

**More Conversation from
"Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp"
and Thoughts on the Values We Pursue in Creation**

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It was recently pondered whether art has acted as Ivory Tower, thereby subtly altering the creative motivations of "artists." They unwittingly believe, whether consciously or unconsciously, that they are on the bright side of knowledge, confronting society's universal values and tinkering with the universal characterisation of "artists." This article was inspired by the 1920 book "Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp" by French art critic Pierre Cabanne. In his lifetime, Duchamp seldom went to exhibitions or fantasise about them. He was anti-art and "anti-arrogance."

1. "Death of the author" is both introspection and a topic

"[...]fundamentally, I don't believe in the creative function of the artist. He's a man like any other. It's his job to do certain things, but the businessman does certain things also, you understand?" (p. 16)

"[...]I don't ascribe to the artist that sort of social role in which he feels obligated to make something, where he owes himself to the public. I have a horror of such considerations." (p. 81)

Duchamp condemned "artist sociality" and that the phrase "creation" of art made him cringe at explaining it. "Death of the Author" sometimes indulges readers to over-interpret and misinterpret the

artist's intention and extend the work indefinitely; while "duality" is the illusion of artistic creation, we must always be opinionated on certain issues and feelings. Is the habit of holding an absolute personal stance a type of illusion?

The term "sociality" is taken seriously. When we create, we may express or wish for a specific spirit, truth, or social reaction to be realised. When a common reaction from the public is elicited, a sense of accomplishment will be dangled as an attachment to art "making". The eagerness to realise sociality underpins the desire to strike a mark of existence or significance in art history. "Death of the Author" not only ridicules the audience, but it also serves as a tool for introspection. Are we also, most of the time, living in our delusions?

Whether artists, as forerunners in life-reflection, can avoid self-moving and self-flattering - this is a question Duchamp left for posterity.

2. Flatten yourself and accept "cheesiness"

Cabanne: When you were young, didn't you ever experience the desire to be artistically cultured?

"[...]I would have wanted to work, but deep down I'm enormously lazy. I like living, breathing, better than working. I don't think that the work I've done can have any social importance whatsoever in the future. Therefore, if you wish, my art would be that of living: each second, each

breath is a work which is inscribed no-where, which is neither visual nor cerebral." (p. 72)

"Pure chance interested me as a way of going against logical reality[...]" (p. 46)

In his conversations with Pierre Cabanne, Duchamp frequently mentioned the motive of "self-entertainment." In my creative career, there seemed to be a need to fit into certain characters, or else I could not live up to the title of "making art." Duchamp worked on "Large Glass" for eight years, denying aesthetics and timeliness, and allowing the work to develop naturally, even after the delivery person accidentally broke the glass. Duchamp had a broader perspective instead of dwelling on the "uselessness" of artworks, and despised that artists and works must have social significance. Throughout his life, he not only challenged art, but more importantly, the people involved and universal values.

In contrast, recent generations like to "add value" to their works by relating various schools of thought and mythologies. Can we relieve ourselves by admitting that self-entertainment is the purest pursuit and being humble?

3. Paintings of predecessors are dead

"[...]People like Rembrandt or Cimabue worked every day for forty or fifty years, and it is we, posterity, who have decided that this was very

good because it was painted by Cimabue or Rembrandt. Any little bit of trash by Cimabue is still very much admired[...]" (p. 69)

"[...]For me, the history of art is what remains of an epoch in a museum, but it's not necessarily the best of that epoch, and fundamentally it's probably even the expression of the mediocrity of the epoch[...]" (p. 67)

Duchamp did not expect to be worshiped, as artists should not be. Despite the fact that in art history writing, objects serve as evidence of living in a specific time period, there is no relationship between the art and proof of nobility. There are too many structures and rules imposed by the success of predecessors. We grew up in their shadow and lacked the ability to discern history's capability of placing artists on remote pedestals. Duchamp examined art history and artistic figures closely and condemned the nurturing relationship between artists and audiences, which resulted in times when audiences connived at pedestal set-ups, and thus the artist relied on audiences for his existence.

Duchamp spotted the dramas in the art world, and a century later, unsurprisingly, he became one of art history's "great artists." Living like a monk, Duchamp's spiritual realm transcended prosperity, art theory, and aesthetics. Perhaps because he took a daring first step in art history, he brought a singularity to modern and contemporary art in his quest to discover the truth of the universe. Thinking about

society from a higher ground can be both pleasurable and intoxicating for an artist. What else is the purpose of creation after we surrender our high and mighty character?

Work citation

1) Cabanne, Pierre, and Marcel Duchamp. Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp. Vol. 303. Da Capo Press, Incorporated, 1987.

2) Cabanne, Pierre, and Rui Yun Wang. 杜尚訪談錄 / Du Shang Fang Tan Lu. 廣西師範大學出版社, Gui Lin, Guang Xi Shi Fan Da Xue Chu Ban She, 2001.