

Marcel Duchamp in 1962

Early in 1962 Marcel Duchamp visited the students at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia.

I had seen his works at the Philadelphia Museum of Art when I was 12 years old and taking classes there. Now Marcel come into each studio and viewed our works. I was doing a series of "Housewives" entangled with shower nozzles, toilets, irons, etc. in an expressionistic way. He thought they were a mix of Matta and deKooning. I did like both of them. In fact the summer before while on a travel grant from the Academy I had bought two Matta Color Lithographs for \$25. each in Rome.

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Figure 1
"Marcel Duchamp and
the Academy Bones,"
photography by Rodger LaPelle, 1962

He then spoke in the auditorium about his art and said that now he was an underground artist. I was the only one with a camera, and posed him next to the Academy Skeleton. I took one shot and filed it away. This year it dawned on me to show it and publish it after 38 years.

In 1968 I started to sell my work in Cordier & Ekstrom Gallery in the penthouse over the old Park Bernet Auction House in New

York. Duchamp and Man Ray, Noguchi, Bearden, Chryssa etc. were Arne Ekstrom's artists then and here I was sharing a Gallery with Duchamp. There was, I remember, a great exhibition of Chess, and once Arne showed me the Valise of Duchamp in his back office.