Response to “The Magic Number”

Dear John,

Thank you for the thorough reading of my pieces (yup, and Hirschhorn is certainly an intelligent enough artist not to have fallen into my little trap!). There is, of course, a very detailed article on the 8/9 bachelors in the pages of *Tout-Fait*: The Bachelors: Pawns in Duchamp’s Great Game

In terms of the 1964 edition, your thoughts are intriguing, yet the numbers do not quite add up. It becomes pretty tricky. The number of the entire set of Ready-mades (and semi-ready-mades, etc.) in this edition is 14. Each of them is numbered 1/8-8/8. Yet in addition to those there are three replicas reserved for artist (MD), publisher (A. Schwarz) and the Philadelphia Museum. On top of that, there are two more replicas for museum exhibitions, bringing the number up to 13 (!). Research throughout the years has led us to conclude that a much higher number was produced (some stolen from Schwarz’s warehouse, missing the small copperplate or the case and/or the signatures. All in all, it’s a pretty fuzzy affair.

Best, Thomas Girst