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Dear Karl

Thank you for sending me your remarkable analysis of Tu m'. I have learned a great deal and it is wonderful to find that Marcel can still provide surprises. Your observations are so clearly backed up by the evidence that I don't think there is much I can say, apart from the compliments. I have spent a lot of time thinking about your documentation and find it difficult to fault, or even comment on it.

As you say there remain some questions and I would love to have answers about the mysterious elements on the right hand side of the painting. The white square in perspective that establishes the location of the standard stops (you use a nice word 'docked') seems somehow familiar: I have always seen it as related in some way to the draft pistons? The 'stoppage' are chance distortions of line and the 'draft pistons' do the same with a plane. It is almost as though the square could distort into an irregular shape if it were to slide along the tracks of the stoppages. But since a single ruler is used to produce the black lines they have a common curvature and a common length, if the square were to move along the black rails it's shape would not change. But you reveal the paradox that the lines of the standard stops, being the same length, do not conform to the perspective scheme of the white square. In fact there is no coherent perspective in the picture and although there are strong indications of many different viewpoints the contradictions, even within a group introduce some paradox or other. The rulers with bands of colour and the circles make the word 'enigmatic' sound a little inadequate. But there is a reason, a code you are getting near to breaking, which will probably be broken one day.

The vanishing point of the swatch of colours almost has its vanishing point on the corner but it is irritating off centre. As you point out, each of the rhomboids is parallel with the picture plane. There is an intention to create contradictions at every stage. The use of shadows of readymades complicates the perspective because, as you say, the shadows do not create a plane – a surface on which the shadows are projected – the perspective of shadows is created by the position of a light source and all those light sources are relevant to only one readymade.

Being unable to contribute to your discussion of the detail I am left with the whole. It is possible to conceive of a space, outer space for example, in which all the elements are floating freely and unaffected by gravity. Some of Matta's better paintings (very much influenced by Duchamp) show such free floating, unattached; elements but the paintings have the kind of coherence that you get in a science fiction movie. The viewer is a floating camera with a single eye – all they really do is remove the horizon and pretend there is no gravity. Duchamp's achievement is that the eye is denied any fixed viewpoint and it is impossible to make any smooth transition between one viewpoint and another because every feature is designed to force the construction into new dimensionalities.



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Dear Karl

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It was such a pleasure to read the texts and examine again your diagrams that reveal so clearly the complexity of Duchamp's thinking. As you might suppose I have read most of what has been written about Duchamp since the Lebel book appeared in 1959. A lot of water has passed under the bridge over the years and as it flowed it became increasingly full of garbage. I have a few worthwhile publications to keep me going and your book will occupy a special place among them.

In recent years I have become increasingly aware that art historians talk a lot of rubbish about Marcel. They think that there are secrets to be found in sources outside the work. They don't realize that there is sufficient interest in looking at the images, and pondering upon the extraordinary way in which they are constructed and by reading what Duchamp wrote about what he was attempting to do at the time he was doing it. It is not necessary to invent Marcel because he is a fact, in the same way that his works are facts. What we need to do is examine the procedures of their fabrication, and then try to discover the way they work. There is enough to think about without all this pointless surrounding gossip. Forgive me, I get angry at such foolishness. What your book has to offer is a closely argued analysis; not surprisingly, it doesn't take a scientist or an art historian to understand an artist like Marcel, it takes an artist. I congratulate you on confirming my long held belief.

I have one small comment on an anecdote attributed to me. It is of no great importance but I would like you to know that the story of Marcel being 'angry' is not accurate. Marcel (in the years I knew him) was, as you say, 'generally sanguine'. After the lecture given by Schwarz at the ICA it was Teeny who was angry. She argued quite emphatically and insisted, saying 'Schwarz has no right to say these things about you Marcel'. After ten minutes of Teeny's protestations Marcel smiled and said 'OK Teeny, you write your book and let Schwarz write his'. This makes the point of your remarks about acceptance of contradictory interpretations of his works, or his character, much stronger.

There was only one moment while I was showing Marcel around his Tate retrospective that I experience a marked irritation. It was when we came to a vitrine containing, among other things, *Feuille de vigne femelle* and *Dart-Object* to which I had added the relief *Given the Illuminating Gas and the Waterfall* owned by Maria Martins that arrived while I was hanging the show but not too late to get in the catalogue. This relief was completely unknown at the time and it arrived because Maria Martins offered it as something given to her by Marcel. She apologized for not having a photograph. I replied we would like anything she possessed by Marcel and it arrived from Rio de Janeiro wrapped in newspaper and a lot of string. Marcel was annoyed when he saw it on display and even more when I asked 'what's this all about'. Subsequently I realized that he was afraid it might open a chink in the door to the then secret *Etant Donne*, now in Philadelphia. He forgave me when I explained that it was an unsolicited contribution from Maria Martins and that I had placed it where I thought the totally unexpected object made most sense.

[REDACTED]

Best

Richard