

MARCEL DUCHAMP

in Perspective

Edited by

JOSEPH MASHECK



DA CAPO PRESS

We should not overlook the fact that the commercial success enjoyed by today's late followers lies exactly down that road of the self-unmasking of our civilization that Duchamp aimed for. The same bourgeois snob who fifty years ago was horrified by the bottle rack pays good money for it today. In both cases his reaction is aesthetic. The rejection in those days and the applause today are merely two aspects of one and the same unmasking process.

26 STATEMENTS RE DUCHAMP

John Cage

HISTORY

The danger remains that he'll get out of the valise we put him in. So long as he remains locked up—

The rest of them were artists. Duchamp collects dust.

The check. The string he dropped. The Mona Lisa. The musical notes taken out of a hat. The glass. The toy shotgun painting. The things he found. Therefore, everything seen—every object, that is, plus the process of looking at it—is a Duchamp.

DUCHAMP MALLARMÉ?

There are two versions of the ox-herding pictures. One concludes with the image of nothingness, the other with the image of a fat man, smiling, returning to the village bearing gifts. Nowadays we have only the second version. They call it neo-Dada. When I talked with M.D. two years ago he said he had been fifty years ahead of his time.

Duchamp showed the usefulness of addition (moustache). Rauschenberg showed the function of subtraction (De Kooning). Well, we look forward to multiplication and division. It is safe to assume that someone will learn trigonometry. Johns

"26 statements re Duchamp." From John Cage, *A Year from Monday* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1969). Copyright © 1963 by John Cage. Reprinted by permission of Wesleyan University Press. This article also appeared in *Art and Literature*, No. 3 (1964), pp. 9-10.

ICHIYANAGI WOLFF

We have no further use for the functional, the beautiful, or for whether or not something is true. We have only time for conversation. The Lord help us to say something in reply that doesn't simply echo what our ears took in. Of course we can go off as we do in our corners and talk to ourselves.

There he is rocking away in that chair, smoking his pipe, waiting for me to stop weeping. I still can't hear what he said then. Years later I saw him on Macdougall Street in the Village. He made a gesture I took to mean O.K.

"Tools that are no good require more skill."

A DUCHAMP

Seems Pollock tried to do it—paint on glass. It was in a movie. There was an admission of failure. That wasn't the way to proceed. It's not a question of doing again what Duchamp already did. We must nowadays nevertheless be able to look through to what's beyond—as though we were in it looking out. What's more boring than Marcel Duchamp? I ask you. (I've books about his work but never bother to read them.) Busy as bees with nothing to do.

He requires that we know that being an artist isn't child's play: equivalent in difficulty—surely—to playing chess. Furthermore a work of our art is not ours alone but belongs also to the opponent who's there to the end.

Anarchy?

He simply found that object, gave it his name. What then did he do? He found that object, gave it his name. Identification. What then shall we do? Shall we call it by his name or by its name? It's not a question of names.

THE AIR

We hesitate to ask the question because we do not want to hear the answer. Going about in silence.

One way to write music: study Duchamp.

Say it's not a Duchamp. Turn it over and it is.

Now that there's nothing to do, he does whatever anyone requires him to do: a magazine cover, an exhibition, a movie sequence, etc., ad infinitum. What did she tell me about him? That he gave himself except for two days a week (always the same days, Thursdays, Sundays)? That he's emotional? That he formed three important art collections? The phonograph.

Theatre

offer him tributes and sacrifices, and he responds with equal generosity. He who seems to want nothing can freely offer advice to others and find fitting words for the petty inevitabilities of everyday life. They are words, though born out of indifference, which express sympathy and oblige gratitude in return.

His studio is a workroom where chess tables are watched over by automatic chess clocks. Every day they fulfill their duties for two hours. Duchamp has added to the already colossal fund of chess literature with his treatise on certain problems of the end game. As vice-president of the Marshall Chess Club—a leading chess club of New York—he won its championship.

I myself was finally sucked into his chess kingdom despite my less than amateur status. For four years I worked on the filming of a chess fantasy 8 × 8, and on a story about the history of chess, *Chess-cetera*. I had landed in his vacuum and was able to observe his passion without sharing it. His thoughts, his charm, his words in his impeccable French—are preserved in my film *Dadascope*.

The Dutch philosopher Huizinga traces the development of *homo sapiens* not à la Darwin to "necessity" (in the struggle for survival), but rather to his instinct for play, unpurposeful and not directed toward any kind of practical use. Thus play becomes the most serious of activities, and Duchamp took Dada as a form of play. He takes chess quite as seriously as Dada. *Homo sapiens* never acquired wisdom; why not give *homo ludens* a chance?

Watching, a few days after his death, a film on TV, made several years ago by French TV, a film in which we, his friends, all paid tribute to this rare man, I was stunned and deeply moved by a sentence with which Marcel Duchamp ends the film. It still moves me . . . a kind of "last word," a kind of enigmatic "solution" of the enigma of his life and personality. Smiling like the *Mona Lisa* which he once had decorated with a moustache, he seemed to summon up his philosophy and life endeavour: "We are always alone: everybody by himself, like in a shipwreck."

He prevails upon us to insist, "like in a shipwreck," upon our own uniqueness, upon the originality of man as an individual, at every moment, all the time. That's the way the game should be played. And as we feel, more every day, that the ship is wrecked, Marcel has become the mythological figure of a prophet, whose word counts more than a thousand (painted) images.

JOHN CAGE ON MARCEL DUCHAMP: AN INTERVIEW

Moira Roth and William Roth

When did you first meet Marcel Duchamp?

I met him in the early forties. But I didn't know him except to see him now and then. I didn't want to bother him with my friendship. Then, towards the end of the forties, I wrote the music for his sequence in *Dreams That Money Can Buy*. Afterwards I ran into him on MacDougal Street. He had heard the music and liked it. Then I met him later when he was with Mary Reynolds. The conversation turned toward dope. Someone in the group asked whether he thought that dope was a future problem. He said he didn't think so; it would never be any more serious than the drinking of liqueurs. Marcel took very little alcohol or food; he would simply eat what was given him. No one gave him a lot because everyone knew he didn't eat very much—two or three peas and one bit of meat. But he did smoke cigars.

Did he seem to change much during the time you knew him?

No, I would say not.

So becoming more celebrated in the 1960s didn't affect him?

He must have enjoyed it. When I wrote *A Year From Monday*, I told him I had written about him, but hadn't wanted to bother him with it before the book was published. He said rather plaintively, "But I would have enjoyed it."

Did he say anything about it when it was published?

Very little. I think I asked him once what he thought of the text that has his name in the title, and he indicated that he liked it. But then he was very nice about everything, including what Arturo Schwarz wrote about him. Marcel's attitude was that Schwarz's book wasn't about *him*, it was *by* Schwarz.

"John Cage on Marcel Duchamp: An Interview," by Moira Roth and William Roth. From *Art in America* (November-December, 1973), pp. 72-79. All footnotes have been omitted. Reprinted by permission of the authors and *Art in America*.

Do you feel it doesn't matter what people say about you?

Of course it doesn't matter. Because it is *their* action at that point. I learned very early to pay no attention to criticism. A review of a concert I gave in Seattle was to the effect that the whole thing was ridiculous. I knew perfectly well it wasn't. Therefore, the criticism was of no interest. In fact, it taught me that if people like what I am doing, I should look out. It's important that I live as I did before society became involved in what I am doing.

Do you resent society?

I think society is one of the greatest impediments an artist can possibly have. I rather think that Duchamp concurred with this view. When I was young and needed help, society wouldn't give it, because it had no confidence in what I was doing. But when, through my perseverance, society took an interest, then it wanted me not to do the next thing, but to repeat what I had done before. At every point society acts to keep you from doing what you have to do.

When you say society, you don't mean an audience?

I'm objecting to society as an audience. But I like society as what you might call an ecological fact.

So you are deeply concerned with people and unconcerned with the audience. You want the audience to turn into people.

I'm out to blur the distinctions between art and life, as I think Duchamp was. And between teacher and student. And between performer and audience, etcetera.

Do you think of yourself as teaching?

I like to think of myself as either having graduated or as going on studying, and I like to think of the music that interests me as being "after school." In other words, having no message in it; not teaching but rather celebrating. Or as Duchamp might have said—*celebrating*.

Do you think Duchamp had no message?

He was interested in ideas; they recur and permit, with regard to his work, a certain scholarship. This is true of Jasper Johns also.

Do you think you need a lot of scholarship to see Duchamp's work?

I don't feel I need much scholarship to enjoy Duchamp as I enjoy him.

How do you enjoy him?

The way I do. Whether the way I enjoy him is the same way he intended, I have no way of knowing. I could have asked questions about that, but didn't.

Because you weren't interested?

No, no. I didn't want to disturb him with questions. Supposing he had not been disturbed by some question I had asked, and had answered it. I would then have had his answer rather than my experi-

ence. Furthermore, he left the door open by saying that observers complete works of art themselves. Nevertheless, there is still something hermetic or inscrutable about his work. It suggests scholarship, questions and answers from the source. I spoke to Teeny Duchamp once about this. I said, "You know, I understand very little about Marcel's work. Much of it remains very mysterious to me." And she said, "it does to me, too."

What questions come to mind when you think about Duchamp?

The things I think about him don't lead me to ask questions, but rather to experience his work or my life. At a Dada exhibition in Düsseldorf, I was impressed that though Schwitters and Picabia and the others had all become artists with the passing of time, Duchamp's works remained unacceptable as art. And, in fact, as you look from Duchamp to the light fixture (pointing in the room) the first thought you have is, "Well, that's a Duchamp." That's what I think, and that doesn't lead me to ask any questions. It leads me to the enjoyment of my life. If I were going to ask a question, it would be one I really didn't want to know the answer to. "What did you have in mind when you did such and such?" is not an interesting question, because then I have his mind rather than my own to deal with. I am continually amazed at the liveliness of his mind, at the connections he made that others hadn't, and so on, and at his interest in puns.

Would he pun when you talked to him?

He tried to every now and then. He liked it in conversation. He was very serious about being amused, and the atmosphere around him was always one of entertainment.

Would he talk to you about your work?

We really never talked about his work or my work.

He talked mainly about chess and food?

And the people we knew. I was very careful to do that. If, for instance, you go to Paris and spend your time as a tourist going to the famous places, I've always had a feeling you would learn nothing about Paris. The best way to learn about Paris would be to have no intention of learning anything and simply to live there as though you were a Frenchman. And no Frenchman would dream of going to, say, Notre Dame.

So you managed to do that with Duchamp, live in Paris and not sight-see?

That was my intention; to be with him as often as circumstances permitted and to let things happen rather than to make them happen. This is also an oriental notion. Meister Eckhardt says we are made perfect not by what we do, but by what happens to us. So we get to know Marcel not by asking him questions, but by being with him.

What happened when you played chess?

I rarely did, because he played so well and I played so poorly. So I played with Teeny, who also played much better than I. Marcel would glance at our game every now and then, and in between take a nap. He would say how stupid we both were. Every now and then he would get very impatient with me. He complained that I didn't seem to want to win. Actually, I was so delighted to be with him that the notion of winning was beside the point. When we played, he would give me a knight in advance. He was extremely intelligent and he almost always won. None of the people around us was as good a player as he, though there was one man who, once in a blue moon, would win. In trying to teach me how to play, Marcel said something which again is very oriental, "Don't just play your side of the game, play both sides." I tried to, but I was more impressed with what he said than I was able to follow it.

He taught like a Zen master?

I asked him once or twice, "Haven't you had some direct connection with oriental thought?" And he always said no. In Zen, the student comes to the teacher, asks a question, gets no reply. Asks a second and third time, but no reply. Finally he goes off to another part of the forest, builds himself a house, and three years later runs back to the teacher and says, "Thank you." Well, I heard recently that a man came to Marcel with a problem he hoped Marcel would solve. Marcel said absolutely nothing. After a while the problem disappeared and the man went away. It's the same teaching method as the oriental one, and it's hard to find examples of it in the West.

So he got it from himself?

There weren't any specific oriental sources. But there may have been other sources; we'd have to know thoroughly in order to decide whether *they* had any connection with the Orient—Emerson, or Thoreau, who said yes and no are lies, or Schopenhauer, who said that the highest use of the will is the denial of the will. The only true answer is that which sets all well afloat, so to speak, free of one's likes or dislikes. Duchamp says he wants to make a Readymade to which he is completely indifferent. That's the same idea. Now in his case, it didn't come from the Orient directly, but perhaps indirectly.

So that was one reason you felt close to Duchamp?

Well, I always admired his work, and once I got involved with chance operations, I realized he had been involved with them, not only in art but also in music, fifty years before I was. When I pointed this out to him, Marcel said, "I suppose I was fifty years ahead of my time."

Was there any difference between his idea of chance and yours?

Oh, yes. I hear from people who have studied his work that he often carefully chose the simplest method. In the case of the *Musical*

Eratum, he simply put the notes in a hat and then pulled them out. I wouldn't be satisfied with that kind of chance operation in my work, though I am delighted with it in Marcel's. There are too many things that could happen that don't interest me, such as pieces of paper sticking together and the act of shaking the hat. It simply doesn't appeal to me. I was born in a different month than Marcel. I enjoy details and like things to be more complicated.

Duchamp wasn't uncomplicated though?

He was less complicated than someone else doing the same thing would have been. I think the difference between our attitudes to chance probably came from the fact that he was involved with ideas through seeing, and I was involved through hearing. I try to become aware of more and more aspects of a situation in order to subject them all individually to chance operations. So I would be able to set a process going which was not related to anything I had experienced before. In the case of Duchamp—and Johns and others—there is something closer to the development of a language which the person is learning to speak. So in both Johns and Duchamp things recur. He would like us to believe, I think that the *Etant Donnés* [Fig. 28] is a translation of the *Large Glass* [Fig. 17]—the same work restated in a way which is very uncomfortable for us, because we had grown to like the transparency for one thing. In *Etant Donnés* he does the exact opposite, imprisoning us at a particular distance and removing the freedom we had so enjoyed in the *Large Glass*.

Etant Donnés was his last work. Did you know about it?

Oh, no! The only thing he said in the last years, and it was almost like a refrain in his conversation, was that he thought it would be interesting if artists would prescribe the distances from which their work should be viewed. He didn't understand why artists were so willing to have their works seen from any position. Of course, he was referring to the *Etant Donnés*, without my knowing that the work existed. He had two studios in New York; the one people knew about, and one next door to it, where he did his work, which no one knew about. That's why people were able to visit his studio and see nothing going on. As he expressed it later, it was a way of going underground.

I am very impressed with his craftsmanship. I recently saw a show by Picabia, who was so close to Duchamp. But though it was a large show, very few paintings were well made, or as beautifully made as a Duchamp. There are no Duchamps which are made poorly. He spoke of the function of the artist as that of an artisan, someone who made things.

How does that go with the idea of letting things happen?

Well, I would say it would keep one from just letting things happen. When he did notice things that had already happened, as in

the Readymades, he was extremely cautious. He didn't do what we have since done—extend the notion of the Readymades to everything. He was very precise, very disciplined. It must have been a very difficult thing for him to make a Readymade, to come to that decision. But then later in life, while he was making the *Etant Donnés*, he would sign anything that anyone asked him to.

Why did he change?

I think he thought other people were being just a little bit foolish. I hesitate to say that, because he did it in such good spirits. The only thing I ever asked him to sign (and I asked him to do so twice because of the circumstances) was a membership card. I had become a member of the Czechoslovakian Mushroom Society, and when I received my membership card—there were various signatures—I thought what a pleasure it would be to have Marcel's signature too. And so I gave it to him; it amused him and he signed it immediately and very beautifully. By beautifully, I mean in an interesting place. It looked as though he was one of the Czechs. Then, to raise money for the Foundation for Contemporary Performing Arts, I was able to sell the card for \$500 to increase our fund. I regretted selling it, of course. But in the mail, the very same day that it was sold, came next year's membership card. I was delighted. I pointed this coincidence out to Marcel and he said, "There's no problem; I'll sign it too."

Why did he allow the expensive edition of the Readymades done by Schwarz?

In an interview late in life, an interviewer asked the same question: "Why did you permit that, because it looks like business rather than art," and so forth. Marcel admitted it could be so interpreted, but it didn't disturb him. He was extremely interested in money. At the same time, he never really used his art to make money. And yet he lived in a period when artists were making enormous amounts of money. He couldn't understand how they did it. I think he thought of himself as a poor businessman. These late activities were like business. The *Valise* is the rather feeble attempt of a small business man who tries to act in a businesslike way in a capitalist society, who had an idea of how to make a small company, but has no notion of how to become a big corporation. He couldn't understand why, for instance, Rauschenberg and Johns should make so much money and why he should not. But then he took an entirely different life role, so to speak. He never took a job. Both Rauschenberg and Johns, before their paintings were accepted, worked in the field of advertising. Duchamp never did any work. He viewed the bourgeois business of having a job and making money and so forth as a waste of time.

Is it too personal to ask how he lived, if he didn't work?

It would be too personal of me to answer the question. Let me

simply mention that at the beginning of the *Interviews* with Cabanne he says that his life has always been extremely pleasant and that it became more and more so as time went on.

Is that true of your life?

I was brought up to worry. I am very good at worrying. I think if left to myself I wouldn't have much to worry about, but I manage to connect myself with many other people whose problems worry me. I'm very worried, for instance, about the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, because it seems to be almost impossible to make a physical situation which is reasonable and comfortable for so many people and to make it work economically.

Did Duchamp also worry about people he loved?

He didn't give that impression. The only time he disturbed me was once when he got cross with me for not winning a game of chess. It was a game I might have won; then I made a foolish move and he was furious. Really angry. He said, "Don't you ever want to win?" He was so cross that he walked out of the room, and I felt as though I had made a mistake in deciding to be with him—we were in a small Spanish town—if he was going to get so angry with me.

He couldn't understand that you wouldn't care about winning?

He thought it was stupid, absolutely stupid. That night I could hardly sleep. And the next day he was just bubbling over with friendship. I think he had discussed the matter with Teeny, and she had seen that I had been very hurt and had explained this to Marcel. And then he went out of his way to be friendly.

Did you subscribe to the belief that he had stopped working?

He never stopped working. He was working constantly all the time he led us to believe that he wasn't working. And he did just what he had done with the *Large Glass*; he made a large work and a number of offshoots from it. He did two works that it was peculiar to see him doing at the time. But now that I come to think of them, they were very closely related to the *Etant Donnés*. One was a wind-break. He had an apartment in Cadaquès with a terrace outside from which you could look down and see the bay. But the wind, when it came from the hills, was very unpleasant. So he designed and constructed a very ingenious method of breaking the wind with glass and wood. It was difficult to get it to hold against the wind because there was no material to which it could be attached. That kind of problem is no different from those he had to solve in *Etant Donnés*. Then another thing, which was even more peculiar, was his decision to put in a fireplace (when they moved from one apartment to another). He designed the fireplace very carefully. It was extremely uninteresting looking, but it was very detailed and exactly made, and he was delighted when the fireplace was finished. It's not essentially a different

project than the stone wall of *Etant Donnés*, which is absolutely boring. In other words, he continued his work until the end. All he did was go underground. He didn't wish to be disturbed when he was working, so he didn't want anyone to know he was working. And none of us, at the time, connected the fireplace or the windbreak with art.

He made a real distinction between his life as craftsman and artist and his social life?

Yes, you might say that.

But isn't a Readymade supposed to make you feel that this kind of distinction doesn't exist?

I would say so. I rather think, though, when we think of the Readymades, we think of something other than what Duchamp thought of. I'm not sure if my experience is the same as his. Anything I look at is a Duchamp, just anything. I wouldn't say, as he did, that I must be indifferent to it to begin with.

Is the impression of Duchamp saying art and life are one really obtained through people like you?

Yes, but if you put that with the last work, what do you come up with? We have gotten from Duchamp this concern which interests us more than anything else: the blurring of the distinction between art and life. I would say this is true of Rauschenberg and myself more than of Johns. And in this sense, Johns may be closer to Duchamp than Rauschenberg and myself. Because *Etant Donnés* doesn't have any of that fusion of art and life. It has, rather, the most exact separation.

Do you think it is a mistake to see people like yourself and Rauschenberg as the logical heirs of Duchamp's notion of blurring art and life?

I think that if you observe something, and then want to make connections between work now and some other work that preceded it, you can make—if you are clever—any connections you want.

Did you learn anything about the blurring of art and life from Duchamp? Was it all there before you met him?

These are very difficult questions to answer. He is one of the artists whom I admire the most, and whom I had the privilege of getting to know. Another one whom I admired very much was Mondrian, whom I met but didn't know very well. Then in the late forties, I became involved in oriental thought, and in 1960 I collected my writings under the title *Silence*. However, in a recent book which has my name as title, edited by Richard Kostelanetz, you see me in high school at the age of fourteen proposing that the best thing that could happen to the United States in a world sense would be to become silent. That was before I knew anything about Duchamp.

Do you think your idea of silence has anything in common with Duchamp?

Looking at the *Large Glass*, the thing that I like so much is that I can focus my attention wherever I wish. It helps me to blur the distinction between art and life and produces a kind of silence in the work itself. There is nothing in it that requires me to look in one place or another or, in fact, requires me to look at all. I can look through it to the world beyond. Well, this is, of course, the reverse in *Etant Donnés*. I can only see what Duchamp permits me to see. The *Large Glass* changes with the light and he was aware of this. So does a Mondrian. So does any painting. But *Etant Donnés* doesn't change because it is all prescribed. So he's telling us something that we perhaps haven't yet learned, when we speak as we do so glibly of the blurring of the distinction between art and life. Or perhaps he's bringing us back to Thoreau: yes and no are lies. Or keeping the distinction, he may be saying neither one is true. The only true answer is that which will let us have both of these.

Duchamp seems so much less physical in his art than you do.

A contradiction between Marcel and myself is that he spoke constantly against the retinal aspects of art, whereas I have insisted upon the physicality of sound and the activity of listening. You could say I was saying the opposite of what he was saying. And yet I felt so much in accord with everything he was doing that I developed the notion that the reverse is true of music as is true of the visual arts. In other words, what was needed in art when he came along was not being physical about seeing, and what was needed in music when I came along was the necessity of being physical about hearing. However, with *Etant Donnés*, we feel his work very physically, not abstractly, and in a way which can be deeply felt. Music is more complex, I think, than painting, and that's why chance operations in music are just naturally more complicated than they would be for painting. There are more questions to ask about a piece of music than there are about a painting.

Would he come to hear your concerts?

I wouldn't ask him. If he came, that was his concern but I don't think he particularly enjoyed music. He and Teeny performed with me in the chess piece in Toronto. (*Reunion* with David Tudor, Gordon Mumma, David Behrman and Lowell Cross; Lowell Cross constructed a chess board with circuits, so that moves on the board transmitted or cut off sound produced by the several musicians.) I turned to him during the performance. I said, "Aren't these strange sounds?" He smiled and said, "To say the least." The game I played with him, he won quite quickly; then I played with Teeny and he stayed on the stage. The game went on and on; finally about eleven-thirty we looked up and everyone in the audience had left. We continued the game the next morning in the hotel. I lost.

I don't feel in Duchamp any interest in events that are not interesting. What interested him were connections he had not previously noticed or puns that made things glance off in curious directions. He wasn't interested in some elementary aspect of chess. What interested him were the elaborate details. He wrote a fabulous book on the end game. The end game which he chose was simply that with the kings and a few pawns. He made a most elaborate study of this and never tired of trying to explain it to you. It was so complex I never did understand it, even though he gave me the book. When I asked him to write something in it, he wrote: "Dear John, Look out! Another poisonous mushroom."

Our ideas of blurring the distinctions between art and life have led in some instances to works that turn us stupid. But not even children are stupid. I've read that four-year-old children are capable of learning several languages and inventing new ones. Inventing a new language is precisely what would have interested Marcel. We ought to use our ideas not in order to coddle ourselves as though we were infants who hadn't even learned a single language, but in order to stretch ourselves to the limits, both in art and in life.

Did Duchamp ever talk to you about problems aside from art?

Yes, he did. And quite early in the century he proposed the use of private cars for public transportation—people driving cars wherever they liked and just leaving them; other people would take the same cars and drive on. He was opposed to politics. He was opposed to religion as is Zen. He was for sex and for humor. He was opposed to private property. There is a lovely story about this. Before he married Teeny, he went to visit her on Long Island. Bernard Monnier, her future son-in-law, went to meet Marcel at the station. He said, "Where is your luggage?" Marcel reached into his overcoat pocket and took out his toothbrush and said, "This is my *robe de chambre*." Then he showed Bernard that he was wearing three shirts, one on top of the other. He had come for a long weekend.

He must have been a beautiful friend.

Oh yes, his death was a great loss. I notice that Teeny even now frequently uses the present tense with regard to him. She says, "We do this," or "We don't do that," or "Marcel and I always do this."

I can tell you another story about him. Once we were in Cadaqués and we were invited to lunch on a little island off the mainland, just a hop, skip and a jump off the mainland. The hostess was a mediocre painter, but she and her husband owned the island and they were Spanish. Marcel didn't always accept invitations; he was quite choosy about ones he would accept. But he was always willing to go to this house. Well, I had been told the lady was a painter, but there were no paintings on the walls. We had lunch in this bare-walled

room, and afterwards she asked us if we would look at her paintings. She brought them out of the closet, one after another, and put them against the bare wall. I kept wondering what Marcel was going to say, because the paintings were all hideous. I knew he wouldn't say they were hideous, but I just didn't know what he would do. After seeing quite a number, he said, "You should hang them on the wall," and she said she couldn't stand to look at them, and then he said nothing.

He was very friendly with Dali. Isn't that strange? Dali lived in Cadaqués, and if you go into a stationery shop or a post office there, there are postcards showing Dali's house and portraits of him and so on. There were never any postcards of Marcel, to my taste a vastly superior artist and man. The first year I went to Cadaqués, Marcel asked me whether I would like to meet Dali, and I said I would rather not. And so he didn't press the matter. Then, another year, he asked me again, and said he thought I should whether I wanted to or not. So we all drove over to Dali's, and I was astonished to see that Marcel took a listening attitude in the presence of Dali. It almost appeared as if a younger man were visiting an old man, whereas the case was the other way around. Dali, of course, talks all the time, and wants to show what he's doing—absolutely the reverse of Marcel.

He doesn't have a hidden studio?

No, no, he has enormous vulgar paintings. Marcel went in and admired them. There were several other occasions when I was together with Dali and Duchamp, and then, after Duchamp's death, with Dali alone. I haven't changed my mind radically about Dali, but I notice that there is something in his eyes which is very convincing, a very undisturbed honesty in the man, something I had not expected.

And that's what Duchamp saw?

I don't know, but I was looking for something that I could see. An edition of the *Interviews* with Cabanne has been published here. Unfortunately, it is very poorly translated; it includes a ridiculous preface by Dali. At least I find it so. A preface that has the effect of drawing attention to Dali, rather than to Marcel, and yet Marcel in the presence of Dali always sent the attention to Dali. That's an oriental action of self-effacement. Over and over again, at most any point, I find correspondence between Duchamp and the Orient.