

Response to 'Duchamp and Dreier'

William Anastasi responds:

I was pleased to learn that Katherine Dreier has been the subject of a doctoral dissertation. If there is evidence showing that the Tomkins and Marquis accounts of her relationship with Duchamp are off base, adjustments would be welcome. Dr. Angeline states that "correspondence between Dreier and Duchamp does reveal that the *Large Glass* was indeed accidentally broken, unbeknownst to both Duchamp and Dreier..." This is the explanation given by Duchamp to J.J. Sweeney and Pierre Cabanne. But Duchamp's marvelous all-weather disclaimers proclaim that *Each word I tell you is stupid and false* and *All in all I'm a pseudo, that's my characteristic*. He was begging posterity to question everything about him, and particularly his statements. I have not succeeded in reaching Dr. Angeline to learn of his sources, but if he is citing letters from the artist, these disclaimers may apply. In any case, (and especially in view of these famous remarks) letters cannot *reveal* that the *Large Glass* was accidentally broken, they can only say so.

Marcel Duchamp was clearly creating his own myth. A telling attestation of this can be found in the opening paragraph of William A. Camfield's *Marcel Duchamp: Fountain* (Houston: The Menil Collection, 1989). Before embarking on a 180-page dissertation about this enormously influential work from 1917, Mr. Camfield cautions, "We do not even know with absolute certainty that Duchamp was the artist – he himself once attributed it to a female friend..." For all we can tell, Duchamp may have been in collaboration with female friends even at this early date.

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