne Duchamp/ADAGP, Paris /ARS, New York 2017.

Fig. 12. Suzanne Duchamp, *Le sous-sol mystérieux* (1963), oil on canvas, 39 1⁄2" x 32". Private Collection. © Suzanne Duchamp/ADAGP, Paris /ARS, New York 2017.

censored. Many modern artists who fled or were deported felt compelled to express the suffering and misery of the War in their work. Some did this in a very direct way, such as the photographer Germaine Krull (1897–1985), who explicitly photographed daily life during the War, while others, such as Picasso reflected political resistance movements in their work. (During 1925–30, Duchamp and Crotti had shared a cottage with Picasso and his first wife, Olga Khokhlova, near Juan-les-Pins, and afterwards they remained lifelong friends with the artist.) Suzanne Duchamp expressed her opposition indirectly by using hidden symbolism.[39]

In 1941, Duchamp and Crotti moved from German-occupied Paris to Arcachon, on the southwest coast, near Bordeaux. It was an unhappy time for Duchamp. In 1943, while Crotti was working in Cauterets, near the Spanish border, he tried to comfort his wife in his letters, encouraging her to paint to help alleviate her anxiety and agitation. Her work, he told her, would outlive her and was thus the only thing that mattered. Most of her letters to Crotti are lost, but it seems that she took his advice to heart, and made numerous drawings and watercolors of landscapes, flower still-lifes and portraits, often reflecting her patriotism. *Bouquet de Marianne* (1942) refers to Marianne as the symbol of the French republic, and in an untitled watercolor of flowers on a table (ca. 1942; Fig. 11), a *Paysage Rouge* (1943), and *Paysage de la France* (1944), the predominant colors are the blue, white, and red of the national flag of France. For two 1945 watercolors of the same landscape at Lac St. Ferrol she used realistic colors for one and patriotic hues for the second. With this strong, symbolic anti-war statement, Suzanne Duchamp thus made known her feelings about the Second World War.[40]

Despite the German occupation, Duchamp affirmed her sympathy to the resistance by sending artworks to Paris and participating at exhibitions in France and elsewhere. The Salon d'Automne of 1941, where she participated, identified itself after the War as "the salon of the liberation" for exhibiting anti-war art. She also exhibited at the *Exposition au profit de l'Art et des Artistes* (Galerie Malesherbes, Paris, 1939), the *Salon d'Automne* (1940), the *Salon des Tuileries* (1944) and the *Salon des Femmes peintres et sculpteurs* (Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, January-February 1945). Along with other contemporary artists with a strong anti-war attitude, she exhibited and sold work to support war victims at the 1945 "Vente au profit des Prisonniers, Résistants et Déportés" at Galerie Drouant-David in Paris.[41] After the War, she became a member of the Union des Femmes Peintres et Sculpteurs and regularly exhibited landscapes, portraits and flower still-lifes at its salons.[42]

Some explorations in abstraction by Duchamp, clearly influenced by the abstract expressionists, intensified following Crotti's death in 1958. Using vivid colors, her expressive lines and seemingly chaotic compositions evolve into independent elements, so that the figurative depictions seem to disappear. In *Le sous-sol mystérieux* (The mysterious basement, 1963; Fig. 12), the expressive and dynamic composition of color and lines likely mirrors her personal struggles around the time she was diagnosed with a brain tumor. Even in this painting, her last work, the artist continued to incorporate elements of contemporary styles. Suzanne Duchamp died at her apartment in Neuilly-sur-Seine on the 11th of September 1963, within a month of the diagnosis.

Throughout her life as an artist, Suzanne Duchamp's work reflected her concerns about modern society, the effects of war, and her role as a modern woman and artist. These themes were expressed in various styles—by appropriating technology and contemporary objects in her Dada and mechanomorphic assemblages, in her revealing self-portraits, and through her use of color symbolism. In a personal way that was influenced by her time and the art world she came to know, Suzanne Duchamp assembled a complex, heterogeneous oeuvre and made a unique contribution to modern art.[43] ●

Emma Anquinet works at the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage, Brussels. She authored the catalogue of a solo-exhibition on Suzanne Duchamp's work at the Francis M. Naumann Fine Art Gallery (New York, 2015).

Notes

1. Seymour Howard, "Hidden Naos: Duchamp Labyrinths," *Artibus et Historiae* 15, no. 29 (1994), 176; Ruth Hemus, *Dada's Women* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2009), 141–42; Laurent Le Bon, ed., *Dada* (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 2005), 390; Leon Krempel et al., *Family Affairs: broers en zusters in de kunst* (Brussels: Mercatorfonds, 2006), 124; Emma Anquinet, *Suzanne Duchamp: Works on paper* (New York: Francis M. Naumann Fine Art, LLC, 2014), 2.
2. See for example, Léa Vergine & Mireille Zanuttini, *L'autre moitié de l'avant-garde: 1910–1940; Femmes peintres et femmes sculpteurs dans les mouvements d' avant-garde historique* (Paris: Des Femmes, 1982), 176; Franz W. Kaiser et al., *Parijs, stad van de moderne kunst. 1900–1960* (Amsterdam: Ludion, 2012), 47; Nane Bettex-Cailler, "Biographie de Suzanne Duchamp," *Les Cahiers d'Art-Documents. Encyclopédie générale des Beaux-Arts aux XIXe et XXe siècles. Peintres, sculpteurs, graveurs, architectes, décorateurs.* vol. 2, no. 56 (1957), 13; André Warnod, "Les Femmes peintres françaises," *Comoedia* (Dec. 6, 1925), x. Duchamp and Laurencin also exhibited, for example, in "Femmes Peintres Françaises" at Galerie Barbazanges in Paris (1926); together with Mary Cassatt, they participated in the Salon des Tuileries in Paris in 1929, where Laurencin exhibited her *La femme au chien* (Woman with dog, 1921, also known as *The Bride*); and at the "Vente au profit des Prisonniers, Résistants et Déportés" at Galerie Drouant-David in Paris (1945).
3. Arturo Schwarz, *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp* (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1969), 90.
4. Francis M. Naumann, *The Recurrent, Haunting Ghost. Essays on the Art, Life and Legacy of Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Readymade Press, 2012), 299–301, 343–45.
5. Maurice Raynal, *Anthologie de la peinture en France – de 1906 à nos jours* (Paris: Editions Montaigne, 1927), 32.
6. Emmanuelle Cronier, "The street," in Jay M. Winter & Jean-Louis Robert, *Capital cities at war: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914–1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1997 [2007]), 58–61; Jay Winter, "Hospitals," in Winter & Robert, *Capital cities at war*, 358, 367–68, 378–79; Anne Powell, *Women in the war zone: hospital service in the First World War* (Gloucestershire, UK: History Press, 2013), 70–73.
7. Le Bon, *Dada*, 390; Anquinet, *Suzanne Duchamp*, 3; Krempel et al., *Family Affairs*, 123; "Association Duchamp Villon Crotti," http://www.duchamp-villon-crotti.com/fr/raymond-duchamp-villon/, accessed Jan. 23, 2016.
8. See, for example, Thomas F. Rugh, "Emmy Hennings and the Emergence of Zurich Dada," *WAJ*, vol. 2, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 1981): 1–6.
9. Francis Picabia, "Thank you, Francis!" originally published in Littérature, new series no. 8 (Paris, Jan. 1923) as 'Francis Merci!'
10. Lucy R. Lippard, ed., *Dadas on art* (New York: Dover, 2007), 171; Georges Hugnet & Tristan Tzara, *L'aventure Dada. 1916–1922* (Paris: Galerie de l'Institut, 1957), 79; Marcel Duchamp, "Statements and Documents," *Daedalus. Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 89, no. 1 (Winter 1960), 112.
11. Lippard, *Dadas on art*, 171; Hugnet and Tzara, *L'aventure Dada*, 79; Duchamp, "Statements and Documents," 112.
12. Naumann, *The Recurrent, Haunting Ghost*, 270. This letter was published for the first time in English translation by Francis M. Naumann, "Affectueusement, Marcel: Ten Letters from Marcel Duchamp to Suzanne Duchamp and Jean Crotti," *Archives of American Art Journal* 22, no. 4 (1982): 2–19.
13. Camfield, "Suzanne Duchamp and Dada in Paris," 85, Naomi Sawelson-Gorse, ed., *Women in Dada: essays on sex, gender, and identity* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1998); Jean Crotti papers, 1913-1973, bulk 1913-1961. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution (Washington, D.C.): Box 1, Folder 18: *Correspondence: Letter from Marcel Duchamp to Suzanne Duchamp*, 15th of January 1916; Marcel Duchamp to Suzanne Duchamp, April 11 1917, *Jean Crotti Papers*, Archives of American Art, published in Francis M. Naumann, "Affectueusement, Marcel: Ten Letters from Marcel Duchamp to Jean Crotti and Suzanne Duchamp," 2-19. For more information on this process and the interpretation of Marcel Duchamp's letter, see: Naumann, *The Recurrent Haunting Ghost: Essays on the Art, Life and Legacy of Marcel Duchamp*, 112-18.
14. Suzanne Duchamp possibly refers to these 'three roses' in an undated watercolor, *Trois roses*. André Gybal, "Les expositions: Suzanne Duchamp et Jean Crotti," *Comoedia* (8 April 1921), x.
15. Gioia Smid, *Dames in DADA: het aandeel van vrouwen in de DADA-beweging* (Amsterdam: Stichting Amazone, 1989), 17; Jay Winter, "The practices of metropolitan life in wartime," Winter & Robert, *Capital cities at war*, 17; Hugnet & Tzara, *L'aventure Dada*, 75; Michel Sanouillet, *Dada à Paris* (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 2005), 279; Anquinet, *Suzanne Duchamp*, 4; André Gybal, "Les expositions: Suzanne Duchamp et Jean Crotti," *Comoedia* (8 April 1921), x.
16. William A. Camfield, "The Machinist Style of Francis Picabia," *Art Bulletin* 48, no. 4 (December 1966): 314; Paul B. Haviland, "We are living in the age of the machine," *291*, no. 7 (Sept. 1915), title page.
17. Camfield, "The Machinist Style of Francis Picabia," 309; Francis Picabia, untitled, *291*, no. 12 (February 1916), 3.
18. Smid, *Dames in DADA*, 25; Le Bon, *Dada*, 390; Hemus, *Dada's Women*, 133.
19. Camfield "The Machinist Style of Francis Picabia," 311; Linda Dalrymple Henderson, *Duchamp in context: science and technology in the Large Glass and related works* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1998), 115; Calvin Tomkins, *Duchamp: A Biography* (New York: Holt, 1996), 214; Anne Collins Goodyear, ed., *Inventing Marcel Duchamp: The dynamics of portraiture* (Boston: The MIT Press, 2009), 83; Duchamp & Naumann, "Affectueusement, Marcel: Ten Letters from Marcel Duchamp to Suzanne Duchamp and Jean Crotti," 13; Hemus, *Dada's Women*, 131.
20. Sarah Kelly Oehler and Elizabeth Siegel, *Shatter, Rupture, Break* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2015), online interactive catalogue, 102. The French text is: "Et la glace se biserait, L'echaudage croulerait, Les ballons s'envollevaient, Les astres s'etendraient, etc."
21. The two stars in white and red could be interpreted as symbolic representations of explosions, referring to the First World War and the modern war industry. William A. Camfield & Jean-Hubert Martin, *Tabu-Dada: Jean Crotti and Suzanne Duchamp, 1915–1922* (Bern: Die Kunsthalle, 1984), 18; Therese M. Southgate, "Suzanne Duchamp," in *Journal of the American Medical Association*, no. 286 (2001), 274.
22. Camfield, "Suzanne Duchamp and Dada in Paris," 9; Le Bon, *Dada*, 356; Hemus, *Dada's Women*, 147.
23. The meaning of the name of this art movement is difficult to determine. The term "Tabu" could be a variation of "tabou", i.e,. to see through the indefinable, mysterious and unattainable essence of existence. Sigmund Freud's publication "Totem und Tabu" (1913), on the continuous tension between desire and the forbidden as taboo, could as well have been an influence on the name of this intellectual art vision. There is no proof that Suzanne Duchamp and Jean Crotti had a direct connection with the theories of Sigmund Freud.

Nonetheless, this Tabu Dada movement can be related to Freud's theories by the context of Vienna in the mystical experience of Crotti and the importance of Freud's discoveries in psychoanalysis for various avant-garde art styles. Besides this, Francis Picabia published in 1920 "Le Pilhaou-Thibaou" in his journal *391*, and the term "thibaou" could have been an inspiration for the name. Tabu Dada was introduced publicly by a manifesto at an exhibition on the 1st of November 1921 in the Salon d'Automne, yet Duchamp and Crotti remained the only two members of this very intellectual art movement. See Camfield & Martin, *Tabu-Dada*, 71; Francis Picabia, "Le Pilhaou-Thibaou," in *391*, no. 15 (July 1920), 1; Vergine & Zanuttini, *L'autre moitié de l'avant-garde*, 176.

24. Lippard, *Dadas on art*, 158–60; Jean Caro Bertoli, Francis M. Naumann & Marine De Weck, *Jean Crotti: l'oeuvre peint (1900–1958)* (Milan: 5 Continents Editions, 2007), 13, 57; Camfield & Martin, *Tabu-Dada*, 69, 74.
25. Naomi Sawelson-Gorse, *Women in dada: essays on sex, gender, and identity* (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 2005), 82-102.
26. Hemus *Dada's Women*, 158. In "Over the River" by Arthur Moss in *Paris Times* (Nov. 27, 1924), Duchamp explains that she 'sings' while she is painting and that her colors form the song. This possibly illustrates the 'musical sensitivity' in her artworks.
27. Judi Freeman & John C. Welchma, *Das Wort-Bild in Dada und Surrealismus* (Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 1990), 15.
28. Camfield, "Suzanne Duchamp and Dada in Paris," 94.
29. Hugh Honour and John Fleming, *A World History of Art* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2009), 798-800.
30. Greer, *The Obstacle Race*, 124; Camfield and Martin, *Tabu-Dada*, 132; Le Bon, *Dada*, 390; Anquinet, *Suzanne Duchamp*, 10; Florence Gilliam, "Paris Women in the Arts," *Charm* (March 1925): 12.
31. L.L. Martin, "Salon d'Automne," *Paris-Soir* (1 November 1924): x.
32. For example, as the fashions of Coco Chanel (Gabrielle Bonheur Chanel, 1883–1971) permitted women to move in a more liberated and comfortable way, so they literally perceived themselves as having more freedom as well. Georges Duby and Michelle Perrot, *Histoire des femmes en occident 5: le XXe siècle* (Paris: Plon, 1992), 31; Yannick Ripa, *Les femmes, actrices de l'histoire de France, de 1789 à nos jours* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2010), 86; Catherine Gonnard & Elisabeth Lebovici, *Femmes artistes / artistes femmes: Paris, de 1880 à nos jours* (Paris: Editions Hazan), 40.
33. Hemus, *Dada's Women*, 141-42.
34. Gonnard & Lebovici, *Femmes artistes / artistes femmes*, 40, 99; Benstock, *Women of the Left Bank : Paris, 1900–1940* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1986), 4; Ripa, *Les femmes, actrices de l'histoire de France*, 97, 101–03; Hemus, *Dada's women*, 97, 106; Le Bon, ed., *Dada*, 484; Mark A. Pegrum, *Challenging modernity: Dada between modern and postmodern* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000), 135, 139; Maud Lavin, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife: The Weimar Photomontages of Hannah Höch* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1993).
35. Anon., "Women Painters and Women who Paint," *American Women* (Feb. 1936), x; André Warnod, "Les Femmes peintres françaises," *Comoedia* (6 December 1925), x.
36. The exhibition took place during "L'exposition internationale des arts et des techniques dans la vie moderne," and it was an initiative of *La Fédération internationale de l'union féminine des carrières libérales et commerciales*. Later on, this exhibition was organized in Prague (1937–38).
37. Laurence Bertrand Dorléac and Jacqueline Munck, *L'Art en Guerre. France 1938–1947* (Paris: Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 2012), 20.
38. See Naumann, *The Recurrent, Haunting Ghost. Essays on the Art, Life and Legacy of Marcel Duchamp*, 146.
39. Artworks of Suzanne Duchamp with a similar theme and imagery from 1940-1945: *Paysage Rouge* (1943), *Paysage de la France* (1944) and *Paysage Bleu* (1945). Dorléac and Munck, *L'Art en Guerre*, 5, 21, 28, 315, 321, 416-417; Gybal, "Suzanne Duchamp ou la réussite de la liberté," 5; Gonnard & Lebovici, *Femmes artistes / artistes femmes*, 226.
40. Bertoli, Naumann & De Weck, *Jean Crotti: l'oeuvre peint*, 314; *Jean Crotti Papers*, 1913–1973, box 1, folder 13: Correspondence: Letters from Jean Crotti to Suzanne Duchamp, 1943; Dorléac & Munck, *L'Art en Guerre*, 321.
41. Gonnard & Lebovici, *Femmes artistes / artistes femmes*, 232; Bettex-Caillier, "Biographie de Suzanne Duchamp," 13; Digitalized collections of the National Institute for Art History, Paris: http://bibliotheque-numerique.inha.fr/collection/item/24885-vente-de-tableaux-modernes-au-profit-des-prisonniers-resistants-et-deportes-du-m-n-p-g-d-vente-du-23-mai-1945?offset=1. Other artists participating at this sale were, among others, Mary Cassatt, Henri Matisse, Constantin Terechkovitch, and Marie Laurencin.
42. Pierre Sanchez and Chantal Beauvalot, *Dictionnaire de l'Union des femmes peintres et sculpteurs (1882–1965): répertoire des artistes et liste de leurs oeuvres* (Dijon: Echelle de Jacob, 2010), 525. This association was founded in 1881 by the French sculptor Mme Léon Bertaux (Joséphine Charlotte Hélène Pilate, 1827-1909), and strived for the professionalization and recognition of women artists.
43. Letter from Marcel Duchamp to Monique Fong, March 3, 1964, private collection. I would like to thank Francis M. Naumann for making this letter available for this article.

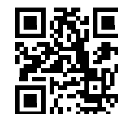
FRONTIERS

A JOURNAL OF WOMEN STUDIES

Edited by Guisela Latorre and Judy Tzu-Chun Wu

One of the premier publications in the field of feminist and gender studies, *Frontiers* has distinguished itself for its diverse and decisively interdisciplinary publication agenda that explores the critical intersections among—to name a few dimensions—gender, race, sexuality, and transnationalism. Many landmark articles in the field have been published in *Frontiers*, thus critically shaping the fields of women's, gender, and sexuality studies.

For subscriptions and back issues:
Visit **nebraskapress.unl.edu**
or call **402-472-8536**



Frontiers is available online
on Project MUSE
bit.ly/FRON_MUSE
and
JSTOR Current Scholarship
bit.ly/FRON_JSTOR

Follow us on Twitter @Frontiers_Women

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA PRESS