

Marcel Duchamp – Spring, 1911 – Where it All Begins

Early in 1911, at the age of 24, Marcel Duchamp painted a relatively small painting (25 7/8 by 19 3/4 inches, oil on canvas) he called *Young Man and Girl in Spring*.¹ This painting is also identified as *Spring*, which is how the painting is referred to throughout this paper. A larger version (58 5/8 x 19 3/4 inches, oil on canvas) followed. This second version was exhibited at the 1911 Salon d'Automne in Paris.² Although no photograph of the entire second painting is known to exist, part of it is visible—now repositioned horizontally—as the background of Duchamp's *Network of Stoppages* of 1914.

What follows is an analysis of the first version of *Spring* and its role in Duchamp's larger creative output. Some of my ideas, as well as my interpretations and conclusions, draw on the large and ever-growing body of scholarly literature on Duchamp. However, my observations and ideas are shaped by my perspective as a practicing artist. Quite intentionally, I have tried to follow the logic of Duchamp's creative process and his artistic decision-making strategies from the standpoint of his *being a visual artist*. I offer what follows in that spirit.

In this paper, I explore the possibility that *Spring* contains pre-figurative elements of Duchamp's final magnum opus, *Étant donnés* (*Given: 1^o The Waterfall, 2^o The Illuminating Gas*), created between 1946 and 1966. That a small, sketchy painting made thirty-five years earlier could be seen as a study for the confounding, elaborate installation that is *Étant donnés* may strike readers as somewhat improbable. Nevertheless, through careful scrutiny of Duchamp's artwork and the many notes he made, it is my opinion that very early on—Duchamp planned and prepared for the major works he would eventually

produce. I acknowledge that this process is highly unusual, that most artists develop their styles over a period of time, with any one piece or style representing a point on a trajectory of development and maturation. It is well known Marcel Duchamp used ideas he had formulated years before their actual implementation. As Michael Taylor observes: “The pseudoscientific title of *Etant donnees* has its source in a note first published in 1934 known as *the Green Box*: “Etant donnees 1° la chute d’eau / 2° legaz d’eclairage.”³

Part I

Although it is uncharacteristically rough in execution, *Spring* is a fully realized composition(**Fig. 1**).

[click images to enlarge](#)

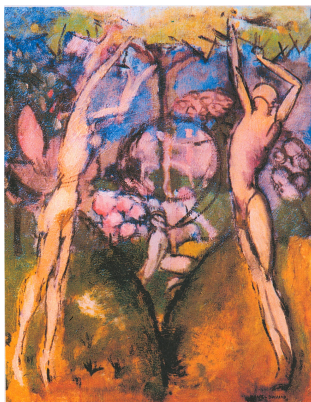


Figure 1

Spring (Young Man and Girl in Spring), 1911. Oil on canvas, 25 7/8 x 19 3/4 in. (65.7 x 50.2 cm.). Israel Museum of Art, Jerusalem

The artist apparently deemed this painting important enough to offer it as a wedding present to his favorite sister, Suzanne, who married a Rouen pharmacist, Charles Desmares, on August 24, 1911. On the back of the canvas Duchamp wrote, “A toi ma chere Suzanne –Marcel” (“To my dear Suzanne –Marcel”).⁴

Perhaps due to the painting’s uncharacteristically loose, expressionistic execution, some scholars assert that *Spring* is merely a loose study. However, the existence of an India ink and charcoal study for the female figure of *Spring*, also dated

1911 and titled *Standing Nude* (**Fig. 2**), adds weight to the argument that *Spring* is an autonomous work, not a preliminary sketch.⁵

click images to enlarge

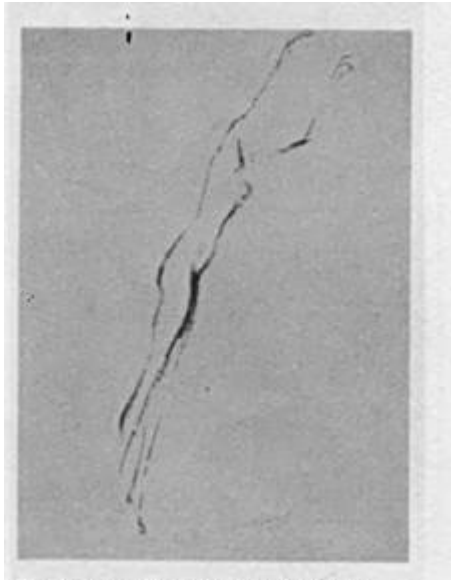


Figure 2

Standing Nude, 1911. India ink and charcoal on paper 24 5/8 x 18 7/8 in. (62.5 x 47.8 cm.). Collection of Silvia Schwarz Linder and Dennis Linder, Milan

The two versions of *Spring* can be seen as the final symbolic allegorical group of works that Duchamp began painting in April 1910 with *Portrait of Dr. Dumouchel*. The others in this group include *The Bush* (1910), *Paradise* (December 1910–January 1911), *The Baptism* (1911), and *Draft on the Japanese Apple Tree* (1911).

Spring is an allegorical painting set in a landscape of tree forms. Most prominent in the composition are the two elongated, up-reaching figures, which occupy the frontal plane and extend from the lower to upper margins of the painting on both sides.

Both figures are delineated by black contour lines. On the left is a female nude; on the right is a male whose genitals are obscured by a thong-like covering. The back of the

female's head is visible as a cap of dark hair; except for her chin, her face is blocked by the closer arm, which, like her other arm, is thrust upward toward a canopy of leaves. Both of the female's arms are rendered twice (**Fig. 3**), visually suggesting waving limbs. This depiction of sequential positions in space essentially constitutes Duchamp's original attempts to paint a figure in motion a year before his two versions of *Nude Descending a Staircase*, of 1912.

click images to enlarge



Figure 3

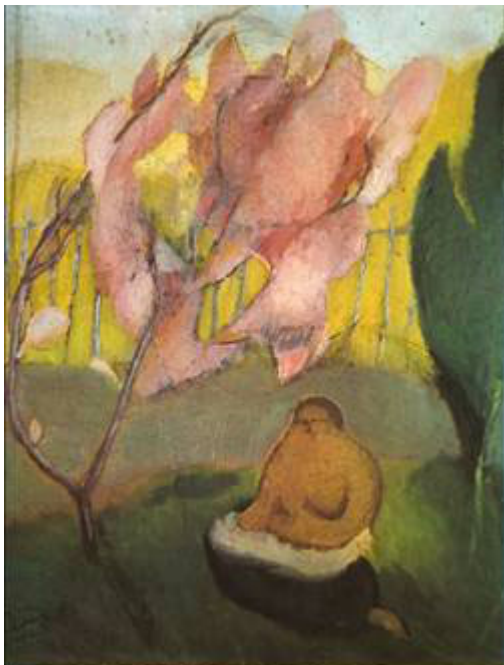
Detail of fig. 1, *Spring*: arms of female figure, marked to indicate "waving" motion

The male figure extends his right arm into the tree leaves. His other arm is bent above his faceless head, the hand in a fist. The feet are roughed in. Just below his feet is a patch of ochre that is deeper in tone than the field of ochre dominating the lower right quadrant. It is in this area Duchamp signed the work in block letters followed by an 11, signifying the year of its production, 1911.

The top of the painting is filled with a canopy of tree leaves defined at its lower edge by angled black lines.⁶ The central area of the canopy is yellow, with an uneven upper band of white pigment suggesting sunlight streaming from above.

Surrounding these leaves and the slender black tree trunk is a section of lightened blue. The black line of the tree trunk doubles as the center indentation of an unmistakable heart shape, which occupies most of the composition. Leading Duchamp scholar Francis Naumann, in his essay on *Spring*, was the first to notice this large geometrically simplified shape for a human heart.⁷ The bottom V shape of the heart passes behind the lower torsos of the two figures. The left outline of the swelling V doubles as the thin, curving trunk of a tree or sapling. Its leaves or blossoms extend from the left behind the female's lower back. The shape and hue of these leaves, along with the bent trunk, recall the tree form in another painting by Duchamp in 1911, *Draft on the Japanese Apple Tree* (**Figs. 4 and 5**). This can be seen as an early example of Duchamp's recycling of pictorial content from one piece to another, a practice examined in the pages that follow.

click images to enlarge





- Figure 4
- Figure 5
- Draft on the Japanese Apple Tree, Marcel Duchamp, 1911, oil on canvas, 24 X 19 11/16", collection of Dina Vierny, Paris.
- Detail from fig. 1 – Bent tree form outlined.

In the area at upper – far left, behind the pink-budded tree, is another tree with a simple, straight black trunk. Over a dark green area are about a dozen daubs of white, red, and green that help define the tree's form. On the right side, surrounding the upper torso of the male figure, are circular shapes outlined in black which I believe were meant to represent trees. These are less realized than those on the left side and are not painted in.

The center of the entire composition and consequently at the center of the heart shape, is a circle whose circumference is energetically and repeatedly drawn with black crayon or oil pastel. Within this circle is rendered a small, pinkish

figure, whose back is positioned to roughly align with the black tree trunk of the central tree. Head tilted to the left, its face, like the two nude figures, is featureless. One leg is straight down, while the leg on the right is raised and bent downward at the knee. One arm is extended, and the other arm is not visible.

This overdrawn circle also loops down in ovoid strokes that cut across the profile head of a fourth human figure, also with a featureless face. The legs of this figure appear to be folded in a kneeling position and are partially cropped by the arced line of the heart outlined on the right. A coat with tails can be interpreted, draped over the kneeling figure's shoulders.⁸

Located toward the top left of the kneeling figure is a series of round shapes, modeled in pink/red and white. Small jots of black seem to indicate tree trunks, possibly an allusion to a small grove of trees, executed almost like a child's simplistic rendering of "lollipop trees" complete with short, vertical black jots for trunks. Interspersed with the pink/red colors are similar shapes in grey. Their uniform size, combined with a stacked symmetry of placement, is not convincingly organic in nature. The staggered symmetry of these uniform-sized boulder shapes is akin to the appearance of brick wall construction. Even the hue is reminiscent of the color of bricks. This aspect creates some ambiguity in their appearance. Other shapes, more loosely formed, are found to the right of the kneeling figure's profile.

The V point of the prominent heart shape outline in combination with the two figures' straight legs approximates the letter M. **(Fig. 6)** This is the first example of Duchamp's embedding one of his initials into his works, a practice he would continue throughout his career.

[click images to enlarge](#)



Figure 6

Detail of fig. 1, *Spring*: outline of M shape.

Part II

Spring is noteworthy in several ways. Its two leaping figures are overtly exuberant and make this Duchamp's most expressionistically emotional painting. Positioned on either side of the composition, streamlined and elongated to extend over most of the vertical dimension of the work, they create a framing device for the encircled central figure. That their faces are without features supports their function as a formal device, although without diminishing their symbolic intent.

The forceful circles drawn repeatedly around the central figure in the outlined heart shape visually emphasize the importance of this element, especially the circle's placement in the middle of the composition. On close examination, the rough quality of line points to the use of oil pastel or crayon applied over thick, dried oil paint, not to the blending-in that is usual in oil painting. In other words, these circles were drawn over the composition *after* it was painted (**Fig. 7**). Perhaps Duchamp came to realize that he could achieve a visceral effect by "roughly" circling this centrally placed element. In any case, it is clear that his intention was to emphasize this part of the painting.

click images to enlarge



Figure 7

Detail of fig. 1, *Spring*: crayon lines circling the central figure

Considering the relatively long time oils take to dry, it is conceivable that the painting was completed before the attributed date of early 1911. If this is the case, it would not be the first time Duchamp mistakenly dated one of his works.⁹

That being said, I would like to comment on Arturo Schwarz's interpretation regarding the possible intent behind the figure enclosed within a circle as representing Mercurius in a bottle. The figure of Mercurius (Mercury) was a commonly used alchemical image symbolizing the universal agent of transformation.¹⁰ Schwarz illustrates an eighteenth-century woodcut for visual comparison (**Fig. 8**).

[click images to enlarge](#)



Figure 8

Anonymous, *Mercurius in a Bottle*. Woodcut engraving for J. C. Barchusen's *Elementa chemiae*, Leiden, 1718.

Duchamp addressed his interest in alchemy on a variety of occasions

He responded to biographer Robert Lebel's question about his connection to the subject with the following statement: "If I have practiced alchemy it was in the only way it can be done now, that is without knowing it."¹¹

While some art historians agree on this interpretation, like most matters concerning Duchamp's creations, other viewpoints abound. Both Naumann and Duchamp biographer Calvin Tomkins reject Schwarz's alchemy theory in favor of the notion that *Spring* can be read as an affirmative statement about marriage.¹² Naumann suggests that the figure in the globe is possibly prophetic of the married couple's newborn-to-be.¹³

A different perspective is expressed by another Duchamp biographer, Alice Goldfarb Marquis, and art historian Jerrold Seigel, both of whom believe there is not one figure but "several dancing figures" in the circle.¹⁴ Pierre Cabanne, another expert and a personal friend of Duchamp's, says of the central circle in *Spring* that it contains "ill defined forms."¹⁵

An unusual, if not perplexing, interpretation of this circle

comes from philosopher and art historian Thierry de Duve. In his book *Pictorial Nominalism*, de Duve acknowledges other interpretations of the orb, including Schwarz's alchemy comparisons and Maurizio Calvesi's reference to vessels in Hieronymus Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights* (ca. 1500). De Duve's opinion is that it could well be inspired by the small circular convex mirror in Jan van Eyck's *Portrait of Giovanni Arnolfini and His Wife Giovanna Cenamani*, or *The Arnolfini Wedding Portrait* (1434).¹⁶ However unique a theory, especially because of the wedding connection, it seems an unlikely source considering that the famous convex mirror in van Eyck's painting reflects the images of three figures, the bride and groom as well as the painter himself, none remotely resembling the singular figure in the orb.

At this point, an examination of the specific emblem Schwarz identified is warranted. In 1718, Leiden chemistry professor Johann Conrad Barchusen had a series of seventy-eight emblems engraved, titled *Elementa chemiae*, which are meant to allegorically represent the specific process of alchemical transmutation known as "the wet way," as opposed to the shorter process called "the dry way."

The Mercurius emblem that Schwarz chose as comparable to the central figure in *Spring* is close to the end of Barchusen's sequence, at number seventy-five. The caption for this emblem has been translated as follows: "After much suffering and torment I was resurrected large and pure and immaculate."¹⁷ The sentiments associated with Barchusen's Mercurius do not mesh in an illustrative sense on any level, alchemical or otherwise, in terms of celebrating newlyweds.

I would like to offer another observation on this small figure, however unconventional, along with a different general point of view about *Spring*. The positioning of the legs—one straight, one bent and the only visible arm outstretched and extended within a small patch of bright paint directly above a

small black line where the hand would appear—are uncannily familiar.

These forms, including a head-like shape tilted to the left, very closely approximates the reclining nude holding a lantern in *Étant donnés*. With this visual correspondence in mind, the circle can be understood as an allusion to a peephole placed in the center of the figurative framing device through which a scene is viewed, a vantage point consistent with his final creation. In addition but possibly just coincidental, the yellow linear device in *Spring*, which extends vertically below the outstretched arm on the right, might be seen as a visual symbol of a waterfall. **(Fig. 9)**

[click images to enlarge](#)



Figure 9

Detail of fig. 1, *Spring*: outline of central figure in relation to the nude and other elements in *Étant donnés*

The repetitive, roughly drawn lines that drop down to include the kneeling figure form a shape that is roughly comparable to the opening in the brick wall of *Étant donnés*. **(Fig. 10)**

[click images to enlarge](#)



Figure 10

Étant donnés (Given: 1. *The Waterfall*, 2. *The Illuminating Gas*), 1946–66, view through the door of the installation. Mixed media. Philadelphia Museum of Art.

The representation of a kneeling figure had lasting importance for Duchamp. In 1967 he produced eighteen drypoint etchings which are included in the second volume of Arturo Schwarz's *Complete Works, The Large Glass and Related Works*. Half of these were devoted to *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*, while the other half formed a suite called *The Lovers*.

Of the latter, one print depicts a female figure kneeling as if in prayer; significantly, it is titled *The Bride Stripped Bare*. Besides the obvious connection with the full title for the *The Large Glass*, (*The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*), the drawing creates a full-circle connection with the first work of Duchamp's to bear this title, a drawing produced in 1912 while he was in Munich. These 1967 prints were some of Duchamp's last artworks, created before the public was made privy to the *Étant donnés* installation, which, as he had specified, happened only after his death. Whatever his intentions, it is noteworthy that Duchamp in his final days would return to the theme of kneeling/prayer imagery first addressed in depth in his early allegorical paintings,

many of which depicted figures in this position.

Let us return to the meaning of the two leaping figures in *Spring*. In the first comprehensive catalog of Duchamp's work Robert Lebel speculates that the painting is a response to the loss of the youthful closeness of his siblings: "Both his brothers were married and his sister wedded a pharmacist from Rouen in 1911: these were just so many assaults upon the ties of childhood for one who was to remain so long the "bachelor."¹⁸

I believe the most original supposition as to what inspired *Spring* is offered by Alice Goldfarb Marquis in her biography of Duchamp, *Marcel Duchamp: Eros, C'est la vie*. Prior to painting *Spring* in early 1911, Duchamp had a relationship with a model, Jeanne Serre, who is believed to be one of the figures represented in the 1910 painting *The Bush*. This relationship produced Duchamp's only child, born February 6, 1911. Marquis believes it is possible that the birth of this child, named Yo, and the end of the affair might be the actual inspiration for *Spring*.¹⁹

Schwarz and Cabanne share the opinion that the two reaching figures represent Suzanne and Marcel, Schwarz insisting that Marcel was opposed to the wedding. And while these bordering figures may or may not be Duchamp's primary focus for *Spring*, they are clearly presented as symbolic of something—seen in the pair's action of reaching upward.

The specific, emotive body language is another thing that separates this painting from Duchamp's other allegorical works of 1910–1911. Those paintings are obscure in their symbolism. The glowing hand in the *Portrait of Dr. Dumouchel* is inexplicable beyond, perhaps, referring to this doctor's "miraculous curative powers"; the relationships between the couples in *Paradise*, *The Bush*, and *Baptism* are all seemingly symbolic in intent, and yet they are stubbornly ambiguous. The

odd, Buddha-like figure in *Draft on the Japanese Apple Tree* is bafflingly arcane.

The essay Schwarz wrote for *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp* describes the *Spring* figures' arms "lifted to the sky in a Y-shaped figure."²⁰ Actually, the arms of the two figures do not form the shape of any letter, much less Y, as they reach up into the leaves of the tree. However there is a Y shape drawn in the space between the figures' arms. (**Fig. 11**)

[click images to enlarge](#)



Figure 11

Detail of fig. 1, *Spring*: outline of Y shape.

This constitutes the top connection of the two orbs of the linear heart shape while doubling as the image of the centrally placed tree trunk. Returning to the small encircled figure, we see that not only is it placed in the painting's center, but it is also at the center of the heart shaped symbol. Surely the symbolic metaphor of something being "central to one's heart" would not escape Duchamp's attention in this time frame.

In writings about *Spring*, one often encounters interpretations of the purpose for the upward stretch of the two figures. Are they reaching for fruit from the Tree of Life, or perhaps the apple in the Garden of Eden? No, there is no discernable fruit of any kind in this painting. (The absence of fruit makes sense in view of the title *Spring*, when fruit is not mature and ripe for picking.)

The top center of the canvas is a discernibly lighter yellow/white than the green abstracted “leaves” on either side. In other words, strong sunlight is clearly suggested as it filters through the tree leaves. I propose that the two figures are enacting, allegorically, the act of “reaching for the sun.”

Duchamp addressed the subject of the sun at least two other times. In 1911, the same year *Spring* was conceived, Duchamp illustrated several poems by Jules Laforgue, one of which is *Once More to This Star*, also translated as *Another for the Sun*. Jerrold Seigel offers this synopsis of the poem: “The sun exchanges insults with the earthlings it threatens to warm no longer . . . once the old waning star has died.”²¹ Another example is a simple drawing from 1914 entitled *To Have an Apprentice in the Sun*. On a sheet of music staff paper, it depicts a figure struggling uphill on a bicycle. Duchamp believed it noteworthy enough to include it in his first compilation of reproductions of significant works, known as the Box of 1914.

Part III

After painting the two versions of *Spring* Duchamp switched gears stylistically and executed notes, works, and studies that culminated in *The Large Glass*, as well as his final painting in 1918, *Tu m’*. Duchamp began developing his ideas through extensive note-taking for future projects. The late Walter Hopps, who was responsible for organizing Duchamp’s first retrospective in the United States, provided a succinct

analysis for the overall import of these notes: “Although they were not published until 1934, some of the notes in *The Green Box* date back to before 1915 [the year] when Duchamp started fabricating *The Large Glass*. These notes are the complete scheme for and the literary form of *The Large Glass*, which is itself like a circuit diagram or even cybernetic abstraction. In *Étant donnés*, *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors*, *Even* becomes a strange and magical three-dimensional tableau, and Duchamp’s magnum opus is now complete: a work that exists in conceptual, diagrammatic, and figurative form.”²²

It is conceivable that after he realized *the Large Glass* and *Tu m’*—in effect crossing them off his “to do” list—Duchamp gave himself the rest of his life to actualize his third and final pre-planned major project. In doing so he freed himself to pursue other interests that would occupy him over the years: the “production” of a variety of readymades, his close involvement with the presentation of ground-breaking art exhibitions which radically challenged accepted practices, and of course the pursuit of his lifelong fascination with the game of chess. The notion that he planned out his entire artistic output before its execution can be compared to the method of a superior chess player, who has the capacity to figure out his moves and strategies well beforehand. Most significantly, this mode of operation would grant him the one thing he claimed to value over all else: personal freedom.

Another look at *Network of Stoppages*—Duchamp’s 1914 painting produced over the second version of *Spring*— is warranted in order to understand his creative process. **(Fig. 12)**

click images to enlarge



Figure 12

Network of Stoppages, 1914. Oil and pencil on canvas, 58 5/8 x 77 7/8 in. (148.9 x 197.7 cm.). Philadelphia Museum of Art.

It is revealing how several different projects dovetailed in one another. Put another way, in quick succession, different projects were manifest in a single work. With his pre-existing notes for *The Large Glass* (its dimensions, the “capillary tubes” element, and the premise for *3 Standard Stoppages*, in particular) this was not a matter of having one epiphany after another. This was the application of pre-formulated thought born of copious note-making.

In 1913 Duchamp had developed his first schematic plans for *The Large Glass*. A year later, the experiment in his notes on The Idea of Fabrication would culminate in the production of three ruler/templates called *3 Standard Stoppages*. This information and these devices would be applied to *Network of Stoppages*. Black bands of paint were applied to both sides of the second *Spring*, producing a space that is exactly half-scale of *The Large Glass*’s dimensions. The three constructed *Stoppages* templates were used to create the *Network of Stoppages* in a configuration that would later serve two functions for *The Large Glass*: the small circles were inserted throughout the array of curved lines that indicated an aerial view of the placement of the nine “bachelors” (also known as Malic Moulds). The linear design is also the first rendition of the *Large Glass*’s “capillary tube” element, the series of lines incised into *Large Glass* which traverse the forms that constitute the bachelors/Malic Moulds.

Here we have a total of six interlocking projects that evolve into one another with a common goal in mind: the second version of *Spring*; 3 Standard Stoppages templates; *Network of Stoppages* painting, which includes *The Large Glass* in half-scale dimensions, the positioning of the bachelors, and the first version of the capillary tubes.

In relation to his later work, *Spring* can be chronologically positioned. If it is not the first-draft study for *Étant donnés*, it is at least a premonition of some of the most important visual elements central to this last work: a reclining figure, one arm raised and holding aloft what I perceive to be a lit lantern near a waterfall, as glimpsed through a peephole that must be viewed through an opening in a constructed brick wall. The cloaked kneeling figure in *Spring* represents the voyeur, a well-known subject of interest to the artist. In fact, the classic pose of a voyeur is a person crouching or kneeling in order to spy through a keyhole. Because *Étant donnés* must be viewed through two peepholes, the viewer is essentially transformed into a voyeur—one who takes in a scene privately.²³

Another general visual interpretation of *Spring* symbolically situates it in a time/space continuum, an allusion to the eventual realization of *Étant donnés*. The two border figures are situated on the green and yellow circular shapes formed by the negative space on either side of the large outlined heart symbol, in other words, “hills.” Viewed thus, the circle/peephole with the small figure can be *perspectively* construed as being far off in the distance. We know that at the time he painted *Spring*, Duchamp was interested in allegory and symbolism and was sufficiently intrigued by Symbolist poetry to do a series of illustrations based on poems by Symbolist poet Jules Laforgue. Perhaps symbolically this circle/peephole device illustrates something taking place in the future—“over the hills and far away”—at a time when Duchamp planned to actually construct the *Étant donnés*

installation.

Based on the belief that *Spring* is in fact the first study for *Étant donnés* and that it was executed even before studies for *The Large Glass* had commenced, perhaps its intention as merely a wedding gift is an oversimplification of Duchamp's more serious concern. Knowing its long-range significance, he could have given it to his favorite sister for safekeeping. I believe Duchamp intentionally inscribed only his sister's name to emphasize her sole ownership if the marriage did not work out. (If this were the case, it proved to be a wise move and is an example of Duchamp's astute forward thinking; the marriage ended in divorce seven years later.) Through the course of Duchamp's life and extensive travels, many works of his were lost, yet Suzanne still had this painting in her possession at the time of her death in 1963.

Spring was never included in any version of *Boîte-en-valise*, the purpose of which was the presentation (at small scale) of all of the works he believed of import in his career. One other major work, *Étant donnés*, was left out, for the reason that only after he died, as per his instructions, was it to be made known. Thus, it seems appropriate that because his last, secret masterpiece would have to be absent from his portable museum, the first painting, *Spring*, that led to it was excluded as well.

With these observations in mind, it is my assertion that Marcel Duchamp's intent was to conclude his artistic career by coming full circle back to his original study, *Spring*. His artistic interests and aspirations remained true to his early allegorical works, which had, in fact, eclipsed his earlier forays into landscape and portraiture. The allegorical works were his first truly original expressions. *Spring* is representative of his study for his ultimate allegory—*Étant donnés*.

I believe that his major works, beginning with *Spring* in 1911,

along with 3 *Standard Stoppages* and the readymade concept, were planned out in the mind and in his notes in a concentrated period of time before their execution by several years and even decades later.

Granted, it is almost incomprehensible that an artist so early in his career could possibly have schemed, organized, and internalized such an intense cavalcade of interrelated artworks or made plans to unfurl future creations over the course of his lifetime. On the other hand, the incomparable and ever-elusive Marcel Duchamp was possibly the only artist who could attempt and pull off such a timed-release, sustained process of creation.

© copyright 2008 Kurt Godwin. All rights reserved.

§ My thanks to Francis M. Naumann for his support and encouragement and to my editor, Julia Moore, for helping me craft this article.

Notes

¹ *Spring* was painted in Neuilly, France. Arturo Schwarz, *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp*, second rev. ed. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1970): 426

² Francis M. Naumann, *The Mary Sisler Collection*. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1984: 172. In 1914 Duchamp applied black paint over the original left and right margins of the painting and rotated it counterclockwise 90°. The most recognizable image is that of a female nude, seen on her back because of the rotation. The rest of what remains of the painting is blurred, as if by a wash of thinned paint. The details, which must have been quite clear originally, are now mostly unrecognizable. The “recumbent” female figure is the

exception. She appears to be more fully realized in detail than the woman in the first *Spring*.

³Michael Taylor, *Marcel Duchamp – Etant donnees*, (Philadelphia Museum of Art Publishing Department, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: 2009), 23

⁴ After Suzanne died 1963, *Spring* came into the possession of the New York City art gallery Cordier & Ekstrom and then was bought for the Mary Sisler Collection. Duchamp scholar Arturo Schwarz collection acquired it from Sisler and in time donated it to the Israel Museum of Art, where it is today. Schwarz notes that the painting was relined in the 1960s, covering over the inscription. Arturo Schwarz, *Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp* Rev. and expanded paperback edition (New York: Delano Greenidge Editions, 2000): 546.

⁵ This drawing study is almost the exact same size as *Spring*, measuring 25 5/8 x 18 3/4 inches. The simple contour of the nude is so closely copied at the same scale that it is not inconceivable that it was used as a direct transfer for the painting. The figure is allegedly a model named Reina who appears in a similar pose in an engraving by Duchamp's oldest brother, Jacques Villon (Schwarz, 2000: 546.)

⁶ Although it is often asserted that there is fruit of some sort in this tree depiction, none in fact is represented. The title of the work specifies spring.

⁷ Naumann, *Sisler Collection*: 139.

⁸ That Duchamp would depict a kneeling figure is significant. With the exception of the *Portrait of Dr. Dumouchel*, the first painting in his allegorical style, there are kneeling figures in all of Duchamp's allegorical works. Further, in 1910, the same year of the Dumouchel portrait, he produced four pen-and-ink drawings, all titled *Study for Kneeling Nude*.

⁹ Speaking with Pierre Cabanne about the illustration he made for Jules Laforgue's *Once More to This Star*, Duchamp stated, "I had put a stupid date below, 1912, when it had been done in November 1911, and I dedicated it to [F. C.] Torrey in 1913. When you compare the dates, you say, 'that's impossible.' An amusing mess." Pierre Cabanne, *Conversations with Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1971): 46.

¹⁰ Arturo Schwarz, *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp*, second rev. ed. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1970): 238.

¹¹ John F. Moffitt, *Alchemist of the Avant-Garde: The Case of Marcel Duchamp* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003): 9.

¹² Rudolf Kuenzli and Francis M. Naumann, eds., *Marcel Duchamp: Artist of the Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 1989): 25, and Calvin Tomkins, *Duchamp: A Biography* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1996): 53.

¹³ Francis M. Naumann, *The Mary and William Sisler Collection* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1984): 138.

¹⁴ Alice Goldfarb Marquis, *Marcel Duchamp: The Bachelor Stripped Bare* (Boston: MFA Publications, 2002: 59, and Jerrold Seigel, *The Private Worlds of Marcel Duchamp: Desire, Liberation, and the Self in Modern Culture* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1995): 34.

¹⁵ Pierre Cabanne, *Duchamp & Co.*, trans. Peter Snowdon (New York: Rizzoli Publications, 1997): 34.

¹⁶ Thierry de Duve, *Pictorial Nominalism: On Marcel Duchamp's Passage from Painting to the Readymade* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991): 53.

¹⁷. Alexander Roob, *The Hermetic Museum: Alchemy & Mysticism* (Cologne, Germany: Taschen, 1997): 145.

¹⁸ Robert Lebel, *Marcel Duchamp*, 1st American ed. (New York: Paragraphic Books, 1959): 6.

¹⁹ Calvin Tompkins, *Duchamp: A Biography* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1996): 45.

²⁰ Schwarz, 1970: 90.

²¹ Seigel: 34.

²² Walter Hopps, Susan Davidson, Ann Temkin. *Cornell/Duchamp*. . . *In Resonance* (Stuttgart, Germany: Hatje Cantz, 1998, and New York: D.A.P. Distributed Art Publishers, 1999): 75.

²³ In his book *Ingres: Erotic Drawings*, art historian and critic Stephane Guegan includes a section devoted to Ingres and voyeurism. The chapter concludes, in part, with the following statement: "The theme of the vulnerable, reclining woman, viewed from the front or back, left other traces, often of a passably licentious aura, among the drawings Ingres bequeathed to his birthplace. On one is written: 'One who looks in at the door.' This confirms Ingres' calculated voyeurism, more subtle than is sometimes thought." Stephane Guegan, *Ingres: Erotic Drawings* (Paris, Flammarion, 2006): 59. The subject of Ingres' interest is noteworthy in relation to Duchamp's. Included in Duchamp's final series of etchings, *The Lovers*, he paid homage to a few artists he apparently held in high esteem. One print is based on a work by Rodin, another on a Courbet. But he must have had particular admiration for Ingres, for he based two compositions on paintings by the older master.