

Unmaking the Museum: Marcel Duchamp's Readymades in Context

As a senior art history major and studio art minor in the Binghamton University Scholars Program, I completed an innovative senior honors project under the advisement of Professor John Tagg in the Art History Department.

Acting as curator, I assembled an online exhibition of Marcel Duchamp's Readymades, creating a web site complete with an exhibition catalogue introduction and individual entries. Utilizing this verbally and visually engaging format for my project helps to further underline my approach. My study not only approaches the readymades from a scholarly perspective, but also from the point of view of presenting the challenge of Duchamp's work in a real, public context. Many art historians have explored the ideas behind the Readymades, but much of the resulting documentation focuses so heavily on Duchamp's philosophy that the reader often forgets the physical impact of the Readymades. In response to this past tendency, I consider the intervention of Duchamp's art works in the tangible art museum context, hoping to clarify their meanings and remind the reader of their original surroundings and the viewer's relationship to the pieces within this space. We must never forget that the Readymades are concrete objects made to be seen in a concrete museum space. This was the space in which Duchamp sought to intervene and in which, therefore, we have to understand the readymade as an act and a concept in all its philosophical complexities.

I invite others to visit my online exhibition in the hope that it will broaden the dialogue and exchange and renew the shock of Duchamp's objects beyond the boundaries of purely academic study

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an online
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