THE EXILES

OF MARCEL DUCHAMP

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For Zoë

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INTRODUCTION

THE PRESENT WORK places the art of Marcel Duchamp in re-
lation to the conditions of exile. Famous for his independence, ex-
pressed through a lifelong commitment to itinerancy, Duchamp
remained possessed by what he called a "spirit of expatriation."
This provocative self-description has received its due within the
many biographical treatments of Duchamp, which have plumbed
the depths of his resolutely sovereign existence that expressed it-
self through perpetual wandering, refusal of traditional cultural
conventions, and a committed antinationalist pacifism. But the
challenge remains to take seriously this spirit of expatriation at the
level of his artistic practice, the consideration of which is the am-
bition of this study.

Far from an all-encompassing monographic text, this book
presents a series of interconnected and developed arguments
about a particular set of projects by Duchamp. The principal works
under consideration include the readymade constructions of the
late 1910s and 1920s, the installation designs for the two surrealist
exhibitions, one in Paris in 1938, the other in New York in 1942, and
the "portable museum," *La boîte-en-valise,* undertaken roughly be-
tween the years of 1935 and 1946. For the most part, Duchamp
created these projects—selected here as case studies for their re-
markable ability to manifest, define, and exploit the terms of exile—
while the artist was living as an expatriate in New York, Buenos
Aires, and occupied France, during catastrophic periods of world
war and within cultural environments of hypertrophic nationalism.
In response to these circumstances, Duchamp deployed an art of
mobile objects and disjunctive spaces, constructing experimental

installations and mixed-media assemblages that were extremely sensitive to matters of location, framing, and (de)contextualization. These works not only express the experiential anguish of geopolitical displacement, but put that force of displacement to their own radical ends, modeling new modes of being released from the rigid structuring of identity. While the ways in which Duchamp's art acknowledged and challenged modern systems of discipline, including those of capitalism, gender formation, artistic production, and perception, have been rigorously and brilliantly analyzed,[1] his art's relation to exile and nationalism has again surprisingly gone unstudied. This relation serves here as the sustained object of attention.

Assuming several interrelated meanings in this study, exile first of all unfolds from the complex systems of displacement that materialized within Duchamp's artistic practice. By avoiding all forms of self-same identity, secure relation to place, and notions of ideal unity, which were culturally coded and exploited by the pressures of nationalism, Duchamp's practice functioned as an oppositional force, even while his definition of exile accrued highly differentiated meanings. Through it, he discovered the means to define an antinational political commitment and, more broadly, an ethical exigency to reject modernity's systems of regimentation at the levels of representation, subjectivity, and collective belonging—all of which concerned Duchamp deeply during these years. This analytic framework reveals the sometimes surprising affinities and at other times irreconcilable differences between Duchamp's practice and the writings of Theodor Adorno, Georges Bataille, Walter Benjamin, André Breton, Jacques Lacan, André Malraux, and Raymond Roussel, among others, which compose a far-reaching, contemporaneous intellectual field within which forms of exile were systematically and diversely conceptualized and, in some cases, actively engaged politically. Through a historiographic approach

that places Duchamp's work in intimate connection with those theoretical practices, and also with the avant-garde projects of Dada and surrealism, this reading attempts to situate it all the more specifically in its cultural and historical frame, even while it struggles against whatever would locate it securely, whether that entails complacent interpretive conclusion or historical categorization. This tension—between the historian's will toward interpretive ends and art's resistance to final destinations—I hope remains alive within my text, which is pledged to forging a deeply analytical argument as much as it is dedicated, in turn, to respecting the very refusal of the arrest of meaning to which the most radical cultural projects of early twentieth-century modernity, and particularly the art of Duchamp are profoundly committed. I try to acknowledge throughout this study, additionally, that Duchamp's practice embodied and elaborated its own theoretical positions, thus defying any facile application of exterior formulations that might otherwise divert the endeavor to bring into proximity his art and the larger cultural and historical environment in which it operated.

Duchamp crystallized the experience of exile within the structural and phenomenological conditions of the artwork itself, sometimes by projecting it into a state of mobility, at other times by materializing an internal liminality. He also allegorized it through the critical internalization and experimental mobilization of photographic reproduction and museological conventions. The consideration of these two institutions—of photography and the museum—in relation to the historical avant-garde forms two sites of systematic inquiry here, which the first chapter engages historically through an examination of the contemporaneous theoretical projects of Walter Benjamin and André Malraux. While the consciousness of these museological and technological institutions has recently informed understandings of the critical dimension of modernist and

postmodernist art, Duchamp in fact invited these frameworks in to his field of practice early on and conceived them as historically constituted in relation to political and nation-state identity. These forms of institutionalization and technological reproducibility operated historically to define the national subject and generate new markets, which Duchamp's art variously exposes for analysis. But they also harbored forces that threatened the very dispersion of the self within a field of infinite exchangeability, both troubling the capitalist field and exacerbating the conditions of geopolitical displacement, which his work also put to critical task. Duchamp at once resisted the instrumentalization of identity within those institutions and internalized their structures for his own purposes. He employed photography and museums both to reconstitute a self against its complete loss in the face of dislocation and to pose its decentered status against nationalism's fanatical attempts to secure a unified subject and collective identity. Consequently, for Duchamp, exile took on a conflicted group of meanings, figuring as a sign of melancholy anguish as much as a vehicle of hopeful resistance. That Duchamp's art could pursue multiple courses at once—demonstrating both the capacity for an analytic recognition of the museum's and photography's wide range of functions and effects, and the ability to reroute them toward subversive ends—represents its wonderful complexity. This slippery doubleness also reveals his practice's remarkable agility in sustaining contradiction, sometimes at the deepest and most provocative levels, which this project aims not to resolve, but to open up productively.

There is no doubt that the confluence of recent historical developments over the last few decades has only increased the relevancy of exile as an object of study. Owing to our present position in the age of globalization—defined by growing and ever further differentiated forms of migration, the simultaneous rupture and

reenforcement of national boundaries, the continual advancement of deracinating communications technologies, and the planetary expansion of the institutions of economic inequality—exile has become an urgent topic to consider, and to reconsider historically. For some, it even suggests a new political program.[2] Invigorated by these historical turns, this book has also been energized by recent movements in installation-based artistic practice, conceptual forms of institutional critique, and experimental curatorial projects and exhibition designs from the 1960s forward, as well as by the art-historical attention that has lately been paid to them. Add to this assemblage of disciplines and practices the intertwined formations of poststructuralist analysis and postcolonial studies, which have also focused on national identity and exile, and there unfolds the expansive intellectual range that grants the subject of exile its extraordinary significance in contemporary culture and discourse and which motivates my own thinking. Yet the present work is by no means a mere reflection of, or even a methodical engagement with these framing conditions; rather, its ambition is to consider how Duchamp's spirit of expatriation animated his artistic practice in all of its historical specificity and conceptual reach, and to demonstrate and analyze with all due sensitivity its formal complexity, theoretical originality, and ethico-political significance within some of the darkest periods of twentieth-century modernity.

The book's first of four chapters examines Duchamp's "portable museum," *La boîte-en-valise,* a suitcase containing miniature reproductions of all his life's work up until the mid-1930s. This chapter assumes the task of opening up the study's problematic, preceding the discussion of chronologically earlier work because it represents the artist's most ambitious and expansive examination of the conditions of exile. Constructed during World War II and during Duchamp's own corresponding dislocation, *La boîte-en-valise*

parsed the demands of exile and geographical mobility within its complex material structure. Its portability, collapsible status, and deracinated photographic condition anticipated and fulfilled the requirements that accompanied the forced exodus from northern France in May 1940, when Duchamp, like thousands of others, fled the Nazi invasion of Paris and became a refugee. But more than merely responsive to those traumatic events, the suitcase represents an extensive meditation upon modern art's tendency toward itinerancy, by which Duchamp correlated the *Boîte*'s interior structures with emerging market forces, exhibition imperatives, and technological advances in reproducibility.

For Walter Benjamin, who also fled Paris in the summer of 1940, photography accelerated art's exhibition value through its reproductive dispersal, which critically negated traditional conventions of originality, secure location, and ritualized reception that might otherwise guarantee the collective belonging that had become increasingly problematic during the 1930s. Through it, remarkably, Benjamin articulated his own experience of exile. This homology between geopolitical displacement and reproductive dispersal resonates profoundly with Duchamp's traveling suitcase. Duchamp's project also intersects with specific modern developments of the museum and *its* use of photography, particularly as evidenced in Malraux's writings in the 1930s, later culminating in his book, *Le musée imaginaire*. Malraux's "museum without walls," as it was translated in English, represents a further instance of dislocation mediated by museological decontextualization (one very different from Benjamin's model), which I compare and contrast to Duchamp's "portable museum." For Duchamp, the embrace of these forces of dislocation within exile became both a means to shore up a precarious subjectivity and a sign of its ineluctable dispersal. While this conclusion suggests a certain paradox, such ten-

sion reveals precisely the unyielding multivalence and conceptual mobility of Duchamp's practice that refuses the complacency of easy resolution or any final resting place.

The second chapter looks back to Duchamp's self-professed "spirit of expatriation" around World War I, particularly in terms of how it infused his *Sculptures for Traveling* of 1918, which he brought with him when he escaped what he perceived as the intolerable American nationalism in New York and fled to Buenos Aires. With these pieces, Duchamp intensified the structural decontextualization already present in his early readymades. His first readymades of 1913–14—such as the *Bottle Rack* or the *Bicycle Wheel*—internalized the circulatory mobility of objects within modern capitalism by inserting commercial objects into either the domestic economy of the home studio or the institutional context of the art gallery. The *Sculptures for Traveling*—the untitled string and rubber assemblage built from cut-up bathing caps and the *Small Glass,* both 1918—went further by approaching the terms of formal mutability in their very materiality, whereby the artwork unfolded to an endless relay between assemblage and architectural frame, artwork and everyday life, rendering each indeterminate in turn. My larger claim is that such a remarkably shifting artistic morphology allegorized a relationality that resisted the essentialism of identity; for Duchamp's "expatriation" represented a rupture with the entire organizational system of the modern construction of the subject (encoded in the root term "*pater*"), which reaches out to paternal authority, religious order, the patrimony of traditional artistic lineages, the hierarchy of labor, and the patriotism of nation-state identity. This matrix of disavowals—the refusal of national, religious, filial, and even identitarian models of the subject—links Duchamp's work with other Dadaist practices, and it picks up specifically on the writings of Raymond Roussel, who connected the

thematics of travel to the liberating structure of displacement within his prose. This chapter also considers the resonance between Duchamp's "expatriation" and what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari term "deterritorialization," which names a process of escape from the disciplinary regimes of the family, capitalism, and nationalism. Yet Duchamp simultaneously avoided any naive utopianism suggested by the seeming promise of pure difference beyond capital by acknowledging, through the *Sculptures*' reassertion of the frame, that the artwork's expression – as much as the subject's definition – is ever open to new forms of capture.

Duchamp's experimental installation design for the 1938 Exposition international du surréalisme in Paris forms the subject of the third chapter. By hanging 1,200 coal sacks from the ceiling of the esteemed right-bank Galerie Beaux-Arts, Duchamp appeared to satisfy the surrealist mandate to hide the architectural traces of the bourgeois salon. After all, exhibiting at such a site presented intolerable contradictions to surrealism's oppositional political identity. But while Duchamp's installation made certain gestures toward this goal, its more profound achievement was to link the space of claustrophobic pressure to a threatening order of capitalist industrialization and institutionalization that was surrealism's condition of possibility. A further connection, one between fascist industry and capitalist exchange, was articulated in the concurrent projects of Bataille, and Adorno and Horkheimer, which offer the conceptual means to further define the historical stakes of Duchamp's installation. In confronting a mass of coal sacks that evoked so many gruesome bodies hung overhead, visitors to the surrealist exhibition encountered a horrific vision of a reified community imaged through an order of industrialized identity, in effect a striking portrayal of a community of death that expressed the grisly dangers of fascism and capitalism alike. In order to render

the contours of such a community, I draw on the contemporaneous theoretical work of Bataille, who also proposed forms of collective belonging alternative to fascist models. Redefining social being as heterogeneous—opposed to the homogeneity of fascism's ideal community—Bataille conceived a notion of collectivity founded upon sharing the very impossibility of immanence, which parallels Duchamp's formation of an experimental social space beneath the coal sacks.

The final chapter investigates Duchamp's installation design for the 1942 New York exhibition of surrealism in exile, "First Papers of Surrealism." By entangling the gallery in a mile of string, Duchamp threw the display of surrealist artwork into a disorienting labyrinth that announced the dislocated status many exiled surrealists wished to forget. Surrealism was in the course of responding to exile by building a vicarious home aesthetically, offering physical and psychic comfort to the displaced. It was precisely in order to redress its growing locational conflicts—between the movement's purported radicalism and its location in the bourgeois salon, between its exiled status and its increasing nostalgia for the home—that exhibition design, eminently concerned with *placement,* obtained the status it did within surrealism. One response that facilitated the surrealist desire to gain a new state of habitability took hold in Frederick Kiesler's contemporaneous exhibition design for Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century Gallery in New York, which figures as a revealing counterpoint to Duchamp's installation. Conversely, Duchamp's installation, viewed in relation to Bataille's theorizations of anti-architecture and decentered subjectivity, rejected the artistic flight toward homely comfort, the expression of which, in the most extreme cases, came dangerously close to fascism's own reactionary ideology of the mythical home. Instead, by assuming the location of the frame itself, Duchamp's

installation sensitized viewers to the institutional and discursive contexts that denied any metaphysical or idealist *heimlich* (or homely) experience, but rather threw surrealism even further into a state of disarray. The refusal to be at home even while at home, as Theodor Adorno had proclaimed in exile around 1944, became at once an antifascist ethics and an aesthetics of exile within Duchamp's practice.

1
THE PORTABLE MUSEUM

This seeking for my home . . . was my affliction. . . .
Where is–my home? I ask and seek and have
sought for it; I have not found it.

–WALTER BENJAMIN in exile, quoting Nietzsche, 1939[1]

I have gone home . . . affectionately Marcel.

–MARCEL DUCHAMP in exile, 1940[2]

ON MAY 16, 1940, when it was clear that the Nazi advance on Paris was imminent, Marcel Duchamp escaped the city by train. He and his companion, Mary Reynolds, traveled south to the small seaside town of Arcachon, near Bordeaux, joining his sister Suzanne and her husband Jean Crotti. The German crossing of the Maginot Line along the upper border of France, once thought impenetrable, had initiated a mass exodus from the northern regions of the country, including Paris. The following month, regrouped in the south of France, Duchamp witnessed the continual circulation of German troops and fleeing refugees. "Many refugees from Belgium and the North have left and the Germans who come here are here 'to rest' (4 days by parcels of 4,000 at a time)," he reported to the Arensbergs, his American friends and patrons in New York. And in a letter to Beatrice Wood: "[I]t is very difficult for us to move about at the moment. But that will not last."[5] Finding himself in the area classified as the occupied zone following the partitioning of France, Duchamp soon left Arcachon and traveled to the house of his other sister Yvonne and her husband Alphonse in Sanary-sur-Mer, near Marseilles, where he would stay for nearly two years, joking that he had returned "home." There he attempted to resume normal life.

Throughout this tumultuous period of German invasion and his consequent displacement, and from within its very midst, Duchamp continued work on *La boîte-en-valise,* his "box in a suitcase": "I am even able to work. I have a good printer and am making headway on my album," he wrote from Arcachon.[4] The box would contain a collection of sixty-nine reproductions of his

own past artwork, which, begun in 1935, would be serialized over the next three decades in an edition of more than three hundred, twenty of which, so-called "deluxe versions," were placed in leather valises. "My whole life's work fits into one suitcase," Duchamp later explained.[5] By 1941, after assembling the majority of reproductions, Duchamp found that living conditions had worsened, prompting his decision to leave France for the United States. But first he had to transport materials for the project from occupied Paris to the unoccupied south of France where he could ship them off to New York. In the spring of 1941 he made three trips between Paris and Sanary, while awaiting visas for travel to the States. In order to cross Nazi checkpoints without drawing attention to his infamous artistic identity, which might have put him at risk at a time when collaborationist Vichy France was purging its enemies of the state, he disguised himself as a cheese merchant and shuttled a large suitcase containing material for the *Boîte*. Its portable structure seems to have anticipated such journeys. "I thought of a scheme," Duchamp later recalled:

> I had a friend, Gustave Candel, who was a wholesale cheese merchant in Les Halles, and I asked him if he could commission me to go and buy cheese for him in the unoccupied sector. He gave me a letter, which I took to the German authorities, and with that letter and a bribe of twelve hundred francs I got from a secretary that famous little card, called an *Ausweis,* which allowed me to travel by train from Paris to Marseilles. I thought I had to be very careful and buy cheese, and probably give an account of my expenses when I crossed the border between two zones, but the Germans never asked me any questions.[6]

Duchamp then brought the materials to Grenoble and shipped them as "household effects" with Peggy Guggenheim's art collection to New York, where he would later continue working on the assembly of the boxes. After gathering the necessary and extensive paperwork for emigration to the United States—required were Vichy exit papers, a valid passport, U.S. visa, and transit visas for any country passed through on the way—he finally set sail for New York on May 14, 1942.

Walter Benjamin also escaped Paris in May 1940, after clearing out his apartment, packing up a suitcase, and having Georges Bataille store his notes for the unfinished study of the nineteenth-century Parisian arcades, the *Passagenwerk*, and various essays, including copies of "Berlin Childhood around 1900" and "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in the Bibliothèque Nationale for safekeeping.[7] He had been living in Paris as a refugee since 1933, when, endangered as a Jew, he escaped Germany after the Nazi seizure of power. By 1939 Benjamin was officially stateless, after the German authorities revoked his citizenship once the Gestapo discovered an essay he had written in 1936 and published in the Moscow journal *Das Wort* (although this new status did not prevent him from later being interned in Paris as a German alien for nearly three months). By 1940, already "afflicted" by a seemingly perpetual search for a "home" that did not exist, he joined five to six million other refugees, many of them Belgians and French fleeing the Nazi advance, and left Paris, traveling by train to Lourdes, in the Pyrenees, and then, two months later, on to Marseilles. An emergency visa awaited him, which Max Horkheimer had arranged from the U.S. consulate, but Benjamin had failed to obtain a French exit visa, newly required owing to restrictions recently enacted by the collaborationist Vichy regime. After a month of anxiously waiting without being able to secure the necessary documents, Benjamin

1.1 Marcel Duchamp, *La boîte-en-valise*, 1941. Philadelphia Museum of Art: Gift of Jacqueline, Peter, and Paul Matisse in memory of their mother, Alexina Duchamp. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris/Succession Marcel Duchamp.

took a train to the countryside near the Spanish border, and from there, out of desperation, decided to make the crossing through the Pyrenees mountains with a small group of refugees to enter Spain illegally. Because of his poor health, he could only walk for ten minutes at a time, then stop for one, yet he refused to let anyone else carry his suitcase, which contained, he said, a "new manuscript" that was "more important that I am."[8] He successfully made the passage only to discover upon arrival in the Spanish border town of Portbou that, with the sudden and unexpected changes in immigration law common in those days, he would not be admitted to the country without the outstanding exit visa and was to be sent back the following morning to the German authorities in occupied France. Unwilling to accept this fate, he committed suicide with an overdose of morphine in his hotel room. Ironically, his travel companions were allowed to enter Spain, perhaps owing to the tragic example set by Benjamin.

Benjamin's possessions, handed over to the court in Figueras at the time, were described as follows: a leather briefcase like businessmen use, a man's watch, a pipe, six photographs, an X-ray picture, a pair of glasses, various letters, magazines, a few other papers whose content is unknown, and some money.[9] These papers later went missing, along with the other contents of the suitcase, and their identification is only speculation. Could that "new manuscript" have been a draft of his "On the Concept of History" (also known as "Theses on a Philosophy of History"), on which he had been working since early 1940? Or perhaps an updated version of "A Berlin Chronicle," later adapted into "Berlin Childhood around 1900" and published posthumously, but under preparation since 1933? Whichever the case, history had been a continual and urgent concern since his exile began, and he carefully considered it both philosophically and personally. While "Theses" meditates on the

tragic destruction of the historical past, "A Berlin Chronicle" examines the way in which the object of subjective remembrance is necessarily mediated and thus distanced by the present. There is certainly a relationship between the two losses. Benjamin confessed that the "Chronicle," which finds a certain solace in the author's own memories, was motivated by his exposure to homelessness: "I hope these images at least make readers feel how much this writer has been deprived of the security that surrounded him in childhood."[10] There is little doubt that this deprivation owing to personal circumstances only exacerbated the troubled relationship to the historical past registered in "Theses." But while the collection of memories signaled the profound existential vulnerability of exile, the return to the past could also, for Benjamin, alleviate its disorientation. Remembering the home while in a state of homelessness extended a sense of security to the displaced. Benjamin's relation to history was consequently marked by conflicting aims: to remember the home and register its loss at the same time.

We are thus faced with a striking historical correspondence between the two stories—on the one hand, there is Duchamp's suitcase, obsessively filled with reproductions of his whole life's work, and on the other, Benjamin's suitcase, containing complex meditations on history and homesickness, both located within the peripatetic conditions of exile. The parallel situates the qualities of mobility, compactness, and miniaturization, as well as the impulses toward nostalgic collection and portable containment—what must be called the aesthetics of exile—within the field of geopolitical displacement during World War II. The homelessness of Duchamp and that of Benjamin were, however, far from equal. Rather, the coincidence mixes the tragic and the farcical: the story of Benjamin's desperate attempt to escape the clutches of the Nazis as a German Jew reads in stark contrast to Duchamp's repeated and even playful

masquerades as a cheese merchant at Nazi borders. Displacement, for Duchamp, represented a desired and productive condition, a prescription for an adventurous life of solitude: "The artist should be alone. . . . Everyone for himself, as in a shipwreck."[11] For Benjamin, more refugee than castaway, it was a traumatic, involuntary sentence delivered with deathly threats: In exile he was "a man at home between the jaws of a crocodile which he holds apart with iron struts."[12]

Still, the stories are illuminating in that their comparison productively differentiates the potential meanings of exile during these years. Additionally, they open up *La boîte-en-valise* to a hitherto unexamined historical field, which is integral to the suitcase's operations and to the motivations of its making. Several questions unfold from here: How and under what circumstances might a portable museum offer a refuge for the homeless? Why collect all of one's artwork, or alternatively, assemble one's memories, in the midst of displacement? More broadly, how might Duchamp's suitcase connect the aesthetics of displacement to a resistance to nationalism, joining the geographical and political casts of exile to oppositional ends? How might it then function as an antidote to the fascist celebration of "the blood and soil" of the fatherland and to its ideology of the home-as-nation? And how, finally, might the conditions of geopolitical dislocation relate to the material, institutional, and technological displacements of modernism and modernity, on which the *Boîte*—as a museum of photography—also reflects?

Living in exile at the same time, Theodor Adorno was amazingly perspicacious about its conflicts, and his wartime writings illuminate the meaning of exile during those years. Under what conditions, Adorno asked, might there exist a "refuge for the homeless"?[15] For him, the paradoxical status of exile—a condition of ethical choice as well as circumstantial necessity—was measured in the impos-

sible relation to living spaces and possessions. He argued that the "house is past" for two reasons. The first owed to the dehumanizing developments of advanced capitalism, which had created "living-cases manufactured by experts for philistines," and "factory sites that have strayed into the consumption sphere," both "devoid of all relation to the occupant." No one could inhabit such environments and live as a human being. On the other hand, one was prohibited from seeking refuge in tradition, such as moving into a "period-style house," for there the owner "embalms himself alive" in nostalgic regression. This was unacceptably escapist because it would deny the second reason why the house is past: "The bombings of European cities, as well as the labour and concentration camps, merely proceed as executors, with what the immanent development of technology had long decided was to be the fate of houses. These are now good only to be thrown away like old food cans."

In other words, by the early 1940s, the house had become a dehumanized architecture set within both the reifying economy of domestic consumption and a war zone of industrialized death, a fate that announced a horrific convergence between capitalist homogenization and the fascist extermination of difference. At the center of this convergence was the home. The only answer for Adorno was a homeless existence, making "the enforced conditions of emigration a wisely-chosen norm." But when the system of proliferating commodities defies all attempts at their limitation, and when one must still have some possessions in order to avoid the descent into abject dependency, even homelessness is compromised. "The nostalgia for independent existence, defunct in any case, is sent packing."[14] Adorno was finally at a loss: there is no refuge for the homeless.

Adorno's grim conclusion exposes the desperate circumstances surrounding what he termed the "paradox" of existence in

the early 1940s, a desperate time when "Wrong life cannot be lived rightly." Wrongly, life was precariously posed between a dispersion that placed the very coherence of the self in jeopardy and a compensatory urge that tempted a suicidal self-embalming. Benjamin was certainly aware of this, and while Duchamp may not have shared these exact circumstances, responded to all of Adorno's concerns, or agreed exactly with his conclusions, he was not entirely free of those described pressures and conflicts either. For *La boîte-en-valise* reacts to a similar set of paradoxical conditions: it betrays the impossible desires for the home in a period of homelessness, and for objects when possessions have been lost. Moreover, it displays a longing for an independent existence in an era of fascist domination, growing artistic institutionalization, and exile's desperation. The astonishing aspect of the *Boîte* lies in its ability to *reveal* this crisis of a life become paradoxical, and to operate within its terms. In the process of precariously traveling within this conflicted terrain, seeking out an independent existence even while realizing the impossibility of finding refuge for the homeless, Duchamp formulated a remarkable and innovative artistic structure capable of critically addressing exile in its full historical complexity.

Although Duchamp commenced *La boîte-en-valise* before the events of 1940, he had lived as a voluntary nomad for the majority of his adult life. Embracing an internal mobility as much as an itinerant residency, he escaped the pressures of traditions and the limitations of place-bound cultural conventions. "[N]either completely at one with the new setting nor fully disencumbered of the old, beset with half involvements and half detachments, nostalgic and sentimental on one level, [the exile] is an adept mimic or a secret outcast on another," Edward Said notes, following Adorno's own insights.[15] Such a description comes close to Duchamp's own position during these years, between outcast and mimic, and correlates

perfectly with the suitcase's priorities of the nostalgic collection of memory-objects and easy portability, which satisfied the needs of exile.[16] Duchamp's suitcase clearly served multiple functions and extended to exile a complex definition: It meditated upon the existential vulnerability of homelessness, as we shall see, but also offered the means to combat the fragmenting effects of exile through the reconstruction of a portable home built upon the assembly of photographic reproductions. More than simply combating the fragmenting force of dislocation, the suitcase also carefully draws on that very power in order to free itself from the institutionalization it at once internalizes and acknowledges. Creating an innovative artwork that escapes all traditional categories, it also proposes the means by which Duchamp modeled a form of subjectivity that freed itself from the strictures of an increasingly claustrophobic national identity, the evasion of which is brilliantly exemplified by Duchamp's cheese merchant slipping through the regulatory mechanisms of Nazi borders.

In addition to its flight from nationalism, Duchamp's project breaks away from the two dominant European avant-garde paradigms of displacement forwarded during the inner-war period: surrealism's long-standing art practiced under the sign of the uncanny (defined by Freud as the *unheimlich*, or unhomely), which exacerbated dislocation through representational experiments; and the German Bauhaus's ideal of an architectural internationalism, which unmoored itself from regional specificity through the embrace of the language of modernist abstraction. The viability of the surrealist position, well worn by 1940, eventually faded in the face of war and exile. Surrealism had tapped into the psychically troubled relationship to the home, indexing repressed memories of the maternal body in order to decenter the self and unleash a desublimatory energy of disorientation through shocking artistic means.[17]

But over the years, it ultimately fell prey to the dangers of escapist tendencies, long present within its own theories, by refusing to acknowledge the surrounding institutional framework of its artistic practice, as when, for instance, it failed to register the contradictions in carrying out a surrealist revolution within the bourgeois salon. Meanwhile, the Bauhaus model lost credibility as it transformed into a free-floating, apolitical style, courting in turn communist patrons, the Nazis, and, when these were refused, U.S. corporate interests, yet all the while neglected to complicate or render critical its relation to this mobility.[18] Its roving architectural style would soon function as the very image of global capitalism.

Still, in terms of the first formation, some surrealists, such as Max Ernst, did attempt to move from the art of the psychic uncanny to one that confronted geopolitical homelessness, carrying the aesthetics of displacement to the register of exile and antinationalism. Living as a German émigré in France and later in the United States before and during the war, Ernst addressed his uprooted condition through his collage books, including *La femme 100 têtes* of 1929. In one image, decontextualized fragments from old illustrated magazines recombine into a representation of a harried man, grasped at and menaced by other fragmented limbs, running with a suitcase onto which is morbidly strapped an amputated arm. The scene dramatically captures the experience of bodily dispersion and psychological desperation that exile may bring. Uncanny elements run continuous with the disorientation of geographical dislocation, as the decontextualization that is structural to collage allegorizes the encounter with homelessness. We also come across meditations on the displaced conditions of subjectivity in later works of Ernst, such as *Les milles-apatrides* (The Stateless Thousands) of 1939, with its uprooted compass needles that find themselves lost in a barren environment. But while these images thematize geopolitical

1.2 Max Ernst, *Défais ton sac, mon
brave,* from *La femme 100 têtes,* 1929.
Courtesy Special Collections of the
Sheridan Libraries of The Johns
Hopkins University. © 2006 Artists
Rights Society (ARS), New York/
ADAGP, Paris.
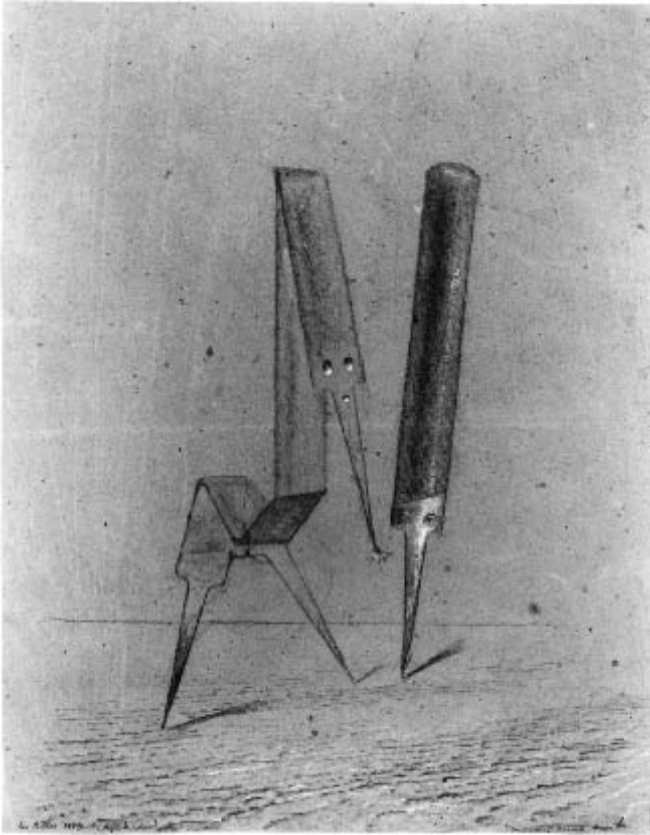
1.3 Max Ernst, *Les milles-apatrides,*
1939. Courtesy Staatsgalerie
Stuttgart/Graphische Sammlung.
© 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS),
New York/ADAGP, Paris.

displacement, they paradoxically fall back on well-established pictorial models emphasizing the *centering* effects of traditional composition, secure viewing points, and orienting perspectival constructions. They share in the dialectics of homelessness, precariously balancing between revealing the conditions of displacement and shoring up its disorienting effects, but their reliance on traditional surrealist pictorial strategies limits the reach of their analyses; for none interrogates the deeper links between geopolitical displacement and the artistic construct stratified by the dislocations wrought by institutionalization, reproduction, and distribution, as is found in Duchamp's *La boîte-en-valise.*

Duchamp's project is provocative just where these other models fall silent: at the point where geopolitical displacement is imbricated with the developing paradigms of the museum and photography. Duchamp, of course, called *La boîte-en-valise* his "portable museum" and its contents were filled with photographic reproductions. This is perfectly appropriate, for in the structures of the museum and photography we encounter the twin engines of decontextualization, even while both provide the very means of recontextualization. It is not surprising, then, that Duchamp turned to them most fully at this time, for they open precisely onto the liminality and contradictions located in the relay between the exposure to loss and the desire for recovery, which defines the experience of homelessness. Just how Duchamp negotiated the terms of exile through the structures of the museum and photography represents a complicated logic that needs to be carefully unpacked.

On March 5, 1935, Duchamp thought up the "new idea" of producing "an album of approximately all the things I produced."[19] He later explained, "[H]ere, again, a new form of expression was involved. Instead of painting something new, my aim was to reproduce the

paintings and the objects that I like and collect them in a space as small as possible. I did not know how to go about it. I first thought of a book but I did not like the idea. Then it occurred to me that it could be a box in which all my works would be collected and mounted like in a small museum, a portable museum so to speak."[20] Certainly not restricted to the negotiation of exile, the *Boîte* is a complicated project that unfolds in various directions—most obviously toward a new conceptualization of photography, the museum, and the techniques of collection and presentation. Duchamp himself was reticent about identifying any single motivating factor for his project, and it makes sense to follow his cue.[21] The most convincing reading of *La boîte-en-valise* to date views it as representing Duchamp's attempt to critically address the institutionalization of the avant-garde, meaning the process by which the transgressive practices of the early-twentieth-century artistic formations came to be officially validated, categorized historically and stylistically, reproduced and commodified, and consequently domesticated by collectors and publishers, art galleries and museums. As Benjamin Buchloh writes:

> As usual, the reflection upon the origins of the artist's concern to integrate within the conception of a work, the final forms of distribution and the conditions of reception and acculturation, the modes of reading that ensue from them and that are contained within the practices of institutionalisation, has to take its point of departure in a reference to the work of Marcel Duchamp. Undoubtedly his description of the origins of the portable museum *La Boîte-en-valise* . . . reveals his anticipation of the final destination that his oeuvre would reach in the immanent process of acculturation: the museum.[22]

Buchloh's thesis, couched in an analysis of the postwar conceptual art of Marcel Broodthaers, takes up Peter Bürger's argument regarding the difference between a historical avant-garde that sought to overcome the institutionalization of artistic practice, and a neo-avant-garde that succumbed to it, whereby Duchamp's practice is positioned as a critical hinge between the two.[23] The originality of Buchloh's position, however, is to argue that Duchamp's mid-career work, which uniquely transcended the divide between the two avant-gardes, not only recognized the inevitability of institutional pressures, but acted to internalize them in advance as a strategy of cagey resistance. This is a compelling reading for sure. Though not limited to a single example or date, the effects of institutionalization on Duchamp's work were more than evident by 1936, and it certainly must have been clear to him even earlier. The "original" *Fountain,* displayed in 1917 and then immediately lost, offers an early story of acculturation, as it only came to be known through its institutional and discursive reproduction.[24] One could, of course, argue that from the first the readymade represented a recognition of the acculturation and reification of the art object in the commercial market. Yet the readymade itself as an artistic object had yet to succumb to its own paradoxical institutionalization, which opens up to the project of *La boîte-en-valise.*

It was during the 1930s that Duchamp in fact encountered an explosion of exhibitions that included his work, more than at any other earlier point in his career as an artist.[25] To cite a single instance, he encountered the institutional acculturation of the readymade when his *Bottle Rack* was displayed in a glass vitrine in the Exposition surréaliste d'objets at La Galerie Charles Ratton in Paris, 1936, a show that predates the radical surrealist experimentations with display techniques in the late '30s and early '40s. A contradiction was here made apparent: Once scandalously rejecting

traditional categories of the original art object, of artistic identity based on craftsmanship, and of the role of the museum as a supposed neutral space of exhibition (the impossibility of which was demonstrated by the debacle of the *Fountain* in the 1917 Independents' exhibition), the readymade *Bottle Rack* now sat as a seemingly rare, historical, and valuable *sculpture* in an art gallery. This represented the generalizing subjection of radically heterogeneous objects to a homogenizing exhibition space. Duchamp's derisive reaction to such repositionings, as in the case of the postwar reception of Dada, is telling: "When I discovered the readymades, my intention was to thwart the aesthetic. The Neo-Dadaists have seized hold of my readymades and they find in them aesthetic beauty. I threw in their face the *Bottlerack* and the urinal as a challenge and now they admire them for their aesthetic beauty."[26] One might argue that this outcome represented less a *contradiction*–between the readymade and its institutional placement in the traditional category of "fine art"–and more a *realization* of the very principles of reification that constituted the readymade in the first place–that of the commodity form, the logical terminus of modern art in the age of modern capitalism. Yet the degree to which the gallery, in the context of a surrealist show, was then capable of exhibiting this deconstructive maneuver that was the readymade, and aestheticizing it in turn, is remarkable.

La boîte-en-valise, Duchamp's "portable museum," reconstructs this very system, self-administering the institutional forces on his own works of art. Its museum-like layout, reproduced status, and presentation techniques clearly reveal the effects of this preprocessing. The *Boîte* has its own case for transport. Its miniaturized reproductions, reduced for easy mobility, already anticipate museum postcards. When its partitions are folded out, it creates a miniature wall of display, on which its artworks hang and are

1.4 Exposition surréaliste d'objets
at La Galerie Charles Ratton, Paris,
1936.

clearly identified in terms of title, date, and collection printed on small paper labels, all neatly categorized and arranged. In other words, the box fully reenacts the museum's educational mission, curatorial techniques, and organizational procedures as its own mode of artistic production. It is truly a "musée-en-valise," collapsing the museum institution into a single suitcase.[27] Like the Ratton exhibition of the *Bottle Rack*, *La boîte-en-valise* transposes readymades into works of art, initially by grouping their miniature reproductions in the same categorization as those of conventional artworks, such as paintings and sculptures. This shift from readymade to acculturated object is perfectly illustrated in the difference between the 1917 *Fountain* and the *Boîte*'s miniaturized, finely crafted version of it, which has been serialized and vertically reoriented—as if hanging on a wall—in its new display.[28] The *Boîte*, mimicking the museum, transformed the *readymade* into a *sculpture* and then into a *reproduction*, rehearsing the institutional fate of avant-garde art. The "portable museum" functions as a kind of machine of acculturation, in effect a *readymade museum*, which subjects objects to a standardized and preestablished set of economic, pedagogical, administrative, curatorial, and art-historical conventions.[29]

As such, the precedent of Duchamp's portable museum has served as a crucial resource for subsequent avant-garde developments, specifically those practices critical or analytical of the institutional forces that would organize and govern artistic categories, including those of authorship and display conventions, which would come to determine the art object's meaning and value. For instance, the work of Broodthaers—including the packing crates and postcard reproductions of his "museum fictions," as well as his various suitcase pieces—is frequently said to be indebted to Duchamp in its decoding of artistic form as the reified shell of the institutional act of physical displacement, recontextualization, and

1.5 Marcel Broodthaers, *Hotel,* 1975.
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New York/SABAM, Brussels.

The Portable Museum

revaluation. Yet the interpretation of the *Boîte* presented in such readings–as an engagement with institutional acculturation–certainly does not exhaust its operations, and moreover, the terms of its comparison to Broodthaers' practice need to be questioned. Whereas Buchloh ultimately argues that Duchamp's *Boîte-en-valise* "seems to fail to maintain any claim for autonomy and rupture in favour of a complacent, melancholic and passive contingency upon the conditions of rule that it set out to disrupt," we must wonder why it too doesn't "vanquish myth from inside," avoiding a "parodic fetishization," as does the work of Broodthaers.[30] In addition, we must avoid the potential ahistorical instrumentalization of the *Boîte* that occurs when it is construed merely as a model for subsequent practices and seen only in their historical terms, thereby closing Duchamp's suitcase prematurely.

While *La boîte-en-valise* certainly adopts various institutionalized conventions, these coincided historically with a specific reformulation of the museum. Duchamp conceptualized and assembled his museum roughly at the same time that André Malraux was rethinking his own, and there are several similarities between the two projects. Beginning in 1936, after reading Walter Benjamin's seminal article on art in the age of mechanical reproduction,[31] Malraux began to consider the promising possibilities of transforming the museum from a geographically determined collection of original objects, traditionally organized by national schools (as in the Louvre), into a virtual display of cross-referenced photographic reproductions contained within a free-floating book. This new model would represent a postarchitectural museum, one that exchanged walls for pages, and its effects would be significant. As Malraux's "museum" undertook the reproduction of art objects, it would uproot them from their historical or national ground and reorganize them along purely stylistic lines.[32] Mechanical reproduc-

tion encouraged the grouping of objects from disparate geographical and temporal contexts according to formal criteria, and such transhistorical and cross-cultural comparisons proliferate throughout Malraux's text: in one typical instance, he compares a photograph of a thirteenth-century sculpture of an angel's head from Rheims Cathedral to another of a sculpted Buddha from fourth-century Gandhara.[53] As a result, artistic identity is subsumed under a metaphysics of style. The real motors of art history, for Malraux, were not artists, but "those imaginary super-artists we call styles."[54]

Malraux's *Musée imaginaire* explains what his museum performs: the disconnection of the original object from all aspects of its historical field and the subsequent definition of its artistic meaning by stylistic identity. *La boîte-en-valise* shares the *Musée*'s system of miniaturized reproductions that have been decontextualized from any historical context beyond the tracing of cross-cultural and transhistorical stylistic developments. As a mobile museum of photographic reproductions contained in a suitcase, it is also an idiosyncratic enactment of Malraux's museum without walls. The major difference—one to which we will later return—is that Duchamp's museum retains a monographic organization, something Malraux's model dispenses with in favor of a hypostatization of style. By staging a *retrospective* exhibition, Duchamp's museum props up the institution of authorship that gives body to a subject behind the work, a function that takes on special significance, as we will see, within the context of exile.

More broadly, Malraux's museological development participates in the related historical movement of art objects toward a heightened condition of deracination, a state Rosalind Krauss has provocatively termed "modernist homelessness." As modernism progressed in the first quarter of the twentieth century, it gradually severed ties to historical specificity, iconographical reference, and

1.6 André Malraux with photographic plates for *Le musée imaginaire*, circa 1950.

national assignment, links that would otherwise variously locate its objects within a particular geographical and cultural framework. Modernism thereby approached the formal condition of itinerancy, which is exemplified, for Krauss, both in abstract art and in Duchamp's readymades of the 1910s. Brancusi's works became nomadic at the moment when the sculpture internalized its base, the sublation of which was one of his major artistic achievements. By absorbing its pedestal, the scupture unlinks itself from its actual place and thereby enters into a potential state of free-floating and autonomous mobility.[35] Similarly, the readymade is constituted by the transplantation of a commodity object from a worldly context into the realm of art, an action that renders the readymade transparent to its structural significance and meaning.[36] In both cases, the artwork enters "the space of what could be called its negative condition—a kind of sitelessness, or homelessness, an absolute loss of place. Which is to say one enters modernism."[37] This sitelessness, in turn, characterizes the smooth space of the modernist museum, with its galleries increasingly divided by freely mobile display partitions, which finds a parallel articulation in Malraux's "museum without walls," with its manipulable pages, stylistic organization, and portability.

Despite the stylistic diversity of the objects that it groups together, this underlying logic of modernist homelessness also defines the earlier experimental containers of Duchamp, such as the croquet box that held *Three Standard Stoppages* of 1913, and the Box of 1914, which utilized a commercial photographic supply container and housed an early collection of reproduced notes. The Box of 1914, released in an edition of five, and an important precedent for *La boîte-en-valise,* includes photographic facsimiles of sixteen manuscript notes and a drawing, *To Have the Apprentice in the Sun* (1914), mounted on mat board and collected in a cardboard box, which

retained its original label, such as "Kodak: Bromure Velours" or "Lumiere & ses Fils: Plaques au Gélatino-Bromure d'argent." Duchamp explained to Cabanne in 1966: "For the 'Box' of 1913–14 . . . I didn't have the idea of a box as much as just notes. I thought I could collect, in an album like the Saint-Etienne catalogue, some calculations, some reflexions, without relating them. . . . I wanted that album to go with the 'Glass,' and to be consulted when seeing the 'Glass' because, as I see it, it must not be 'looked at' in the aesthetic sense of the word."[58] Not only was the 1914 Box's container a remarkable case of commercial-packaging-turned-readymade, but its assembly of notes was based on a department store catalog, specifically the Saint-Etienne to which Duchamp refers, as modernist homelessness joined with the appearance of capitalist exchange and the aesthetic indifference that approached the blasé experience of consumerism.

Although initially reliant on Benjamin's model of photographic reproduction, Malraux's project, especially in its later culmination, also reveals radical differences from it, and in turn, forks away from the project of Duchamp. For Benjamin, photography was revolutionary because it cancels the aura that surrounds the original artwork, encouraging a critical distance from the reproduced image and therefore a newfound independence for its audience. The political urgency of this mode of address is clear in the age of fascism's "aestheticization of politics," the pacified audience of which was mesmerized by a continual stream of ideological aura. Malraux, however, ignored Benjamin's considerations of these shifts in reception brought about through photography. Rather, he viewed the import of photography as contained within a new technology of *distribution*. As Malraux explained: "today we find that if the masses do not go to the art, technology inevitably brings the art to the masses."[59] Photography, for Malraux, promotes a significant

widening of public access to works of art, whether they be paint-ings *or* readymades, and such a promise forms the basis of his humanist understanding of reproduction. *Le musée imaginaire,* conceived in the 1930s and fully published by 1947, signals the moment when the museum, paralleling the deracinating logic of modernism, merged with the postwar developments of liberal hu-manism and advanced capitalism.[40] The reconfigured "imaginary" museum would offer new nonterritorial possibilities for collective solidarity through technologically expanded cultural experience and consequently transnational opportunities for the development of new markets. Malraux's museum predicted a postnational, uni-versal, and humanist culture, rising out of the ashes of the destruc-tion of warring nationalisms of World War II. "In the movement which brings works of art and knowledge toward a greater and greater number of men," Malraux explained, "we intend to main-tain or recreate, not permanent and particular values, but . . . hu-manist values. Humanist because universalist. Because, myth for myth, we want neither Germany nor Germania, neither Italian nor Roman, but man."[41] After the war, however, this desire was in-creasingly directed toward a universalism paradoxically placed under national patrimony. As the new Minister of Information for de Gaulle's reconstructionist government, Malraux proposed a plan to distribute "culture" to the general population by reproducing one hundred masterpieces of French painting and displaying them in French schools.[42] Ultimately, far from being inherently nonter-ritorial, the technology of reproduction could easily serve the in-terests of the state.

Against Malraux's faith in the redemptive value of technology and the museum achieved through the democratic distribution of reproductions, and against the implications regarding the new metaphysics of subjectivity of a new postnational "man," others

writing at the same time were deeply skeptical. Adorno and Hork-
heimer, for instance, saw in modern reproduction not the catalyst
of liberty, but the probability of increased means of domination,
where "myth" cloaks ideology and culture dissembles industry:
"the 'culture industry' demonstrates the regression of enlighten-
ment to ideology," they argued. "Here enlightenment consists above
all in the calculation of effectiveness and of the techniques of pro-
duction and distribution."[45] This "calculation of effectiveness," ob-
tained through "the techniques of production and distribution,"
was perfectly exemplified by Malraux's industrialization of cul-
ture achieved through photographic reproduction, which joined
enlightenment to ideology in his imaginary museum. It remains a
question, however, what interests were served and what effects
were released by Duchamp's internalization of museum conven-
tions. Could *La boîte-en-valise* have performed this internalization
only as a self-defeating act of mimicry, or for its own critical pur-
poses, even as a means of survival for Duchamp's own indepen-
dent existence? It is precisely against these models of the humanist
negation of difference and the culture industry's homogenization
of identity, both specters raised by Malraux, that we must recon-
sider Duchamp's *Boîte-en-valise.*

Modernist homelessness, like institutional acculturation, only goes
so far in comprehending *La boîte-en-valise,* and this is where the
historical coincidence of the suitcase stories of Duchamp and Ben-
jamin becomes particularly provocative, pointing toward new in-
terpretive possibilities. The parallel, which dramatizes the relation
of the *Boîte* to *exile,* repositions the suitcase within the field of
geopolitical homelessness.[44] The suitcase, in this context, responds
to the transitory existence of the subject in exile, an experience that
adjoins the uprooting tendencies of capitalism, artistic institution-

alization, and photography. This redefinition of homelessness suggests why it was only in 1941, in the state of forced displacement, that Duchamp first conceived of placing the *Boîte* in a leather suitcase, thus initiating the "deluxe" version of *La boîte-en-valise*. When asked by an interviewer, "Why a suitcase? It is obviously ready to be carried off somewhere," Duchamp equivocated: "What would you consider the proper solution?"[45] But only when placed in a portable box were the reproductions fully equipped for the exigencies of travel, that is, as a suitcase for a refugee. It is thus necessary to reposition *La boîte-en-valise* at the point where institutional acculturation intersects with Duchamp's own exile.

The value of Benjamin's story, and particularly the way in which he treated exile in his writing, is that it dramatizes the connection between *modernist homelessness* and *geopolitical homelessness,* whereby each is expressed through the other. Exile entered into Benjamin's writings through its inscription in the aesthetic structure of modernism, which his work advanced in its own way. It was in fact partly through the principles of montage and allegory, which Benjamin considered at length, that he negotiated his own displacement. Like Adorno's theorization of exile, Benjamin's writing in exile, specifically "A Berlin Chronicle," defined a system of contradictory desires, which was a function of implacable loss. Benjamin responded to homesickness by collecting images that substituted for a lost past or forbidden land, but he also resisted compensatory and nostalgic temptations that would regressively reconstruct an imaginary home. Ultimately, Benjamin's "Berlin Chronicle" confirms Adorno's realization: "For a man who no longer has a homeland, writing becomes a place to live." Yet this home, stored in Benjamin's suitcase, was as illusory for him as it was for Adorno: "The demand that one harden oneself against self-pity implies the technical necessity to counter any slackening of

intellectual tension with the utmost alertness, and to eliminate any-
thing that has begun to encrust the work or to drift along idly,
which may at an earlier stage have served, as gossip, to generate
the warm atmosphere conducive to growth, but is now left behind,
flat and stale. In the end, the writer is not allowed to live in his writ-
ing."[46] Benjamin reached similar conclusions.

"A Berlin Chronicle" tells the tale of the author's memories
of a "lived Berlin" doubly lost to him—through both the passage of
time and the ravages of exile. Throughout the text he yearns to
"evoke the most important memories of one's life," those initial and
formative experiences, such as learning the meaning of the word
"love," first hearing the "accent of death" on a name, or the earliest
stirrings of sexual desire.[47] If the "Chronicle" is threaded through
with the signs of homesickness, he was, however, never enthralled
by nationalism; he yearned not for Germany, nor, of course, for its
mythically imagined community bound by nationalism, nor even
for the prefascist nation.[48] Rather, Benjamin recollected images of
a personal and familial past, his own subjective home built of his
earliest experiences now lost to him. Giving in to homesickness
was a precarious danger, wherein one risked an overwhelming
nostalgia that would idealize the past and reject a critical relation-
ship to the present. Benjamin was sensitive to these dangers and
tried hard to resist such temptations because it was the very nos-
talgia for the home, particularly enlarged to the idea of the home-
as-nation that enabled National Socialism's appeal. "One reason
why Fascism has a chance," Benjamin noted, "is that in the name
of progress it is treated as a historical norm."[49] Fascism had rewrit-
ten the past to position itself as its inevitable endpoint. In response,
it was urgent to contest fascism's historicism. This could only be
done by uprooting history, by placing it overtly in a constitutive re-
lation to the present, so that fascism could no longer be treated as

the ineluctable result of historical progression. Even in his last desperate months, in the shadow of world war, Benjamin believed that "to bring about a real state of emergency" and "improve our position in the struggle against Fascism" it was necessary to obtain a new "conception of history."[50] It was for this struggle that Benjamin risked his life to deliver his suitcase to safety.

In addition to the grandly metaphysical and gnomic aphorisms on history presented in his "Theses," Benjamin also carried out this struggle, modestly, through the recollection of his own past in "A Berlin Chronicle." Against idealist approaches to memory that viewed it as an already completed experience waiting to be recovered by recollection, Benjamin defined memory as fluid and contingent upon its materialization according to desires and needs in the present. In returning to his childhood while in exile, he consequently attempted to satisfy homesickness self-consciously in a controlled way: "I attempted to limit it by becoming conscious of the irremediable loss of the past."[51] Memory represented a "boundless horizon opening in my imagination," but he reminded himself that "this vista would indeed be delusive if it did not make visible the medium in which alone such images take form . . . the present in which the writer lives is this medium."[52] By revealing this "medium"—by identifying the time of writing, by announcing his authorship, by wrapping remembrance up reflexively in its rhetorical articulations—he rendered memory porous to the present, thus inoculating himself against the overwhelming desires of homesickness, even while giving in to the longing to return to the past. Indeed, "Language shows clearly that memory is not an instrument for exploring the past but its theater."[53] His homesick writings would be *homeopathic:* "Just as the vaccine should not overtake the healthy body, the feeling of homesickness was not about to overtake my mind."[54] In other words, his "new conception of history"

was advanced through a set of self-reflexive terms continuous with modernist representation.

Benjamin's historiography merged the logics of modernism and exile, both opposed to fascist homeliness. He considered photography and film, his theoretically privileged visual mediums, as postauratic precisely because their images were no longer *rooted* to any site. There was neither original object nor cultic context to mystically absorb the viewer. Reproductions consequently became *homeless* representations: free-floating, they existed in no secure location, geographical or temporal: "Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be."[55] As such, his dialectical system of history took on political value in that it contested the fascist naturalization of the past, which corresponded to its ideological attempts to return to the "blood and soil" of an essentialized communal identity. The value of Benjamin's modernism was its thoroughly transitory identity, and the tropes of exile float throughout his writings.

With emerging reproductive technologies, subjectivity, according to Benjamin, became increasingly touched by new forms of placelessness: the filmed actor, paragon of modern subjectivity, was homeless, and "feels as if in *exile*. . . . With a vague sense of discomfort he feels inexplicable emptiness: his body loses its corporeality, it evaporates, it is deprived of reality, life, voice . . . in order to be changed into a mute image, flickering an instant on the screen, then vanishing into silence."[56] The thematics of exile proliferate in earlier essays, too: In "A Short History of Photography," Benjamin views Atget's photographs as "swept clean like a house which has not yet found its new tenant," and surrealist photography as establishing "a healthy alienation between environment and man."[57] Within his "Berlin Chronicle" this logic is personalized.

Benjamin, the exiled subject, records his own homesick memories as dislocated montage, arrayed within a cycle of continual particularization: "He who has once begun to open the fan of memory never comes to the end of its segments; no image satisfies him, for he has seen that it can be unfolded, and only in its folds does the truth reside."[58] By derealizing the object of memory through the segmentation of its reproduction, Benjamin both satisfied and restricted homesickness. This points once again to the complex and contradictory demands of Benjamin's strategy. Returning to childhood memories protected against the total dissolution of the self in exile, just as it preserved the self against the desubjectivization operative in modernism's logic of deracination (a threat that Malraux redressed by an eventual return to a form of national identity). But Benjamin also relied on, by embracing these same decontextualizing strategies of modernism and homelessness to avoid the regression and historicism of fascism. The aesthetics of modernist exile, then, offered the means both to satisfy homesickness by shoring up identity through a memorial project, and to challenge fascist historicism by resisting its essentialism through a homeless aesthetic. It was his turn to a flexible model of homeopathy, where the disease is used against itself to limit its dangerous effects, that allowed Benjamin to negotiate this double bind.

We return to the coincidence of the two suitcases: Just as Benjamin returned "home" in exile through his retrospective writing, so did Duchamp through a return to his past works of art, to his "whole life's work." From the early paintings to the readymades, from the *Large Glass* to the *Rotoreliefs, La boîte-en-valise* summoned a collection of reproductions that acted as a kind of family album. The gathering of these works engendered a meditation on past relationships, personal and familial activities, earlier formal investigations,

and dialogic exchanges with other artistic formations and aesthetic models. The earliest works, from 1910 to 1911, represented intimate domestic encounters, picturing family members at Duchamp's childhood home in Blainville, near Rouen. *Sonata* and *The Chess Game* showed his brothers and sisters assembled together playing music or games. There was the portrait of *Dr. Dumouchel*, *Portrait of Chauvel*, and *Apropos of Little Sister*, all painted in anachronistic, pre-cubist styles not yet subjected to rigorous fragmentation. *Bateau-Lavoir* and *Church at Blainville* represented the regional area of Duchamp's childhood. Later works, such as the *Large Glass* and *Tu m'*, returned to the significant artistic contributions of his career. The box enacted a reunion, bringing together all his works and family members vicariously. It's not that a referential clarity groups these works together, many of which participated in an attack on illusionism; rather, because of the heightened sensitivity to loss that marks it, exile provides an optic that brings Duchamp's subjective attachment to the represented figures from his earlier life into greater focus.

With Duchamp reproducing objects from his past, and with Benjamin narrating his, it is evident that exile leads to a crisis in memory.[59] Isolation from a familiar site, especially from one's home, brings about a rupture from history, which in turn exacerbates the fragmentary experience of dislocation. Troubled by the loss of secure lived space and by the disrupted connection to the personal relationships and material possessions that would otherwise provide continuity with the past, the exile returns to memory, the enactment of which consequently becomes a stabilizing force. Remembrance restores some sense of security to an identity experiencing disorientation. The crisis of memory, in Duchamp's case, would be alleviated by photography, which is particularly suited to address the desire for the past. Uniquely situated to stand in for its

referent, to create the closest simulation of its original model, the photograph creates a *physical* connection between viewer and image, reestablishing a link to the past. As Roland Barthes explains, "The photograph is literally an emanation of the referent. From a real body, which was there, proceed radiations which ultimately touch me, who am here. . . . A sort of umbilical cord links the body of the photographed thing to my gaze: light, though impalpable, is here a carnal medium, a skin I share with anyone who has been photographed."[60] Because the photographic connection offers this existential proximity to the lost object, it is not surprising that photography would be among the items in a displaced person's suitcase—as they were in Benjamin's as well. Duchamp himself explained how returning to his early work while constructing the box represented "a wonderful vacation in my past life . . . [a] vacation in past time instead of a new area."[61]

Photography would show its captured object as if reincarnated, unlike film, whose unstoppable progression exiles its representations to a vanishing ephemerality, as Benjamin observed. Duchamp's *Portrait of the Artist's Father* of 1910, intimate and psychologically introspective, and contained in *La boîte-en-valise,* exemplifies this "carnal medium." It shows an image of Eugène Duchamp, whose death in 1925 occurred within a week of his wife's, gazing out into the viewer's eyes. But it is clear that he is depicted looking not at any anonymous person but at his son, and the intimacy of the visual connection between painter and father, reaffirmed by the compassion of the gaze and the penetrating focus, is palpable. Duchamp claimed that it offered an "illustration of my cult of Cézanne mixed up with filial love."[62] Painted in a representational idiom still attached to traditional referential functions and expressive content, works like this one would likely become nostalgic in 1940, in terms of both the intimacy of their subjects and their outmoded styles, an elision

1.7 Marcel Duchamp, *Portrait of the Artist's Father*, 1910. Philadelphia Museum of Art: Gift of Jacqueline, Peter, and Paul Matisse in memory of their mother, Alexina Duchamp. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris/Succession Marcel Duchamp.

that was registered in the division of Duchamp's "filial love" between his father *and* Cézanne, a subject *and* style both lost. Through the photographic reproduction he could recapture and possess the painting otherwise out of reach. Serving a family album, *La boîte-en-valise* offered an archive to which Duchamp could freely return, "a sort of umbilical cord" between him and his past.

A number of questions unfold from here: how successful can a memorial project be that is based in photographic reproduction, where mnemonic functions may be overtaken by the fetishization of the past? To what degree is Duchamp's homesickness reflexive, like Benjamin's, avoiding a facile escapism or an unproblematized compensation? While Duchamp's reproductions establish a *corporeal* connection between viewer and referent, photography's mediated condition also works *against* such closure which is clear in Duchamp's usage. If the box's reproductions served the homesick desire to replace a lost object, then this lost object must itself be understood as already split between two referents: the original object (e.g., *the painting* of Duchamp's father) and its own referent (Duchamp's father). Any ultimate origin is already located within a complicated chain of doublings, progressing through painted and photographic mediations before becoming available to the *Boîte*'s archive. Like Benjamin's memory, the object of Duchamp's memory dislocates itself in the medium of its reproduction. And the medium of reproduction is photography, whose structure is defined not only by a form of exile (as according to Benjamin), but also by the fetishistic *denial* of displacement in the first place. No doubt the two are related, like two sides of the same coin. The aspect of denial is pointed out by Sigfried Kracauer, who famously noted that "What the photographs by their sheer accumulation attempt to banish is the recollection of death. Seemingly ripped from the clutch of death, in reality it has succumbed to it all the more."[65]

We can see that the reproductions of Duchamp's suitcase were similarly situated. They capture artworks lost through museological distribution; but once photographically reproduced, these works are only displaced again through their hypermediated condition. The more something is lost, the more energy is expended in its recapture. What results is an obsessive series of replications, a fetishistic multiplication seemingly without end, evident in the decades-long *Boîte* project as a whole, which, in its totality, amounts to an edition of nearly 300 boxes with more than 22,000 reproductions in all. The point is that *La boîte-en-valise* was poised both to satisfy memory as well as to announce the cyclical pursuit of its impossible reconstitution. Homeopathically, it gives in to homesickness and the reconstitution of the self, but then reveals these to be effects of reproduction, beginning the cycle once again.[64]

The desire to replace the lost object generated a complementary urge that drove Duchamp to physically return to as many of his original objects as possible to study them for reproduction during the late 1930s. It also generated their careful hand-based reproduction. In order to transform the black-and-white photographs (which were most often made by hired professionals) into the finished color versions, Duchamp traveled to the originals, which were distributed across the United States and France, making detailed notations on their color. These notations would be used to color the reproductions by hand back in France. In 1936, after soliciting photographs from his various patrons, he sailed to New York to see Katherine Dreier's collection, traveled to Hollywood to consult the Arensbergs' holdings, and stopped off in Cleveland on the way back to examine *Nude Descending a Staircase,* where it was temporarily on loan. It is not surprising that at times Duchamp would become tired of being a "perpetual tourist," as he confessed in 1934.[65] Duchamp perhaps became weary of the geographical dispersal of his

self through travel, which came to double the institutional dissemination of his objects, even while that travel was motivated by the impulse to reunite the work in the *Boîte* project.

The process of reproduction was complicated and was not new to Duchamp. He first employed photography to make a substitute artwork in 1913, when he recreated *Nude Descending a Staircase (No. 2)* for Walter Arensberg, who had missed out on purchasing the original at the Armory show earlier that year. At that time, Duchamp used watercolor, ink, pencil, and pastel over a black and white photograph to recreate a full-scale, hand-colored replica of the original, which he signed "Marcel Duchamp [Fils]," indicating that it was the "son of" *Nude, No. 2.* For the coloring of the *Boîte*'s reproductions, Duchamp employed the *pochoir* technique, an anachronistic, cottage-industry procedure, which required the time-consuming hand-coloring of each print by the use of stencils. By doing so, he avoided the excessive cost of color photography. But what resulted was an intensive artisanal process. "The time required for obtaining a satisfactory first print is about a month for a highly skilled craftsman," Duchamp explained. "An average of 30 colours is required for each plate. . . . [It takes] seven or eight weeks to apply 30 colours by hand through stencils."[66] The notes for *Sonata* were typical, where Duchamp's color notations carefully fill in the different areas of the template. However, whenever possible, Duchamp did not hesitate to use high-quality reproductions from magazines or books directly in *La boîte-en-valise.* For instance, the color images of *Dr. Dumouchel* of 1910 were first photographically reproduced and hand-colored for the early boxes; later editions used the color gravure reproduced in *Lectures pour tous,* which Duchamp simply cut out of the magazine.[67] In other words, reproductions went both ways, serving both *as* and *for* the original. From artwork to reproduction and back again, they

1.8 Marcel Duchamp, proof print
with color notes for *Sonata*, circa
1935. © 2006 Artists Rights Society
(ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris/
Succession Marcel Duchamp.

completed a circuit that was multidirectional, if not tautological. Duchamp would deflect criticism of later reauthorizations of readymades in the 1960s by denying the existence of any problem: the readymade's very significance "is its lack of uniqueness . . . the replica of a 'readymade' delivering the same message."[68]

Still, these first proofs paradoxically acquired the status of originals. As opposed to the procedural depersonalization contained within the process of the coloration of reproductions, owing to the task-based method embodied in the use of stencils, Duchamp's artisanal fixation on the surface unfolds to yet another level of fetishistic desire: reproductions became endowed with the auratic traces of originals. This is especially true of the first proofs, the so-called *coloriages originaux*, which served as prototypes for further reproductions. Duchamp placed one of these "originals" in each of the twenty deluxe *Boîtes-en-valise*. He even submitted them as independent works to the International Exhibition of Surrealism in Mexico in 1940, at André Breton's behest. In this regard, the hand-colored photographs of the *Boîte* complicate the Benjaminian opposition between reproduction and auratic original artwork. Indeed, Benjamin himself noted their strange attraction in his diary in late spring of 1937 in a unique reference to the *Boîte:* "Saw Duchamp this morning, same café on Blvd. St. Germain. . . . Showed me his painting: *Nu descendant un escalier* in a reduced format, colored by hand *en pochoir*. breathtakingly beautiful. maybe mention."[69]

Although Benjamin opposed photography to the auratic original, he nevertheless discovered in the early form of nineteenth-century photography an auratic quality: practitioners "saw their task in simulating that aura through all the arts of retouching . . . through which bad painters took their revenge on photography."[70] It is perhaps for similar reasons that he was moved by the reproduced *Nude*'s appearance where Duchamp took his revenge on

dispersion. Barthes also found a compensatory maneuver in early photography, the coloring of which represented "an artifice, a cosmetic (like the kind used to paint corpses)."[71] In other words, retouching, painting the surface of a black-and-white photograph restores the illusion of life to a dead body. Hand-coloring not only blurs distinctions between originality and reproduction, but as such it further intensifies the replicatory ability of photography. The coloration acts to deny—even if impossibly—the reality of photographic reproduction and decontextualization, which, after all, had sundered Duchamp's oeuvre, in favor of the presentation of seemingly original handmade objects. While photography displaces the original by substituting for it, hand-coloring paradoxically restores a sense of aura. But rather than rehearsing the opposition of *either* original *or* reproduction, the condition of the *Boîte*'s images proposes a liminal status *between* painting and photography. Duchamp here explored the very relay between the two, a relay put to task in the negotiation of the dialectic of displacement and replacement that broadly defines his project. Moreover, this logic parallels Benjamin's own elaboration of memory and homelessness in a writing that is neither regressively auratic nor completely decontextualized, but exiled somewhere in the double-negative space between the two.

We would be right to ask why Duchamp—the exemplar of avant-garde nomadism, the paragon of an independent life, and the creator of the paradigmatic artistic model of displacement, the readymade—would concern himself with the *monographic* organization of his works of art in a single collection.[72] Why go to such lengths to contain all his life's work in a *single suitcase?* Rather than viewing his newfound obsession for collection simply as a resigned capitulation to the realities of institutional acculturation,

or as an inexplicable, perhaps compensatory, backlash against the structural paradigm of displacement that organizes his earlier work, it makes sense to read the practice of collection as a further response to the historical conditions of geopolitical dislocation, one that was also rather nuanced and reflexive. The fact that Duchamp's own homelessness was at its most intense during the construction of *La boîte-en-valise* encourages us to read it is as an answer both to the dislocation of his artwork and to his own displacement. Indeed, the two are inextricably intertwined. For Duchamp, the realization of the corpus of his work, reassembled through handmade photographs and housed in the suitcase, became a way to limit homesickness and subjective dissolution in a way similar to Benjamin's collection of childhood memories. Like Benjamin, the threatened dispersion of homelessness is checked by Duchamp's vicarious reconstitution of the self through the process of collection and containment, abetted by photography and the museum.

What reveals the profound subjective investment in *La boîte-en-valise* is not only its photographic condition, but its obsessive collecting, corroborated by Duchamp's own conspicuous comments that responded to the feared dispersal and loss of his artwork. In the process of requesting that Walter Pach sell *Sad Young Man on a Train* to Walter Arensberg, for example, Duchamp explained: "I would like this painting (if it is to part from you) to go and join its brothers and sisters in California. I am still convinced that because my output is limited, my things should not be subjected to speculation, i.e. traveling from one collection to another and being scattered about, and I am certain that Arensberg, like myself, intends making it a coherent whole."[75] The familial links between artworks, bound together to fend off the divisive onslaught of market speculation, were also imagined as corporeal connections protecting against the morbid parcelization of art that occurred through its

dissemination: "Exhibiting one thing here and another there feels like amputating a finger or a leg each time."[74] Such comments as these betray Duchamp's psychic attachment to his past work, indicating an identification between his sense of physical self and the perceived body of his artistic corpus, which comes a long way from the original "indifference" according to which the first readymades were reputedly chosen. Correlatively, the perception of his work reassembled in a single retrospective (as at the Tate Gallery in 1966) offered visions of bodily reparation, even an image of triumph over death: "When your memory's warmed up, you see better. You go through it chronologically; the man's really dead, with his life behind him. It's a little like that, except I'm not dying! Each thing brought up a memory. No, not at all. It was simply being laid bare, kindly, with no bruises, no regrets. It's quite agreeable."[75] What was at stake in such identifications? And how might the obsessive collecting of *La boîte-en-valise* repair or alternately exacerbate these fears of fragmentation?

Walter Benjamin once again provides answers. Considering his "Berlin Chronicle" a kind of "collection," Benjamin suggested in his *Arcades Project* that the act of collecting responds precisely to the anxiety of dispersion, and moreover that at its most regressive levels it betrays a nostalgic desire for the home.[76] The collection signifies an "abridged universe," "a nest," which serves a "biological function" in protecting against the fragmentation of the outside world: "Perhaps the most deeply hidden motive of the person who collects can be described this way: he takes up the struggle against dispersion. The great collector, at origin, is affected by the confusion and the scattering of things in the world."[77] The *space* of the collection may also become expressive of this longing. The container—Benjamin referred to it in French as a "boîte"—represents "the originary form of all habitation," and the desire for it indi-

cates "the human being's reflex to return to the maternal breast."[78] Collection, Benjamin realized, is not merely about the assembly of things; it compensates for the perceived fragmentation of the collector himself. Its "biological function" represents his own autocircumscription. The collection, then, neutralizes the sitelessness of decontextualization, even while its act of assembly motors the very cycle of displacement in the first place. Even while it decontextualizes, the collection—or archive, which derives from the Greek term *arkheion,* meaning house or domicile—evinces "an irrepressible desire to return to the origin, a homesickness, a nostalgia for the return to the most archaic place of absolute commencement," notes Jacques Derrida.[79] However, that said, Derrida points out that the archive is constituted by the inevitability of mnemonic loss. The death of memory, in other words, is both premise and consequence of archival desire. The collection organizes itself around the mutually informing conflict between memory and loss, between decontextualization and relocation, which identifies both the structural paradox of and homeopathic solution to homesickness.

In terms of Duchamp's *Boîte-en-valise,* what specifically countered the anxiety over displacement is its monographic organizational principle. "I wanted the *whole body of work* to stay together," says Duchamp, emphasizing his wish to conserve the totality of his corpus.[80] His so-called boxed monographs carried this out.[81] While the monograph represents an institutionally ordered organizational system, seemingly devoid of choice or personalization (one places *everything* in it, theoretically obviating any decisions based on personal preference), it also serves as the model that guides Duchamp's process of identification. This identification, equating artist's body and artistic corpus, is driven by two monographic effects: one that secures a sense of the totality of its structure; the other that concretizes Duchamp's authorial identity. Both act to shore up the self

through the fetishization of the collection. If the fetish's fundamental function is to replace a lost object, then this ultimately responds to the anxious desire for the reparation of the fragmented or "amputated" body (as in Freud's classic definition, according to which the fetish serves as supplement or substitute to the perceived castration of the mother). This definition closely approximates Duchamp's identification with the corpus of his collection, where personhood became physicalized and concretized through familial or corporeal relations to reproduced objects and their monographic assembly in a circumscribed space. Through this correlation between artistic corpus and physical self, the *Boîte*'s collection fended off threats of dispersion, intensified in Duchamp's own displacement, by reconstructing a body both materially and psychically. The *Boîte*'s fetishism, however, is certainly multiple: it replaces the object lost to the market and institution; it reunifies the psychically fragmented self of the artist; and it restores the home lost to the displaced person. What results is an investment through objects that multiply around loss, materializing a self whose coherence is paradoxically impossible, which drives the process in turn.

The monographic collection, in addition, determines the space of the suitcase, shrinking its contents to a custom fit. While the miniaturization of the *Boîte*'s contents has been read as a duplication of the effects of commodification,[82] it also remains the necessary condition for the containment of Duchamp's corpus of work within the single space of a portable suitcase. In other words, miniaturization and containment effectively allow the corpus to be perceptible as a single, complete, portable body, which offers a (momentary) resolution to the anxiety over fragmentation. Moreover, miniaturization is what connects the perceived totalization of Duchamp's oeuvre (as an undivided body) to its nostalgic function; for, if the placement of the corpus within a single suitcase entails

its miniaturization, then this material condensation signals the very form of nostalgia. It is not surprising to find in phenomenological studies of space and scale that the miniature object leads back to a domestic space of intimacy and childhood, proposing a personal and tactile relation to the individual beholder. "The tiny things we imagine simply take us back to childhood, to familiarity with toys and the reality of toys," writes Bachelard.[83] Similarly, *La boîte-en-valise* is eminently playful, inviting the physical manipulation of its contents and the discovery of its various compartments, offering a welcoming intimate space. The reproductions become like toys in the hands of the viewer, similar to playing with a doll's house. In fact, "the miniature typifies the structure of memory," according to Susan Stuart, for "there may be an actual phenomenological correlation between the experience of scale and the experience of duration."[84] Objects reduced in scale appear to recede in time. Miniaturization, in other words, indicates psychic investment, often regressive, and temporal remove – the two ingredients of nostalgia.

Consequently, the *Boîte-en-valise* suggests a complex and interrelated division between its decontextualized institutionalized condition, which is deeply depersonalizing, and its monographic identity, which is subjectively reparative. It cannot, in other words, simply be collapsed into a melancholic and desubjectified double, and indeed it is crucial to seize hold of its important subjective functions.[85] Duchamp's use of the museum reveals a strategy adjacent to what Benjamin theorized as the "antinomies of the allegorical," where objects are transformed within new framing conditions (such as the subjective requirements of exile lodged within an imitated museum's architecture), or even merged into the setting, into the structure of the artwork, in order to gain a new purchase on life: "If the object becomes allegorical under the gaze of melancholy, if

melancholy causes life to flow out of it and it remains behind dead, but eternally secure, then it is exposed to the allegorist, it is unconditionally in his power."[86] If Duchamp's *Boîte-en-valise* mimed the depersonalizing museum under the gaze of melancholy, then it did so to paradoxically bring its contents back to life under the control of its author. Consequently, Duchamp's "boxed monograph" cannot ultimately propose a facile repetition of Malraux's museum. Seeing it as such would fail to explain how the monographic logic, retrospective urge, and fetishistic replication became engaged within Duchamp's own physical dislocation and experience of homesickness. The monographic system actually clarifies the suitcase's refusal of the complete decontextualization that occurs in Malraux's *postmonographic* museum, which abandons any sense of subjective cohesion or artistic identity, beyond its abstract notion of "man." The monographic shores up authorial selfhood against the experience of its fragmentation, meaning the dislocation of its objects within the market or within the institution, as well as the geopolitical displacement of the exiled subject. Indeed, these various functions are interconnected, which is the achievement of Duchamp's portable museum.

In 1946, Duchamp fabricated two deluxe editions of *La boîte-en-valise.* Coming late, these versions may seem peripheral to the project, but in fact they reveal its fraught structure most dramatically. Each case includes a unique artwork. The first piece, *Untitled,* created for a suitcase for the surrealist painter Matta, shows a schematic diagram of a figure. Duchamp made it by brusquely taping human hair to a Plexiglas support, each clump positioned to correspond to the appropriate anatomical areas of a body indicated by a lightly penciled outline. The second work, made for Maria Martins, a love interest of Duchamp's at the time, is *Paysage fautif,*

an abstract "landscape" whose title translates both as "faulty" and "dirty." Considered faulty, its amorphous shape, positioned beyond any horizon line and outside any recognizable space, fails to represent even the slightest suggestion of a landscape. It is dirty in the scatological sense, because Duchamp created the formless image with his own semen. He preserved the globular mass on Astralon backed with black satin. Uniting masturbatory urge and painterly gesture, *Paysage fautif* parodies the extravagant rhetoric of abstract art, particularly its New-York-School variety, with its claims of paint flowing from the body as if directly from the source of the unconscious. It makes the riff through a hilariously and obscene act of literalization, Duchamp's "semen spill" performing a perverse mimicry of what would soon become Pollock's signature drip painting technique. "It's olfactory masturbation, dare I say," Duchamp commented. "Each morning a painter, on working, needs apart from his breakfast, a whiff of turpentine. . . . A form of great pleasure alone, onanistic almost."[87] Yet, viewed within the broader historical context of 1946, in the immediate aftermath of World War II, one can see in these two works both the recognition of the obliteration of the human subject, rendered unrecognizable by the inhumanity of the war, and the parody of the narcissistic desire to create art in the wake of the recent genocidal catastrophe.

Considered from within the logic of Duchamp's *Boîte-en-valise,* these pieces advance further the multiplication of the artist's body initiated by its photographic reproduction and museological accumulation, procedures that materialized a lost corpus and recovered a cohesive object of identification. *Paysage fautif* and *Untitled* answer to the same fetishistic desires as the larger *Boîte* project, even furthering the connection to Duchamp's own body by emerging as fluid and matter directly from it. The "umbilical cord," in Barthes' words, that extended the psycho-photographic link
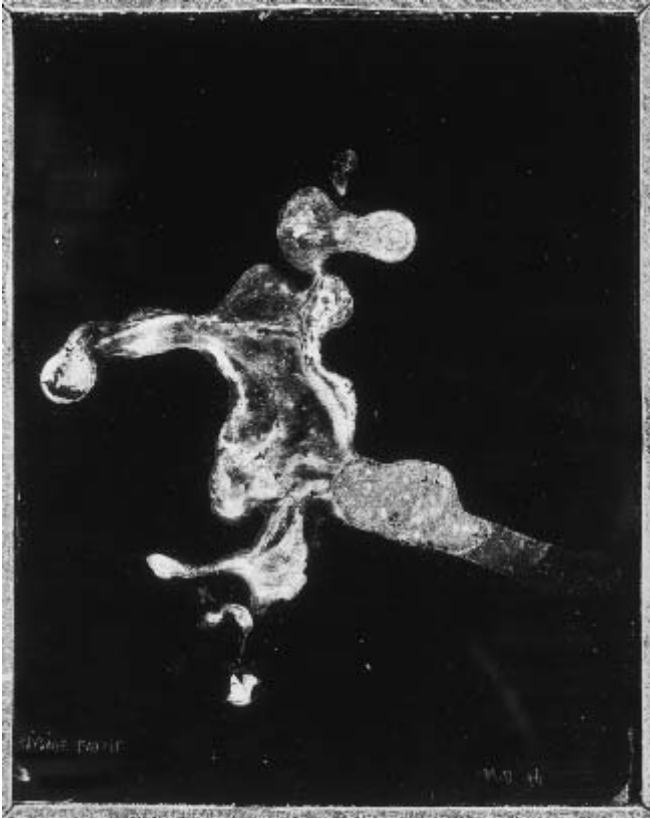
1.9 Marcel Duchamp, *Paysage fautif,*
1946. Philadelphia Museum of Art:
Gift of Jacqueline, Peter, and Paul
Matisse in memory of their mother,
Alexina Duchamp. © 2006 Artists
Rights Society (ARS), New York/
ADAGP, Paris/Succession Marcel
Duchamp.

between artist and object, here becomes literally physicalized. In the process, *La boîte-en-valise* comes to suggest a bizarre phantasmatic body, one circumscribed by a leather skin, framed by a complicated system of joints, divided into interior organs, pulsating with fluids, growing hair, and containing a photographic memory bank. With each suitcase signed *"of or by Marcel Duchamp or Rrose Sélavy,"* the latter Duchamp's feminine alter ego, this identificatory blur between author and object is explicitly stated. The *Boîte* must thus be considered as created *by* its maker and *of* his/her own body, rendering apropos its title.[88]

Although these bodily traces facilitate Duchamp's construction of *La boîte-en-valise* as phantom self, conjuring a morbidly unified body that harmonically combines genders, they equally reveal its profound division; for the pieces of semen and hair expose the ultimate and grotesque sign of physical decrepitude and fragmentation, the exiled body scattered across suitcases, through mediums, between institutions, and in reproduction. While the portable museum proceeded to collect and document even the most intimate belongings of its author, it seems that this did not stop Marcel Duchamp/Rrose Sélavy from perversely gaining enjoyment out of projecting his/her own body into the flux, or at least signifying the pleasure gained through the carefully cataloged results of masturbation. This revelation of enjoyment—"a form of great pleasure alone"—complements the reading of Duchamp's complex relation to his dispersed condition. While the *Boîte*'s fragmentary status expressed the physical insecurity of exile as well as its institutional decontextualization, its dislocation also prompted the ecstatic parceling of the body, which stimulated onanistic pleasures. Against the fetishistic urge directed toward physical cohesion witnessed earlier, here we confront the very desire for the dismemberment of the self. Was this desire for annihilation a

masochistic surrender to the body given over to institutionaliza-tion, or a sign of the enjoyment of the fetishistic act itself? Or might this controlled self-division have been yet another mode of home-opathic inoculation, one put to task in Duchamp's own interests against and within exile?

"Desire causes the current to flow, itself flows in turn, and breaks the flows," write Deleuze and Guattari of the body that is subjected to the demands of capitalist exchange at the behest of an urge that pushes its fluidity to the ultimate limits of schizophrenic abandon: "flowing hair, a flow of spittle, a flow of sperm, shit, or urine that is produced by partial objects and constantly cut off by other partial objects, which in turn produces other flows, inter-rupted by other partial objects. Every object presupposes the con-tinuity of a flow, the fragmentation of the object."[89] Existing within a similar physical flux, the nomadic body of the *Boîte-en-valise* in-dicates the pleasures of the disarticulation of the self, which es-cape the dreary submission to institutionalization. Such pleasures are bound up with the destruction of the coherence of identity, leaving a flexible self pledged to itinerant desires. In this sense, ex-ile suggests a mode of being in the grips of becoming, one that, in the case of the *Boîte,* defines an independent traveler who has trans-gressed the regulations of traditional identity, including its gen-dered codes, national loyalties, and ideals of physical cohesion. Duchamp pushed the flux of exile to ecstatic intensities beyond in-stitutionalized order.[90]

However, the options for liberation and self-invention were continually threatened in turn by institutional capture, all too evi-dent in the highly structured format of the suitcase. The *Boîte* clearly refuses the abstract freedom of the nomadic, especially where it expresses an unreflective optimism in its ability to dissolve the so-lidifications of dominant conventions and identities; for Duchamp

realized that institutional co-optation and reification were not so easily overcome. In this light, the experimental self-portraiture performed by the valise represents a historically updated version of that of *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even,* which also positioned its author, "MarCel," as divided between fragmentation and instrumentalization, between ecstatic unity and thwarted desire, and between female and male halves corresponding to the upper and lower panes of glass, the spaces of the MARiée and the CÉLibataires, the bride and the bachelors.[91] This figuration, of course, was also a disfiguration; for the *Large Glass* deconstructs identity and rebuilds the body through a mechanical schematization of the desiring subject, which, in mapping out psychosexual zones, intricately divides bodily functions. Moreover, while it entices the viewer with orgasmic fusion—promising what Deleuze and Guattari describe as "a schizophrenic experience of intensive qualities in their pure state, to a point that is almost unbearable"—it ultimately offers only the frustration of desire—"a celibate misery and glory experienced to the fullest, like a cry suspended between life and death."[92]

This frustration, which is productive of desire in the first place, derives from the fact that, although MarCel enjoys the pleasures of disarticulation, she/he is already submitted to the modern regimes of industrialization that retool the body as machine, albeit one that Duchamp renders disfunctional. The *Boîte,* like the *Large Glass,* reveals that its fragmentation is not simply liberatory, but also caught up in the ongoing process of institutionalization and reproduction. Nevertheless, Duchamp found in this experiment more than the prison of mechanical objectification and scientific control; he also discovered the potential for a transgressive identity that attempted to push beyond the limitations imposed by traditional institutions, thereby inventing his own kinds of *jouissance.*

Nowhere is this transgression more strikingly dramatized than in the image of Duchamp disguised as a cheese merchant passing through Nazi checkpoints. Certainly it was the *Boîte*'s paradoxical status—mimetic yet singular—that allowed its owner to dissimulate its identity, which was at its heart mobile and discontinuous. It was only appropriate that this extraordinary meeting should take place at the border, which figured as both the rigid boundary of the nation's territory and the fluid portal onto exile. There, two radically different formations confronted one another: nationalism and banishment. Whereas the nationalist imagined himself as physically whole and ideal, exemplified in so many grotesquely monumentalized bodies whose armored physiques only betrayed the paranoia of dissolution in the first place,[95] Duchamp's construction committed itself to the exiled body. By reflexively opening up the desires for both mnemonic cohesion and fetishistic reproduction, for both a completed corpus and physical flux, Duchamp negated any simplistic expression of homogeneity and unity and refused the facile regression to a vicarious home. Luckily, Duchamp successfully passed through the Nazi border, leaving us with a remarkable articulation of the paradoxes of exile. Through it, Duchamp gained his independence, which was in turn sent packing.

Duchamp's critique of nationalism, however, was not limited to the easy targeting of fascism. In New York in 1943 Duchamp made a portrait of George Washington. Constructed out of gauze soaked with iodine, the image unites the profile of the first American president with the geographical border of the United States. But this is no official portrait. It suggests a wounded body brutally impaled with long nails, each driven through a golden star, wrapped in bloody bandages. A series of oppositions tears its surface between unification and fragmentation, between the symbols of the nation (the flag, the country, the president) and their

1.10 Marcel Duchamp, *Genre Allegory,* 1943. Philadelphia Museum of Art: Gift of Jacqueline, Peter, and Paul Matisse in memory of their mother, Alexina Duchamp. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris/Succession Marcel Duchamp.

metonymic dispersion (as dismembered part objects). Not surprisingly, it was rejected by the editors of *Vogue* magazine, who commissioned it as a patriotic image for the cover of a special issue on Americana in the midst of World War II. What repulsed them was, no doubt, the sordidness of the portrait, contained in the fact that it pierces the patriotic order, destroys its borders, and attacks its subject. *Genre Allegory* materializes the violence hidden behind the homogenization and essentialism of national identity, in which the desire for collective unity is fulfilled at the cost of bloody fragmentation. We recognize its logic from *La boîte-en-valise.*

2

SCULPTURES FOR
TRAVELING

JUST BEFORE SETTING SAIL for Buenos Aires from New York on July 8, 1918, Duchamp came up with a new idea for a sculpture. He described it in a letter to Jean Crotti: "Do you remember those rubber bathing caps that come in all colors? I bought some, cut them up into uneven little strips, stuck them together, not flat, in the middle of my studio (in the air) and attached them with string to the various walls and nails. . . . It looks like a kind of multicolored spider's web."[1] Calling this work a *Sculpture for Traveling*–in French, *Sculpture de voyage*–Duchamp carried it with him to Argentina. Not designed to last, the sculpture disintegrated after several years, leaving only a few photographs to document its ephemeral existence. The earliest, from 1918, shows it suspended in the middle of his studio in New York, at 33 West 67th Street. Seen above the *Bicycle Wheel*, the spindly assemblage of stretched rubber hovers in space, supported by tentacle-like strings that extend in different directions without any discernable organization. It appears as a formless mess, set up without rhyme or reason, like an old abandoned spider's web. The photograph emphasizes the spatial disorientation of the *Sculpture* by cropping out areas where string and wall connect. One can't see where the work begins and where it ends. Its material extremities seem to recede into the distance, lost in an area out-of-frame.

It shows up again, and to similar effect, in *Shadows of Readymades* (1918), another black-and-white photograph taken at the New York studio, in which the *Sculpture*'s shadows are cast onto a wall, along with those of several other objects, including the *Hat Rack* and the top part of the *Bicycle Wheel*. As in various areas of
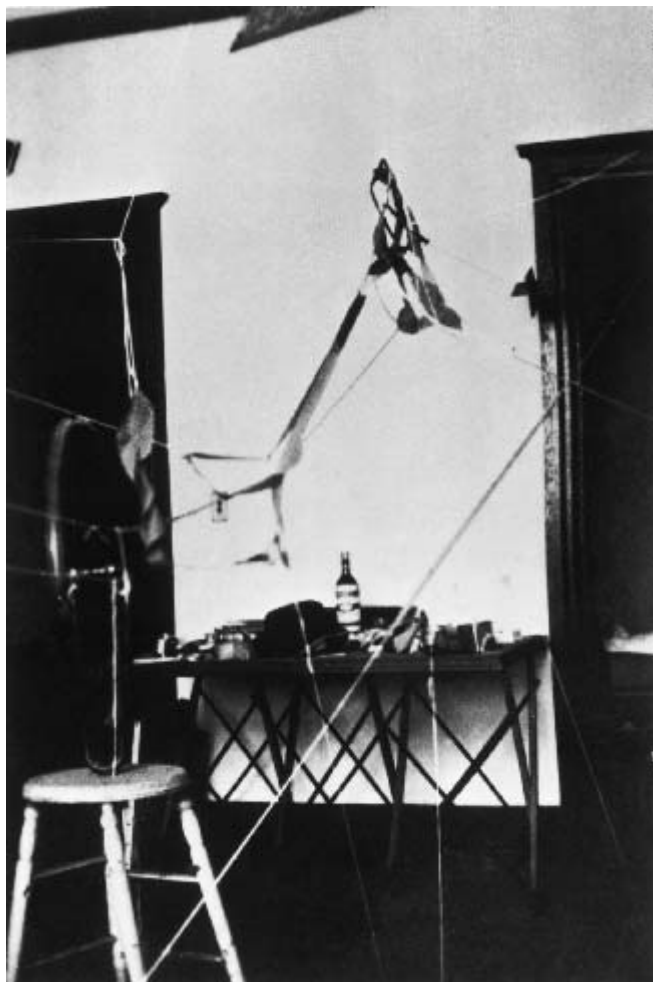
2.1 Marcel Duchamp, *Sculpture de voyage*, installed in New York studio, 1918. Philadelphia Museum of Art: Gift of Jacqueline, Peter, and Paul Matisse in memory of their mother, Alexina Duchamp. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ ADAGP, Paris/Succession Marcel Duchamp.
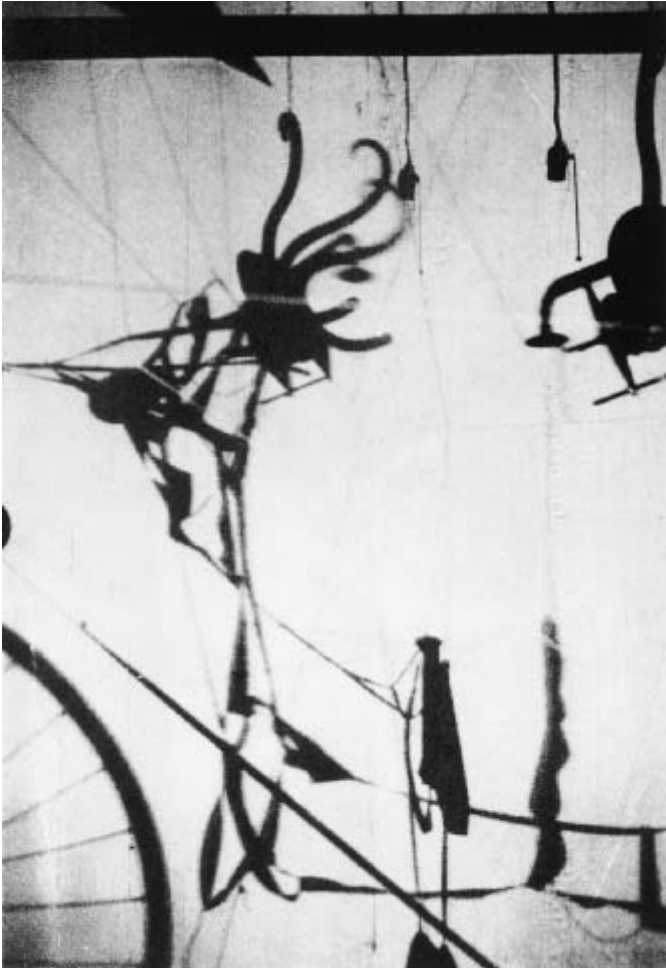
2.2 Marcel Duchamp, *Shadows of Readymades,* 1918. Philadelphia Museum of Art: Gift of Jacqueline, Peter, and Paul Matisse in memory of their mother, Alexina Duchamp. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris/Succession Marcel Duchamp.

2.3 Marcel Duchamp, *Sculpture de voyage,* installed in Buenos Aires, 1918. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris/ Succession Marcel Duchamp.

the painting *Tu m',* which Duchamp had recently completed, dark forms interact, dissolving clear shapes and blending the traces of different objects so that hybrid figures result. While certain visual signs imply a shallow depth—we can measure the distance between the hanging light socket at upper right and its corresponding shadow cast on the wall to its left—the play of shadows suggests a multidimensional constellation unbounded by walls. One also comes across the *Sculpture for Traveling* while flipping through the flat files of *La boîte-en-valise,* Duchamp's portable museum made several years later. The hand-colored photograph reconstructs the *Sculpture*'s original bright chromatic range, as it is seen hanging above a couch in Duchamp's apartment in Buenos Aires. Here it appears condensed, its discrete objecthood now perceptible as it dangles neatly between two strings.[2]

The *Sculpture* travels, passing through diverse representations and disparate geographies. If it so adamantly resists staying in place, refusing even to be the same from one photograph to the next—unless the same equals continual metamorphosis—how can it even be recognized or identified? Through its photographic perambulations, it renders problematic not only the assignment of its artistic medium as sculpture (is it sculpture? an early form of installation art? a photographic prop?), but its very identity (is it art or diversion? a game? where does it begin and end?). While the piece connects to Duchamp's earlier artistic practice, it pushes previous projects further: it proposes a perpetual state of flux that can only momentarily be pinned down, as if permanently letting loose the string from *Three Standard Stoppages* (1913–14); it throws its uncertain materiality upon the spaces of everyday life, as if detaching the aleatory lines of measurements in *Network of Stoppages* (1914), uncanning chance, and allowing them to wander freely. The result is a fluid assemblage that expands toward architectural pa-

rameters, a mobile body that will not be the same twice, a shifting thing that defies classification. What might this problematization of identity, this refusal of static categories, tell us of the imperatives of exile? For not only was the *Sculpture* situated in the field of dislocation, but it produced its very experience.

The *Sculpture* travels, as much as Duchamp did—from Paris to New York to Buenos Aires, and so on. This parallel between Duchamp's itinerancy and the *Sculpture*'s nomadism offers a key to the project. Duchamp had been living in New York for more than three years before he left for Buenos Aires, and the reasons for his departure were complex. Among them was a growing fatigue with his patrons, the Arensbergs, and an exasperation with the loss of the city's carefree energy and social dynamism owing to the encroaching world war, which the United States joined in 1917.[5] In retrospect, however, more than anything else it was the increasingly claustrophobic atmosphere of the patriotic environment—with military conscription, ordered in 1917, delving ever deeper into the population, even to the point of drafting noncitizens—which forced Duchamp to flee the States. He sought out a "neutral country" unencumbered by the pressures of patriotism, just as he had done earlier when he left France for New York in 1915.[4] To Pierre Cabanne, he explained:

> Yes, I left for a neutral country. You know, since 1917 America had been in the war, and I had left France basically for lack of militarism. For lack of patriotism, if you wish . . . I had fallen into American patriotism, which certainly was worse, but before leaving the United States I had to ask for permission, because even there I was classified for military duty. There were various categories, A, B, C, D, E, F, and F was foreigners, who would have

been called up in an extreme emergency. I was F, and that's why I had to ask permission to leave for Buenos Aires; they were very nice about it and gave me permission for six months, and I left in June–July, to find a neutral country called Argentina.[5]

His plans for this trip were undefined, other than to "really make a clean break with this part of the world," as he explained to Jean Crotti.[6] He would produce drawings for the *Large Glass,* a project begun some five years earlier, but beyond that, playing chess and exploring the city would occupy his time. On the eve of his departure, he wrote to Picabia: "I leave tomorrow for Buenos Aires for a year or two, without plans, without knowing anyone there."[7] And to Henri-Pierre Roché: "I'm off again, it's getting to be a habit."[8] In a whimsical drawing sent to his friend Florine Stettheimer, Duchamp drew out the course of his maritime journey. He registered the openness of his plans by indicating the location of Buenos Aires with a large question mark.

"I'm off again": The French–*Je m'éloigne encore*–is undoubtedly more suggestive than the English translation, expressing a distancing of the self and suggesting an internal mobility that travel may bring in its most transformative capacity. "I'm distancing myself again" is an expression that fractures being, divides it into subject and object, implying a crisis of identity in the age of its national consolidation. What is remarkable about the *Sculpture* is the degree to which it expresses Duchamp's "habit"–or better yet, "mania" (*manie*)–of throwing himself into remoteness, a yearning for an undetermined flexibility that resisted any form of regimentation, unification, or rigid classification. This is the ultimate significance of Duchamp's travels during this time. His dedication to mobility is particularly meaningful at this historical moment

2.4 Marcel Duchamp, *Adieu à Florine,* 1918. Philadelphia Museum of Art: Gift of Jacqueline, Peter, and Paul Matisse in memory of their mother, Alexina Duchamp. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris/Succession Marcel Duchamp.

Sculptures for Traveling

when identity was entering into regimentation in the face of world war; for what the *Sculpture* achieved through its perpetually shape-shifting form was a telling refusal of the very consistency of identity, of its unitary self-same definition, which served (and still does) as a theoretical foundation of the forces of order, expressed within nationalism, capitalism, and traditional social positions. In other words, it was from the fundamental basis of identification (of being classified as A, B, C, D, E, or F) that Duchamp wished to escape in 1918. This escape was, in part, made through the *Sculpture for Traveling*. The fact that no stable material object survives to guarantee the *Sculpture*'s ongoing existence is only appropriate; its peripatetic appearance established itself only through several photographs that document a multiplicity of momentary materializations of something that continually distances itself from itself. This is not merely coincidental; *travel* constitutes the *Sculpture,* which perpetually changes shape with each new siting and physically adapts to every new context. Its self-differing logic defines the extreme possibilities of Duchamp's artistic practice as much as it articulates the ideal of freedom embodied in exile during World War I.

One of the first to perceive the significance of exile for the avant-garde at this time was Roman Jakobson. Having recently arrived in Prague from Moscow in 1921 during the tumultuous early years following the Russian revolution, Jakobson wrote an essay entitled "Dada" in which he attributed the radicality of that avant-garde movement to its destabilization of identity. This destabilization occurred, Jakobson argued, as part of a broad epistemic shift toward an emerging culture of relativity, arrived at through the confluence of theoretical insights in "scientific thought" at large, including those in physics (he cites Albert Einstein's theory of relativity), historiography (Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West* of 1920),

and post-Marxist concepts of value (Nikolai Bucharin's *The Economics of the Transitional Period*). The historical conditions of relativity were further intensified, Jakobson argued, by spatial and economic shifts owing to the atomization and differentiation of cities across Europe—"the fact that Europe has been turned into a multiplicity of isolated points by visas, currencies, cordons of all sorts"—and by advances in the technologies of travel and communications—"space is being reduced in gigantic strides—by radio, the telephone, aeroplanes."[9] This early-twentieth-century modernity constituted an emerging transnational geography defined by the maximizing of connections between points of cultural difference. Despite these circumstances of expansion and hybridity, and no doubt in reaction to them, nationalism was resurgent, reasserting geographic borders, regional communities, purified languages, and a corresponding cultural chauvinism. What animated this system and determined its reaction to the culture of relativity, for Jakobson, was a confrontation with foreignness, according to which difference would be either neutralized by its reduction to the familiar, or consigned to a condition of denigrated alterity: "One's own little world and all that is 'translatable' into one's own dialect versus the incomprehensible barbarians—such is the usual scheme" (34).

Driven toward its extreme, this logic gave rise to the xenophobic aggressions encountered in warfare and the violence of colonialism, each of which would force difference into being the same or obliterate it altogether. However, there was yet another model of interaction between self and other, Jakobson suggested, that replaced the guarded security and self-assuredness of *being* with the fluidity of *becoming*, prompting a different goal: to allow the encounter with difference to change the self, thus dissolving its identity. An openness to foreignness would result, which was natural for those who, like sailors, traveled continuously or were completely

without a home, Jakobson noted, for they launched themselves into ever-new relations with a world that was always strange, outside of the stability of family relations, beyond the familiarity of one's own language, and distant from the security of comfortable spaces. "Is this not the reason for the fact that sailors are revolutionary, that they lack that very 'stove,' that hearth, that little house of their own, and are everywhere equally *chez soi*?"[10]

To be sure, Zurich Dada, which formed the central focus of Jakobson's study, was established precisely as a refuge for the homeless, away from the rigidification of national identity and the dark longings for the destruction of difference that animated the patriotic masses during the war.[11] Rather than rest content with this analysis of the antinational politics of the avant-garde, now common to histories of this period, Jakobson went further. It was his remarkable insight to perceive that Dada did not just represent a politics of antinationalism; it founded an aesthetic of exile, or what he called a "systemless aesthetic rebellion."[12] By "laying bare the device" of artistic form—by exposing the codes that structure it—Dadaist practice denaturalized representation, and this cleared the way for radical formal experimentation and ultimately the realization of an art of relativity, such that "letters in arbitrary order, randomly struck on a typewriter, are considered verses; dabs on a canvas made by a donkey's tail dipped in paint are considered a painting."[13] Such iconoclastic strategies flew in the face of traditional artistic ordering systems and national styles, which had been discredited, argued the Dadaists, owing to their origins in a now condemnable European culture responsible for catastrophic world war. Yet for Jakobson, the stakes were larger than simply an opposition to tradition by the avant-garde's transgressive practice: the choice was between a brutal form of identity that polarized cultures, which catalyzed war itself, and one that revolutionized the

self, loosening it from the grips of identity. Although Jakobson overlooked Duchamp's activities concurrent with Zurich Dada, his essay nevertheless proposes a provocative approach for the reconsideration of Duchamp's practice, wherein expatriate existence and deracinated aesthetic structure also coincide.

Duchamp himself articulated the theoretical terms for his practice in New York around the same time as the construction of the *Sculpture for Traveling*. In a series of notes, written in terms that suggest certain parallels with the philosophy of Henri Bergson, he explored the artistic possibilities of the transformative powers of "becoming."[14] In one note, entitled "Cast Shadows," Duchamp envisioned the following task:

> make a picture. of *shadows cast*
> by objects 1st on a plane.
> 2nd on a surface of
> such (or such) curvature
> 3rd on several transparent surfaces
> thus one can obtain a hypophysical
> analysis of the successive transformations
> of objects. (in their form-outline–)[15]

One such "picture of *shadows cast*" found its realization in the painting *Tu m'* (1918). Across the surface of its long horizontal canvas are several representations of the shadows of readymades, as if projected onto the painting. The objects that serve as referents for these shadows have been doubly displaced: from functional object (such as a corkscrew) to readymade status, and from objecthood to shadowy trace. A certain dematerialization occurs in the process, occasioned by the distance that the readymades travel through different contextual frameworks and representational states, each

of which transforms the objects in turn. The destabilization described in "Cast Shadows" also points to the photograph *Shadows of Readymades* in which the *Sculpture for Traveling* makes an appearance, achieving just such a "hypophysical analysis of the successive transformations of objects" as explained in the note. The photographic focus on shadows registers a play of luminosity released from its physical "form-outline" through photochemical procedures. Beginning with the stretched rubber, Duchamp cast its shadows–the luminous tracing of three-dimensional forms–onto surrounding walls, where they blended together in an aleatory reordering before being further differentiated–captured on a two-dimensional surface and miniaturized–through photographic inscription. Several surfaces combine in the final image, which performs a metamorphosis on seemingly banal everyday objects.

Duchamp references the photographic process that is at the basis of such transformations later in the same note when he contemplates the possibility of "*the execution* of the picture by means of luminous sources," which indicates the detachment of the object from its concrete material support and its passage into light. That the photographic inscription, or at least the mechanical tracing, of the object's shadows elicits such a transformation is indicated further in a related note (reproduced with the orthographic irregularities of Duchamp's writing), titled "shadows cast by Readymades." In it Duchamp conjures "a figure formed by an equal [length] (for example) taken in each Readymade and becoming by the projection a part of the cast shadow. . . . Take these 'having become' and from them make a tracing without of course changing their position in relation to each other in the original projection."[16] This force of *becoming*–imagined to be materialized in this instance through the projection into shadow–was in fact key to Duchamp's practice and thinking at this time. As a corrosive energy,

it would ruin equivalence and unity, subverting self-same identity, as is evident in *Shadows of Readymades,* where representation and reference appear as radically distinct rather than as illusionistically unified, like the division of Duchamp's identity into subject and object. Readymades no longer resemble themselves and are only vaguely, if at all, recognizable. They are in effect distanced from their own selves. Duchamp further explained the motivation behind this process of estrangement in yet another note: "To lose the possibility of identifying/recognizing 2 similar objects–2 colors, 2 laces, 2 hats, 2 forms whatsoever to reach the Impossibility of sufficient *visual* memory. . . ."[17]

What would it mean to lose the possibility of "identifying/recognizing" two similar objects? For one thing, Duchamp's proposition assumes that "to identify" *is* "to recognize"–that is, it means to become aware of a connection of similarity between appearance and preestablished form on the basis of "visual memory." A few years earlier, the readymade had demonstrated the precondition of this exercise, thereby revealing that the principle of identity had become dominant within mass culture. By associating the readymade with common everyday objects of mass production, such as urinals, snow shovels, and bicycle wheels, Duchamp ascribed this condition to an industrial paradigm of repetition, wherein the "lack of uniqueness" registered a state of complete similarity between identical objects, which marked the readymade.[18] According to the lesson of the readymade, the experience of seriality had become the prevailing condition of art in the age of mass production, such that it had become habitual to assume identity between objects. Indeed, the provocation of the readymade–as demonstrated most of all in the *Fountain* episode in 1917–owed itself precisely to the invasion within the artistic realm of a mass-produced commodity object, such that the vaunted originality and categorical difference

of art from commerce was forfeited, or at least exiled to a purely conceptual register. But based on his notes and the subsequent creation of the *Sculpture for Traveling,* it is evident that Duchamp was close to considering how to free identity from the grips of manufactured sameness, and correlatively, how to liberate the viewer from the habitual perception of likeness between similar objects. It is true that the readymade's achievement was not only to announce the impoverishment of auratic originality in the face of mass production, but also to disrupt it by isolating a manufactured object and giving it a new meaning, endowing it with a "new thought."[19] *Fountain* freed the urinal from the straitjacket of functionality and allowed it to wander conceptually and associate with unexpected ideas. Yet even as resituated and recontextualized, readymades—such as the *Snow Shovel* or the *Hat Rack*—still perpetuated an unchanging formal rigidity that meant accepting the physical objectification of the commodity objects with which they began. And even in their photographic "transformation" the luminous forms in *Shadows of Readymades* still existed as a static "tracing" of an already "having become." The challenge remained of how to bring about "the figuration of a possible" that would act as "a physical 'caustic' [vitriol type] burning up all aesthetics or callistics,"[20] as Duchamp mused in another note. In other words, how could figuration itself be made to travel continually? How could the force of open-ended possibility enter into figuration? How could it overcome the stasis of reified appearance, of its own endgame as representation, achieving a sort of ongoing "virtual multiplication" beyond the repetition of the same, an endless becoming?[21]

Duchamp's *Sculpture for Traveling* expresses this force of difference through two forms of multiplicity (which in fact correspond to Bergson's own understanding of the term's meanings): Beginning with mass-produced bathing caps, it presents them as

Fountain by R. Mutt

Photograph by Alfred Stieglitz

THE EXHIBIT REFUSED BY THE INDEPENDENTS

2.5 Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain*, 1917, as reproduced in *The Blind Man*. Philadelphia Museum of Art: Gift of Jacqueline, Peter, and Paul Matisse in memory of their mother, Alexina Duchamp. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris/Succession Marcel Duchamp.

Sculptures for Traveling

fragmented, cut up into a series of amorphous forms strung together in a way that releases identity into differentiated spatial juxtapositions; and it draws on soft, flexible materials—string and rubber—that change over time, proposing a heterogeneous and unquantifiable succession of transformative temporal states.[22] In other words, the *Sculpture* takes mass-produced things and unleashes upon them a rending force of becoming. This force operates across both time and space, and invokes an order of repetition that produces change rather than sameness, a repetition that draws together identity and difference into what defines the possible. "[W]hat repeats, repeats the unrepeatable," Gilles Deleuze has argued, and this perfectly articulates the relay between repetition and difference that the *Sculpture* puts into play.[23] Rather than viewing the identical under the sign of the similar, which works to produce generality, Duchamp redefined repetition such that variation does not obscure it, but rather serves as its very condition.[24] Consequently, "that which becomes" overwhelms the repetition of the "same," and thereby contests long-standing Platonic reason and its subordination of difference to what Deleuze calls the "power of the One." Returning is the becoming-identical of becoming itself, and within this cycle identity is constituted over space and time in the repetitive movements of change, spiraling off into perpetual revolution.

The fact that the *Sculpture* achieved a malleable, ephemeral existence, changing itself from itself at every turn ("je m'eloigne encore"), meant that it undermined the very meaning of identity, or at least its conventional definition (in Latin, *idem,* the etymological root of *identity,* denotes "the same"). Withdrawing constancy from its appearance over time, it frustrated its ability to be recognized and recognizability in general. Whereas the conventional understanding of identity has it locked into an unchanging mimetic cycle, pointing to an unattainable abstraction, an ideal

form, to Platonic Oneness, which is mobilized within culture at large to enable its various systems of knowledge—guaranteeing the viability of technological and scientific constants, the reliable conditions of capitalist production and exchange, the socio-political classification of individuals, and so on—Duchamp's *Sculpture* overturns its fundamental ontological basis. The *Sculpture* thereby introduces a new force of *difference* that would uproot identity from sameness, figuring as an assemblage that fractures its existence into nonexchangeable and nonsubstitutable materializations, into a series of virtual states beneath which "there is no ultimate term"— only "the possible."[25]

While the *Sculpture for Traveling* may still trace threads of continuity from one state to the next—in terms of its materiality, title, and authorship—which works to guarantee the consistency that organizes identity so that it can still be called the "*Sculpture for Traveling*" at each moment, none of these threads is perfectly stable—rubber disintegrates, its title translates into different languages (balancing between French and English), and its authorship names a variable self (which Duchamp would soon further emphasize through the invention of his alter ego, Rrose Sélavy). In fact, retaining its identity appears only as a way to make the *Sculpture for Traveling unrecognizable.*[26] As such, the assemblage allows identity and difference to touch, delivering an explosive charge to each term. The result is that repetition produces difference from within identity and consequently becomes a source of freedom, designating an act of will rather than a predetermined practice ruled by habit, moral law, and social institutions, which were constricting identity and intensifying its opposition to difference during World War I.[27]

One way to articulate further the crisis of identity during the war years is to consider the uneasy consolidation of geopolitical and

psychic borders carried out by nationalism in the formation of its group subject, in attempt to correlate the self to the nation's own boundaries. Though imaginary, these identifications were powerful and contagious, enough to send troops by the hundreds of thousands to the front lines to defend the body of the nation ostensibly shared by all. It is here that individuals arrange themselves into the fused social being that is called community, motoring a process of deindividualization that facilitates group formation. Impetuous and uninhibited, the subjects of nationalism during the First World War appeared to succumb to a collective instinct, acting as if unconscious and without individuality, unified in a shared intolerance of the nongroup and in a perceived commonality among themselves. Such observations as these prompted Freud to undertake an analysis of the phenomenon in 1921, just after the war. How does the group, Freud wondered, exert "such a decisive influence over the mental life of the individual?"[28] His explanation was that the power of collective binding resided in a series of identifications based on a libidinal tie to a love object−a leader, or a leading idea (the nation, racial or sexual identity)−modeled on primary Oedipal emotional attachments. Under such conditions, the love object assumes the place of the ego ideal, an introjection that when undertaken collectively facilitates the perception of commonality among members, thus solidifying the basis of group psychology.[29] This melding would defend the subject against the threats of both the external anarchy of ethnic or cultural difference−represented traditionally by such figures as communists, Jews, women, homosexuals, the masses−and the internal chaos of uncontrollable drives−the unconscious, sexual urges, and violent passions.[30] The (proto)fascist subject, driven by paranoia, would build up and expand his own physical borders by combining the projected surface of his bodily ego with the imagined territorial expanse of the nation. According

to Klaus Theweleit's reading of the fantasies of German *Freikorps* mercenaries operating in the aftermath of the First World War, for instance, the strength for the body's fortification was "drawn *from the outside,* by the disciplinary agencies of imperialist society."[31] Such a bond, however, would weaken as much as strengthen its members, as Freud observed. While the subject seemingly enriches itself through the love object's properties—gaining resolve, security, purpose, and moral rectitude—it also lies impoverished and empty, having surrendered its individual ego. What results is "an unmistakable picture of a regression," according to Freud, and it was characterized by several factors, including weakness of intellectual ability, lack of emotional restraint, incapacity of moderation and delay, and the heightened need for action.[32] All are not determined by this condition, however. While it is true that every person "is bound by ties of identification in many directions"— Freud mentions race, class, creed, and nationality—"he can also raise himself above them to the extent of having a scrap of independence and originality," or what he called, more specifically, "a differentiating grade in the ego," which would avoid the extremities represented by the pathologies of mania and melancholia, or the fusion of ego and ego ideal and their complete disconnection, respectively.[33] This self-differentiation through multiple identifications is precisely what was lacking in the subject forged in the rabid nationalism and socio-political extremes that surrounded World War I.[34]

"From a psychological standpoint I find the spectacle of war very impressive," Duchamp exclaimed while living as an émigré in the United States in 1915, indicating his own allergic reaction to national identity. "The instinct which sends men marching out to cut down other men is an instinct worthy of careful scrutiny. What an absurd thing such a conception of patriotism is!"[35] The reasoning

that brought him to this conclusion was based on a sensitivity to one of the fundamental paradoxes of nationalism—that its greatest expression is discovered in the heroic sacrifice of its own members. Such an insight—that nationalism is founded on a kind of death instinct, even if Duchamp did not name it—finds its elaboration in Freud's thesis that the patriot's death in battle is the physical outcome of an earlier self-destructive process wherein the ego is renounced and individuality is suppressed in the dedication to national unification. By definition, the social fusion of national identity marks the death of individuality, even if, with some degree of irony, that sacrifice is made in the name of liberty, independence, and freedom. This, for Duchamp, was certainly the absurdity of patriotism, which, in the abstract terms elaborated in his notes, represented the drastic surrender of the self to a preexisting category. Against it, he preferred to "combat . . . invasion with folded arms."[56]

"My intention was always to get away from myself, though I knew perfectly well that I was using myself," Duchamp reasoned. "Call it a little game between 'I' and 'me.'"[57] This game of self-differentiation is astonishing for its radial refusal of the assimilative features of nationalism, exemplified variously by the voluntary submission of the self to a mass-produced idea of the nation-state, the establishment of an imagined community, the sacrificial requirements of its wartime defense, and the monolingual reduction of its speakers.[58] Duchamp's "little game" countervails this surrender of the ego in the nationalist subject's voluntary submission to group binding. Yet it is also remarkable for its renunciation of the ostensibly healthy Freudian subject, which retains an individual ego ideally balanced between different systems of identification. Instead, Duchamp's game unleashed a self-differing force that produced a gap between "I" and "me," between subject and object,

which would fundamentally estrange the self from identity (at least one based on sameness), corrode the unity and integrity of individuality, and insistently place being in proximity with difference. Rather than become a group subject, or even an "independent" individual, Duchamp would multiply the self. Manifested by an ever-modulating internal division, this modeling of the self, needless to say, challenged any consolidation of its borders with those of the nation-state. In fact, Duchamp proposes a radical formation of the self within a state of perpetual exile—an abolition of identity from within identity. He dramatizes, in other words, "how easily that boundary that secures the cohesive limits of the western nation may imperceptibly turn into a contentious internal liminality that provides a place from which to speak both of, and as, the minority, the exilic, the marginal, and the emergent," as Homi Bhabha has recently written.[59]

A photograph of Duchamp taken during his time spent in Argentina portrays exactly this state of internal liminality. In it, he appears barely recognizable, his visage starkly lit against a nondescript dark background that suggests no specific location. If the orientation is unclear spatially, then its ambiguity is matched by an apparent anatomical disjunction that depicts a head exacted from its body, as if decapitated through montage, which creates an effect that is extenuated by the oblique, overhead vantage point. The camera position, furthermore, is disembodied, shot from a position floating somewhere in the air above. Intensifying the strangeness even further is Duchamp's bizarrely shaved head, which removes him from all familiarity. He thus "makes a clean break with this part of the world" by casting himself into a disjunctive state that renders his own appearance unrecognizable. Embodying a figure of exile, he exists outside any clear relation to a specific time or place. This dislocation of the self forecasts later displacements enacted through

his alter ego Rrose Sélavy. Duchamp as a unified, knowable subject was discarded, and his later playful poster, *Wanted: $2000 Reward,* which pictured Duchamp as a wanted man, would only end up literalizing this fact. By associating the lack of legalized subjectivity with criminality, which is then parodied, it mocked the quest for any true identity beginning with the aspirations of documentary photography. It is clear from these images that Duchamp's exile would be defined and enacted, not just documented, in these representations. "Perhaps I had the spirit of expatriation, if that's a word," Duchamp explained. "It was part of a possibility of my going out in the traditional sense of the word: that is to say from my birth, my childhood, from my habits, my totally French fabrication. The fact that you have been transplanted into something completely new, from the point of view of environment, there is a chance of you blossoming differently, which is what happened to me."[40]

Duchamp's self-professed "spirit of expatriation" first manifested itself in the spring of 1912 when he attended a performance of the play *Impression d'Afrique,* adapted from Raymond Roussel's eponymous novel published two years earlier. The story tells the tale of a motley group of European passengers aboard a ship traveling to Buenos Aires that is diverted by a storm and wrecks off the coast of Africa. The unlucky castaways come ashore only to be captured by a native tribe and held hostage by its flamboyant king, Talou VII. Awaiting the arrival of their ransom from Europe, they perform a series of madcap theatrical spectacles for the king's coronation ceremony, which are recounted one after the next in a dizzying array in the first half of the book before the narrative circumstances are later elucidated: the one-legged Breton, Lelgoualch, plays melodies on a flute made from his own tibia; La Billaudière-Maisonnial invents a fantastic fencing apparatus; Balbet, a marksman, shoots the
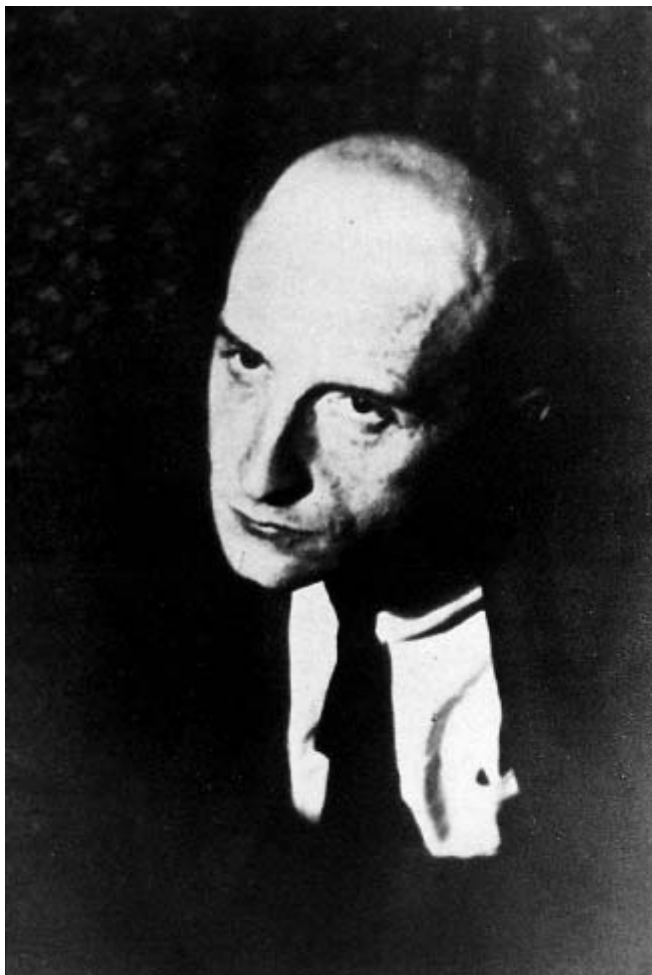
2.6 Marcel Duchamp, *Shaved,*
Buenos Aires, 1918. Philadelphia
Museum of Art: Gift of Jacqueline,
Peter, and Paul Matisse in memory of
their mother, Alexina Duchamp.
© 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS),
New York/ADAGP, Paris/Succession
Marcel Duchamp.

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2.7 Marcel Duchamp, *Wanted $2000 Reward*, 1923. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris/Succession Marcel Duchamp.

shell off an egg at a distance without breaking the inner membrane; and Louise creates a painting machine out of a combination of photographic parts and mechanized paint brushes, which duplicates on canvas any landscape placed before it with all of the perfect subtleties of natural color. Duchamp, who had been working on a series of cubo-futurist paintings of machine-like figures, was so impressed with the play that he claimed that Roussel "showed him the way" toward future artistic advances.[41] Indeed, the debt to Roussel can be measured in several ways, beginning with Duchamp's conceptualization of the mechanics of human sexuality in the *Large Glass*. Roussel provided a model by which to address the contradictions between traditional artistic procedures and the new technological developments of modernity, which surpassed the outmoded poetics of symbolism and post-impressionism and offered Duchamp an escape route from his dependence on cubism. What also captured Duchamp's fascination was that Roussel's unconventional creativity joined an aesthetic of displacement to the thematics of travel.

Impression d'Afrique is remarkable for the fact that the "shipwreck" of its linguistic construction coincides with its narrative of geographical dislocation.[42] Yet it was not simply the narrative of displacement that occasioned the resourcefulness of Roussel's tales; the outlandish content derived in part from the displacement of writing itself. Roussel's stories are cast into a storm of disorientation by virtue of the mechanically determined "method" he used to blow words off course, the origins of which he explained in *How I Wrote Certain of My Books,* published posthumously in 1935. He would choose identical terms, or homonymic words, yet draw on their different meanings in order to wrap identity and difference into uncanny association,[45] the famous example being: "Les lettres du blanc sur les bandes du vieux billard" (The white letters on the

cushions of the old billiard table), which he transformed into: "Les lettres du blanc sur les bandes du vieux pillard" (The white man's letters on the hordes of the old plunderer).[44] The resulting game would then consist of reconciling these closely mirrored phrases and thereby producing the story. Beginning with near-identity—the homonymic chains of terms—Roussel would facilitate a self-differing eruption from within its repetition. In each instance, the contextual placement of individual words (though always remaining ambiguous) defines the meaning of the entire sentence. What matters is whether *billard* or *pillard* ends the phrase, and, in addition, where the line is placed contextually within the larger diegetic structure of the book.

In his study of Roussel, Foucault explains that this compositional method expresses what nineteenth-century grammarian César Dumarsais called the "tropological" conversion of language, which occurs when "words are turned away from their original meaning to take on a new one which is more or less removed but that still maintains a connection."[45] Roussel's systematic application of this principle, driving it toward new mechanistic intensities, would create an endless series of figures that take everyday, banal terms and subject them to a process of continual alteration. As Foucault writes, "Words from anywhere, words with neither home nor hearth, shreds of sentences, the old collages of the ready-made language, recent couplings—an entire language whose only meaning is to submit to being raffled off and ordered according to its own fate is blindly given over to the grandiose decoration of the process."[46] Rather than returning to a recycling of the same, Roussel's repetition was directed toward the ongoing production of difference, whereby homonyms would simultaneously both generate identity (resemblance between like terms) and produce endless differentiations in form and meaning, provoking the continual eradication

of equivalence. In its course, identity is given over to difference, as the thematics of travel join up with the expatriation of language.

Duchamp was sympathetic. "I've always felt this need to escape myself," he would say.[47] And soon after witnessing Roussel's play, he did just that, living out his own story of dislocation and producing his own hybrid mechanomorphs. On June 18, 1912, he took a train to Munich, where he knew virtually no one and stayed for several months, casting himself into a completely foreign environment.[48] The experience prefigured his later trips to the States and Argentina. Duchamp explained that the voyage to Munich represented "the occasion of my complete liberation," likely the result of his encounter with unfamiliar artistic models. For it was there that he entered a radically different cultural context and became sensitive to the relativity of artistic practice, evident in German approaches to art that were utterly foreign to the priorities of his local group of painters back in Puteaux. It was there, argues Thierry de Duve, that Duchamp inaugurated his so-called nominalist aesthetic, according to which artistic practice, namely painting, was severed from any substantial form or foundational activity, cut off from any essential materiality, medium, or style, and instead understood to be fully conventional, contingent, and dependent upon the shifting regulatory mechanisms of cultural, linguistic, and sociopolitical institutions.[49] Following this system to its logical conclusions allowed a readymade to be considered a painting, as Duchamp reasoned: "Since the tubes of paint used by the artist are manufactured and ready made products we must conclude that all the paintings in the world are 'readymades aided' and also works of assemblage."[50] This counterintuitive association did not mean, however, that the readymade should simply or unproblematically be considered painting; rather, the readymade, as de Duve argues, symptomatizes a crisis in nomination that extends doubt to the

security of the designation of painting: "it renders the act of naming the painting undecidable."[51]

What contributed to this crisis of the identity of artistic mediums was Duchamp's experience in the spring of 1912 of the rejection of his *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2* by the Salon des Indépendents.[52] The exhibition featured a display of cubist paintings by the Puteaux group led by Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger, which also included Duchamp's brothers Jacques Villon and Raymond Duchamp-Villon, all of whom objected to Duchamp's canvas on the grounds of its perceived inappropriateness according to the tacit rules of artistic discourse at the time—nudes do not walk down stairs, they explained. Rather than submit to self-censorship when the organizers asked him to at least change the title (which itself points to the newfound significance of naming functions for the meaning of art at this time), Duchamp preferred simply to remove the work from the exhibition. It was no doubt his antipathy toward this exertion of institutional control upon his artistic practice that inspired Duchamp to escape Paris, a decision encouraged further by the promise of displacement dramatized in Roussel's play. "It was a real turning point in my life. I saw that I would never be much interested in groups after that."[53] Remarkably, soon after its refusal by the Indépendents, the *Nude* was accepted in other cubist exhibitions where it was shown without controversy—including one at the Section d'Or in Paris in the fall of 1912, mounted by the same members of the Puteaux group who had rejected it just months earlier. It was partly from these events, argues de Duve, that Duchamp came to appreciate the extreme relativity of aesthetic judgment, which he summed up in one of his notes as "a kind of pictorial nominalism."[54]

The aesthetic judgment of undecidable nomination in fact corresponds to Roussel's system of tropological conversion, although

each approaches the other from different sides of the spectrum of self-differentiation. The first introduces irreconcilable difference (the readymade) into a more or less unified traditional category (painting) in order to destabilize it; the second begins with equivalence (homonyms) and edges it into multiplicity (differentiated references, contexts, usages). Both operations desubstantialize identity, which Duchamp quickly put into practice in several ways, beginning with the invention of his own language games: "Take a Larousse dict. And copy all the so-called 'abstract' words, i.e., those which have no concrete reference. Compose a schematic sign designating each of these words. (this sign can be composed with the standard stops) These signs must be thought of as the letters of a new alphabet."[55] This schema was accomplished most directly with *Rendez-vous du Dimanche 6 Février 1916/à l h. 3/4 après midi* (1916), consisting of four postcards taped together and addressed to the Arensbergs, on the back of which is typed a meaningless text. Duchamp explains: "there would be a verb, a subject, a complement, adverbs, and everything perfectly correct, as such, as words, but meaning in these sentences was a thing I had to avoid . . . the verb was meant to be an abstract word acting on a subject that is a material object, in this way the verb would make the sentence look abstract."[56] In this Rousselian gambit, *Rendez-vous* empties out language through systematic contextual confusion. The text retains syntactic structure but sacrifices semantic sense, dispersing the coherence of sentences and atomizing meaning. Individual words and syntax make sense, but they fail to add up. The frequent hyphenation of terms at the edges of each postcard further estranges the words and makes the text recede into designifying graphic matter, while the visual repetition within what is a textual all-over composition undermines any narrative pretense. While identical postcards are differentiated according to specific position, the categorical
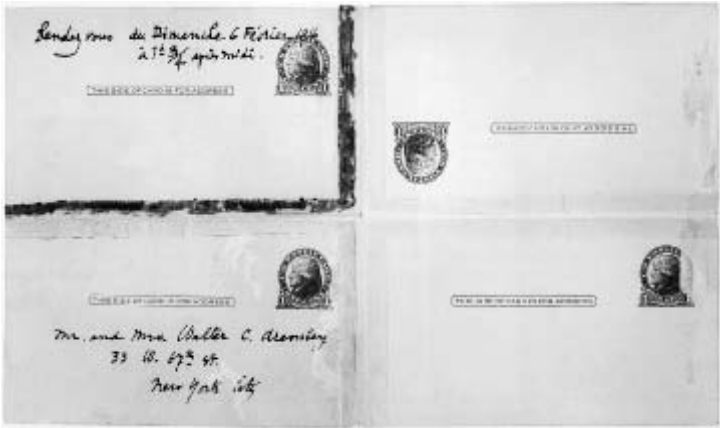
2.8a Marcel Duchamp, *Rendez-vous du Dimanche 6 Février 1916/à l h. 3/4 après midi,* 1916 (recto). Philadelphia Museum of Art: Gift of Jacqueline, Peter, and Paul Matisse in memory of their mother, Alexina Duchamp. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris/Succession Marcel Duchamp.
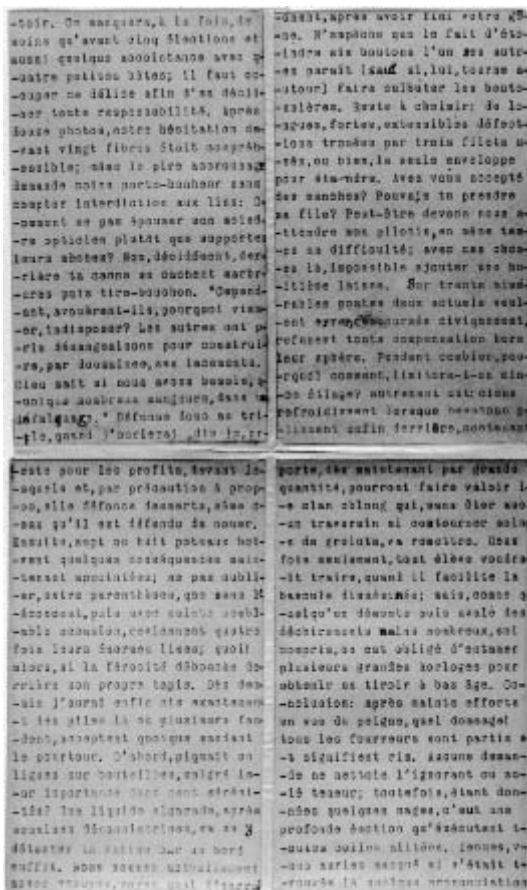
2.8b Marcel Duchamp, *Rendez-vous du Dimanche 6 Février 1916/à l h. 3/4 après midi,* 1916 (verso). Philadelphia Museum of Art: Gift of Jacqueline, Peter, and Paul Matisse in memory of their mother, Alexina Duchamp. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris/Succession Marcel Duchamp.

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divergence between text and image is drawn into a corrosive unity. Duchamp makes language travel, as much as the postcards were meant to, promoting a radical linguistic-geographical migration.

Similar operations were made in his project *With Hidden Noise* (1916), composed of a ball of twine (containing an unknown object supplied by Walter Arensberg) enclosed between two brass plates connected at their corners by four large screws. Inscribed on each end are three rows of unrelated, fragmented words in English and French, whose letters are intermittently omitted and replaced with periods. To complete the terms, letters must be borrowed from words in the lines above or below, like an alternative form of a crossword puzzle. For Duchamp, this was "an exercise in comparative orthography (English–French)."[57] Its effect, again, was to compromise the integrity of identity. The comparison of different languages–not only French and English but also that of noise, generated by shaking the object–signals the insufficiency of any one, and it further suggests the promise of a playful hybridization between visual, textual, and aural systems that opens each to translation and difference. Moreover, in both projects–*Rendez-vous* and *With Hidden Noise*–the meanings of words are swayed by context, encouraging a sensitivity to adjacent forces that prevail over the stability of rooted identity. But in the latter, the injection of linguistic difference interrupts the consistency of the system. The exercise in translation breaks the homogenization of language through its multilingual commitment. It consequently ruins the supposed internal plenitude of any monolingual system by inserting into it untranslatable iterations of foreignness, at the center of which is the absence of an unknowable object, which refuses any ultimate meaning because the origin of the work of art cannot be identified.[58]

The *Sculpture for Traveling* is, as we have seen, one further meditation on the destruction of selfsame identity. It achieves an

2.9 Marcel Duchamp, *With Hidden Noise*, 1916. Philadelphia Museum of Art: Gift of Jacqueline, Peter, and Paul Matisse in memory of their mother, Alexina Duchamp. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris/Succession Marcel Duchamp.

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"internal liminality" through its endlessly relational status, which spatializes the contingency played at in the language games. The travel named in its title indicates not only its location within the coordinates of exile—of "going out" from the world, as the word's origins suggest (stemming from the Greek: *ex* "away" and *al* "to wander")—but also the sculpture's structural malleability, which is determined by the assemblage's material connection to its architectural support. Duchamp explained that "The length of the strings could be varied; the form was *ad libitum*," which indicates its morphological flexibility, its resistance to any inert state.[59] This improvisational makeup, which follows from its elastic rubber material and its variable string attachments, throws the *Sculpture* into a liminal condition, in other words one existing *between* forms, spaces, and representations. This liminal status is in effect *internal* to the assemblage, for it can only materialize in a context-dependent situation that will always change. Continually adaptive, it hangs on the walls of any architectural container, altering the space as much as it is changed by it. Any stable existence it might be argued to have, which could transcend its various contexts of installation, must be founded upon its differential character; any "identity" it achieves derives from the absence of any stable characteristics that would render it easily knowable.

Picking up the Rousselian line, the *Sculpture* becomes "tropo-logical" not only through spatial play, but also in its journeys through the various representational conditions that engender new forms and indeterminate meanings. Its travels are achieved, in a sense, by a linguistic conversion through the nomination of bathing caps as "sculpture," which corresponds to the readymade strategy of displacing the common meaning of everyday objects through new linguistic-discursive assignments and spatial recontextual-izations. In addition, the *Sculpture*'s physical condition intensifies

the implications of this tropological force by enacting a deracinating effect on itself as it is physically "turned away" from its previous forms. The original group of more or less identical mass-produced objects–the differently colored bathing caps–consequently becomes a compositional arrangement, both homonymic and differential, that mutates with each new installation. But the form of self-differentiation is also established in the temporal register, paralleling the syntactical disruptions within Duchamp's language-based objects. The shifting relation to context–whether within the sentence structure or within the spatial manifold–is determined through successive differentiations in time as well as in space. At any given moment, the *Sculpture* undertakes new relations of difference from moments before and after, which have also been physicalized in the ongoing spatial displacements of the assemblage.

Thus, two ways to produce a self-differing identity are at work here: by differentiating the similar, and by grouping the differential. They are not quite the same–one targets homogeneity, the other bridges difference–and the *Sculpture for Traveling* enacts both. One corresponds to the register of substitution, forming a spatial multiplicity of simultaneous possibilities (according to Bergson, a homogeneous numerical proliferation). The other corresponds to the register of syntax, creating a multiplicity of duration (for Bergson, correlating heterogeneous states of temporal experience). Consequently, Duchamp's assemblage acquires an ever-evolving transformative power through continual travel, as it plots out ever-new labyrinths of dislocation, endless connections to new spaces, which begin with its own self-differing. One important distinction from Bergson's theory is that Duchamp elicits an interlacing of multiplicities of duration and space, whereas Bergson insists on their separation. But it is precisely the philosophical purity of such categories that Duchamp's assemblage rejects. In the process, the

Sculpture advances further the aesthetic judgment of undecidable nomination beyond the consideration of its own questionable identity; for it extends a force of indeterminacy to the spaces of everyday life with which it intersects.

Duchamp brought two "voyage sculptures" with him to Buenos Aires, in fact: "Yes, the voyage sculptures were really two things," he recalled. "One was the small 'Glass.'. . . It's called '*To Be Looked At with One Eye, Close To, for Almost an Hour'*–this sentence was added to complicate things in a literary way–and then there were some rubber objects. . . ."[60] Similar to his earlier glass studies, such as *Glider* (1913–14) and *Nine Malic Moulds* (1914–15), the *Small Glass* figured as a preparatory study for *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even,* which intermittently occupied Duchamp between 1913 and 1925. And like the other *Sculpture for Traveling,* the *Small Glass* was an experiment in the subversion of identity. Fixed between two transparent panes of glass are several geometric forms composed in the mechanized style of industrial drawing familiar to Duchamp's early work.[61] A representation of a pyramid occupies the upper half, and toward the middle, concentric circles surround a magnifying glass situated atop the apex of an obelisk and balanced on a diagonal line between two opaque glass lenses. The obelisk's base emerges from the center of a radiating ring at the bottom rendered in perspective, offering an early appearance of what would later become the "Oculist Witnesses" in the *Large Glass.* The obelisk is bifurcated by a long rectangular strip that extends out from both its sides on which Duchamp handwrote the long title in French.

These forms, however, are far from autonomous, ideal shapes; rather, they are fated to be thrown into a relation with the larger world framed by the *Small Glass* at any given moment. A

2.10 Marcel Duchamp, *To Be Looked At (From the Other Side of the Glass) with One Eye, Close To, for Almost an Hour,* 1918. Oil paint, silver leaf, lead wire, and magnifying lens on cracked glass. Katherine S. Dreier Bequest (150.1953). The Museum of Modern Art, New York, N.Y., U.S.A. Digital Image © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA/Art Resource, N.Y. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris/ Succession Marcel Duchamp.

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photograph from 1918 shows it hanging from two pieces of string on the balcony of Duchamp's apartment one night in Buenos Aires (before the glass was accidentally cracked on its way back to the States). The balcony's decorative ironwork appears through the transparent panel, and several blurred lights punctuate the otherwise darkened glass pane. The two translucent disks now glow, as they collect and register luminosity dispersed in the atmosphere. As such, the *Small Glass* links support surface and background, creating a variable relation that depends on time of day, amount and quality of light, and the angle by which one looks at or through the glass. Indeed this play in the title appears to make an important conceptual point: to differentiate between looking "at" the glass or "through" it breaks the glass into pieces, with each view, like subject and object, defined by and against the other, neither allowed to exist in complete isolation. Like the other *Sculpture for Traveling,* the *Small Glass* integrates the perceptual and physical connection to its site into its complex formal condition. Consequently, it is less an identity, autonomous and discrete, and more a relation, connective and contingent; less a being, fixed and constant, and more a "becoming," generative and transformative. Not only is the *Small Glass* a "sculpture for traveling"—designating by name its physical and perceptual mobility—but its formal condition is such that even if it were not moved at all it would still "travel"; for its identity is constituted by perceptual fragmentation, and the context to which it is irrevocably tied continually shifts around it, producing an always changing perception of space (*From the Other Side of the Glass*). In other words, situated in space, it is distanced from itself; located in time, it registers a duration of lived experience outside the timelessness of ideal identity. This is similar to the temporalized conditions of *Rendez-vous,* which indicates a relation to temporality (at such and such an hour) even if it doesn't prescribe a set
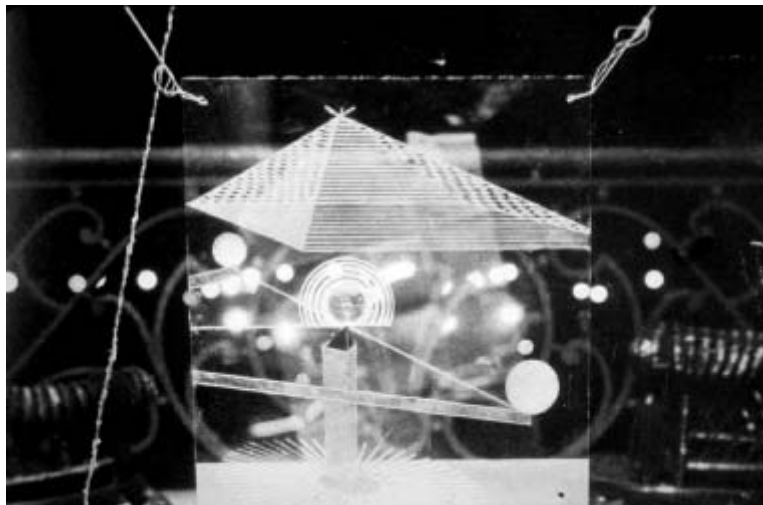
2.11 Marcel Duchamp, *Small Glass,*
installed in Buenos Aires, 1918.
© 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS),
New York/ADAGP, Paris/Succession
Marcel Duchamp.

2.12 Marcel Duchamp, *3 stoppages étalon*, 1913–14. Assemblage: three threads glued to three painted canvas strips, 5¼ x 47¼", each mounted on a glass panel, 7¼ x 49⅜" x ¼", 2½ x 47 x ⅛", 2½ x 43¼ x ⅛", shaped along one edge to match the curves of the threads; the whole fitted into a wood box, 11⅛ x 50⅞ x 9". Katherine S. Dreier Bequest (149.1953.a-1). The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, U.S.A. Digital Image © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA/Art Resource, N.Y. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris/Succession Marcel Duchamp.

duration of perception, as does the *Small Glass.* Much like *Three Standard Stoppages,* the *Small Glass* begins with a standard unit of measurement and then proceeds to allow an infinite experience of spatial and temporal variation to erupt from within its structure. It places standardized measurement in jeopardy by the lived perceptual experience that inevitably exceeds its boundaries and introduces an undetermined flux within its order.

There are nevertheless several differences between the two traveling sculptures. Whereas the *Small Glass* proposes an identity-corroding relationality that parallels the *Sculpture for Traveling,* it retains the legibility of diagrams and geometric figures, which invoke mathematical formulas and optical science (even if it does not specify them further).[62] Conversely, the rubber and string *Sculpture for Traveling* throws up an anti-gestalt formlessness, where the original sign of repetition present in the mass-produced bathing caps has been completely obliterated. And whereas the long title of the *Small Glass* alludes to instructions for a physical regimen, proposing a body in training or submitting to an optical examination, even if incomprehensible and absurdist, the *Sculpture for Traveling* gives rise to a chaotic surge beyond the grasp of instrumental reason, interfering with the rationality of spatial organization and disrupting the functionality of objects. If the *Small Glass*'s regimen invokes modernity's ongoing project to update and integrate the body's perceptual system into ever-new visual conditions, seeking to render the subject increasingly efficient and attentive in the face of jarring economic forces and alienating psychological states, then the rubber *Sculpture for Traveling* projects an antiproductive mess of deinstrumentalized physical exuberance. The two so-called *Sculptures for Traveling* thus bring together a polarized combination of forces, between scientific rationality and formless intensity, between geometric organization and aleatory material flow. While

the *Small Glass* provokes a cycle of discipline wherein boundless energy is directed toward instrumental ends, even if unsuccessfully, the rubber assemblage performs an ongoing intervention into systems of productivity, where uncontrollable effects and unexpected contingencies continually escape capture.

Seeking to explore this highly unstable relationship within modernity between unruly desire and socio-economic production, Deleuze and Guattari counterpose what they term "desiring-machines"—ways of articulating the body and its part-objects through connectivity with other productive nodules within the socio-economic matrix—and "bodies without organs"—which release the flow of desire, unencumbered by any rational economy and moving beyond instrumentalized organization. One productive, the other antiproductive, the two are continually intersecting, forming relations of attraction and repulsion that are mutually constitutive.[63] Functioning in tandem, the two systems may create a "celibate machine," meaning an autoerotic orgasmic network that presents "a schizophrenic experience of intensive qualities in their pure state, to a point that is almost unbearable—a celibate misery and glory experienced to the fullest, like a cry suspended between life and death, an intense feeling of transition, states of pure, naked intensity stripped of all shape and form."[64] In *Anti-Oedipus,* this celibate machine is explicitly related to the operations performed within Duchamp's *Large Glass.*[65] Following this logic further, the two *Sculptures for Traveling,* let us say, show related but alternative forms of correspondence between desire and social production, which similarly create different experiences of intensive qualities and transitional states. It is not that either assemblage proposes a pure condition of organless bodies or desiring machines, but rather that each enacts differentiated and specific combinations of the two. Both tilt in various degrees toward the

disruption of conventionally useful productive effects and the release of uncontrollable perceptual and physical sensations. The rubber and string *Sculpture for Traveling* accomplishes its exit from productivity by materializing a disorganized body, which throws up a self-differentiated relationality that resists consistency, equivalence, and identity. Hovering in an ambiguous ontological state between object and architectural space, between material and representation, this shape-shifting assemblage unleashes an amorphous and promiscuous mobility—not only for itself, but for anything or anyone caught within its web. Similarly, the *Small Glass* directly attacks figures of ideal identity and releases upon them relational pressures, both casting geometry onto a world that forever resists it, and allowing the contingency of the changing environment to relativize its internal order. This description articulates, I believe, exactly what Duchamp was after: experimental vehicles for traveling outside the limits of social reproduction at a time when its forces of order were tightening their grips on identification.

In this sense, Duchamp's project intersects with contemporaneous advances in avant-garde artistic practice, which similarly concerned the derigidification of representation. The *Sculpture*'s force of relationality represents a line of flight out of cubism, which had already ruptured the ties of representation to consistency and the selfsame sign structure, as was evident in Picasso's work around 1912. In his collages and assemblages, such as *Guitar* (1912), Picasso realized the differential possibilities of signifying elements in a way that would correspond to the arbitrariness of the sign within Saussurean semiology.[66] Within its schematic construction of metal planes and wires, the sound hole, for instance, could be variously indicated by a projecting lead can or a plastilene cone, depending on the compositional arrangement. Consequently, the "value" of its signs was rendered nonessential, determined "within a system that

regulates its use," as Yve-Alain Bois has observed: "Picasso realized for the first time that a sign, because it has a value, can be entirely virtual, or nonsubstantial."[67] Duchamp would similarly treat signification as derealized virtuality in *Network of Stoppages* (1914), which takes up an earlier fauvist painting of figures in a landscape (*Young Man and Girl in Spring,* 1911), turns it on its side, and overlays on its surface a series of diagrammatic lines, representing nine "capillary tubes" (in the gnomic iconography of the *Large Glass*), which were drawn by using the templates from *Three Standard Stoppages.* The strange combination of schematic diagram and impressionist figuration causes the signifying properties of both to take flight, such that the identity of each system of representation becomes hybridized, its signs projected into a virtualized landscape of differentiated and relational possibilities. But rather than advance "an entirely virtual, or nonsubstantial" system of signification, as Picasso had done, Duchamp maintained the carnality of the system's representational elements. As David Joselit has provocatively argued, *Networks of Stoppages* proposes "an allegory of the chiasmatic relationship between mensurability and immensurability," wherein the female body is submitted to a dematerializing abstract measurement, while the overlapping metric system becomes embodied.[68]

One limitation of *Network of Stoppages,* however, similar to one we encountered earlier in terms of the readymade, is that even though it corrosively blends abstract measure with its own errant materiality, its relational system is still bound within the ideal space of its pictorial structure. The problem remained for Duchamp of how to release this "having become" into a space of open possibility, unleashing a "successive transformation" without end. This is precisely what he accomplished in Buenos Aires with his two *Sculptures for Traveling,* an advance that was also elaborated

2.13 Pablo Picasso, *Guitar*, 1912–13. Construction of sheet metal and wire, 30½ x 13¾ x 7⅞". Gift of the artist (94.1971). The Museum of Modern Art, New York, N.Y., U.S.A. Digital image © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA/Art Resource, N.Y. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Sculptures for Traveling
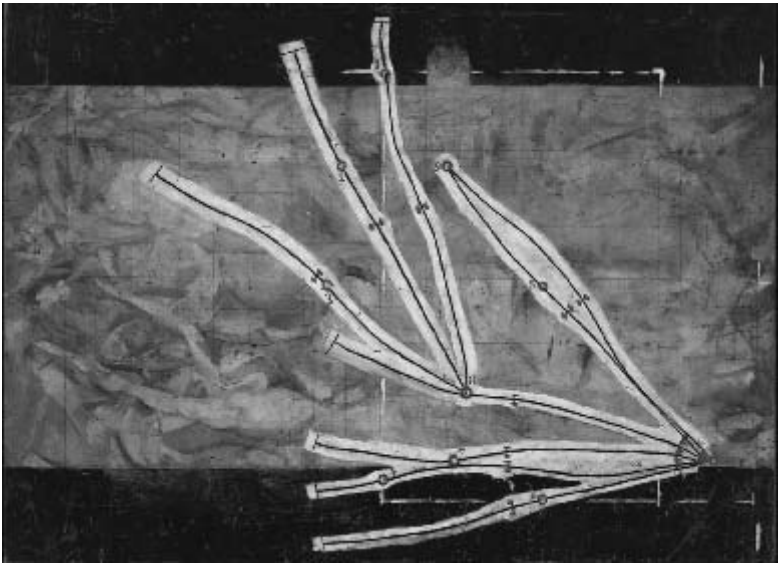
2.14 Marcel Duchamp, *Network of Stoppages* (*Réseaux des stoppages*), 1914. Oil and pencil on canvas, 58⅝ x 65⅝". Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund and gift of Mrs. William Sisler (390.1970). The Museum of Modern Art, New York, N.Y., U.S.A. Digital image © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA/Art Resource, N.Y. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris/ Succession Marcel Duchamp.

in what could be designated as a third "voyage sculpture": the *Unhappy Readymade* (1918). For this related project, Duchamp mailed from Buenos Aires a geometry textbook along with instructions for the artwork's realization to his newly wed sister Suzanne and her husband Jean Crotti in Paris. Part wedding present, it also ostensibly mourned the recent death of his brother Raymond Duchamp-Villon, who had succumbed to an illness in a military hospital in 1918 just before the end of the war. To create the *Unhappy Readymade*, the couple was to hang the textbook by strings on the balcony of their apartment, allowing it to interact with the effects of nature. As Duchamp explained, "the wind had to go through the book, choose its own problems, turn and tear out the pages."[69] Subjected to the elements, it would slowly disintegrate according to the weather. In one surviving photograph, pages containing geometry diagrams are seen strewn out of order, folded and torn at the edges, whipped and battered by the wind.[70] As in the *Small Glass,* ideal form has come up against aleatory force, introducing the power of contingency and arbitrariness into the abstract space of universal constants, or conversely, displaying the failed results of Duchamp's tongue-in-cheek attempts at the rationalization of nature. "The treatise seriously got the facts of life," Duchamp mused.[71]

In this case, the "chiasmatic relationship between mensurability and immensurability" earlier developed within the pictorial structure of *Network of Stoppages* was thrown into a relationality that exceeded the artwork's boundaries. For Joselit, the *Unhappy Readymade* generates two types of irreducible relationality: it weds textual and visual systems into an unstable marriage, and it connects fluctuating weather conditions and the universal abstraction of geometry in a double subversion.[72] Rather than viewing Dada's diagrams as mimetic of actual technical devices or functional machines, which would consign its maneuvers to a frozen form of

2.15 Marcel Duchamp, *Unhappy Readymade,* 1918. Philadelphia Museum of Art: Gift of Jacqueline, Peter, and Paul Matisse in memory of their mother, Alexina Duchamp. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris/Succession Marcel Duchamp.

symbolic representation, Joselit sees the diagrammatic as the generative and transformative joint between different regimes of signification—specifically the textual and the visual—which were entering into rivalry in the early twentieth century: "While each of the regimes of signification—or machines—. . . corresponds to a different social or political paradigm extracted from world history . . . no one ever corresponds directly to a particular historical reality. On the contrary, not only is each regime itself an assemblage of bodies and signs, but various paradigms are mixed together at differing proportions in different times and places."[73] By virtue of its hybridity, the diagrammatic is constituted by conflictual forces rather than by any stable or homogeneous representational system. This identifies its promise, according to Deleuze and Guattari's original theorization: "The diagrammatic or abstract machine does not function to represent, even something real, but rather constructs a real that is yet to come, a new type of reality."[74] But how, we must then ask, is this desire itself located in "a particular historical reality" in the case of the *Sculptures for Traveling,* if it is precisely such a historical connection that the diagrammatic resists? What falls out of Joselit's analysis, focused as it is on abstract machines and regimes of signification, is the consideration of how Duchamp's art connects to its historical and cultural field. For the will toward abstraction must itself represent a historical form of flight from the material reality of a social life that has become unacceptable. These assemblages constructed "a real that is yet to come" through an expatriation from a real world engulfed in war and nationalism.

There is yet a third form of relationality that locates Duchamp's practice within its socio-political field that all three *Sculptures* generate, which has so far gone unexamined: each assemblage forms an expanded field between the force of becoming and the space

of everyday life. Duchamp installed his work during this time in unlikely places–specifically, domestic sites and studio contexts in New York, and hotel balconies in Buenos Aires and Paris. These are unusual display areas for sure, resistant to easy classification and clear definition, which is perhaps why Duchamp favored them. They suggest so many quotidian sites that would offer refuge from the structured zones of official order, dominated by specialized activities and conventional modes of reception, namely the art galleries and museums that Duchamp made every effort to avoid during the later part of the war. It appears that the debacle surrounding the exhibition of the *Fountain,* as well as the earlier controversy prompted by his *Nude Descending a Staircase,* left him reluctant to exhibit his work in any formal environment for years to come. On this, Duchamp was suggestive, if evasive: he was fond of explaining that the French verb "*exposer*" was too close to "*épouser*": he wished to avoid "exhibition" as much as "marriage" during these years, each implying an unacceptable level of restriction.[75] According to his "principle," he would not exhibit anything in any gallery, whether in Buenos Aires, New York, or Paris. To the Dadaists, who requested an inclusion for their Dada Salon in 1920, Duchamp telegrammed his famous response: "Pode ball," which communicated his refusal to exhibit by making a play on the French *"Peau de balle,"* or "balls to you."[76] And he turned down similar requests by Arensberg from Buenos Aires during 1918 by insisting "I will not exhibit anything myself, as is my principle. (It is also understood, naturally, that you will not exhibit anything of mine, if you don't mind, should anyone ask you to lend anything in N.Y.)"[77]

Rather than exhibit his work in official institutions, he installed his projects in modest everyday spaces. Yet far from completely undetermined and open, even if unlike the rigidly structured conditions of public areas or work sites, the space of everyday life is still

fraught. It has been "situated somewhere in the rift opened up between the subjective, phenomenological, sensory apparatus of the individual and reified institutions," according to Kristin Ross and Alice Kaplan.[78] This rift materializes in the various photographs of the *Sculptures for Traveling,* which picture so many living areas thrown into disarray by Duchamp's interventions, where the institutions of domestic order are tossed into a phenomenological flux. It is also visible in an unusual shot of Duchamp's New York studio from around 1917, which offers perhaps the most vivid account of the space of the artist's everyday life. It shows a room that is completely disordered, the strangeness of which is intensified by the off-kilter viewpoint of the camera. Everything in the area is *out of place:* the shelves of the dresser are chaotically opened, and sundry objects range bizarrely throughout the room from floor to ceiling. A hat rack floats in the air, a urinal hangs improbably at the top of a doorway, and a snow shovel inexplicably descends from the ceiling. Duchamp himself appears in the corner, but his image is only partly visible, suggesting the presence of an apparition that hovers on the margins of the photographic exposure, as if lost in time. His body, in other words, has been partly released from its stable "form-outline," projecting his material presence beyond the grips of secure identification. The photograph is continuous with *Shadows of Readymades,* which shows the same studio but crossed with rubber and string, disrupting movement and bringing about complete disorientation. In fact Duchamp articulated with seeming glee how the *Sculpture for Traveling* disrupted the course of normal domestic life: "Naturally, [it] took up a whole room. . . . At the end of each piece [of rubber] there were strings that one attached to the four corners of the room. Then, when one came in the room, one couldn't walk around, because of the strings!"[79] To be out of place, to disrupt common areas, to provoke unconventional behaviors:

2.16 Photograph of Marcel Duchamp
in studio, New York, 1917–18.
Philadelphia Museum of Art: Gift of
Jacqueline, Peter, and Paul Matisse
in memory of their mother, Alexina
Duchamp.

this was the course of Duchamp's everyday life, which was encouraged by the dislocating effects of the *Sculptures for Traveling,* which threw the world into exile.

These provocative attempts to carve out areas of indeterminacy in daily life, however, must be measured, even more specifically, against the simultaneous constriction and institutionalization of everyday existence in France and increasingly in the United States during these years owing to the state of siege caused by the war. Responding to the French government's plea for a *union sacrée* were reactionary calls to overcome social heterogeneity and political divisions, consolidate national identity, and enforce the unification of its imagined community.[80] Driven by conservative pressures expressed across mass media, cultural institutions, and governmental publicity, demands were made to return to the true origins of French identity, which corresponded to a massive *retour à l'ordre* within artistic practice, as Kenneth Silver writes:

> Suddenly, and without warning, a new set of values replaced those of Parisian bohemia: instead of an art of Bergsonian simultaneity, they were now expected to make pictures that embodied Platonic absolutes; in place of internationalism, they were expected to recognize France, the Mediterranean, and *la grande tradition;* whereas to a greater or lesser degree all had made art based on a conception of innovation and novelty before the war, now all were attempting to forge a "synthetic" art of supposedly mature pictorial and thematic values.[81]

Identity was pushed into the realm of idealism: Absolute but French, traditional but timeless, national but synthetic, the rhetorical power of this return to order cloaked all of its obvious contradictions.

Meanwhile, the qualities of difference, spontaneity, liminality, and diversity, which once enthralled the avant-garde, were officially expunged from cultural expression, as identity—pointing to a state of equivalence, one solidifying the nation-state—reigned supreme. By 1917, the United States was similarly experiencing a national mobilization with a surge of pressures toward national unification, which consequently brought about a profound sense of alienation among those who, like Duchamp, could not abide nationalism.[82] There is no better image of this conflict than that of the expatriate Marcel Duchamp sequestered before a military board in New York, finding himself classified according to the readymade categories of national identity.

At the time that Duchamp fled to Buenos Aires to escape patriotic New York, his brother, Raymond Duchamp-Villon, was laid up in a French military hospital. Nationalist but pacifist, averse to violence but no expatriate, Raymond had enlisted as an officer in the medical corps once war was declared in August 1914.[83] Near the end of 1916, stationed on the front, he contracted typhoid fever and was moved to a hospital at Mourmelon to recuperate. Somewhere along the path of his treatment, however, he picked up a virulent infection accompanied by severe blood poisoning. He died two years later, just before the armistice was signed at the end of 1918, three weeks into Marcel's stay in Argentina.

While convalescent, Duchamp-Villon finished a sculptural relief entitled *Rooster (Gallic Cock)*. It depicts an image of the traditional heraldic symbol of France shown in a majestic posture with wings spread wide and one foot resting on a radiating globe. Rendered in a futurist style with diagonal axes blazing, the figure bears a streamlined body, angular with muscles taut, expressing the energy and symbolic power of the French nation. Despite the artist's

2.17 Raymond Duchamp-Villon,
Rooster (Gallic Cock), 1916.
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture
Garden.

apparent ambivalence regarding the war, *Rooster* appears to have been inspired by the same patriotic identification that had motivated the artist to enlist in the first place. Designed as a public expression of national pride, it was to be placed on a theatrical stage for the entertainment of troops at the front. There it would project an image of triumph, figured as an ideal being materialized in the solidity of its clearly defined body, its boundaries fortified by a thick band stretching around the composition, closing it off within its own sublime space. *Rooster* offers a figure of utopia, but, as such, casts a negative shadow on the reality beyond its frame by denying the brutal facts of war and its creator's deteriorating physical condition. It operated, no doubt, as a compensatory gesture by which Raymond drew on the powers of patriotic symbolism to sustain his own failing physicality, as if the imaginary borders of the nation could buttress his own. Dying of typhoid, Raymond Duchamp-Villon clung to life through the ideal figure of the nation.

Next to *Rooster*, the rubber and string *Sculpture for Traveling* appears monstrous. Formless and disorganized, disintegrating and brutally strung up, it appears as a body torn apart, a hybrid figure pledged to the forces of the differential. Yet the two artworks maintain a peculiar connection. The *Sculpture* too began with figuration, if synecdochically. By using bathing caps, the *Sculpture* invokes human forms insofar as the caps were once destined to serve as the epidermal-like skins for heads. As a series of mass-produced prophylactics, they were originally meant to conform to the surface of the body, and like so many military uniforms, they exemplified the regimentation of diversity into a state of collective uniformity. However, the *Sculpture* appropriated this device of unification and with it created a machine of differentiation. What better way to refuse the conformity of the self to a preestablished "form-outline" than to fragment that encasing, thereby rendering it ineffective,

and display the deflated remains in a perpetually foreign space, like a pathetic and ragged flag hung from a balcony? The image conjures up one of Duchamp's notes in which, in the context of conceptualizing the bachelors of the *Large Glass,* he imagines "a cemetery of [more or less] 8 uniforms," indicating the internment of the very logic of unification.[84] Similarly, in a note from 1914 Duchamp gave notice that he was already thinking about the body's disfiguration in war: "Against compulsory military service: a *'deferment'* of each limb, of the heart and other anatomical parts; each soldier being already unable to put his uniform on again, his heart feeding telephonically, a deferred art, etc. *Then,* no more feeding; each *'deferee'* isolating himself. Finally a Regulation of regrets from one *'deferee'* to another."[85] The melancholy tone of these notes—especially under the dark shadow of his brother's death—need not dominate the interpretation of Duchamp's *Sculptures for Traveling;* for they also clearly concerned a "little game," light and humorous, through which being was released into the pleasures of becoming, liberating desire in turn and encouraging unconventional assemblages and experimental spaces. Expatriated, Duchamp figured forth an exiled body, one that materialized around errant desires that rejected the regimenting machinery of social reproduction, one that discovered its own pleasures of change.

The rubber and string *Sculpture for Traveling* may still project a utopian vision of its own. For Louis Marin, it is precisely at that moment when "frightening frontiers appear or reappear, those of nationalistic, racial, or religious exclusions," that one sees "the fiction of an island appearing at the dawn of a period for which the present time would be the twilight."[86] Utopia is then gained by "a departure and a journey, most of the time by sea, most of the time interrupted by a storm, a catastrophe that is the sublime way to open a neutral space, one that is absolutely different. . . ."[87] For

Duchamp, this refuge was found in Buenos Aires, and in the space opened by his artwork. Still, Duchamp's *Sculpture for Traveling* was never a *figure* of utopia—fixed, idealized, and representative of a distant nonplace—as was *Rooster*. Its very dynamism, commitment to continual migration and ephemeral existence prevents this conclusion. Rather, Duchamp practiced what we can term, after Marin, a form of *utopics:* a matter of spatial play around the limits of indissoluble categories. As we have seen, it operated *between* objects and spaces, identity and difference, mobility and stoppage, bodies and signs.[88] The rubber and string *Sculpture* was never meant to substantialize an identity or produce a fiction of an ideal life. Instead, its very structure encourages a sensitivity to the conditions of relationality between its materialization and its surrounding conditions. This relationality could operate both negatively, rejecting stable geographies and idealized identity, and positively, positing exile as the liberation of desires beyond the restrictions of conventional identity. These travels would give rise to future investigations for Duchamp, especially within his experimental exhibition designs of the 1930s and 1940s which explored further the relays between the work of art and its surrounding institutional framework. Creating frames for disfiguring as much as refiguring, these projects would reveal zones of control as much as produce spaces of the possible.

3 DREAMS OF INDUSTRY

FOR THE 1938 Exposition International du Surréalisme, Marcel Duchamp served officially as "*Générateur-Arbitre,*" as he was designated on the checklist. Drawn in by organizers André Breton and Paul Eluard, he generated the conceptualization for the installation, which would be no ordinary display of art, and arbitrated the terms of its realization.[1] "I had had the idea of a central grotto, with twelve hundred sacks of coal hung over a coal grate," Duchamp later recalled. "There was coal dust. They were real sacks, which had been found in La Villette. There were papers inside, newspapers, which filled them out. . . . revolving doors . . . were used to hang drawings and objects. . . ."[2] Based on his memory of the installation, it appears that he attempted a precarious negotiation between fulfilling the request of the surrealists for an appropriately disorienting space and satisfying his own imperatives about what such a display should be: "I had been borrowed from the ordinary world by the Surrealists. . . . They had a lot of confidence in the ideas I could bring to them, ideas which weren't antisurrealist, but which weren't always Surrealist, either. . . ."[3] The resulting disjunction is visible in photographs of the installation, which threw up a complex double negative that astonishingly acted against surrealist objects and the art gallery alike.

The installation, it is true, was not simply antisurrealist: utterly chaotic, it completely estranged the expected gallery environment and provoked bizarre juxtapositions between its different areas. Any sign of clean white walls, well-lighted display areas, or the orderly hanging of artworks was neutralized. In its place, a mass of coal sacks, appearing full, hung from the ceiling, simultaneously

3.1 Exposition International du Surréalisme, installation view, 1938. Philadelphia Museum of Art: Gift of Jacqueline, Peter, and Paul Matisse in memory of their mother, Alexina Duchamp. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris/Succession Marcel Duchamp.

darkening the exhibition underneath and suggesting overhead an ominous field of sheer weight. In the middle of the gallery Duchamp placed a coal brazier, whose perforated body cast uneven flickers of light throughout the space, sparking fears of fire and explosion; yet its illumination was dim, and, as it was the gallery's only source of light (at least for the show's opening night), viewers wandered through the darkness with the aid of flashlights passed out at the door.

Although Duchamp may have conceptualized much of the show's installation, construction responsibilities were delegated to others. "I was part of a team, a group, and I gave advice," Duchamp explained.[4] While Man Ray served as *Maitre des Lumières* and distributed pocket lamps, Wolfgang Paalen constructed *Eaux et Broussailles,* a small pond surrounded by reeds and brushwood, and the surrealists placed four antique Louis XV–style beds in the corners of the gallery. A mélange of other surprising inclusions further diversified the sensory experience: The scent of roasting coffee floated through the air of the gallery, and a gramophone played a soundtrack alternating between recordings of cries from an insane asylum and German military marching songs.[5] By excluding all signs of the traditional gallery, the surrealists severed conventional ties between the institution and its traditional ordering and rationalizing functions, thereby negating the expected position of artworks as rarified objects demanding contemplative modes of solitary viewing. Marcel Jean described the environment as "a space in which the marvelous coincided . . . with an essential disorientation, a fantastic metaphor in which the spectator found himself plunged, whether he wanted to or not."[6]

The "essential disorientation" Jean observed was most immediately an effect of the reinvention of installation design as a new form of collage brought to an architectural scale, which generated

3.2 Exposition International du Surréalisme, installation view of pond, 1938. Photograph: Denise Bellon. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris/ Succession Marcel Duchamp.

a space of shocking defamiliarization that addressed the audience on a collective level. Such a development of the technique of display recalls several earlier avant-garde experiments with collage and exhibition design, including Kurt Schwitters' *Merzbau* (1923–1936) and Soviet models during the same period, even while no precedent captured exactly what the 1938 exhibition achieved. In the early 1920s, Schwitters had gradually expanded the field of collage into the architectural framework of his Hannover apartment. The desublimatory result cast the visitor's body into an enlarged area of material heterogeneity, where domestic space was dislodged from its habitual perceptual conditions. Similar to the 1938 installation, the *Merzbau* created a terrain of sensory diversification, activating the visitor–no longer a specialized *viewer*–on several different registers at once. Optical and somatic experiences overlapped and complicated the privilege art normally accorded to visual sensation, even while this was already partially achieved through the tactility of collage. Yet–unlike the 1938 exhibition design–the *Merzbau*, according to Schwitters' wishes, was designed ideally for a single visitor, and if the project expanded the sculptural field into domestic space through the assembly of stratifications of urban detritus, miscellaneous found objects, and relics from encounters with friends and everyday life, its various grottos offered a largely private archive of the artist's memory.[7] With its material accretion over time, the gradual transfiguration of domestic space as uncanny architecture represented a movement away from collage as a Dadaist system of semiotic fragmentation and toward its redefinition as an increasingly abstract and aestheticized interior skin that was continuous from floor to ceiling.[8] But early on, the *Merzbau* drove a critical wedge between occupant and habitat that allegorized the disorientation of geopolitical space

3.3 Kurt Schwitters, *Merzbau* (detail: Blue Window), 1933 (destroyed 1943). Hannover, Waldhausenstr. 5, 393 x 580 x 460 cm. Photographer: Wilhelm Redemann, Hannover.

Photo: Kurt Schwitters Archives at the Sprengel Museum Hannover. Repro: Michael Herling/Aline Gwose © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG-Bild Kunst, Bonn.

following Germany's collapse after the war, and this gesture would resonate with Duchamp's later installations.

Unlike the private conditions of the *Merzbau,* the immanently public address of Duchamp's 1938 installation invites comparison with other major interwar models of experimental exhibition design, particularly those carried out by the Soviet avant-garde, largely under the direction of El Lissitzky, even if the political aims of those projects may have been very different.[9] Here too collage was spatialized as architecture, as in the photofrieze and interior design of Pressa (Cologne, 1928), or in the distribution of text throughout the International Hygiene Exhibition (Dresden, 1930).[10] By encouraging mobile and varied physical interactions with their displays, which frequently reached from floor to ceiling and broke from the traditional focus on flat vertical surfaces of visual information, these projects created zones of perceptual activation that challenged conventional modes of viewership. Rather than reproduce the conditions of passive spectatorship that were understood to typify the traditional museum experience, Lissitzky's designs promoted the revolution of perception along with the perception of revolutionary propaganda, both directed toward the political unification of its mass audience.[11] While the surrealists shared the goal of dismantling traditional perceptual expectations in their 1938 exhibition in order to revolutionize the spectator, their emphasis was on complete sensory estrangement. They could not abide the Soviet political instrumentalization of design, nor its formulation of the audience as a fused political body. Whereas the montage aesthetic of Lissitzky was directed by the integral, if dialectical, relation of its parts in the formation of a powerful pedagogical project leading to revolutionary consciousness, the surrealist exhibition was geared toward unleashing the unconscious, which was definitionally exterior to political function (at least according to Breton).

3.4 El Lissitzky, *Pressa*, installation
view, 1928. © 2006 Artists Rights
Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-
Kunst, Bonn.

Indeed, the rejection of art with direct political ends—the art of propaganda—formed the very basis of the surrealist notions of sovereignty and freedom during the mid- to late 1930s.

Unlike these precedents in the history of experimental exhibition design, the 1938 installation deployed the spatialization of collage to project radically heterogeneous zones of visual and conceptual experience that created disjunctive borders between themselves, but remained discrete within the same space. Each area of the main gallery—the beds, coal sacks, and pond, each referencing the spaces of domesticity, industry, and nature, respectively—was equally out of place, and each, more or less, maintained its spatial and referential integrity only to combine explosively and inexplicably in the audience's reception of the exhibition as a whole. Far from earlier Dadaist practices of collage, such as Schwitters' *Merzbau*, which produced fields of implosive fragmentation that corroded the discrete identity of individual inclusions, the 1938 exhibition space grew directly out of surrealist models of collage, enacting "The miracle of the total transfiguration of beings and objects with or without modification of the physical or anatomical aspect," as Max Ernst defined it in the *Dictionnaire abrégé du Surréalisme*, published as the catalog for the show.[12] This "total transfiguration"—geared toward the complete transfiguration of whole spaces—was now extended to the gallery space at large, providing an area of confusion in which the material surroundings were presented as fully decontextualized, freed from their anticipated appearance and function.

To what factors do we owe this development? The installation, first of all, answered surrealist fears of the increasing objectification of everyday life. The conditions of material reality had catalyzed a "crisis of the object," which was a result of the intensified domination of objects by a functionalism and use-value that excluded all

else. This crisis constituted a growing concern for Breton during the 1930s, one he had addressed in several smaller-scale surrealist exhibitions and publications just before the 1938 exhibition. Breton's answer was to theorize a new "surrealist object" that was, as he inimitably put it, "calculated primarily to raise the interdict resulting from the stultifying proliferation of those objects which impinge on our senses every day and attempt to persuade us that anything that might exist independently of these mundane objects must be illusory."[13] Against that "hateful regime" of what we might call the increasing rationalization of capitalist instrumentalization, surrealism responded through "the depreciation of those objects of often dubiously accepted *usefulness* which clutter up the so-called real world." The "surrealist object" would constitute "a total disruption of sensibility by routing all rational habits,"[14] and it carried this out by redirecting materiality toward a deinstrumentalized irrationality: Breton's aim was to take "those objects which impinge on our senses every day" and cast them "headlong into the realm of all that is marvelous."[15]

While this disruption was first enacted through object-based assemblages, such as Man Ray's *Object of Destruction* (1931) or Joan Miró's *Man and Woman* (1931), the perceived proliferation of forms of rationalization in everyday life soon demanded enlarging the scale of the surrealist intervention, in effect bringing its disruption to an architectural level. The 1938 installation answered that demand, providing a diversified environment of aleatory associations continuous with, and expanded from the collage-based structure that characterized the "surrealist object." By invoking the "marvelous" the exhibition engaged a key surrealist term, which Breton had recently defined through two subgroups: convulsive beauty (itself subdivided into the veiled-erotic, the fixed-explosive, and the magic-circumstantial) and objective chance

(designating both the encounter and the *trouvaille*).[16] The installation design, in fact, provided a complete repertoire of exactly these surrealist devices: the not-too-veiled-erotic of the unraveled beds, the fixed-explosive of the coal sacks ready to ignite, and the magic-circumstantial of the pond and brushwood found incongruously in an art gallery. All offered so many shocking encounters with irrationality and dream imagery, which had by now become the standard expectations of a surrealist show. Yet the ease of this interpretation was precisely the problem, as several critics noted: "The devices of Surrealism could be enumerated without much difficulty. The most apparent consists in diverting objects from their conventional use. . . . These are not whimsical artists, these are mathematicians of the absurd, who operate with a method that is the inverse from conventional methods, but one even more rigorous."[17] By 1938 the relations between surrealist theory and practice had become all too automatic, and this very legibility eventually compromised the success of surrealism's radical hopes.

The 1938 installation also addressed corresponding fears of the reification of the subject, which were intertwined with the perceived invasion of rationalized objects, one "impinging" on the other, as Breton explained. He continued: "In the last analysis, this new way of thought is fuelled chiefly by the anxiety inherent in an age like ours, where human brotherhood is at a premium while the best organized systems—including social systems—seem to have become petrified in the hands of their advocates."[18] If material relations between things had come to define relations between people—objectified through petrified social systems—then a disruption was required that would form an exodus from this intolerable situation.[19] Answering this demand, the 1938 exhibition produced a collective space in which the decontextualization of things would estrange people in turn, making one a foreigner in a once-familiar

terrain. Expanding into a space that would encompass an area of simultaneous collective reception, the installation was meant to produce a form of sociability that would operate according to Rimbaud's famous motto, "Je est un autre," tellingly quoted in the *Dictionnaire abrégé,* which became a formula for rendering the self other by separating it from its linguistic identity, dividing it into subject and object, which the installation would carry out in its own way. Reimagining the possibilities of collectivization had become a political necessity in a period threatened not only by the reification of social relations, but also by the ascendancy of nationalism, according to which subjects, like the proliferation of instrumentalized objects, lined up for the cause of *la patrie* and prepared to battle cultures perceived as the enemy. Indeed, by 1938 this socio-political regime had become a central target of surrealism, which attacked the "dark world" of "the infantile insanity of German nationalism" and the "senile madness of French nationalism." Confronted with this political phenomenon, which appeared to be heading toward a horrific repetition of the catastrophe of the First World War, surrealists responded by denying their own national identity and rendering themselves foreign: In a period of rabid nationalism and its regimentation of identity, "we can encounter ourselves categorically only as strangers."[20]

The installation, through its collage format, addressed these complex exigencies by defamiliarizing viewers, objects, and space alike. One way to understand the translation of this ethico-political dedication to defamiliarization within the framework of the 1938 exhibition—though not at all obvious or expected—is through Breton's declaration in the *Dictionnaire abrégé* of the notion of "reciprocal love," which proposed the need for a revitalized relation to the world and to others within it. Enacted through shifts in habit and perception, and promoted through a reconciliation between

objective and subjective realities, "reciprocal love" is "that which puts into play the spontaneous in the practiced, the imagination in the commonplace, faith in doubt, and the perception of the interior object in the exterior one."[21] Reciprocal love would re-enchant the world of reification through unpredictability and irrationality, and in its course, would reestablish an empathic rapprochement between the complexity of human psychic experience and material reality.[22] With this ambition in mind—of a wholly new living environment of loving relationality between people and things—the desire to reinvent an expanded space of radical intersubjectivity and object relations becomes clear.

The 1938 surrealist exhibition, however, did not exactly or simply attempt to fulfill this desire. The space was provocative and politically urgent not because it enabled a new form of reconciliation between different modes of social experience—suggestive of a desire for unity incipient in Breton's explanations—but rather because it brought about a fundamental defamiliarization. The exhibition design formed less a space of social homogenization, as was desired by the various national movements that surrounded it at this time, and more one of radical heterogeneity, which stood as the fundamental principle behind what would become an extremely experimental formation of collective belonging. Rather than propose a refutation of Breton's calculations, the 1938 exhibition complicated them. It was precisely through the displacement of the self, rendering it foreign, that one might bridge an empathic connection to difference, both within and outside the self, producing social relations open to otherness rather than fanatically exclusive of it. While this theoretical potential existed implicitly within Breton's notion of "reciprocal love," the radical dimensions of self-estrangement and social heterogeneity were more forcefully and systematically articulated, as we will see, by Georges Bataille (it

was Bataille, after all, who acted as the dominant voice of Contre-Attaque, the activist collective that articulated the demands of self-estrangement as the basis of its political program during the mid 1930s). This radical modeling of social relations was approximated by Duchamp's exhibition design.

The installation represented ideas "which weren't always surrealist, either," as Duchamp emphasized. This was most vivid in the ceiling of coal sacks that came to dominate the exhibition, remarkably, to the exclusion of art beneath, which was cloaked in darkness and relegated to the "vague role of accessory."[23] The installation made evident a certain reversal of priorities between art and its display apparatus, and other participants in the show—especially the painters—were, not surprisingly, upset.[24] While the conventional function of installation design was to complement the exhibition of art, foregrounding it above all else, Duchamp's display paradoxically reduced the visibility of surrealist objects below, consigning them to a position of relative insignificance. This is telling, especially given that this event represented the first major exhibition of surrealism in Paris, its hometown. Yet the installation's unmistakable predatory aggression is only the more superficial characteristic of the relation between it and what lay beneath; more profoundly, Duchamp's ceiling of coal sacks materialized an order of repetition that utterly conflicted with the values of individual sovereignty and reciprocal love that were the goals of the surrealist project at this time. Although separating the coal sacks from their conventional functions and projecting them in an artistic category, the installation figured forth a domineering law of mass production that menacingly hung over visitors, which appeared to evacuate the particular in total conformity with industrial rationality. There was no creative intervention in the organization that composed this field of objects, as it eliminated signs of authorship and individual expression. Rather,

the sacks simply and completely filled the expanse of the ceiling—as is evident in photographs of the exhibition space—as if they obeyed a banal logic of impersonal storage, even if they were eccentrically located overhead. The coal sacks threatened the very crushing destruction of individuality and creative allowance, even the possibility of resistance through artistic practice, which was dispatched to the shadows as insignificant folly. While Breton's aim was to invoke the industrialized object in order to throw it "headlong into the realm of all that is marvelous," which Duchamp's installation partly fulfilled, things also appear to have reversed course, and industry returned to surrealism with a vengeance.

The installation consequently emerges as a frame of ambivalence, true to Duchamp's conflicted motivations. While it offered surrealism a radicalizing context for its exposition, producing the most extensive attack yet on the "proliferation of objects" within daily life and expanding its collage aesthetic into architectural dimensions—as well as securing for the aging avant-garde movement the required media spectacle to make the show a scandalous success—it simultaneously revealed the very capitalist force that was poised to absorb it. The ambivalence appears contained in the installation's paradoxical expression of the irrationalization of industry and the industrialization of irrationality, as if through his design Duchamp meant to directly question surrealist strategies even while he carried them out. Similarly, while the installation's embrace of individual freedom was put to task against the nationalization of identity, Duchamp also appears to have questioned what line of escape could exist when individuality had already been exiled by capitalism. This ambivalence, as we shall see, mediated the fraught relation between surrealism and its surrounding political and economic fields; it also expressed the unresolved relation between the movement and the framing conditions of its in-

stallation, proposing both a continuity with surrealist practice and a telling rupture. Additionally, while the installation advanced Duchamp's own practice, pushing it in new directions, it also seems to have questioned the continued viability of his own previous strategies, particularly the relevance of the readymade, which it deployed in significantly renewed form. Certainly it was this correspondence of engagements—of Duchamp's reinvention of the readymade, the very sign of the growing commodification of everyday life, against which the surrealists were in effect making one last stand—that prepared the ground for the installation in the first place. It remains to be seen whether the 1938 exhibition envisioned a dream of industry, through which one might realize an escape from the instrumentalization of identity, or the industrialization of the dream itself, where the forces of order and discipline had crept into even this last redoubt of surrealism.

The 1938 installation furthered a genealogical transformation of the readymade, which had been initiated some twenty years earlier. Since its initial conception, the readymade had undertaken various relations to mass production, at times invoking it through an isolated object, at others materializing its repetition as an assemblage of things. Whereas the singular readymade—such as *Hat Rack* or *Fountain*—presented a synecdoche of industrial mass production by isolating and displaying a repeatable commodity object, the readymade assemblages of the 1910s—such as the *Sculptures for Traveling*—revealed a line of flight from the simple repetition of identity. *Three Standard Stoppages* (1913–14), with its three variably shaped threads of the same length, released the force of "canned chance" on geometry, making a "joke about the meter,"[25] while *Why not Sneeze, Rrose Sélavy?* (1921) accumulated heavy pieces of marble that appeared paradoxically as light sugar cubes.

These works at once instantiated and frustrated forms of scientific and industrial repetition, whether through aleatory variation or perceptual tricks, yet their scale was limited to the conventionally sized sculptural object. The *Sculpture for Traveling* expanded this scale, prefiguring the social space of the 1938 installation, even if it carried out an altogether different logic. In it, identity was disrupted by the projection of mass-produced objects (rubber bathing caps) into a relay of repetition and difference, one spatialized in the conditions of everyday life.[26] This trajectory from readymade to architecture was further advanced with works such as *Fresh Widow* (1920) and *Bagarre d'Austerlitz* (1921), as well as with the experimental doorways Duchamp designed during the 1920s and 1930s, including *Door 11 rue Larrey* (1927) and the entrance to Breton's gallery, *Gradiva* (1937), each of which evinced a growing sensitivity to the architectural framework of art, or rather art as architectural framework. The earlier readymades, such as *Fountain*, had completed their transformation into an artwork in part through an act of institutional recontextualization (from plumbing store to art gallery), reflexively testing the functions of the institution and subjecting to analysis its ability to turn everyday objects into works of art. The subsequent window and door projects continued this demonstration of contextual sensitivity, insofar as they mimicked and internalized the architectural container, manifesting the relationship to it metaphorically (by reproducing architectural components) and metonymically (by becoming architecture). Yet, the architecture would be altered in turn: the windows denied the transparency traditionally associated with glass (those of *Bagarre d'Austerlitz* were backed with black leather), or correspondingly, with the visual field of pictorial art, throwing the work into a material and discursive opacity that was carried out linguistically through the Rousselian language games of their peculiar

3.5 Marcel Duchamp, *Door, 11 rue Larrey,* 1927. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris/Succession Marcel Duchamp.

titles; similarly, the doors produced areas of spatial transformation, movement, and conceptual contradiction, as in *Door, at 11 rue Larrey,* which, positioned on the hinge between the bathroom and bedroom of Duchamp's Paris apartment, was capable of being open and shut at once.

The 1938 installation furthered this genealogy and expanded it in new directions, as it answered a different set of imperatives. While it assembled a collection of readymade objects—the 1,200 coal sacks[27]—that defined an experience of scale and space on the level of architecture, it did so in relation not to sites of liminality—doors and windows—but to the central area of the gallery space, creating a terrain of collective sociability, instead of one ideally suited to an individual viewer. Moreover, its temporary existence was limited to the length of the show, becoming coincident with the exhibition. This physical contingency upon the architecture of the space and this temporal transience reliant on the show's schedule suggest a new and complicated relation to its institutional context. These developments, for Duchamp, responded to several motivations, which were not exactly the same as those that guided the surrealists. First of all, by 1938, it was evident that the original strategy of the readymade—involving the radical redefinition of the terms of authorship, objecthood, and spectatorship—was outmoded. The roughly twenty-year-old gesture of isolating and exhibiting a commodity object had not only lost its shocking impact and conceptual provocation, but had acceded, one could argue, to the very institutionalization it once exposed and challenged. Included in major exhibitions of modern art, it had also been internalized within subsequent avant-grade practice. In 1936, for instance, the readymade appeared in Alfred Barr's "Fantastic Art, Dada, and Surrealism" at New York's Museum of Modern Art, in the catalog

of which Barr discussed the readymade under the title "The Sur-realist Object," explaining that "Dada and Surrealist objects have primarily a psychological interest—bizarre, dreamlike, absurd, uncanny, enigmatic";[28] and in the same year, the readymade was included as a "surrealist object" in the Exposition Surréaliste d'Objets at La Galerie Charles Ratton in Paris, organized by Breton. Moreover, by the time of the 1938 surrealist exhibition even Du-champ was in the process of institutionalizing his own past proj-ects—readymades included—in the "portable museum" of *La boîte-en-valise*, creating his very own "History of Art" of repro-duced, labeled, and recontextualized artworks.[29] This reclassifi-cation of the readymade deserves critical scrutiny. As Benjamin Buchloh has pointed out, "If Duchamp's concern for the destruc-tion of the aura and the abolition of the hieratic individual object had been the focal point of his invention of the Ready Made strat-egy in 1914, [then by the time of *La boîte-en-valise*] he had to focus on an entirely different question: how to encounter the immanent acculturation of the Ready Made?"[30]

The 1938 installation answered this concern in several ways, perhaps most immediately by rediscovering the readymade as dirty and used, recovered as discarded on the outskirts of Paris. Rather than present a brand-new commodity object, as the readymade once appeared, Duchamp now substituted well-worn coal sacks, stuffed like taxidermied animals, their life already consumed. This gesture conceptualized the readymade itself as obsolete, and it also explains the frequently perceived morbidity of the installation, which not only offered an image of decay, but also indicates the recognition of the very death of the readymade as an avant-garde strategy. Yet Duchamp's installation was not necessarily absent of new critical functions. Although the recent acculturation of the

readymade meant the paradoxical reinstitution of the very conventional artistic values of aura and individuality that the readymade had once challenged, these values would be newly denied in 1938 through the materialization of a repetition directly tied to industry and destructive of aura, and further by the ultimate withdrawal of the readymade as an object of consumption, even as it was displayed in the commercial gallery context. In terms of this latter point, Duchamp's strategy shifted its focus from the presentation of a singular commodity object to the construction of an experience organized around acculturation and repetition. That the installation would expire with the end of the show with no material object to sell meant that there would be no marketable commodity as remainder. Rather, the whole event would be consumed on the spot. Of course, this strategy raises new concerns in terms of the creation of a certain spectacle in the service of commodification—that of marketing surrealism. Yet, the acculturation of surrealism defined the very meaning of the installation, which would first of all acknowledge the inescapable forces of industrial production and consumption now fully immanent to artistic practice and its reception.

The installation consequently differs from Duchamp's dealings with industry decades earlier when there may have existed greater opportunity to unleash a liberating deterritorialization upon what capitalism had encoded for its own purpose. As David Joselit has argued, Duchamp's early readymade projects did not simply constitute a "critical challenge to the capitalist order," but rather redirected the unstable logic of exchange against the commodity itself, subjecting it to an "infinite regress" of desire by opening up its materiality to a boundless flux beyond the disciplined markets of dominant institutions and conventional identities: "Duchamp

looked behind the reified precipitates of capitalist production and found nothing but streams of matter—words that no longer meant anything and objects whose difference from one another was indiscernible."[51] Yet if this strategy once promised an escape from reification, its potential seems to have receded by 1938, as many of those same readymades now found themselves sitting in the very institutional confines they had earlier attempted to elude.[52] It was now the very indiscernibility of differentiation *within* industrial order that had become distinctly threatening. Not only would the coal sacks produce an image of art as a vacant shell of commercial form—awaiting the institution's stamp of artificial authenticity and value, existing as so many readymade packaging materials—but insofar as they materialized a connection to the architectural container of the surrealist exhibition, they exposed the relation between art and its institution as a form of industrial production and consumption. In other words, the surrealist attempt to enact the transfiguration of objects appeared incomplete; its regression was internal to, not transgressive of, capital and its institutions. Consequently, the mode of address of the coal sack installation was one of perceptual domination, which threatened the suppression of decoded desire rather than achieving its liberation.[53]

Along similar lines, whereas Duchamp had once defined the readymade as an object chosen in a state of "visual indifference" and "complete anesthesia,"[54] which provoked the most radical challenge yet to the centrality of traditional forms of expressive authorship and the privileging of artistic intentions that ignored the automatic behavior of consumerism that had come to define modern life, he now had to address the surrealist designation of the readymade as the origin of its own genealogy of surrealist objects. "The readymade and readymade aided, objects chosen or

composed, beginning in 1914, by Marcel Duchamp, constitute the first surrealist objects," Breton declared imperiously in his entry for "object" in the *Dictionnaire abrégé*. He continued:

> In 1924 in the "Introduction to the Discourse on the Paucity of Reality," André Breton proposed to fabricate and put in circulation "certain of these objects that one can only dream" (*objet onirique*). In 1930, Salvador Dalí constructed and defined the *objets à fonctionnement symbolique* (object which lends itself to a minimum of mechanical function and which is based on the phantasms and representations susceptible to being provoked by the realization of unconscious acts). . . . Only the very attentive examination of the numerous speculations to which this object has publicly given place could permit one to understand the current temptation of surrealism in all its reach (*objet réel et virtuel, objet mobile et muet, objet fantôme, objet interprété, objet incorporé, être-objet*, etc.).

This is a sweeping redefinition of the readymade, and we would be right to ask why Breton would reposition it as the key historical source for surrealist practice during the 1930s; for rather than figuring as its obvious precedent, the readymade suggests its very antithesis. The readymade, which placed art and commodity in critical reversibility, signified the obsolescence of personal taste and individual creativity and revealed the anonymous rationalization of production and the passivity of consumption—the very forces against which surrealism was locked in struggle. Breton's response to this situation was to subsume this threat within surrealist practice so that it paradoxically came to bear the mark of in-

dividuality and exemplify the realization of unconscious intention, rather than portend their destruction.

It is true that Duchamp considered the readymade as extending a new thought to a mass-produced object, in effect projecting unexpected meanings onto it as it was thrown into a different context than normal. The act of consumption was thereby transformed into a process of immaterial creative production. The *Dictionnaire abrégé* called attention to this point of artistic elevation and conceptual transvaluation in its definition: "Readymade: common object promoted to the dignity of an art object by the simple choice of the artist."[35] But by appropriating the readymade as such Breton risked the reduction of its complexity, if not the creation of an entirely new art object—the surrealist object. Rather than recognize the implacable displacement of traditional artistic institutions as the profound accomplishment of the readymade, Breton resuscitated those very institutions in his notion of the surrealist object. Such an appropriation never fooled Duchamp, however, and he later corrected any misperceptions: "My Ready-Mades have nothing to do with the *objet trouvé* because the so-called 'found object' is completely directed by personal taste. Personal taste decides that this is a beautiful object and is unique. That most of my Ready-Mades were mass produced and could be duplicated is another important difference. In many cases they were duplicated, thus avoiding the cult of uniqueness, of art with a capital A."[36]

By collapsing the models of the *objet trouvé* and the readymade into a single category, Breton eliminated the crucial difference between them, in effect deradicalizing the latter and confounding the former. This leveling of difference is also contradictory, given that Breton's goal was to discover a zone of transcendence within materiality, one beyond the domination of a proliferating repetition

and a deadening functionality. By rendering continuous the ready-made (created by "choice") and the surrealist object ("realized by unconscious acts"), Breton retrospectively subjectified Duchamp's gesture, which was radical precisely for its desubjectified basis. Ironically, there was a greater chance for an encounter with difference when the readymade was seen in its original light. By returning aesthetic intention to it, even if one of psychoanalytic complexity, Breton ignored the object of "aesthetic indifference." This act constituted the latest sign of the institutionalization of the readymade by the avant-garde, yet, paradoxically, it generated a similar rationalization of objects that motivated Breton in the first place.

Although Duchamp's 1938 installation may have, to some degree, carried out the surrealist goal of transfiguring objects of everyday life, it also resisted the "surrealization" of the readymade. Indeed, Duchamp's field of repetition, which hung over the ceiling of the art gallery, suggested that through its very resistance to a proliferating objectification, surrealism had ironically inaugurated its own proliferation of "surrealist objects" ordered by the same law of commercial production it was struggling against. This revelation was clearest in the use of borrowed revolving doors on which to hang objects—another one of Duchamp's "ideas"—which could not have been more direct in associating the displayed artwork with department store merchandise. This then became the new "surrealist object," according to Duchamp's critical reframing. Critics took note, relating the exhibition to a "vulgar salesroom."[37] In other words, the installation presented "ideas which weren't anti-surrealist, but which weren't always surrealist either." Duchamp's formulation of this double negative signals a hesitancy to embrace either position in its simple positive expression. Perhaps he discerned in surrealism both the historical necessity of resistance to the domination of capitalism as well as its increasing futility. Consequently, the in-

stallation represented a complex project, one sensitive to various layers of determination and foreclosed options, even as the desperate need for alternatives only grew stronger. The ambivalence of Duchamp's maneuvers reveals a struggle over what critical role the readymade, or rather its legacy, might play in 1938, and it additionally exposes the conflicted status of surrealism itself.

The crisis of surrealism during the 1930s is initially perceptible in the central motivation behind the installation design for the 1938 exhibition, which was to conceal the institutional site. As Breton later explained, "The organizers had wanted, in effect, to create an atmosphere as alien as possible from that of a so-called 'art gallery.'"[38] Another participant, Georges Hugnet, elaborated: The surrealists "imagined the galleries bathed in an atmosphere of disorientation in which they intended to create a demonstration the importance of which would be the revenge on the material limitations imposed on dreams by reality."[39] The reason behind this desire to hide all signs of the gallery, no doubt, derived from the fact that the exhibition was held at Georges Wildenstein's prestigious Galerie Beaux-Arts at 140 Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, located in the patrician eighth *arrondissement* on the right bank of Paris, whose traditionalism was indicated by its preceding exhibition featuring the work of the old master El Greco.[40] For the surrealists to hold their first major retrospective at such an institution, as conservative artistically as it was upper-class socio-economically, apparently necessitated a tremendous disavowal, because the conflict could not be greater for an avant-garde group pledged to the destruction of the bourgeoisie to exhibit in such an elite art establishment. The exhibition, moreover, occurred in the midst of Breton's ongoing denunciations of capitalism during the '30s, as when he proclaimed in 1937 that the "rule of the bourgeoisie is drawing to

an end,"[41] and later in 1938: "Today, if the pseudo-democratic pow-
ers set themselves in motion at last, it is only to defend a state they
have created in their own image, a state thoroughly capitalist, cen-
tralized, policelike and static."[42] The fact that the surrealists were
now inhabiting a rarified and elite space associated with that state,
in effect designating it as the privileged site for their own revolu-
tion, clearly presented a glaring contradiction, and it was immedi-
ately evident as such for critics who noted, some with reactionary
glee, that the exhibition revealed "one more revolution that fades
into that which it wished to overturn."[43]

More than just revealing fears of the absorption of everyday
life by capitalist modes of objectification, surrealism encountered
the betrayal of its revolutionary political program, as it not only
sunk into obsolescence but also became representative of the very
face of bourgeois culture, even legitimizing its claims of demo-
cratic freedom and tolerance. The institutionalization of surre-
alism, however, was not sudden; nor do I mean to imply that the
avant-garde ever operated in an autonomous realm outside of dom-
inant cultural institutions, the immersion in which long dogged
surrealism. What prepared the ground for the 1938 exhibition in
particular was a complicated process of dislocation that occurred
over the course of the tumultuous '30s, a time when the surrealists
found themselves increasingly at a loss for an appropriate space
where they could pursue their artistic and political goals. Ever
since parting ways with the Partie communiste français (PCF) in
1934 owing to ideological and artistic differences, the surrealists
were left politically isolated.[44] Opposed to both the capitalist right
and the dictatorial communism of Stalin's Soviet Union, they had
little political space in which to operate, and so, making a virtue
out of necessity, the surrealists turned to the ostensible openness
of the street as a zone of spontaneous collective organization and

revolutionary direct action—that is, before being forced back into the salon.

Perceived as the ideal place to join art and life, the street had in fact been long celebrated by surrealism. As the privileged location of compulsive beauty, the auratic space of flea-market wanderings, the site of labor, drifting *flaneurs,* prostitutes, and tourists, the street variously captured the surrealist imagination. "The street [was] the place for the ultimate Surrealist experience, that of love or revolution—but in the best of circumstances, of love and revolution," observes Susan Suleiman, who points out that it was there that the surrealists believed Freud and Marx would ideologically meet.[45] When Breton asked in 1937 where "social crisis will come to a head," he answered: "the only conceivable place, namely, *in the streets.*"[46] It was thus not surprising that once surrealists declared their independence from conventional political parties, they would turn to the area thought to be outside of dominant political and artistic institutions as the only viable locus of their activities, even if they never addressed the obvious contradiction between the embrace of this idealized space and the movement's continued gallery-bound artistic practice, which continued throughout this time—at least, not until 1938.

The ideological commitment to the street was politically most intense during the formation of the radical collective Contre-Attaque, which militated for a "real revolution" drawn from irrational energies welling up organically within the masses—the natural inhabitants of the street—which was counterposed against the alleged failures of the parliamentary government and bureaucratic administration of republican France. The group, for which Breton and Bataille momentarily joined forces (a sign itself of the desperate times that motivated such adversaries to overcome their differences and commit to some form of collective action), followed the

surrealists' expulsion from the PCF and responded to two recent political developments. The first was the growth of fascism in France, most notably the organization of the xenophobic paramilitary group Croix de Feu, which had catalyzed street riots in 1934 that nearly precipitated a coup d'état. For Contre-Attaque, French fascism was not just threatening in itself; it signaled a lost opportunity insofar as the Left had failed to redirect those reactionary energies toward its own revolutionary purposes.[47] The lesson drawn by Bataille was that "We must know how to appropriate the weapons of our adversaries."[48] The second catalyst was the formation of the centrist Popular Front government under Leon Blum following the events of 1934. Although antifascist, the Popular Front represented a capitalist and nationalist state; Contre-Attaque could only oppose it.[49] In response to its ascendancy, the group called for a "Popular Front in the Streets" that would revolt against fascism, poverty, and war. Faced with the alternatives of fascist tyranny, capitalist oppression, and a bureaucratic communism denuded of all artistic, cultural, and personal freedom—a triangulation that broadly maps the political bind of the 1930s from the perspective of the surrealists—the only option was to affirm the spontaneous uprising of the multitude—the "total power of the people"—in the streets. This "revolution in the streets" would oppose "the poisoned atmosphere of professional congresses and committees."[50] It would also encourage a diversification of the "French community" through its internationalization, unmasking the financial greed lying behind the false populism of nationalism:

> A great number of men love their fatherland, sacrifice themselves and die for it. A Nazi can love the Reich until he is delirious. We also can love with fanaticism, but what we love, although we may be French in origin, is not the

French community, but the human community; it is not in any way France, but the world. We call for a universal conscience tied to moral liberty and the solidarity of those who possess nothing, just like the national conscience is tied to the control and solidarity of wealth.[51]

Fundamental to Contre-Attaque's embrace of the "street" was its perceived status as the only remaining space of possibility for political autonomy, popular sovereignty, and collective oppositional action. Yet the more visceral attraction to the street was its capacity to unleash a spontaneous eruption of revolutionary energy, which was most of all encouraged by the group: "What drives the crowds to the streets is the emotion directly aroused by striking events in the atmosphere of a storm, it is the contagious emotion that, from house to house, from suburb to suburb, suddenly turns a hesitating man into a frenzied being."[52] This liberation of direct nonrational emotional energy, it was believed especially by Bataille, would overcome the reified social relations of capitalism as well as the misdirected system of belonging encouraged by nationalism.[53] Correlatively, because its collective social relations were not determined in advance by the strict protocols of doctrinaire political institutions, such a revolution would unleash the freedom of unprompted expression on behalf of its participants.

Contre-Attaque, however, would last less than a year before dissolving, partly owing to the realization that in calling for a spontaneous and bloody insurrection in the streets, the group was inadvertently mirroring the very fascism it was fighting against: its "antifascism" was all too close to a perceived "surfascism."[54] Its extremist redefinition of the street as bloody site of popular uprising too easily flowed into the horrific images of Nazi torchlight parades and Soviet mass spectacles, which consolidated collective energy

3.6 *Appel à l'action*, Contre-Attaque
street protest, Paris, 1936.

with nationalist spirit and deathly intolerance, unleashing a desire for war and destruction.[55] It turned out to be much harder to channel the power of the street toward socialist revolution than it was for fascism to appropriate the space of capitalism for its own ends: "While condemning the contents of modern culture, [fascism] found in the dreaming collective created by consumer-capitalism a ready-at-hand receptacle for its own political phantasmagoria," notes Susan Buck-Morss.[56] With their ideal site of love and revolution discredited, their independent leftist agenda lacking popular support and public place in an age dominated by party politics, the surrealists were left out in the cold by 1938.[57] The geopolitical situation around them only worsened: the German Reich annexed Austria in the 1938 March Anschluss, and the infamous Munich Pact was signed by Hitler, Chamberlain, Mussolini, and Daladier in September. This agreement, in effect, appeased Germany and surrendered to it the Sudentenland, which was occupied the following month, sealing the fate of Czechoslovakia and announcing the irreversible commencement of World War II.

With the loss of the street as viable site of artistic and political action, the surrealists encountered what Suleiman describes as "the gradual, reluctant, perhaps totally unwilling but nevertheless indubitable movement of Surrealism during the 1930s from the street to the *salon*."[58] But perhaps just as astonishing was the uncanny recreation of the street *in* the salon of the 1938 exhibition. There, the space of everyday life crystallized into a representation, revealing an utter forfeiture of the revolutionary hopes that had earlier animated surrealism. Lining the entrance hall to the gallery, the so-called *Surrealist Street* welcomed visitors with a series of mannequins dressed in bizarre outfits and positioned in outlandish scenes, each arranged by different artists. Max Ernst created a morbid tableau of a widow clad in black veils who stood above a male

figure lying on the ground, dressed in a suit splattered with light paint (apparently her most recent victim), while Man Ray presented a female model saddened with glass tears, with tobacco pipes in its wig spouting large translucent bubbles. The most celebrated was André Masson's, whose figure, wearing a g-string exotically ornamented with glass eyes, had a birdcage placed on its head with the door opened to show its mouth gagged with a black velvet band and a pansy flower.[59] For Breton, Masson's mannequin offered a "metaphor [for eroticism] in its pure state—I mean impossible to translate into writing."[60] On the walls behind the mannequins hung miscellaneous posters advertising past surrealist exhibitions and activities, as well as blue enamel street signs, which loosely corresponded to the labels on a schematic map entitled *La Ville Surréaliste* included in the dictionary. Suggesting a utopian space outside any real geography, *La Ville Surréaliste* offered several real and imaginary street names enclosed within rectangular boxes surrounding a Hans Bellmer drawing of a bodily disfiguration.[61] They included: Rue de la Transfusion du Sang, Rue de la Vieille Lanterne (where Gérard de Nerval committed suicide), Rue Vivienne (Lautréamont's residence), Rue Nicolas Flamel (named after the admired medieval alchemist), and Le Passage des Panoramas (one of the famous Paris arcades).

The fact that Masson's mannequin appeared emblematic of the *Street,* especially to Breton, was telling, for it encapsulated the redesignation of the street as a space of libidinal fantasy, one where individual liberty was defined primarily through sexual desublimation. Retracting the political expression from its earlier conception of the street, surrealism surrendered the spontaneous energies and emotional intensity of its once-vaunted idea of mass-public sovereignty to a frozen image of public place, through which the administration of collective production drastically narrowed the
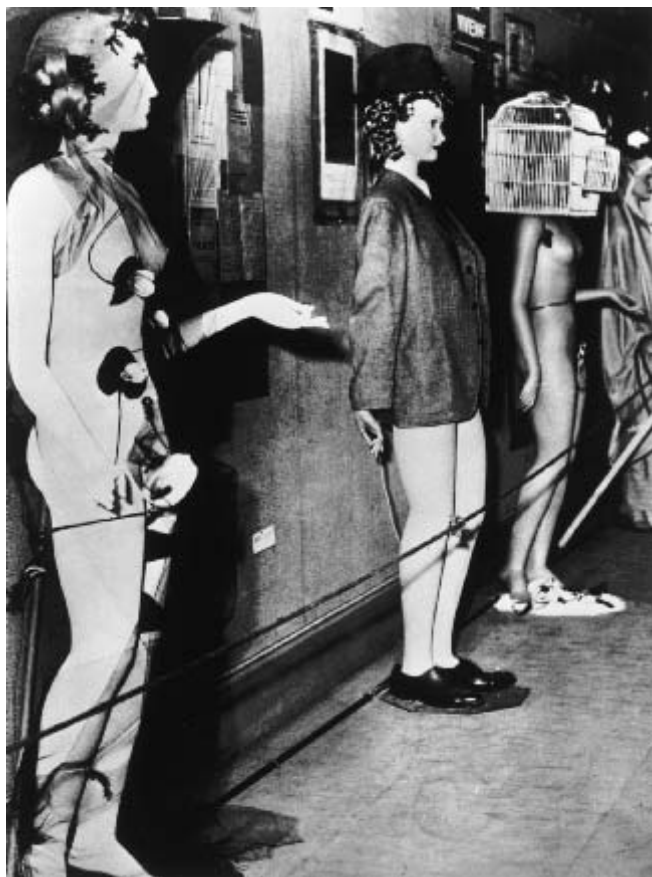
3.7 View of *Surrealist Street,* with mannequin by Marcel Duchamp, 1938. Philadelphia Museum of Art: Gift of Jacqueline, Peter, and Paul Matisse in memory of their mother, Alexina Duchamp. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ ADAGP, Paris/Succession Marcel Duchamp.
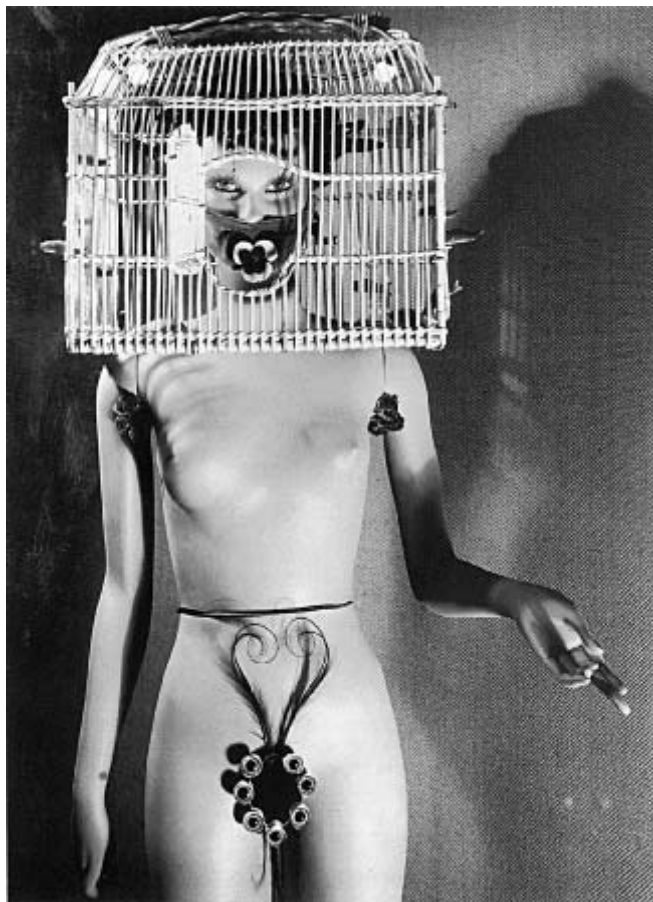
3.8 André Masson, *Mannequin,*
Exposition Internationale du
Surréalisme, Paris, 1938. Photograph
by Raoul Ubac. Getty Research
Institute. © 2006 Artists Rights Society
(ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris.
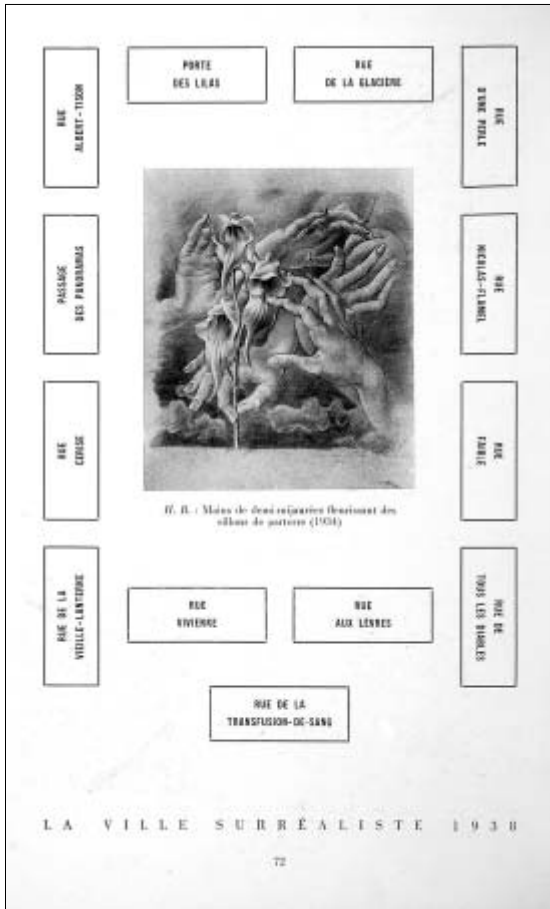
3.9 *La Ville Surrealiste*, 1938.
Courtesy Special Collections of the
Sheridan Libraries of The Johns
Hopkins University.

identities of participants from revolutionary activists to conventional artists. Alternatively, whereas one might argue that the *Street* marked a redirection of the political into sexual expression, into a state of desire constituent of individual freedom–one impossible to codify or rationalize–this shift in priorities still points up an unavoidable problem within surrealist practice: It attempted to define freedom negatively through the very refusal of direct political expression, which is difficult not to interpret as a gesture that compensated for the movement's complete lack of political power. Indeed, according to the doctrine of surrealism at this time, art must expressly void any instrumentalized political form, for the movement based its definition of sovereignty upon the refusal of any determination of content or style. According to Breton, the domination of art by political propaganda–both in the Soviet Union and in fascist Germany–had rendered *any* political art unacceptable, which became coincident with stereotyped declarations.[62] Consequently, yet still problematically, its political aesthetics of individual autonomy translated into a by-this-time conventional and depoliticized avant-garde art, which found welcomed reception within the bourgeois salon.

Whatever political effect the *Street* might have achieved, however, it was clearly not located in any predetermined and explicit political content; rather, the force of the *Street* was directed toward the desublimation of the mannequin as a figure of reified identity. Familiar from the repertoire of surrealist artistic strategies, the mannequin–relative to the automaton and the machinic body–was a source of fascination for what it revealed about the objectification of the human body. Surrealism had long since discovered that the mannequin was the very image of capitalist reification.[63] As was well recognized by the late 1930s, modern forms of labor had come to separate the body of the worker from his or her mental

functions, leaving behind a purely physical existence chained to the laws of production. This condition informed what Lukàcs had earlier termed reification: "With the modern 'psychological' analysis of the work-process (in Taylorism) this rational mechanisation extends right into the worker's 'soul': even his psychological attributes are separated from his total personality and placed in opposition to it so as to facilitate their integration into specialised rational systems and their reduction to statistically viable concepts."[64] The mannequin revealed this phantasmic figuration of a bodily husk devoid of humanity, a serial thing bereft of individuality and sovereignty, subjected to the scientific calculations of capitalist production. The strategy behind the *Surrealist Street* was to appropriate this rationalized body and carry out upon it idiosyncratic treatments by individual artists, in effect to project back into it the very psychological attributes that had been separated off. The mannequin would consequently be freed from its capitalist subjection and released into a state of defamiliarized appearance within a space of unexpected and spontaneous arrangements. The *Surrealist Street*, in other words, set the "irrationalization of the subjective world" in opposition to the "capitalist rationalization of the objective world," as Foster notes in regard to surrealism's earlier strategies.[65] Yet this was not just directed toward individual experience, for irrationalization was projected onto a collective space opening onto the surrealist formation of community around difference and dysfunctionality, one resisting "the fact that the 'natural laws' of capitalist production have been extended to cover every manifestation of life in society; that—for the first time in history—the whole of society is subjected, or tends to be subjected, to a unified economic process, and that the fate of every member of society is determined by unified laws," as Lukàcs noted.[66] This articulates the "petrified social relations" of which Breton would later speak.

Addressing this situation, the *Surrealist Street* proposed a space of irrational spontaneity, unconventional imagination, and a shocking oscillation between libidinal fantasy and inanimate objects—precisely the space of reciprocal love Breton gestured toward earlier, now developed on a collective level.

The danger of Breton's strategy, however, was that it once again risked repeating the dominating rationality it was struggling against. What Breton termed "the objectification of the very act of dreaming, its transformation into reality," or again, "the continuous assimilation of the irrational," threatened to replace one form of objectification with another.[67] It was exactly "the projection onto nature of the subjective," carried out in order to repel enlightenment reason, that might end up mimicking reason itself, as Adorno and Horkheimer would soon argue: "The multitudinous affinities between existents are suppressed by the single relation between the subject who bestows meaning and the meaningless object, between rational significance and the chance vehicle of signification."[68] In the process, "what was different is equalized" and "irrationality turns . . . into an instrument of rational administration."[69] Such paradoxical reversibility was the danger, as we have seen, of "surrealizing" the readymade. Additionally, the risk in diversifying the figure of repetition through idiosyncratic artistic procedures was that its expression of individualism was itself a capitalist fetishization; wherever the surrealists exaggerated the signs of individuality against the monotonous repetition of the commodity and its reified object relations, they risked reinstating the same capitalist logic they were attempting to attack. "This art, no longer dangerous, will wind up at the decorator, the advertising agency, the hairdresser, and the couturier," noted commentators, presciently.[70] But even more damning was the criticism that surrealism's tactics had become fully conventional in their own right, administered as so

many predetermined formulas or "surrealist ideas": "From all this [comes] that artificial surrealism, by recipes, by formulas . . . that turns into an atelier 'assignment.'"[71]

This cycle was brilliantly exposed in Duchamp's contribution to the *Street,* his mannequin named *Rrose Sélavy,* which he half-dressed in his own clothing, with suit and hat underneath a curly blond-haired wig adorning its upper body and nothing below except for men's dress shoes. The ambivalence of cross-dressing allegorized the double role of the surrealist mannequin itself, which functioned both as model of dereification and as artistic act commodified in turn as high fashion spectacle or avant-garde product. The presence of a small red light in the mannequin's jacket advertised this duplicitous logic, depicting his figure as a prostitute, and by extension the elaborate mise-en-scène of the *Surrealist Street* as a red-light district–of surrealist love and politics, both thoroughly institutionalized and merchandized.[72] It is not surprising that Duchamp perversely signed his mannequin at lower torso level, enunciating the entwinement of artistic and sexual commodification it had become. While the mannequin may have referred generically to the body of the prostitute, "seller and commodity in one," as Benjamin once wrote, the broader realization is that this figure–a living instantiation of the mannequin–exposed the generalized commodification of all.[73] Indeed, for Marx, "Prostitution is only a *specific* expression of the *universal* prostitution of the worker."[74] That even the unconventional body of Duchamp's mannequin–transgendered and therefore stationed outside the conventional reproductive cycles of dominant heterosexuality–was marketed as well as part of the spectacle of surrealism reveals the flexibility of the economy of consumption, even as it offered a wry revelation of Duchamp's hiring himself out to the surrealists. This was the space where not Freud and Marx but surrealism and capitalism would meet.

While the *Surrealist Street* did pursue the subversion of capitalist reification, it also attacked the situation whereby the generalized object relations of capitalism had become homologous to the subjective relations of nationalism. This condition had been dramatized just a few months earlier during the 1937 Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques in Paris, assembled on the fair grounds surrounding the Trocadero just under the shadow of the Eiffel Tower. In some ways a continuation of the nineteenth-century frenzy of world fairs, the Exposition provided the opportunity for members of participating countries—perhaps foremost the hosting French—to construct idealized representations of their national identities. This mass-public spectacle was largely defined through the extensive display of technical and artistic accomplishments, but perhaps making the greatest lasting visual impression in 1937 was the presentation of the ideal national body. The pavilions of Germany and the Soviet Union, which faced each other on the esplanade, dominated all others, with their monumentalized figures squaring off in an ominous mirroring of bombastic triumphalism.[75] Before Albert Speer's neoclassical tower, topped with a monumental German eagle, stood Josef Thorak's *The Family* and *Comradeship* (both 1937), their metalized physiques and grotesquely exaggerated physiognomies largely indistinguishable. Situated atop a giant building-*cum*-pedestal across the way was their Soviet counterpart: Vera Mukhina's enormous social-realist *Industrial Worker and Collective Farm Woman* (1937), its figures rising up in glorious celebration of communism with hammer and sickle in hand. The bodies of these figures, more or less equally idealized and purified in terms of their ideological visions, appeared increased in scale as if to engulf their entire respective national communities within themselves. Each projected a phantasmic image of the social corpus of totalitarianism, of the People-as-One.[76] Related to

3.10 International Exposition, Paris,
France, view of German and Soviet
pavilions, 1937.

Dreams of Industry

3.11 Joseph Thorak, *Comradeship,*
1937.

those political expressions in terms of the reification and seriality of the social body, and also of particular relevance to the *Surrealist Street,* was the so-called Pavilion of Elegance, which formed part of France's exhibit and presented an assemblage of faceless mannequins posed in designer fashions and placed on curved pathways amid artificial trees. In each instance, the body ascended to the condition of abstract repeatable unit, hardened into its reified ideological form whether as wax mannequin or steel colossus. Each projected the sign of mass-produced identity, whether in the name of capitalism's society of consumers or the totalitarian community of nationalism.

It is likely that the "internationalism" of the 1938 exhibition was meant to directly counter the hypernationalism of the 1937 world's fair. Answering the "miserable nationalisms of France and Germany, ready again like dogs to tear each other's people to pieces," the surrealists had already declared themselves to be "of all nationalities."[77] The 1938 exhibition, whose checklist included some seventy artists from fourteen nations, demonstrated this and not surprisingly precipitated criticism from conservative members of the French press that the movement was no longer "French" ("Surrealism is no more French than the Hottentot," proclaimed Louis Brunet in *Qu'en pensez-vous?*).[78] If official institutions in France—from its Popular Front government to its art galleries, including the Galerie Beaux-Arts[79]—were alarmingly acceding to nationalist interests, then in its capitulation to the bourgeois salon surrealism would at least render it resolutely international for the length of the exhibition as a form of protest. But could the "assimilation of the irrational" in the name of an antinational individualism counter the irrationality of nationalism itself? Was it possible to oppose to the surrender of the ego by the nationalist subject the displacement of rationality by the surrealist?[80] This strategy in fact

raised the specter of an uncanny mirroring between the two irrational extremes. In fact, in light of Breton's administrative supervision of surrealist aesthetics–for instance, he censored several mannequins proposed for the *Street* in an act of managerial control that certainly ran contrary to the movement's political rhetoric of individual liberation, but was continuous with surrealism's hierarchical organization–it was apparent at least to some that "the group maintains a strange cohesion as if obedient to a mysterious cult."[81] This cohesion crystallized into the frozen condition of the *Street*, indicating the petrification of social relations within the avant-garde group itself even while, in other ways, it fought against it.

A few years before the 1938 exhibition, Bataille had fiercely attacked Breton's model of surrealism, calling it "a disgusting idealistic verbal outpouring that gives free rein to a craving for cheap utopian blindness."[82] Speaking in the name of irrationality, surrealism elevated itself to a higher realm–expressed in the prefix *sur*–consequently sanitizing and domesticating the base elements of the body and the unconscious, according to Bataille. Its "literary revolution," paradoxically enacted from within bourgeois culture, exposed the fact that its transgressions ultimately signaled a masochistic plea for punishment and the reinstatement of authority, rather than represented an authentic challenge to its law. Even if initially hyperbolic and located within the context of a fierce polemic with Breton during the late 1920s, Bataille's accusations would most likely have found further encouragement in the 1938 exhibition. No doubt the image of the ideal surrealist city built within the safe confines of the bourgeois salon would have perfectly exemplified the "utopian blindness" of the movement in Bataille's eyes. Insofar as the *Street* fabricated a dream-world within capitalism's own, it allowed the latter to perpetuate all the more, even while

surrealism's ostensibly radical visions, based on a nostalgia for the revolutionary politics of the street, were perversely marketed. "Given the wrongs of the time, the confused and inert stupefaction of a collective bourgeois existence dedicated to nothing less than the mustiness of the balance sheet, the surrealists find no meaning in an ignoble rout save a pretext for tragic, headlong flight," argued Bataille.[85] Because for him surrealism was merely an antibourgeois facade that in fact represented an instrument of capitalism's interests, even lending bourgeois culture the glow of radical chic, it could be pursued "only as negation." This would require the rejection of idealist abstractions in favor of a materialism "brought back to the subterranean action of economic facts . . . [which] hollows out chambers in a decomposed soil repugnant to the delicate nose of the utopians."[84] Bataille's materialism, however, was not Marxist, but something else entirely: It represented a desire for an untransposable heterogeneity, a base materiality, that he believed the avant-garde had surrendered when it placed its merchandise on the market, which, as the site of exchange-value, would only transform avant-garde transgression into innocuous diversion. "One enters an art dealer's shop as one enters a pharmacist's, in search of nicely presented remedies for unspeakable maladies," sneered Bataille.[85]

Duchamp's installation approximated this crisis of the avant-garde, but not simply by instantiating Bataille's notion of heterogeneity through the untransposable materiality of the grimy coal sacks and its subterranean-seeming space of darkness. It also materialized a double negative that exposed the impossible situation of surrealism in 1938—simultaneously suggesting the irrationalization of the deadening objects of everyday life, and revealing, along the lines of Bataille's critique, how irrationality itself had become an instrument of the everyday administration of capitalism

and nationalism alike.[86] What is remarkable is that Breton, if guided by "utopian blindness," invited Duchamp to design the installation in the first place. If the chief motivation behind the exhibition design was to eliminate signs of the art gallery, to cloak it behind a surrealist phantasmagoria that would produce a space of expatriation of objects freed from utility and subjects liberated from instrumentalized identity, then why turn to Duchamp, whose earlier practice had perhaps more than any other's recognized the unavoidable circumstances of institutionalization? Could it be that, to his credit, Breton was to some degree aware of the crisis of the avant-garde in 1938, of surrealism in particular, and perhaps considered Duchamp's participation as a way of acknowledging those circumstances rather than attempting to escape from them? As Breton would later confess: "Ten years of perspective allow us not only to distinguish what, in the stir created by that exhibition, expresses fairly well the mental climate of 1938, but also to set in their true focus—which, I repeat, is not that of art—certain aspects of its structure intended by us to suggest as widely as possible the zone of agitation which is situated at the confines of the poetic and the real."[87] This "zone of agitation" between the poetic and the real—what I take to be an intensified entwinement of artistic practice and its historical conditions—was exposed by the ultimate failure of the successful transposition of materiality into the marvelous, as Breton had desired. Instead, Duchamp's installation summoned the forces of industrial production, which, rather than hiding the commercial conditions of the gallery, obliterated the possibilities of poetic transcendence. Correlatively, with object relations dominated by a leveling abstraction, social relations followed suit: The installation gave rise to the threatening image of the complete and deathly reification of community, which negated the very possibility of artistic practice. "Both fascism and Communism are bent on regiment-

ing people, robbing them of their individuality," Duchamp observed in 1936. "It is no atmosphere in which creative art can thrive. The zest, the joy, is gone."[88]

The repetition of coal sacks—a reputed 1,200 of them—is particularly significant, for it invokes a sum that exceeds the possibility of perceptual measure. It conjures a cold and anonymous presence of industrial objects from which the individual spectator is radically excluded. Without a secure perceptual position from which to contemplate this order, unable to master it from a distance—for there was none—the visitor was alienated, rendered a mute witness to an uncompassionate register of materiality existing outside the expected range of artistic operations. The absence of vantage point from which to contain the field of repetition—apparent in photographs of the main gallery—paralleled the installation's inner logic of exchangeability, of 1,200 of the same thing, invoking an order of industry wherein difference is equalized. As such, it offered no option for identification, for mirroring back to the spectator an image of his or her individuality. The installation suggested a new paradigm of objectification, one that had only recently appeared and had become a prevailing feature of advanced modernity. As made clear in the roughly contemporaneous analysis of Adorno and Horkheimer, this period was threatened by the wholesale destruction of particularity, dispatched by a "technological rationale" shared by capitalism and fascism: "The technological rationale is the logic of domination," which, they argued, "makes everything in nature repeatable."[89] Sacks of coal figured as the perfect image of such a leveling domination of abstraction, of nature transformed into repeatable, indistinguishable units so completely defined by their functional value that their material existence would be obliterated in the moment of consumption (indeed, only the dust remained).[90] This new industrial order expressed an abstraction

that both engulfed its objects and produced an alienation from them, and this too was manifest in the perceptual estrangement from the coal sacks. "Domination is paid for by the alienation of men from the objects dominated," write Adorno and Horkheimer, articulating the estranged relation between audience and Duchamp's installation.[91] Positioned on the ceiling and as overwhelming in their perceived weight as in their sheer numerical proliferation, the sacks of coal bore down on the audience, as if neutralizing the surrealist fetishization of individuality below and expressing the coming absorption of objects by capitalist production.[92]

It was the "rational enslavement of production" that, for Bataille too, constituted the negation of life which was increasingly defining the 1930s.[93] Within the extremist cultural framework of fascism, which formed an object of sustained analysis for Bataille during this period, production had become the means to achieve social homogeneity from which all useless elements would be excluded. This generalized model of production, also shared by capitalism, was carried out most efficiently by the state, which, "as frame for the entire fascist process of organic organization," functioned to discipline and neutralize whatever was heterogeneous: the low, labor, unproductive expenditure, waste, the unconscious, anything "other."[94] Fascism's "concentration" of homogeneity, Bataille argued, was most visible in its militarization, through which subjects became substitutable units and underwent a process of deindividualization:

Human beings incorporated into the army are but negated elements, negated with a kind of rage (a sadism) manifest in the tone of each command, negated by the parade, by the uniform, and by the geometric regularity of cadenced movements. The chief, insofar as he is impera-

tive, is the incarnation of this violent negation. His intimate nature, the nature of his glory, is constituted by an imperative act that annuls the wretched populace (which constitutes the army) as such (in the same way that the slaughter is annulled as such).[95]

Bataille articulated the social conditions of totalitarianism, defined by the equalization of object relations and social relations. Both were dominated by an industrial law of abstraction and repetition according to which people became things. It was this condition that hovered around and within the 1938 exhibition, whose frame of coal sacks neutralized difference, concentrating homogeneity within its order, presenting a frozen image of complete deindividualization.[96]

The fact that the installation presented a threatening field of catastrophic probability was recognized by many: "unrest, claustrophobia, and a feeling of some terrible disaster hung over the rooms," one commentator wrote.[97] Deathly signs were in fact everywhere, and several photographs of the central exhibition space show the dark field of inert objects that hung overhead and carried mortuary overtones. The physical threat of the coal sacks—from both the perceived danger of collapse and the genuine danger of explosion—increased the alarm. The installation, moreover, manifested an apparently randomized compositional order, presenting one thing after another hanging from the ceiling, which conveyed a dehumanizing repetition that eliminated creative invention, eliciting the "hateful regime" about which Breton had earlier agonized. This depersonalization of artistic procedures, as observed earlier, was completely at odds with the surrealist attempt to humanize the material world through creative process, through the projection of subjective desire onto material objects by an expression of reciprocal love. Conversely, its dehumanized order only

gave rise to further deathly visions, as expressed in critics' observations that the installation created the "suspicious atmosphere of a cavern," as if presenting so many "exhumed remains."[98]

Such an observation allows us to join the logic of industrial repetition with its dehumanizing influence to startling effect: Through a shocking phantasmic transfiguration, the coal sacks came to suggest so many inanimate bodies suspended from the ceiling. But the anthropomorphization was only partial and consequently all the more gruesome—it's as if bodies had been amputated or compressed in bags, either way rendered generic and all the more deindividualized, completely leveled by a dominating abstraction that was literalized through an image of monstrous disfiguration. In this sense, the installation revisited the 1920 Berlin Dada Fair, infamous for John Heartfield and Rudolf Schlichter's suspension above the display area of a mannequin dressed in a German military uniform with the head of a pig called *The Prussian Archangel*. The two provocations, however, are not identical, and their comparison indicates a certain shift of concerns. The earlier Dadaist action linked the reification of the body to a grotesque regression to an animalistic order, which parodied the military subject of the First World War as a beast enslaved to base drives and devoid of higher-level rationality. Conversely, Duchamp's installation carried out a disfiguration of a mass of bodies that came to approximate a series of indistinguishable objects. The installation showed that "In the face of total reification . . . a subject . . . reveals itself to be inanimate, something virtually dead," as Adorno later observed of surrealist art itself.[99] More, the installation envisaged the resulting community of death when all are submitted to the logic of unification, when each member is identical to the next, when social relations appear just as rationalized as those of the object world.[100]

3.12 Marcel Duchamp, installation of
1,200 coal sacks, 1938. © 2006 Artists
Rights Society (ARS), New York/
ADAGP, Paris/Succession Marcel
Duchamp.

Dreams of Industry

3.13 First International Dada
Fair, Otto Burchard Gallery, Berlin,
June 30 to August 25, 1920,
installation view. Bildarchive
Preussische Kulturbesitz.

It was the very abstraction of Duchamp's installation that allowed it to multiply its metaphorical meanings. Not only did the installation suggest the expiration of surrealist creativity in the face of its own institutionalization, and more broadly, of artistic practice in the age of advanced industry; it also proposed a space of conflict between surrealism and non-surrealism, between the attempt to estrange this order of industrial repetition—through montage, alienating experience, perceptual confusion, irrationalization—and the expression of its totalizing impact. In this sense, the installation revealed its own dialectic of enlightenment, wherein the strategies of surrealism reversed into the very rationalizing logic of what they attempted to overcome. The grim reality of the installation, finally, was a result of its materialization of the catastrophic conditions of the industrialization of the body, which was historically adjacent to the deathly formation of communities of total fusion. While these communities carried out the termination of individuality and difference by various means, such as capitalist production, the militarization of the body, and the rationalization of death within the concentration camps, each was a related outcome of the same modern history of industrialization.[101] The fact that the coal sacks came from La Villette—the location of the slaughterhouses on the outskirts of Paris—further exposes this uncanny marriage between industry and death that coincided within the installation, as did the soundtrack of German military marches that played on a gramophone and haunted the gallery, connecting the music of fascist militarism to the vision of regimented bodies presented by the installation. In retrospect, even Breton recognized the installation's doubleness, seeing that there was more to the exhibition than simply "displaying the marvelous," which was the goal of his own original conception: "In 1938 the exposition of surrealism had rendered perceptible one part of the surrealist project regarding the

frontier between poetry and reality. But another aspect revealed the spiritual climate of 1938. The exposition showed with clairvoyance the epoch and its future of shadows, suffocation and dark days."[102]

Totalitarianism, suggests Jean-Luc Nancy, might be better named "immanentism," for what this term identifies in its theoretical specificity—whether in the case of German fascism or Stalinist communism—is the totalization of the self, positioned as "the absolutely detached for-itself, taken as origin and as certainty."[103] It is then the paradox of such an absolute subject placed in relation to others similarly constructed, forming an imaginary state of social fusion intolerant of anything other, different, or outside, that defines totalitarianism. The expression of such fusion has led to the most violent exterminations of difference—both within and outside its totalitarian community—as we have witnessed repeatedly across the globe over the course of the twentieth century. Yet perhaps just as importantly, immanentism means "the suicide of the community that is governed by it," for it brings about the deadening of members through the destruction of their singularity: "man made equal to himself or to God, to nature, and to his own works, is one such community of death—or of the dead."[104] With this insight we can comprehend that surrealism's opposition to immanence—to a world of proliferating objects dominated by usefulness, of subjects fully instrumentalized by capitalism and nationalism—was based on a threat that was real. Its historical crisis presented a genuine state of emergency, whether or not it led to problematic oppositional strategies aimed at overcoming immanence through the projection of irrationality onto the world from within the confines of the bourgeois art gallery—what Bataille derided as surrealism's utopian blindness, what Adorno termed the paradoxical rationalization of difference. Duchamp's installation both acknowledged

this failure and attempted its negation. Yet the negation contained within Duchamp's 1938 installation of coal sacks was not limited to its critical exposure of the unstoppable proliferation of industrial order; in addition, it exerted a force of disruption on what lay beneath that was productive of new possibilities. The installation turned the order of industry upside down, but it left viewers on their feet, encouraging them to counteract the order of things by social means. While visitors confronted their own phantasmic reflection as reified objects of mass production in the morbid field of repetition posed by the coal sacks, this reflection was not necessarily their reality or destiny. Indeed, the installation prompted the creation of experimental social relations in the dark space beneath, suggesting an alternative realm to the deathly collective hanging above. The spatialization of the readymade not only envisioned mass production as the production of mass objects and mass subjects alike, but also gave rise to the formation of a different form of sociality insofar as it defined a collective space of reception through its architectural dimensions. This would be a collective that, even if ephemeral and tentative, would define itself in the shadow of its own deathly reflection.

The crisis of collective formation during the 1930s, precipitated by both the threat of fascism and the invasion of capitalism into all aspects of life, elicited a radical rethinking of community within surrealist circles, and nowhere was this considered more systematically than in Bataille's writing. For Bataille, fascism was pledged to a military order charged with religious zealotry, and, as we have seen, it represented an efficient state of social equalization wherein the heterogeneous was steadily homogenized, bringing "formlessness" into what Bataille termed an "aggressive rigidity."[105] Organized around the mystical idea of race incarnated in the person of the Führer and his followers, fascism's "purified geometric

order" would unleash "a brutality that destroys with rage every-thing it lacks the power to captivate."[106] During the earlier '30s Bataille had argued that fascism still maintained the heteroge-neous within itself—at the level of violence and in the perceived di-vine force embodied in its leadership. The task of the opposition was to appropriate and redirect those energies toward revolution-ary ends, which was the goal of Contre-Attaque. Later, in 1937, fol-lowing the disillusionment with that strategy, he would envision a new objective: the formation of a radical collective constituted through heterogeneity, bound together through death, but without hierarchy. This "headless human community" he opposed to the "Caesarian unity" of fascism.[107]

It is true that fascism possessed an intimate relation to death as well. Yet, for Bataille, this pointed directly to the difference of his own conception of community. Because fascism amounts to a totalizing homogenization of alterity, whereby "it subordinates everything to a particular utility," even death is functionalized.[108] This is clearest in its military existence, which eliminates any pro-found meaning of death outside of function: "if it uses cadavers, it is only to make the living march in a straighter line."[109] However, as death represented the most poignant sign of the heterogeneous, when it was allowed entrance into society—neither negated nor functionalized—it would act as a force of life and socialization, Bataille believed. Indeed it was a sign of the movement of culture toward an increased state of equivalence that it had eliminated any meaningful presence of death.[110] "No one thinks any longer," Bataille continued, "that the reality of a communal life—which is to say, human existence—depends on the sharing of nocturnal terrors and on the kind of ecstatic spasms that spread death."[111] It is the ex-perience of this extreme limit that gives rise to communal life in the first place, for it fosters collective bonding around the finality of

loss, which represents the most forceful encounter with the impossibility of the immanence of the self.[112] Death is inextricable from community. Indeed, for Nancy, "the revelation, through death, of being-together or being-with, and of the crystallization of the community around the death of its members," is based precisely upon the definition of death as "the 'loss' (the impossibility) of their immanence and not around their fusional assumption in some collective hypostasis. . . ."[113] That is to say, through the experience of loss the self opens onto a relation with others, while within the resulting community the self is revealed to be the very limit of sociality, through which no fusion is possible, which serves as the basis of collective belonging.

This is a far-reaching argument, and it suggests a final way to comprehend the difference of Duchamp's installation from other major projects of installation design during the interwar period. It was exactly the goal of so many National Socialist exhibitions, parades, and mass public spectacles during the 1930s to render visible the immanence of its ideal community, its *Volksgemeinschaft*, defined by the principle of identity between self and other. As Eric Michaud writes: "In this way, a situation of pure immanence was elaborated, in which the pleasure of seeing and being seen no longer implied any externality, and in which the assembled people gave birth to its now-visible soul while the Führer beheld the formation, before his very eyes, of the people he had brought into the light of day in accordance with his vision."[114] Although located within a different geopolitical context, the great Soviet exhibition projects, especially the spectacles of the later Stalinist years, were also keyed toward the total social unification of the worker with his works, yearning for an ideal state of immanence for the revolutionary mass subject. For Nancy, "it was the very basis of the communist ideal that ended up appearing most problematic: namely,

human beings defined as producers . . . and fundamentally as producers of their own essence in the form of their labor or their work."[115] Conversely, what Duchamp's installation achieved was a figuring forth of the subject in a way that would uncover collective belonging around the impossibility of immanence. This began with the ceiling of coal sacks, which, in eliminating the sources of light, threw visitors into a dark void that negated the ability of the audience to be perceptually present to itself. In other words, the installation prevented any possibility for the audience to *know* itself and others visually. The subject was revealed as a limit—to itself, to its community—beyond which immanence was unachievable. *Je est un autre,* as the surrealists' Rimbaud had declared, and the installation translated this linguistic estrangement into a sensorial one, wherein the subject's self-knowledge was founded on misrecognition or altogether thwarted. The most provocative aspect of this approach is that it allows us to see that in the 1938 surrealist exhibition it was precisely around the very impossibility of the immanence of the self that an experimental community could and must form.

The coal sack installation set the stage for this negation, initiating the experiential conditions underneath that further dramatized the limits of subject and community. With the ceiling lights eliminated, a zone of darkness prevailed in the central gallery, provoking general confusion and the experience of danger. It limited depth perception, hid visual cues by which to navigate through space, and cloaked visitors in shadows, making them rely on flashlights to find their way around and to see each other. "Needless to say, the flashlights were directed more to people's faces than to the works themselves . . . ," Man Ray recalled.[116] What resulted was an expanse of fragmented bodies within a pulsating shimmer of luminosity. The effect was described as a flickering between social

recognition and shadowy invisibility: "Out of the shadows, familiar faces loomed up and then disappeared," one critic wrote.[117] Moreover, the opacity of social space was intensified by the thickening of air, as the gallery filled with a miasma of coal dust that drifted down from the bags of coal, creating a collective zone of sensation that threatened asphyxiation as much as it corroded the transparency between bodies and space.[118]

The visitor's loss of mastery over the visual field as it retreated into a darkness unavailable to visual inspection was accompanied by the body's objectification by beams of light directed by others in the space. "To see, it is to compare, to judge, to deform, to forget or be forgotten, to be or to disappear," as Paul Eluard defined *voir* in the *Dictionnaire abrégé*. This approximated the specular dialectic operative in the exhibition space that ruined all possibility of an "absolute subject," one constituted by its self-knowledge, by its immanence and fused collective experience.[119] One among a dazzling array of lights, the visitor to the 1938 exhibition experienced a partitioning of the self between subject and object of vision, wherein consciousness, as according to Lacan's analysis of the visual dynamics of subject formation, would emerge from a fundamental misrecognition initiated by the division between the eye and the gaze.[120] "In th[e] principal room, centered by a searchlight that injures the eyes without giving light, the silence will comfort no one. A gramophone launches some shouts, maintaining the alarm," one commentator noted.[121] In other words, the visual conditions dramatized the negation of immanence insofar as the visitor, unable to perceive himself as object of another's vision while momentarily blinded by light, figured as an absence or limit within the optical field. That the installation created a spatialized assemblage, or an architectural collage, as noted earlier, meant that its inhabitant materialized in its rift of fragmentations, as divided within the very

site of the cut, or rather *as* the cut that opens a place of partial subjective negation within the social structure. The visitor's body was as exposed as were the works of art, posed in an exteriority next to others that assembled into a "community of beings" rather than the "being of a community," into a collection of subjects united in what cannot be shared, or sharing what cannot be united.[122] Indeed, such a description amounts to the problematization of the term "community," which corroborates Blanchot's reading of Bataille's notion of social relations: "if the relation of man with man ceases to be that of the Same with the Same, but rather introduces the Other as irreducible and–given the equality between them–always in a situation of dissymmetry in relation to the one looking at that Other, then a completely different relationship imposes itself and imposes another form of society which one would hardly dare call a 'community.'"[123] In other words, the experience of social relations–to invoke a term besides "community"–was constituted by the sharing of absence, meaning the impossibility of the immanence of the individual and collective alike. The opposing condition, figuring forth the community of death, hung from the ceiling.

While Duchamp's installation created an experimental zone of collectivization, this does not propose a space exactly continuous with Breton's notion of "reciprocal love," if that meant the achievement of a communal body, of a collective bound through irrationality, which would come dangerously close to its nationalist counterpart. Rather the exhibition gave experiential definition to a mode of social relations that can only be constituted by the displacement of the self, by its fundamental resistance to complete capture. True to form, Duchamp conspicuously missed the opening. He was already on the train to London, making a telling exodus from the exhibition. While he participated in surrealism's exhibition, he did so ultimately only as an absence within its collective definition.

4 DUCHAMP'S LABYRINTH

IN OCTOBER 1942, two shows opened in New York within one week of each other, both dedicated to the exhibition of surrealism in exile, and both representing key examples of the avant-garde's forays into installation design. "First Papers of Surrealism," organized by André Breton, opened first. The show was held in the lavish ballroom of the Whitelaw Reid mansion on Madison Avenue at 50th street, organized to benefit the Coordinating Council of French Relief Societies, a charitable agency that was located at the same address. Nearly fifty artists participated, drawn from France, Switzerland, Germany, Spain, and the United States, representing the latest work of an internationally organized, but geopolitically displaced, surrealism. The "First Papers" of the exhibition's title announced surrealism's dislocated status by referring to the application papers for U.S. citizenship, which emigrating artists—including Breton, Max Ernst, André Masson, Matta, Duchamp, and others—encountered when they fled to New York between 1940 and 1942. But the most forceful sign of the uprooted context of surrealism was the labyrinthine string installation that dominated the gallery, which was conceived by Marcel Duchamp, who had recently arrived in New York from Marseilles in June of that year. A disorganized web of twine stretched tautly across the walls, display partitions, mural-painted ceiling, and the ornate chandelier of the gallery, producing a surprising barrier that intervened in the display of paintings.[1] As in his coal sack installation for the 1938 surrealist exhibition in Paris, Duchamp successfully transformed the New York gallery into a space of conflict, one that travestied the display of artworks by visually crossing them out, prohibited the
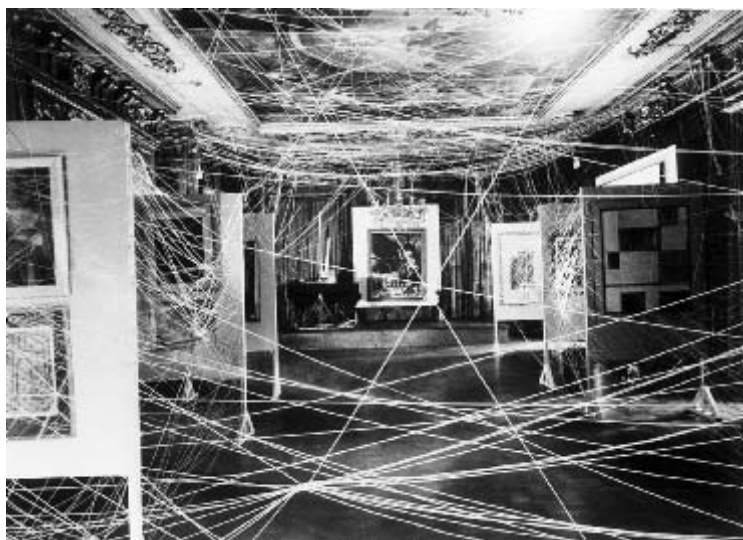
4.1 Marcel Duchamp, installation for First Papers of Surrealism, New York, 1942. Photo John Schiff. Philadelphia Museum of Art: Gift of Jacqueline, Peter, and Paul Matisse in memory of their mother, Alexina Duchamp. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris/Succession Marcel Duchamp.

intimacy of physical access to them, and drew into an explosive proximity the irreverence of such an apparently juvenile gesture with the seriousness of the artistic aspirations of surrealism at this time. "Pictorially [surrealism] gives form to the anatomy of intangible reality—the grain of modern sensibilities, the substance of feelings, of automatic responses and associations, dreams, totem, myth and fable, of the intimate nature of things and the nature of the intimate relations of things," declared Sidney Janis in his introduction to the exhibition published in its catalog.[2] But how could these pursuits be appreciated within the confused space of Duchamp's twine, which barricaded off the very access to artworks?

The second show was the inaugural exhibition of Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century Gallery on 57th street, which displayed her collection of surrealist and abstract art. Guggenheim gave Frederick Kiesler free reign to design the exhibition space. Originally a Romanian though Austrian by choice, Kiesler had practiced architecture in Vienna while connected with the Bauhaus and De Stijl avant-gardes before settling in New York in 1926. His installation for Guggenheim's gallery was more elaborate than that of Duchamp's approach to "First Papers." In contrast to Duchamp's menacing string, Kiesler's design went to extraordinary lengths to *integrate* the artworks into the exhibition's space. In the Surrealist Gallery, frames were removed from paintings in order to enhance the possibilities for the viewer's uninterrupted aesthetic connection to them. Canvases supported by wooden arms floated away from the walls, which were rendered concave in an attempt to transform architecture into a plastic material that would resonate with the human body. Kiesler painted the background and ceiling black and the floor turquoise to darken the environment, and alternating sides of the gallery were mechanically illuminated for two minutes each, divided by a few seconds' pause. In the Abstract

4.2 Frederick Kiesler, Surrealist
Gallery, Art of This Century Gallery,
New York, 1942. Photo: Berenice
Abbott. © Austrian Frederick and
Lillian Kiesler Private Foundation,
Vienna.

Duchamp's Labyrinth

4.3 Frederick Kiesler, Abstract
Gallery, Art of This Century Gallery,
1942. Photo: Berenice Abbott.
© Austrian Frederick and Lillian
Kiesler Private Foundation, Vienna.

Gallery, works by artists such as Kandinsky, Arp, and Mondrian were hung in midair with string. Interactive and mobile, they could be variously tilted and suspended at any height. Unlike Duchamp's installation, Kiesler's design figured as a radical attempt to incorporate viewers into a dynamic space of perceptual shifts and bodily participation, one overcoming the contemplative passivity and physical stasis associated with the traditional gallery display where artworks hung at a standardized sightline that tended to produce repetitive bodily postures and neutralize much of the surrounding area.

The two installations thus appear to have little in common, one being thoroughly disruptive, the other ideally integrative. Commentators, however, have frequently proposed a line of continuity between them that has been all too quickly accepted. It is common to read, for example, that Duchamp's artistic practice offered a model for the "transparent" relation between viewer and artwork that was realized in Kiesler's design. As Cynthia Goodman observes, "One source for the illusion of 'transparency' [in Kiesler's exhibition design] may have been Duchamp, whose concurrent installation of Surrealist art at the Whitelaw Reid mansion suspended the paintings among sixteen miles of string."[5] Ultimately this position derives from Kiesler himself, who frequently stated that Duchamp's work served as a guide for his own interests in what he called "correalism," which defined a state of complete fusion of artistic media, exhibition space, and viewers achieved through interior design. "It is architecture, sculpture and painting in one," Kiesler observed of Duchamp's work, identifying the *Large Glass* in particular as a model for his own practice.[4] But to extrapolate from Kiesler's understanding of Duchamp's past work an art-historical claim that the two installations were at all similar would seem to completely ignore their quickly apparent antithetical forms

and divergent effects. While Kiesler employed string to support paintings, its use minimized any physical separation between painting and viewer, "correlating" the two as much as possible within a continuous space. This was to facilitate the transformation of paintings into what Kiesler termed "eidetic images," as if they had shed their very materiality and hovered as dream images in the viewer's visual field without the intervention of physical support or frame. In fact, Kiesler's string was the answer to his desire to negate any nonaesthetic barriers between viewer and work of art, or rather to render those barriers aesthetic.[5] Conversely, Duchamp's use of string acted as the *maximal* obstacle between the paintings and audience, deployed to an extreme point of disruption. The result shockingly eliminated viewing spaces between partitions and closed down significant areas of the exhibition—the exact opposite of the "transparency" ascribed to his work. Duchamp's intervention was precisely to make the installation as conspicuous as possible as an obstacle between viewer and artwork. While Kiesler made every architectural attempt to promote an uninhibited correlation between the viewer's perception and the aesthetic objects of his or her attention, Duchamp's installation achieved the utter opposite by restricting visual access to the paintings, effectively dislocating artworks from their visible exhibition, and subjecting the gallery space and its visitors to a stubborn and disorienting labyrinth of string.

To accept *any* continuity between the two installations, moreover, appears to be a direct result of the failure to adequately consider these artistic developments within their historical and political conditions. When this broader context is addressed, rather than simply Kiesler's explanations, it quickly becomes clear that these installations were not only opposed, but that each articulated a unique response to the avant-garde's displacement during this tu-

multuous period. Duchamp's installation, far from a flippant work or a simple Dadaist gesture, acted as a sophisticated and telling *negation* of certain nostalgic and reactionary tendencies within surrealism once it entered into exile, which in many ways continued his ambivalent involvement with the avant-garde movement that had been established in his 1938 exhibition design. This becomes even more intelligible, in fact, through a revised comparison with the objectives of Kiesler's designs. Opposed but productively related, the installations represent two very different models through which we can measure the historical antinomies of the avant-garde in its context of exile during World War II. By rendering the exhibition's container biomorphic (particularly within the Surrealist Gallery) and creating a space of psycho-physical fusion between bodies, objects, and space, Kiesler's installation provided a second home for a displaced surrealism, one expressive of its desires for stability at this moment of geographical displacement. On the other hand, Duchamp's installation enforced a profoundly insecure space that resonated with the conditions of dislocation and thoroughly refused any compensatory strategies of display that might give comfort to the émigré. Duchamp's installation, moreover, turned exile into an object of analysis, addressed at the experimental level of the perceptual and ideological mediation between objects, viewers, and their surrounding space, which concerned precisely the issues of placement, location, and contextualization that assumed heightened sensitivity in the context of exile. Considered together, these projects reveal the historical entwinement of the desires for the home and the insistence on a homeless reality, which define two oppositional directions taken by the displaced avant-garde in 1942.

Surrealism's relation to dislocation, as we have seen, was significantly redefined during the years between 1935 and 1942, a period

of tremendous social and political upheaval in Europe that gradually descended into the catastrophe of World War II. By 1935 the surrealist pledge to an aesthetic of psychic displacement, practiced under the sign of the uncanny, had transformed into an oppositional politics that refused the "home" as ideological site of nationalism. The figure of the home, frequently referenced in political rhetoric in France of the 1930s, and later adopted as ideological fodder by the collaborationist Vichy government, had quickly crystallized into as a powerful political symbol. But it was one filled with contradictions: It signified the familial integration of otherwise polarized social classes and regional divisions within a homogeneous spatial and social unit, but it nevertheless existed under a governmental order modeled upon patriarchal authority. Further, it acted as a unifying metaphor for society, referenced in the phrase "national home" or through the terms "motherland" and "fatherland," even though its architecture of private property was economically, spatially, and socially divisive.[6] Identifying a mythical ideal, with nationalism, patriarchy, and capitalism condensed under its roof, the home came to represent a central target of the short-lived surrealist political movement Contre-Attaque, which committed to a radical politics under the Nietzschean banner, "*We Who Are Homeless.*"[7] While the original French, "*Nous Autres Sans-Patrie,*" might be translated as "We Others Without Country," Bataille's critique in fact targets the rhetorical figure of the "home," with all this term implied regarding the structures of familial identity and paternal authority, which Contre-Attaque viewed as continuous with fascism; the translation of *sans-patrie* as "homeless," rather than the more literal option, "without country," is therefore apt. In contrast to the contemporary association of the term homelessness with a victimhood that groups the politically and economically disenfranchised and the involuntarily evicted, Bataille's

invocation defined it as an oppositional ethico-political stance that rejected the generalized tyranny of social discipline and repressive constraint that spread across the interrelated spheres of traditional family organization, national identity, and capitalist socio-economic hierarchies, all of which unfold from the original French etymon *père:*

> A man who acknowledges the homeland, a man who struggles for the family, is a man who commits treason . . . [which] renders the human being a traitor to his fellow men. The family is the foundation of social constraint . . . [and] has served as a model of all social relations based on the authority of bosses and their contempt for their fellow men. Father, homeland, boss [*père, patrie, patron*]: such is the trilogy that serves as the basis of the old patriarchal society and, today, of fascist idiocy.[8]

Despite the historical validity and remarkable prescience of this critical analysis of nationalism, which increased in proportion to the progression of the cataclysmic and genocidal trajectory of fascism, by the late 1930s, Contre-Attaque's "revolution in the streets" had only resulted in unrealized hopes and the group's disbanding. Worse, the disillusionment with engaged political activity was met with the treacherous return of surrealism as an avant-garde movement to the bourgeois salon in the 1938 international exposition in Paris. Soon it lost even that space.

By 1940, the German occupation of France and the gradual emigration of surrealists to New York and other destinations beyond the borders of central Europe only heightened the movement's sense of political disenfranchisement, loss of artistic relevance, and resulting anomie.[9] While homelessness was once defined by

4.4 *Révolution Nationale,* Vichy
political poster, circa 1942.
Bibliothèque documentation
internationale contemporaine,
Musée d'histoire contemporaine.

the psychic uncanny and was later retooled through the politics of antinationalism, it soon came to refer to the lived experience of forced exile, which was something altogether new for the surrealists. As a result, surrealism was pressed to renegotiate its identity in the face of its new existence in the context of exile in the United States, a country long denigrated by the movement, which had simply erased it from its *Surrealist Map of the World* in 1929. Abandoning Europe to its self-destruction and finding refuge in North America was in many ways the last resort of a melancholy defeatism for a movement that had long struggled against nationalism and war. Meanwhile, surrealism's homeless politics remained rhetorical and never entered directly into artistic form. This decision largely owed to the perceived straightjacketing of art under the dictates of the Communist Party, resulting in forms of socialist realism that instrumentalized politics, which Breton had by now long steadfastly refused. "Originality, ever greater originality in art, ought to be sought as the supreme antidote for the poison of the times in which we live," Breton declared in 1942, a stance continuous with his position during the '30s. He continued: "Even though all external freedom were abolished, that inherent, fundamental freedom, which gives its sole authenticity to freedom itself, will be concentrated, more directly than ever before, on works of art, in order to take life by surprise."[10] As a consequence of this position, the surrealists defended artistic freedom and individuality against communism's controlling doctrine and fascism's repressive regime, which resulted in an opposition to any politicized art during the war. This not only turned out to limit surrealism's options; its policy also announced the paradoxical condition of the movement in the early 1940s, which was precariously balanced between its increasingly meaningless declarations of artistic autonomy and the fact of its existential vulnerability in the space of forced exile.[11]

4.5 *Surrealist Map of the World (Le monde au temps des surréalistes),* 1929. Courtesy Special Collections of the Sheridan Libraries of The Johns Hopkins University. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris.

Surrealism, it appeared, could enjoy its freedom only in a situation of profound unfreedom.

Once in New York, Breton regrouped and soon wrote a "Prolegomena to a Third Surrealist Manifesto or Not," published in 1942 in the movement's new journal *VVV*. In this new manifesto the leader of the surrealists in exile was determined to find new avenues of escape from reality, since there were no opportunities for meaningful action within it: "Man must flee the ridiculous web that has been spun around him: so-called present reality with the prospect of a future reality that is hardly better."[12] Once committed to the psychic tension of the uncanny as a representational strategy to rupture the banality of quotidian life under industrialized capitalism, and later dedicated to the politicization of homelessness as an antinational politics within the framework of Contre-Attaque, surrealism, brought to its knees in geopolitical exile, now longed for a *home*. Of course, for Freud, the uncanny—in German *unheimlich,* or unhomely—referenced the home, but did so ultimately as a metaphor for the infantile intimacy with the maternal body, which figured as the primal psychic and somatic domicile, later repressed as a potential source of desire and thus conflict in adult life. "There is a joking saying that 'Love is home-sickness'; and whenever a man dreams of a place or a country and says to himself, while he is still dreaming: 'this place is familiar to me, I've been here before,' we may interpret the place as being his mother's genitals or her body . . . the *unheimlich* is what was once *heimisch,* familiar; the prefix 'un' is the token of repression."[15] It was precisely the troubled and unresolved relationship to the mother's body and the subject's repressed psychic experience that surrealism had earlier opened up at the level of representation, in part to shatter the complacent, oppressive conditions of everyday life, to render irrational the intolerable rationalization of the socio-economic

order, and to unleash transgressive operations upon conventional identities.[14] If surrealists had earlier probed the primordial ties between mother and child, it was done in "nonregressive ways," for they understood that "refinding a lost home is one with facing a deathly end," as Hal Foster has argued.[15] But now it appeared that exterior reality had itself become so disjunctive and unendurable that further estrangement was no longer desirable, which resulted in a renunciation of earlier theoretical positions. Faced with the loss of its geographical home–one that, it is true, the surrealists never overtly supported or celebrated politically–due to the unfathomable devastation of world war, Breton outlined the surprising new directions of surrealism: "V as a vow–and energy–*to return to a habitable world.*"[16] Bretonian surrealism had gradually but grudgingly moved from the street to the salon during the 1930s, which culminated in the paradoxes of the 1938 surrealist exhibition; in New York in 1942, it moved from the salon into *myth,* through which it would pursue its new goal to "return to a habitable world" disallowed by the "so-called present reality" of dislocation.

In his "Prolegomena," Breton asked: "In what measure can we choose or adopt, and *impose,* a myth fostering the society that we judge to be desirable?"[17] His plea corresponded to his invention of what he termed the "Great Transparents," which referred to what Breton imagined as illusive entities that surround human beings but remain invisible to the senses. "Man is perhaps not the center, not the focus of the universe," he reasoned in the most extensive passage on the Great Transparents: "One may go so far as to believe that there exists above him on the animal level beings whose behavior is as alien to him as his own must be to the day fly or the whale. There is nothing that would necessarily prevent such

beings from completely escaping his sensory frame of reference since these beings might avail themselves of a type of camouflage, which no matter how you might imagine it becomes plausible when you consider the theory of form and what has been discovered about mimetic animals."[18]

Breton's idea was clearly one of the more eccentric and short-lived examples of the surrealist commitment to an antirationalist imagination, and it is not difficult to guess the likely motivations for his embrace of myth at this time, problematic as it now appears. The desire was patently unrealistic, for it betrays a naively volunteerist supposition that a new society can simply be engendered, its collective values redefined, merely by the fabrication of a myth consciously invented by a single artist (which was in fact not far from a fascist aspiration).[19] Because one was "powerless to be anything but victim or witness" as Breton explained, the subject enthralled by myth would be released from the responsibility of identifying the real causes of, and solutions to, the catastrophic events that had overtaken the world. The consequent deflection of responsibility obfuscated a real loss of power and agency in the face of events beyond one's control, which is no doubt a reflection of the disenfranchised condition of surrealism in 1942. Mythical constructions simultaneously offered a reassuring outside, a metaphysical zone that inexplicably organized a new world beyond rational comprehension. Because therein agency is consequently reduced "to the condition as modest as the child," the artist, denied the power of acting with any real effect within the external world, would be granted a new romantic purpose: to realize freedom within the terrain of art.[20] This was then given grand purpose in that the turn inward would bring about exterior transformation, the synthesis of which was a longstanding objective of Breton's

surrealism, a position continuous with his earlier pronouncements but newly articulated in the introduction to the inaugural issue of the surrealist journal *VVV:*

> To V, which signifies the View around us, the eye turned towards the external world, the conscious surface, some of us have not ceased to oppose VV, the View inside us, the eye turned towards the interior world and the depths of the unconscious, whence VVV, towards a synthesis, in a third term, of these two Views, the first V with its axis on the Ego and the reality principle, the second VV on the Id and the pleasure principle—the resolution of their contradictions tending only to the continual, systematic enlargement of the field of consciousness.[21]

Completing the regressive implications of this mythological construction, Breton described his myth further by defining the habitat of the Great Transparents as "the realm of the Mothers" (into which it was Tanguy's credit to have "visually penetrated" in several paintings of 1942).[22] It was clear that the underlying goal of Breton's invention of myth was that its synthetic power would ultimately resolve the conflict between surrealism's exile and its desire for a return to a state of habitability.

For Breton's "Prolegomena" in *VVV*, Matta produced a painting, also called *Les grands transparents,* that attempted to indicate the indeterminate existence of these beings through the uncertain relation between abstraction and representation. Balancing between linear scrawls and local washes of color on select areas of the surface, certain points intimate biomorphic and anthropomorphic shapes. The transparency and dispersed location of these forms suggest the diaphanous quality of the implied beings, living

in a state of liminality or, as Breton wrote, "escaping our sensory frame of reference." Further attempts to visualize Breton's ideas were included in the catalog for "First Papers of Surrealism," for which Breton submitted an illustrated essay, entitled "On the Survival of Certain Myths and on Some Other Myths in Growth or Formation,"[23] functioning as a loosely structured picture dictionary. The essay groups a variety of images culled from art history and popular culture that illustrate several contemporary myths: "L'âge d'or" shows the detail of the fountain of life from Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights,* where intricate vegetal forms seem to grow out of one another to create a tall organic body, whose several orifices issue flows of water; "L'homme artificiel" offers a photograph of a nineteenth-century automaton dressed in tuxedo and top hat and sitting before a checkerboard; and "Rimbaud" provides a portrait of the nomadic poet standing on a rocky plateau somewhere in Harrar, Ethiopia. To illustrate his own otherwise unexplained notion of *Les grands transparents,* Breton used a photograph of a nude figure partly disfigured through brulage, entitled *Hidden Fundamental,* by American artist David Hare. Its anatomically intact bottom half seems to explode above the waist into an inchoate cloud of luminosity, suggesting a site of transcendence, a passage from a bodily existence to a metaphysical zone of energy and light released from physical containment.

Perhaps as an attempt to complicate and expand his argument in the "Prolegomena" Breton referred to Roger Caillois' "theory of form" based on his study of mimetic animals, "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," published in 1935 in the surrealist journal *Minotaure.* Caillois had examined the conspicuous phenomenon of insectoid mimicry, considering in particular how and why certain insects perform a "homomorphic" assimilation (the adoption of one like form to another) to their surrounding space.[24] According
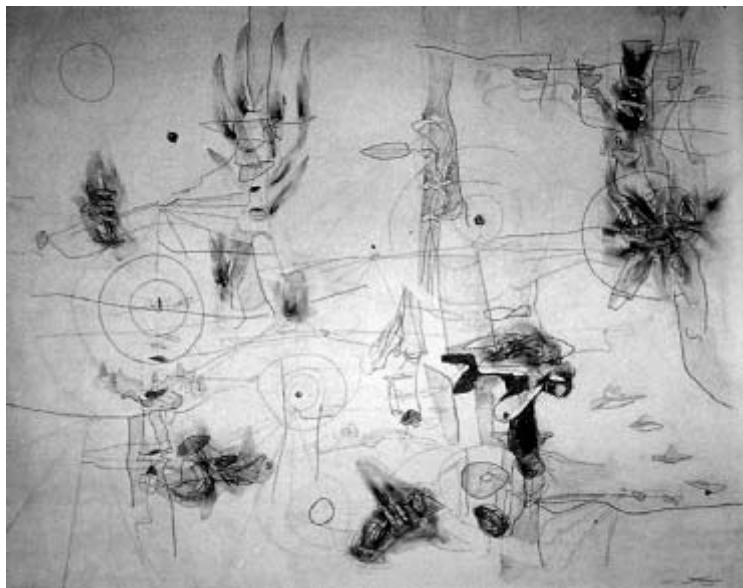
4.6 Matta, *Les grands transparents,*
1942 as reproduced in *VVV.* Courtesy
Special Collections of the Sheridan
Libraries of The Johns Hopkins
University. © 2006 Artists Rights
Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP,
Paris.

4.7 David Hare, *Les grands transparents* in First Papers of Surrealism, 1942. Courtesy Special Collections of the Sheridan Libraries of The Johns Hopkins University.

to Caillois, homomorphy not only identifies a logic of "reciprocal topography," materializing a "mutual organization" between two surfaces, but describes a state of radical loss, according to which the body of the insect seems to disappear in an act of "detumescence." Mimicry, in other words, dispossess being of its physical location to the degree that one "no longer knows where to place itself." This "depersonalization by assimilation to space," corresponds to a sudden materialization where "the body separates from its thought." It results in what Caillois termed "legendary psychaesthenia" in which "the feeling of personality, considered as the organism's feeling of distinction from its surroundings, of the connection between consciousness and a particular point of space" somehow *fails*.[25] Such a theory, however appealing it may have been to Breton, was in fact quite antithetical to the comforting space of a mythical *Heimlichkeit* and habitability he desired. Instead of representing an inquiry into the deindividualizing generalization of space through psychic loss, Breton's myth anthropomorphized and even deified space. Interestingly, Caillois also considered the case of the intrauterine nostalgia of mimicry—the point of closest connection to Breton's ideas—but quickly dismissed it as paradoxical for reasons that identify a further problem with Breton's conceptualization: "to employ a psychoanalytic vocabulary and speak of reintegration with original insensibility and prenatal unconsciousness," Caillois explained, produces "a contradiction in terms" precisely because "the *generalization of space*" comes "at the expense of the individual."[26]

The larger risk of Breton's new mythology, however, was that it performed an *escape* from the socio-political, rather than a complicating development within it. The recent claims of Breton—the equation of the Great Transparents with the "realm of the mothers," the desired reconciliation of psychic antagonism represented

by the proposed synthesis of the reality principle and the pleasure principle, and the negation of borders between interior and exterior perception – were nothing less than regressive. The danger was that such regression came close to the desires of fascism. Some commentators from the left at the time, such as Ernst Bloch, had in fact called for the revolutionary appropriation of the regressive desires and forces of the atavistic, which fascism had itself instrumentalized, in order to redirect them *against* fascism and capitalism.[27] Conversely, Breton's myth, and the aesthetic constructions it encouraged, retreated to a homely space that was effectively postrevolutionary, or imagined to be revolutionary only within its own internal system. Surrealism had served the revolution already to failed ends; now was the time to rediscover a space of security away from the actual social and political systems of catastrophic reality.

Not surprisingly, contemporary audiences were immediately suspicious of the new directions of surrealism, particularly against the backdrop of fascism and the surrounding events of World War II. The critical response of Meyer Schapiro to the first installment of *VVV* is exemplary: "This is the issue on which surrealism may well fall; it is an assault on the *construction de l'homme.*"[28] Harold Rosenberg flatly replied that Breton's "desire for a new myth is reactionary." Recalling the politics of Contre-Attaque's antinationalism, Rosenberg advocated the "the painful negation of myths, and of the myth-seeds, Church, Fatherland, Family," especially since "the production of myths, which disintegrate humanity into warring cults, has become the chief occupation of the world's most brilliant talents, such as Goebbels, Mussolini, and thousands of editors, advertising men, and information specialists."[29]

Finally, in perhaps the most far-reaching examination of myth of its day, *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* exiled authors Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer found, contra Breton, that far from existing

without myth, society had become engulfed by it, which was precisely the problem. For them, however, fascism was only its most barbaric manifestation. Rather than revolutionize myth against fascism, as in Bloch's approach, or negate fascist mythology with enlightenment science, as in liberal humanism's response, the goal of Adorno and Horkheimer was to uncover how modernity itself had reverted into myth. For them, it was urgent to reveal how the enlightenment's myth of positivism and instrumental reason had come to enforce a deadly forgetfulness regarding history and to promote the idolization of capitalism through increasingly powerful means of control and manipulation. Were Adorno and Horkheimer to read Breton's call for a "new myth," they would likely have been profoundly skeptical, viewing it as the idealist creation of a compensatory shield against the traumas of exile and war, as the reflection of an impossible attempt to build an imaginary home in an age of homelessness that was itself an acritical mimicry of fascism. The Great Transparents, in other words, serves as a telling mirror of Breton's own fears and subjective needs: "Enlightenment has always taken the basic principle of myth to be anthropomorphism, the projection onto nature of the subjective. In this view, the supernatural, spirits and demons, are mirror images of men who allow themselves to be frightened by natural phenomena. Consequently the many mythic figures can all be brought to a common denominator, and reduced to the human subject."[30]

If surrealism in exile longed to return to a "habitable world" through its mythological construction, then this was accompanied by a corresponding shift in its exhibition practice that would return surrealist objects to a habitable space. It was the job of Frederick Kiesler to facilitate this passage in his installation design for Guggenheim's Art of This Century Gallery. In many ways, the choice of

Kiesler as exhibition designer confirmed surrealism's new directions. Increasingly identified with surrealism and its growing nostalgia for the home during the early 1940s, Kiesler, also a displaced person, reiterated Breton's agenda: "The artist's work stands forth as a vital entity in a spatial whole, and art stands forth as a vital link in the structure of a new myth."[51] Kiesler's "correalism" sought to manifest this myth in the aesthetic unity between artwork, space, and audience, which would propose its own kind of metaphysical idealism: that of pure presence and absolute integration. The installation pursued this objective by attempting to eliminate any mediation between artworks, audience, and surrounding architecture, which explains the removal of frames from paintings and the turn toward string as a support mechanism for canvases, for it would introduce an aesthetic zone within the viewer's own physical area and away from the separate wall, enabling the intimate connection of viewer and artwork. Furthermore, the designs of the spaces corresponded to the general artistic style of the displayed work, reconciling art objects and architectural context. The walls of the Surrealist Gallery were hollowed out, producing a curvature that mimicked the biomorphic compositional forms of paintings and sculptures, whereas the works of the Abstract Gallery, mostly of a geometric abstraction, were supported by cords that formed resonating geometric shapes. Just as the artwork was positioned to correlate ideally with perception—paintings were hung at different levels corresponding to dynamic viewing perspectives—so too the gallery arena would further assimilate visitors by offering organically shaped furniture, employing surfaces that would map directly onto the contours of the human body.

Kiesler was explicit about his objectives. Turning to a prelapsarian conception of language and perception based in unspecified primitivist notions of the prehistoric past, he defined and justified

the aims of the Guggenheim installation. It was meant "to break down the physical and mental barriers which separate people from the art they live with, working toward a unity of vision and fact as prevailed in primitive times."[32] He elaborated: "Primitive man knew no separate worlds of vision and of fact. He knew one world in which both were continually present within the pattern of everyday experience. And when he carved and painted the walls of his cave or the side of a cliff, no frames or borders cut off his works of art from space or life—the same space, the same life that flowed around his animals, his demons and himself."[33] The unity of "vision and reality" that Kiesler sought was nothing less than a magical and impossible reversion to a prelinguistic condition where the difference between sign and referent—made obvious by the frame, which separates picture from reality—would dissolve. Kiesler proposed to achieve this unity through the simultaneous and paradoxical dissolution and aesthetic sublation of the frame:

> Today, the framed painting on the wall has become a decorative cipher without life and meaning. . . . Its frame is at once symbol and agent of an artificial duality of "vision" and "reality," or "image" and "environment," a plastic barrier across which man looks from the world he inhabits to the alien world in which the work of art has its being. That barrier must be dissolved: the frame, today reduced to an arbitrary rigidity, must regain its architectural, spatial significance.[34]

The ultimate goal of Kiesler's architectural practice was that the reunified plenitude of a totalized aesthetic space would efface the experience of barriers and dislocations, which clearly reverberated with the war-torn world of 1942 and the experience of

exile. In this regard, his installation designs concretized Breton's demand for a myth to restore habitability by resolving contradictions between objective and subjective forms of experience, and it did so by constructing an installation design that would promote the illusion of the integration of aesthetic zone and exhibition space. The continual focus on developing a "livable home," a "habitable space," which one encounters repeatedly in Kiesler's writings, clearly exposes the homeless anxiety that marks his designs. In "Cultural Nomads," published some years later, he specified the angst of dislocation that motivated the regressive character of his work: "Moving from one apartment to another, from one town to another, or across borders into different lands. . . . We live an emergency life, a deadline life. . . . The core of the civilized nomad's life . . . is hollow, and we gobble down anything to fill the emptiness."[35]

Kiesler's installation design, more specifically, "filled the emptiness" of homelessness through the construction of an aesthetic space redolent of a fantasy of the psychic and maternal home, giving expression to Breton's mythical "realm of the Mothers." The Surrealist Gallery was ultimately conceived as a *heimlich* interior of a body: concave walls suggested a uterine form; protruding organs held up the "eidetic images" of paintings; and the lighting was designed to "pulsate like your blood."[36] This homely architecture was a long-term pursuit of the architect, exemplified in several of his spheroid architectural models from the 1950s, including *Endless House* (1950), and extending back to Kiesler's earlier domestic designs produced after he moved to the United States in 1926 (he gained citizenship in 1936). His *Space House,* developed in the U.S. in 1933, would be a "one-space-unit," employing the spherical shape, free plan, and the elimination of interior walls as structural supports. The "shell-monolith" container would overcome the divisive partitioning of the house into "roof, floor, wall or column,"

generating an architectural unity that suggested even then the intrauterine yearnings that would later characterize his work. As he explained: "We will create a man-made cosmos around us in which we will not have to depend on decorations to render our homes livable, but which will give us an awareness of belonging to a space centre and of the ever-present cosmic forces which feed us continuously, nourish us physically, emotionally, and spiritually, without end."[57] The Guggenheim installation design created exactly such a "space centre," wherein the emphasis on biomorphic shapes and the attempt to fuse the viewer with an egglike or uterine surrounding betrayed the desires for spatial, linguistic, and psychic plenitude that correlated with surrealism in exile. This represented one response to the experience of geopolitical deracination: to regress to a primordial intrauterine home. With Kiesler's installation design, a psycho-aesthetic homeliness answered a geopolitical homelessness, compensating for the contradictions in surrealism's identity: politically antinationalist, surrealism was insufferably displaced from its geographical home; revolutionary, it was excluded from the political arena; anticapitalist, its only recourse was the bourgeois salon; and desperate for social and cultural relevancy, it was reduced to the silence of its artistic imagination.

Kiesler's language in fact replays a certain strain in surrealist rhetoric regarding the fantasy of an intrauterine architecture, which reads as hyperbolically avant-gardist as it was flamboyantly regressive, especially among its expatriate members. Similar spatial fantasies were expressed just a few years earlier by Matta, a displaced Chilean who lived in Paris before escaping to New York in 1939. Before joining the surrealists and becoming a painter, Matta had trained under Corbusier, whose rationalist architecture according to which the home existed as a "machine for living" Matta soon came to criticize in favor of an organically conceived space:

4.8 Frederick Kiesler, *Endless House*,
1950. © Austrian Frederick and
Lillian Kiesler Private Foundation,
Vienna.

Duchamp's Labyrinth

"Man yearns for the obscure thrusts of his beginning, which enclosed him in humid walls where the blood beats near the eye with the sound of the mother," he explained in 1938. "We need walls like damp sheets which lose their shapes and wed our psychological fears."[58] Tristan Tzara, displaced from Romania and whose adopted name means "sad in country," made similar appeals in 1933, all the more conspicuous because they followed his involvement in the resolutely expatriate community of Zurich Dada, notorious for its vociferous attacks on nationalism and homely comfort during World War I. For him, the spherical morphology of primitive designs had been dislodged by the "castrative aesthetics" of modern architecture, which had prepared the ground for the "self-aggressiveness that characterizes modern times." Like Matta, he too extolled a return to the "intrauterine life," seeking "prenatal comfort" in the primordial cavities of the earliest house designs, such as the Eskimo yurt, the grotto, and the tent.[59]

During the advancing 1930s, however, such homely longings had turned dangerously problematic; for the regression driving its spatial model, once merely a utopian avant-garde aim, was now shared with the aspirations of fascism. If the home as rhetorical figure had already been co-opted by nationalist discourse as a privileged mytheme, then so had the fantasy of fusion, which was criticized at the time by theorists such as Jacques Lacan, an associate of surrealism during the '30s. The fantasy of an intrauterine architecture, Lacan noted, suggested the utopian longing for the spatial resolution of the anxiety of psychic division and physical fragmentation—an illusory wish that characterized nationalism's irrational mass apeal. In a 1938 article on "Family Complexes," Lacan related the "the desire of the larva" to fascist attempts to return to an imaginary physical habitat. Reacting to a perceived paranoid threat of bodily and psychic fragmentation, the subject compensates
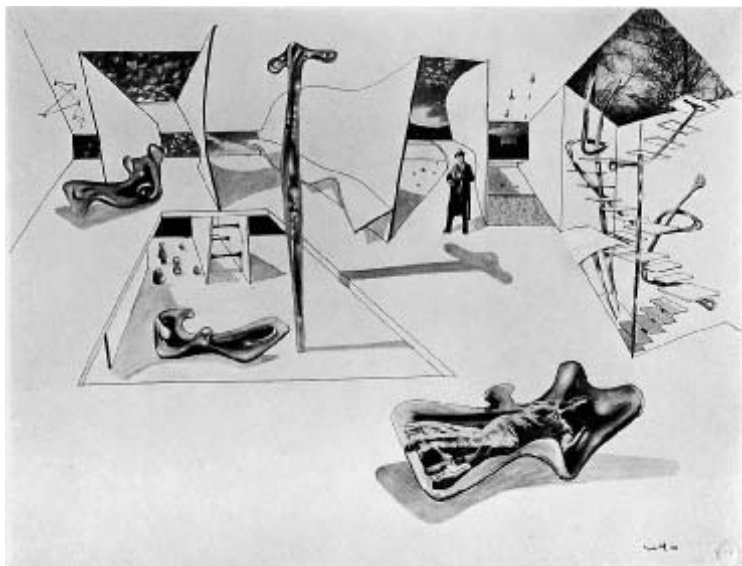
4.9 Matta, illustration, *Mathématique sensible – architecture du temps,* 1938. Courtesy Special Collections of the Sheridan Libraries of The Johns Hopkins University. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ ADAGP, Paris.

through fantasies of fusion, absorptive architectural spaces, and all-encompassing spectacles, a logic that prefigured the dynamic later elaborated in Lacan's more famous essays, including "Mirror Stage" and its counterpart, "Aggressivity in Psychoanalysis."[40] The "prenatal habitat," less a literal architecture than a matrix of regressive desires, held the myth of "the perfect assimilation of everything into a being," which approximated the surrealist desire for habitability. Within this matrix, Lacan noted, "will be recognized the nostalgias of humanity: the metaphysical mirage of universal harmony; the mystical abyss of affective fusion; the social utopia of totalitarian tutelage—all resulting from the fear of a paradise lost before birth and from the most obscure aspirations for death."[41] Such nostalgias were not far from those that motivated Kiesler to eliminate the frame in the name of a mythological *Heimlichkeit*, which approached fascist desires even though it was carried out in an avant-garde context overtly antithetical to fascism. The problem was that Kiesler found no articulate way to redirect his practice *against* fascism. Framelessness did not open onto the socio-political; rather, it disavowed it in order to compensate for the loss engendered by dislocation.[42]

While Kiesler facilitated surrealism's mythologization through a fantasy of framelessness achieved through exhibition design, one originating in and compensating for the fragmentary experience of dislocation, Duchamp's installation for "First Papers" forcefully restored the frame, hindering visual access to the displayed paintings and manifesting a layer of ineluctable mediation between viewer and artwork. Instead of undertaking a facilitating role for the viewing of art—the traditional function of exhibition design ("exhibition" coming from the fifteenth century Latin *exibere* "to show, display," originating in *ex-* "out" + *habere* "to hold")—and

rather than "correlating" viewer and artwork to the ideal point of their mutual fusion, Duchamp's string produced a recalcitrant barrier between viewers, objects, and space that exacerbated the fragmentation and experience of dislocation which formed the larger social and political framing condition of the exhibition. The string, spanning the gallery in all directions without order or system, produced an environment that countered any sense of comfort or reassurance, regressive unity or homeliness. If Kiesler's exhibition design for the Art of This Century Gallery, as we have seen, formed a compensatory reaction to the historical reality of geopolitical displacement, then how, more specifically, did Duchamp's installation function in relation to the conditions of exile? Given its physical, aggressive relation to the surrealist exhibition, which it fully obscured, how did it respond to the movement's recent developments, and how might its disruptive intervention come to allegorize the dislocated avant-garde at this historical moment?

The most provocative approach to the installation to date, provocative precisely because it differentiates it from the problematic directions of surrealism in 1942 rather than collapses Duchamp's participation into a generalized surrealist aesthetic, has been suggested by Benjamin Buchloh. Arguing that Duchamp's installation was a direct challenge to the institutionalization of surrealism, he contends that the web of twine functioned as an attack on the "quasi-religious veneration of [its] acculturation," as well as a critical assault on the continued but deeply compromised role of painting within its practice.[45] This is certainly an accurate description of the conflict between Duchamp's installation and the artwork in the exhibition, not only in terms of the spatial antagonism that dominated the gallery but also in view of the controversy that ensued between Duchamp and other participants in the show, particularly the painters. During 1942, when "First Papers" was on

display, Duchamp in fact spoke more vociferously than ever about his contempt for painting, criticizing precisely its quasi-religious veneration: "I don't believe in the sacred mission of the painter. My attitude toward art is that of an atheist toward religion. I would rather be shot, kill myself, or kill somebody else, than paint again."[44] And he is reported to have claimed that his string installation was "intended" to "combat the background," where "the background"— remaining unspecified—ambiguously suggests both the opulent architectural interior of the Ried mansion, symbolizing a space of privilege and upper-class status, and the surrealist paintings that the string obscured.[45] Duchamp later recalled that he had to "fight . . . some painters [who] were actually disgusted with the idea of having their paintings in back of lines like that, [because they] thought nobody would see their paintings."[46] It is easy to understand their concern, for the installation's restriction of viewing areas meant that the close analysis of artwork, permitting intimate examination, would be impossible. The installation denied retinal pleasures, enforcing a collective distance from the artwork that was a translation of Duchamp's vaunted aesthetic indifference. Not surprisingly, critics recognized the brutality of the assault as well, with many reviews complaining about the obscuring of the paintings (including some of the same artists—such as George Bellows— who had earlier supported the censorship of the *Fountain* at the Independents exhibition back in 1917).[47] Clement Greenberg likely had Duchamp's design in mind when he disparaged surrealism as an "anti-institutional, anti-formal, anti-aesthetic nihilism . . . inherited from Dada with all the artificial nonsense."[48] For Duchamp, this would only be a sign of its success.

Because contemporaneous criticism and art-historical scholarship have largely taken Duchamp's design to be an enactment of the surrealist "marvelous," the question of how Duchamp's con-

struction displaced surrealist practice from developments internal to the movement, specifically the "return to a habitable world" concurrently undertaken in Breton's myth and in Kiesler's exhibition design, has consequently gone completely unconsidered. As Duchamp later claimed, his long-standing project was committed to "de-deifying everything by more materialistic thoughts," and this resistance to religion and metaphysics represents the very opposite of Kiesler's fantasy of framelessness.[49] Instead of providing an installation design that would act as an insulating mythological womb to protect against the reality of displacement by denying it completely, as Kiesler's project had done, Duchamp's installation in fact forced artists to experience the immediacy of displacement as an irrepressible spatial environment. This, in effect, introduced a political framework to a display of art intent on escaping it, one that announced the problematization if not the impossibility of artistic practice within the context of world war.

By the late 1930s, it was clear to Duchamp that under the existing political conditions of totalitarianism that were gradually descending upon Europe, which brought with them equally paralyzing reactions of nationalization within democratic nations, artistic practice, and specifically painting, needed to confront the impossibility of its historical continuity: "Painting is now dedicated the world over to propaganda—to subject matter. . . . It is as true in Europe as in America—even more so—that people's minds are concentrated on politics, including the artists. Both Fascism and Communism are bent on regimenting people, robbing them of their individuality. It is no atmosphere in which creative art can thrive."[50] This acknowledgment of the necessity of a rupture in artistic practice, in fact, parallels Adorno's critical discussion of surrealism shortly after the war. In addition to arguing along the lines suggested by Duchamp that the regimentation of subjectivity within

fascism and communism had effectively eliminated the viability of uninterrupted artistic practice, Adorno suggested that the devastation and brutality of warfare had eclipsed the significance of the avant-garde's transgressions: with "the European catastrophe, the Surrealist shocks lost their force."[51] In other words, what role could such artistic gestures play in a traumatic arena of world war that rendered those aesthetic shock effects insignificant by comparison? The only function of such a practice was to promote the semblance of its uninterrupted historical continuity, which Adorno clearly discerned in the surrealist movement at this time: "the dialectical images of Surrealism are images of a dialectic of subjective freedom in a situation of objective unfreedom."[52] As we have seen, surrealism's experience of its increasing political impotence was met with forms of aesthetic mythologization, producing the mirage of subjective homeliness in a situation of geopolitical homelessness, which was performed in Kiesler's installation design. It was not only against such an aesthetic fantasy that Duchamp's installation was directed, but also against the very avant-garde strategy of shock on which it must be read. Rather than existing as a form of provocation bent on reinstalling an avant-garde tradition, one going back to Dada (as Greenberg contended), and thereby reasserting an uninterrupted faith in artistic practice, Duchamp's installation figured as a negation of art and of the very continuity of an avant-garde in the period of war. Adorno's incisive reading only corroborates Duchamp's own misgivings about the ongoing possibility of artistic practice in the age of fascism.

Adorno's critique of surrealism formed part of a larger distrust of the comfortable and self-satisfied relation to one's environment, which he came to reject in the name of a necessary ethics of exile. "Today we should have to add: *it is part of morality not to be at home in one's home,*" Adorno claimed, astonishingly.[55] The desire to

be *at home*, safe, sheltered, and integrated within the larger surroundings, was viewed, as we have seen in the earlier analysis of Lacan, as an irresponsible regression and a dangerous political impulse representing a "betrayal of knowledge." This betrayal–of the consciousness of the ethical impossibility of comfort in the midst of fascist destruction–served both political and psychic needs, subscribing to the willful rejection of the awareness of reality and the fact of displacement. Because the conceptual basis of the home had become suffused by fascism–whose nationalism defined itself through a mythology of psycho-socio-architectural fusion represented by the figure of the home–any architectural project based upon a similarly desired fusion must of necessity become suspect as a utopian project and critiqued as an ultimate form of irresponsibility. And it is because of this determination of the homely as a fascist aesthetic and political goal that the fragmentary space of Duchamp's installation becomes politically meaningful and subversive. But what does it mean to adopt a morality of homelessness, an ethics of exile? Adorno argues that it involves the ethical rejection of all those forms of comfort based upon a refusal of the knowledge of social and political reality. "If art is to remain faithful to its concept, it must pass over into anti-art, or it must develop a sense of self-doubt which is born of the moral gap between its continued existence and mankind's catastrophes, past and future," Adorno argued.[54] This imperative means to commit to a critical consciousness of the conditions of how one relates to space, and how art and architecture are situated within the field of social, political, and economic inscription. Above all, Adorno suggests, it entails the steadfast rejection of the desire for the home as it had come to function within fascism and capitalism alike.

Duchamp's installation expresses its own ethics of exile, which began with its intervention into the surrealists' movement toward

a mythical habitability in the space of exile. Duchamp's installation accomplished this subversion by constructing a disorienting frame, which prohibited any pretensions regarding the possibility of an unmediated unity between viewers and art objects, or between art objects and their space of exhibition. In exploring the installation as a frame, it is important to recognize that it shares in the logic of the readymade. The string was purchased by Duchamp, who explained in an interview: "I had a friend, even almost a relative, in Boston who is an accountant in a cordage place for Boston Harbor. And he sold me that 16 miles of string–it was a regular business."[55] Duchamp's string would avoid any connection to the refined materials of fine arts and instead encourage an aesthetic indifference that characterized his approach to commercial objects transformed into readymades: "Vintage cobweb? Indeed not!"[56] The string would not hide the business of art, but would announce its entanglement through both its origins as a commercial product and the metonymic connection to the architectural fact of the gallery set up by the installation. While the initial readymade was intimately connected to and in part constituted by its institutional framework–insofar as it was precisely the change in physical context that aided in granting the readymade its meaning and significance–soon after its invention Duchamp advanced the readymade *as* a kind of frame. We can trace this development in the first few decades after the initial inauguration of the readymade aesthetic in the early 1910s. String first appeared in Duchamp's work as a compositional element in *Chocolate Grinder* (1914), where it was attached directly to the face of the canvas and used to represent the divisions between the slats of the three barrels that made up the grinding machine. As such it introduced a crisis within the pictorial object between the handmade and the readymade, between artisanal

and commercial modes of production, which was an outgrowth of the heterogeneous materials of cubist collage (such as Picasso's seminal *Still Life with Chair Caning* of 1912), and which would be resolved ultimately through the eclipse of the hand with the development of the mass-produced commodity object as readymade. Isolated and existing outside of illusionistic functions, readymade string was employed again in *Three Standard Stoppages* (1913–14), in which three pieces, each a meter long, were dropped on the ground from a meter height, attached to three Plexiglas supports, and enclosed in a croquet box. This piece already begins to emphasize the materiality and discursive conditions of its own frame, not only through its wooden container, which became an integral part of the art object, rather than merely its supplement, but also by referencing the systems of mathematical measurement, the commercial circulation of artworks, and commodified leisure within which it partly operates.

Soon, Duchamp's use of string moved more fully from compositional element and readymade material to a frame in its own right in *With Hidden Noise* of 1916, introduced earlier in our discussion. Composed out of a ball of twine enclosed in two copper plates, screwed together, *With Hidden Noise* concealed a secret object, noisy when shaken, unknown to Duchamp and placed there by Walter Arensberg. In addition to serving as material container, the string also intimates the linguistic and commercial frameworks of the work of art, as David Joselit has suggested. Like so many lines of text rolled up into a ball, the string seems to extend the phrases written on the copper plates, each inscribed with one of Duchamp's word games in which missing letters have to be borrowed from the terms above or below. Moreover, its play of text, which Duchamp compared to an old neon sign with some of its

letters burned out, mimics the commercial network in which its language is situated, which further alludes to the marketplace that is itself an inevitable terminus of artistic practice.[57]

String would also be employed to highlight the institutional framework of the site of exhibition, not only in the work of Duchamp but also in that of Francis Picabia. Picabia's 1920–21 *Danse de Saint-Guy* presented a readymade frame for an easel painting, which was presented empty except for a few strands of string stretched within it that suspended small paper cards with handwritten text. Picabia insisted that this object be hung away from the wall to announce its transparency, or rather to stress the mediation of the frame in space, similar to his "stage designs" at the Manifestation Dada of March 27, 1920, where he reportedly stretched cords across the stage between performers and audience ostensibly to disrupt the achievement of theatrical illusion.[58] This development in Picabia's practice was forecasted by Duchamp's own materialization of the figurative lines and network of cracks within the *Large Glass*. The effect disturbs the ability to peer through the glass's otherwise transparent surface and, in contrast to Kiesler's reading of Duchamp's work, fosters a sensitivity to the relation of nonidentity between the artwork and its physical context of exhibition that is visibly manifested within the surface. Insofar as its transparent form establishes a contingency upon an ever-changing context, and was developed in a period of itinerant travel during the First World War, Picabia's *Danse* also recalls Duchamp's *Sculpture for Traveling* of 1918, which Duchamp carried with him to Buenos Aires during his own flight from nationalism in Europe and America. Like Duchamp's project, it stresses collapsibility, portability, and contextual determination, thereby placing the readymade in a relationship with the experiential conditions of geopolitical displacement. Yet Picabia's construction advanced the readymade

toward an even more specific internalization of institutional conventions within its very structure. Just as *Danse de Saint-Guy* displays its miniature paper pictures within its frame—which are in fact written statements, proposing a further relation between itself and language—the construction mimics the common convention of hanging paintings by string or wire from wall moldings, and consequently highlights the readymade framework of the exhibition context, a relation which Duchamp's 1942 installation design later takes up and confounds.

These artworks, especially *Danse de Saint-Guy,* participated in an early assault on the idealism of art by substituting a frame in its very place. By negating the interior picture's visual status in favor of its supplemental conditions, they thereby challenged the traditional artistic assumptions regarding the virtual plenitude of the interior aesthetic zone and the supposed immanence of its meaning and value, and redirected the focus upon its institutional determination and situational contingency. They also indicated that frames exist as an unavoidable—readymade—mediation in the reception of works of art, which would find its most developed articulation in Duchamp's *Boîte-en-valise,* in which the fact of decontextualization—of an unending reframing—came to allegorize the condition of exile in which modern subjectivity as well as its art objects found themselves irrevocably situated.

The installation for "First Papers" continued this trajectory by expanding the string to architectural parameters. Prefigured by those earlier interrogations of the institutional dependency of artwork, Duchamp's installation materialized a framing condition that, like the coal sacks in his earlier design for the 1938 surrealist exhibition, acted on the space around it by interrupting the access to and contemplation of surrealist paintings. In fact, through the domination of that space, the 1942 installation enforced a set of
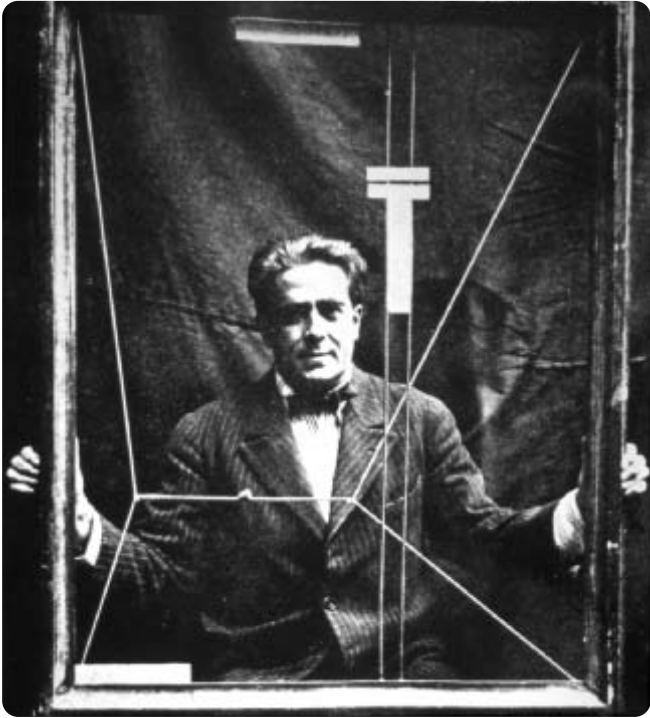
4.10 Francis Picabia holding *La
Danse de Saint-Guy,* 1920–21. © 2006
Artists Rights Society (ARS), New
York/ADAGP, Paris.

disorienting conditions on the gallery space that were summarized by the word "labyrinth" by nearly every review of the exhibition, an approach I too will adopt. It may be argued that this move points up a contradiction in the framework of my argument that Duchamp's installation represented a historically specific negation of surrealism; for if it acted as a labyrinth, then it drew on a quintessential surrealist trope. The labyrinth and its mythical inhabitant, the Minotaur, had variously served as subjects of surrealist work throughout the 1930s and early 1940s. *Minotaur*, of course, named a surrealist journal from 1933 to 1939, and various covers showing different versions of Minotaurs and labyrinths were designed by many artists during this time, including Duchamp.[59]

But while the labyrinth dominated the surrealist imagination during the '30s, its meaning or use was—appropriately—no more fixed than was that of surrealism. And nothing suggests that reading Duchamp's installation as labyrinthine entails the affirmation of surrealist aesthetics in general or even its specific directions in 1942, despite the fact that most commentators have viewed the installation as continuous with the surrealist figure of the labyrinth and consequently overlooked the possibility that the installation *challenged* surrealism at the same time, or framed it in a new way. One of the first was Marcel Jean, who wrote of the installation as "an immense 'spider's web' made of miles of white twine stretched across the rooms, an aerial labyrinth criss-crossing at every angle." William Rubin followed suit: "Duchamp designed the installation, which consisted of a mile of string, an Ariadne's thread beyond which the pictures hung like secrets at the heart of a labyrinth."[60] This interpretation, however, which has rarely been developed further, depends upon a number of problematic comparisons and underlying assumptions. Most surprising is the argument that connects Duchamp's installation to painting on the basis of an

ostensibly shared interest in perspectival construction.[61] This reading is striking for how it overlooks the ways in which Duchamp's string, hung in its insistently haphazard manner, confused spatial relationships, created its own intricately antisystematic network, and existed beyond and against any form of pictorial rationalization. As a physical barrier to depth, arranged arbitrarily, the intervention assaulted the logic of pictorial perspective that organizes space and renders it perceptual as the illusion of depth. The installation's own lack of compositional logic, moreover, absolutely opposed the visual mastery and centering functions associated with such spatial organization, which is normally facilitated by the geometry of the frame.

The comparison is inapt, furthermore, because Duchamp's installation challenged the psychological depth imputed to the painting in question on the basis of perspective. Matta, for instance, frequently explained that his canvases developed "a morphological projection of a psychological state" achieved through the use of multiple perspectival vanishing points. Conversely, Duchamp's installation insistently negated any intentional psychic content and the metaphysics of interiority, the effect of which is traditionally produced by the subordination of the frame's function—that of guaranteeing the difference between the virtual field of the painting and its surrounding actual space. The function of the string frame, however, was proscriptive, rather than representative or expressive; it blocked any immersion within itself or in the displayed artwork. If in 1957, Duchamp claimed that "the artist acts like a mediumistic being who, from the labyrinth beyond time and space, seeks his way out to a clearing" then he appears to have vitiated that creative model in 1942 by inserting the viewer precisely *within* the conditions of a labyrinthine frame from which it was impossible ultimately to escape.[62] Not only do these readings of "First Papers"
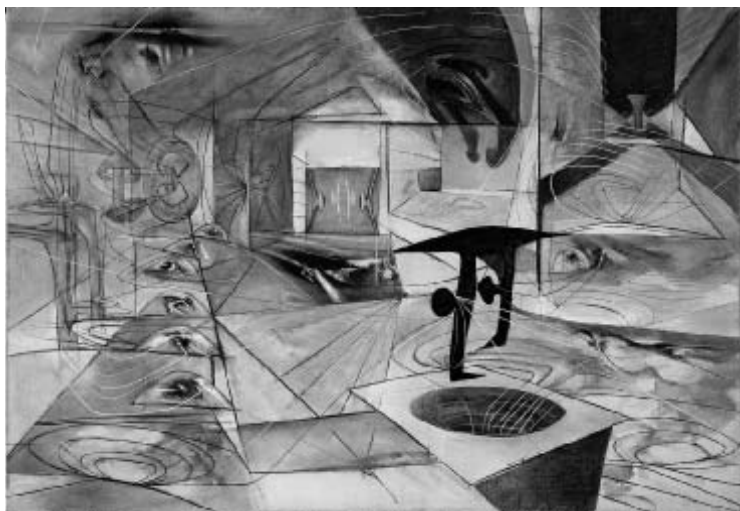
4.11 Roberto Matta-Echaurren, *The Onyx of Electra,* 1944. Oil on canvas, 50⅛" x 6'. Anonymous Fund (963.1979). The Museum of Modern Art, New York, N.Y., U.S.A. The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA/Art Resource, NY. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris.

contradict the form and function of Duchamp's installation, they also plainly fail to take into account the radical possibilities of the labyrinth that they commonly cite as an interpretive model. Indeed, by aestheticizing the labyrinth, comparing it to the organizing and rationalizing system of perspective, relating it to surrealist mythology, and viewing it as a means for psychological expression and intentional meaning, these readings end up neutralizing this potentially powerful conceptual metaphor, which otherwise offers the means for a subtle and complex analysis of the framing conditions of Duchamp's installation that acknowledges and articulates the status of being in exile.

The fully radicalized elements of the labyrinth were developed at length by Georges Bataille in his 1936 essay, "The Labyrinth." In his elaboration, the labyrinth describes a disorienting model of identity, structure, and space in which all are irrevocably dislocated. In the labyrinth, there is no center and no way out; indeed, we never know just when we are inside or outside of it. Bataille wrote the essay at the end of his participation in Contre-Attaque, coinciding with his disillusionment with the efficaciousness of an oppositional political practice. In the later 1930s, he would move from a revolutionary politics in the streets to an investigation of the internal experience of mysticism and ritual, a passage marked by his shift from Contre-Attaque to the esoteric and secretive activities of Acéphale in 1936 and then to Le Collège de Sociologie during 1937–39. His mysticism, however, was very different from Breton's. Bataille repositioned activism *within* myth and ritual, a desperate move that was both paradoxical and productive.[65] Bataille's seeming ambivalence during these years was a literary one, according to Denis Hollier, that reached its own greatest intensity when it refused to countenance the certainty of any political position and

rejected as illusory the notion that language and history could exist *without* equivocation.[64] The appearance of "The Labyrinth," in fact, bears a certain continuity with Bataille's earlier political writings. Although he had earlier fought for a politics of homelessness that refused the complacency of traditional forms of identity and knowledge, Bataille soon came to imagine its metaphorical site. Yet the labyrinth was not merely theoretical, nor did it refer to the mythological place of Breton's war-time refuge; rather, the labyrinth signified, in its largest scope, the ever shifting and perpetually dislocated status of being within the unstable and mutating systems in which it is enmeshed. In its most immediate and local register, it referenced a shocked and confused war-torn Europe: "A catalyst of anguish, war condemns human beings to the irremediable disorientation of the labyrinth, to a glorious intoxication in the face of life's incompleteness," Hollier observes.[65] Oscillating between anguish and intoxication, the dislocation of the labyrinth, according to Bataille, signaled both an insufferable state of structured existence and, perhaps unexpectedly, the very means of escape from determination.

The labyrinth forms a structure against structure, an architecture against architecture. "Architecture," the term most antithetical to the labyrinth that was included in Bataille's "Critical Dictionary," published earlier in *Documents,* was, conversely, dependent upon the mastery of spatial organization and the specialization of scientific knowledge, expressing the "authoritative command" of "society's ideal nature."[66] The term defines what the labyrinth attacks. As a disorganizing force, the labyrinth does violence to all forms of systematicity and knowledge. Indeed, Bataille's essay begins not with the constructive associations of building, expressive of a form of positivity as if the structure existed autonomously in some ideal realm, but by referencing the "negativity" of being,

quoting Hegel in its epigraph: "Negativity, in other words, the integrity of determination." While "men act in order to be," argues Bataille, in a world of "specialized functions" modern life is depleted to the point where being encounters its own "insufficiency."[67] This insufficiency represents the derealization of being that occurs when it is "mutilated" by and "reduced to knowledge": "What is commonly called knowing—when a man *knows* his neighbor—is never anything but existence *composed* for an instant" (174). Against the pretension of knowing, Bataille wished to recover being's openness *against* definition, and this was accomplished by realizing the negativity of being both through and against determination. It wasn't as if knowledge had either failed to totalize the object of its gaze, or completed its objectification within its own systematization; rather, being was constituted by a relationality that rejected the very possibility of immanence and unity, which is clear where being is crossed by language: "Each person can only represent his total existence, if only in his own eyes, through the medium of words. . . . Being depends on the mediation of words, which cannot merely present it arbitrarily as 'autonomous being,' but which must present it profoundly as 'being in relation'" (173–174).[68] This condition of relationality elicits two effects: The labyrinth evokes "a kind of *nausea*," because "being is in fact nowhere," constituted by its very lack (173); and it produces "a kind of incandescent joy . . . each time a striking appearance is contrasted with its absence, with the human void" (176). We return consequently to the anguish of loss and the intoxication of indeterminacy that mark the ambivalent experience of being in the labyrinth.

The labyrinth's force of liminality and dislocation rose up in Duchamp's installation, which acted precisely as a destructuring anti-architecture, producing contingent identity, lost meaning, and disorienting space. The installation cannot be considered

labyrinthine for metaphorical reasons, however, because it merely looked like one, or because it was rhetorically situated within the realm of surrealist myths; it was labyrinthine because of its function: it displaced space, viewers, and objects alike, throwing up a confusing, aleatory web of formless matter within the exhibition space, even as it marked the gallery's logically structured architectural areas. Indeed, the string extended the walls, created new partitions, and reorganized the space, announcing the architecture even as it transgressed it, parodying its chandeliers and ornate paneling, mocking its painted ceiling and gilded moldings, and opposing the gallery's associations with wealth and upper-class taste with its own banal material, irrational composition, and rejection of traditional artistic skill.[69] Through its physical continuity with the architectural container, the installation, in other words, acknowledged the complex system of determination that exists in the reception of artwork, signaling the presence of the institutional framework that had come to constitute the space of surrealism's fictitious independence in exile. By asserting the frame, refusing to hide or neutralize it, the installation rejected any conception of the art object as ideal, immanent, or autonomous. Instead, viewers were forced to consider the significance of the physical context of the installation's framework in the production of any meaning in the encounter with artwork. How did the exposed gallery context, for instance, function as the very condition of possibility for the formation of artistic value? How were surrealism's claims of freedom enabled by the otherwise neutral and intimate enclosure of the white partitions? How did the gallery's frame facilitate surrealism's fantasy of framelessness? By negating the neutralization of the frame, by putting the frame to work rather than elaborately framing the work, Duchamp's installation combated the mythologizing and idealizing impulses of surrealism, eliminating

any possibility of fusing with objects or with space in a psychic or physiological manner, as was proposed by Kiesler's correalism and his installation design.

This subversion occurred most acutely where Duchamp's meshes of twine engulfed surrealist artworks such as Matta's *Great Transparents,* the painting that perhaps most emblematized Breton's myth and the desire to return to a state of habitability, of precisely the *security* of space that depended upon maintaining the exteriority of the intolerable outside world. But instead of expanding outward the aesthetic terms and expressive interiority of Matta's painting, the string intervened in its very visibility, forcing the viewer to become conscious of the gallery framework. The intervention became political exactly at this point where it challenged the reactionary mythologization of objects that were positioned within a mythical frameless home. Duchamp's construction amounted to a remarkable contestation of the ways in which installation design, Kiesler's in particular, attempted to negotiate the avant-garde's contradictions–namely its anti-institutional, anti-capitalist ideology versus its actual state of institutionalization–by obfuscating them through the construction of a highly artificial exhibition design; for the purported framelessness of Kiesler's installation was, of course, ultimately only an extensive frame itself, one intent on freezing an elaborately conceived ideal world within its own boundaries, and keeping out the whole of the historical, economic, and political field that surrounded it and of which it was ultimately an effect.

Duchamp's installation both negated the traditional gallery's functions–to provide the ideal conditions for the neutral presentation of artwork–and concretized the institution's presence as an inescapable frame, one that was moreover readymade, where the commercial string indexed the gallery's function as a kind of pre-

fabricated container, providing artistic and economic value, social status, and cultural relevance. Resonating with the linguistic definition of Bataille's labyrinth, the string constructed an armature that performed a similar tracking of the mediating circuits between individual objects, viewers, and the surrounding space, as it articulated the spacing between terms. By tracing the negative areas *between* artworks and viewers, by occupying that very site of relationality, the string caused a visual and physical rupture in reception, obliterating the self-sufficiency of individual pieces, rendering them instead "related beings" caught within the negativity of determination. Because the materialization of the frame revealed the labyrinthine structure of mediation between objects, spaces, and viewers, exposing the limit that constitutes the very fiction of unity and autonomy, it disrupted the complacent location of the artworks, preventing them from finding security on the walls.[70]

Once acknowledging that inevitable condition of determination, Duchamp's labyrinth then elicited the forces of disorientation from *within* it. The labyrinth is not simply opposed to architecture. According to Bataille, the two forces–of dislocation and relocation–are forever locked in struggle, each constituted by the other, each, at times, transforming into the other.[71] As a frame, Duchamp's string was neither interior to the work of art nor wholly exterior from it; rather it disturbed the very opposition between the two, even as it acted as the condition for the opposition itself.[72] It both internalized its own framing conditions, and exteriorized its aesthetic interior. From this position of liminality it generated its own negativity: against the idealism of surrealism, against the putative neutrality of the institution, and against the unquestioned continuity of artistic practice itself. Through being situated in the very site of exile, the frame announced the impossibility of pure interiority or immanence and extended this recognition to whatever it touched.

The installation, consequently, cannot be considered as a force of synthesis without becoming its mere representation (as it did in Kiesler's design), for in this case it inevitably hides what it cannot include. Indeed, were such fusion truly possible, it would eliminate identity and difference altogether, as Caillois had realized, such that synthesis itself would become meaningless. Because determination, Bataille argued, could never be total, the condition of being was precisely at some ultimate level ecstatically indeterminate, which is conceptualized by the labyrinth as a site of both the infinite play of ever new framings and the impossible finality of any one.

While the readymade aspect of Duchamp's labyrinth confirmed the preexisting matrix of language, of architecture, and of institutional determination as inevitable preconditions for the reception of artwork—in other words as an already existing system that organizes the commerce, evaluative criteria, speculative laws, and hierarchies of artistic practice—it also disrupted that very system through the force of dislocation. It opened up forms of ambiguity and polyvalence by shifting objects from their expected location, giving them new possible values by effectively rendering them homeless, revealing the infinite potential for new contextualizations. "The labyrinth does not hold still, but because of its unbounded nature breaks open lexical prisons, prevents any word from finding a resting place ever, from resting in some arrested meaning, forces them into metamorphoses where their meaning is lost, or at least put at risk," Hollier notes.[75] The same conclusion applies to the subject caught within Duchamp's labyrinth, wherein being was thrown into a relationality that is endless, without final resting place, so that metamorphosis becomes its constituent condition. For this reason, the installation cannot be considered a symbolic architecture, as if it represented a mythological subject, for this would propose a stable system of reference, which would

unacceptably define its meaning and secure it within the very system of knowledge it confounded. Finally, as a frame, Duchamp's labyrinth produced the condition of exile, of being in relation, and rendered visible the profound fact of dislocation that represented, in 1942, the tragic circumstances of existence. For Duchamp, this open ontology of being clearly transcends the local framework of world war and comes to characterize for him the very status of human existence, forever locked into a form of exile from others and from itself, but thereby gaining its escape from ultimate arrest. Herein lies the promise of a glorious intoxication, which is only ever available once one acknowledges and passes through the anguish of the labyrinth.

No doubt Duchamp's unbending commitment to freedom and independence expressed a fundamental truth that the surrealists themselves could only agree with, and which Breton supported even if outside the more specific consideration of artistic strategy and political practice. For Duchamp's art took on a politics of its own, characterized by its fundamental resistance to determination, even while it acknowledged its partial inescapability. Perhaps it was the resulting potential for a certain reversibility of positions, themselves capable of subsequent reframings, that left Duchamp ultimately always guarded, even at a loss; for even resistance to the most intolerable conditions, he realized, could end up affirming an unacceptable compromise: "I left France during the war, in 1942, when I would have had to have been part of the Resistance. I don't have what is called a strong patriotic sense; I'd rather not even talk about it."[74] While Duchamp may have preferred not to talk about it, his work certainly did, and his independence during these wartime years extended to the artistic refusal of even the most seemingly innocuous security of space, homely assurance, and conceptual complacency. Duchamp recognized in the temptation of such

comforts the danger of the security of knowledge itself, whether in terms of artistic meaning or one's very being, which his work, in the cause of independence, would continually challenge.

As in 1938, Duchamp remained a missing person at the opening of the exhibition "First Papers of Surrealism," figuring as a conspicuous but only appropriate site of absence within his own labyrinth. In his place, he notoriously sent a band of children, recruiting two sons of collector Sidney Janis, whom he instructed to play ball and never stop—especially when confronted by adults. This was Duchamp's last transgression against the exhibition and its architecture, with its "majesty and authority" that "impose silence upon the crowds," and "inspire good social behavior and often even genuine fear."[75] By escaping the determination of architecture's social regimentation, by ultimately refusing to be in the place of his own identity, Duchamp, of course, had the last laugh.

NOTES

Introduction

1. An incomplete list includes: Thierry de Duve, *Pictorial Nominalism: On Marcel Duchamp's Passage from Painting to the Readymade,* trans. D. Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnnesota Press, 1991); David Joselit, *Infinite Regress: Marcel Duchamp, 1910–1941* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998); Rosalind Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious,* chapter 3 (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993); Jean-François Lyotard, *Duchamp's Trans/Formers,* trans. I. McLeod (Venice, Calif.: Lapis Press, 1990); and Molly Nesbit, "The Language of Industry," in *The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp,* ed. Thierry de Duve (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992).

2. See Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000) and *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin, 2004); Giorgio Agamben, *Means without Ends: Notes on Politics,* trans. Vincenzo Binetti and Cesare Casarino (Minneapolis: University of Minnnesota Press, 2000); and Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 2000).

1 The Portable Museum

1. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* quoted by Walter Benjamin as an epigraph for "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century" (1939), in his *The Arcades Project,* trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 20.

2. Duchamp writes: "Je suis rentré chez moi." Postcard to Walter Arensberg, dated 30 September 1940, from Sanary, France, in *Affectionately, Marcel: The Selected Correspondence of Marcel Duchamp,* ed. Francis M. Naumann and Hector Obalk (Ghent: Ludion Press, 2000), 224.

3. Cited under 16 and 17 July 1940, in "Ephemerides on and about Marcel Duchamp and Rrose Sélavy," in *Marcel Duchamp: Work and Life,* ed. Jennifer Gough-Cooper and Jacques Caumont (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993).

4. Letter to Louise and Walter Arensberg, 16 July 1940, in *Affectionately, Marcel,* 220. In its early stages, before its final form had been decided, Duchamp referred to *La boîte-en-valise* as an "album."

5. Cited in Ecke Bonk, *Marcel Duchamp, the Box in a valise: de ou par Marcel Duchamp ou Rrose Sélavy: Inventory of an Edition,* trans. David Britt (New York: Rizzoli, 1989), 174. Bonk offers extensive documentation of the complicated construction of the project.

6. Interview by Calvin Tomkins, in his *Duchamp: A Biography* (New York: Holt, 1996), 323–324.

7. See Momme Brodersen, *Walter Benjamin: A Biography,* trans. Malcolm Green and Ingrida Ligers (New York: Verso, 1996), from which many of these biographical details are taken. Also useful is the editors' "Chronology" in Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings,* vol. 4, trans. Edmund Jephcott et al., ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003).

8. This is based on the report of his guide, Lisa Fittko, who recounts the events of Benjamin's last days in "The Story of Old Benjamin," in *Escape through the Pyrenees,* trans. David Koblick (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 106.

9. Cited in Brodersen, *Walter Benjamin,* 260.

10. Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften,* vol. 7 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1972–1989), 385; cited in Rainer Rochlitz, *The Disenchantment of Art,* trans. Jane Marie Todd (New York: Guildford, 1996), 181.

11. Duchamp, unpublished interview by Jean-Marie Drot, "Jeu d'échecs avec Marcel Duchamp" (1963), cited in Tomkins, *Duchamp,* 93.

12. Cited in Susan Buck-Morss, *Origin of Negative Dialectics* (Hassocks: Harvester, 1977), 155.

13. The following citations are from section 18 of Adorno's *Minima Moralia: Reflections from a Damaged Life,* trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (1951; reprint, New York: Verso, 1991).

14. Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* trans. John Coming (1944; reprint, New York: Continuum, 1994), also challenged both the homogenization of the culture industry (the loss of specificity and difference in identity) and the regressive essentialism of fascism, which, for its authors, represented the double bind facing modern subjectivity.

15. Edward Said reproduces but unfortunately does not discuss *La boîte-en-valise* in his own examination of exile: "Intellectual Exile: Expatriates and Marginals," *Grand Street* 47: 114. See also his "Reflections on Exile," *Granta* 13 (autumn 1984): 159–172.

16. Robert Lebel was the first to suggest this when he noted that "one year before the war Duchamp foresaw that he must pack his bags in as small a space as possible." Lebel, *Marcel Duchamp,* trans. George Heard Hamilton (New York: Grove Press, 1959), 54. Yet, taking into account the relation of the valise to developments in reproduction, commodification, and the art institution–developments that relate to, but also exceed, issues of nationalism and homelessness–I would resist Lebel's implied suggestion of a limiting causal connection between the war and the valise.

17. For a reading of the psychic homelessness of the surrealists translated through Freud's notion of the uncanny, see Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993). For the most forceful criticism of surrealism as rendered obsolete by world war, see Theodor Adorno, "Looking Back on Surrealism," in *The Idea of the Modern in Literature and the Arts,* ed. Irving Howe (New York: Horizon, 1967). I investigate further Duchamp's critical relation to surrealism in chapters 3 and 4.

18. For a history of the Bauhaus in Nazi Germany, see Stephanie Barron, ed., *Exiles and Emigrés: The Flight of European Artists from Hitler* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1997).

19. Duchamp writing to Katherine Dreier, 5 March 1935, in *Affectionately, Marcel,* 197.

20. Cited in James Sweeney, "A Conversation with Marcel Duchamp" (1955), reprinted in Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson, eds., *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Da Capo, 1973), 136.

21. Duchamp, typically, refused to answer when asked what was the "idea" behind *La boîte-en-valise.* When asked by Alain Jouffroy in 1961 "What was your intention behind the *Boîte-en-valise*?" Duchamp avoided the rather simplistic suggestion that there could be a single "intention" behind the complex work: "I don't really know, as a matter of fact . . . it was all done without any very clear idea in mind." Alain Jouffroy, *Une Révolution du regard: À propos de quelques peintres et sculptures contemporaine* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), 119ff.

22. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "The Museum Fictions of Marcel Brood-thaers," in *Museums by Artists,* ed. A. A. Bronson and Peggy Gale (Toronto: Art Metropole, 1983), 45.

23. Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde,* trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

24. On this history, see William Camfield, *Marcel Duchamp, Fountain* (Houston: Menil Foundation, 1989).

25. These included shows such as the International Surrealist Exhibition in London in 1936, Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism at New York's Museum of Modern Art in 1936–1937, and L'Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme in Paris in 1938, as well as some twenty-five other minor shows in Europe and America. See the listing of exhibitions in *Affectionately, Marcel,* 186.

26. Reported in Hans Richter, *Dada-Art and Anti-Art* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1965), 207–208; cited in Dominique Chateau, *Duchamp et Duchamp* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1999), 17, which discusses this comment at length.

27. Jean Suquet, *Marcel Duchamp, ou, L'éblouissement de l'éclaboussure* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998), 82.

28. As Bonk documents, Duchamp constructed a small papier-mâché prototype, from which a Parisian craftsman mass-produced the tiny white porcelain urinals for the *Boîte.*

29. Rosalind Krauss first suggested that *La boîte-en-valise* formulated the museum as readymade in a discussion reprinted in *The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp,* ed. Thierry de Duve (Cambridge, Mass.:

MIT Press, 1992), 305: "I think that if there's anything ready-made operating in the *Box-in-a-Valise* (and this at a very conceptual level), it has to do with the box projecting a bizarre way of thinking about a museum as an institution that is itself ready-made."

30. Buchloh, "The Museum Fictions," 49, 56.

31. Benjamin's essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" was translated into French by Pierre Klossowski and published in the May 1936 issue of *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung.* Malraux refers to it in "Sur l'héritage culturel," a presentation delivered in London in 1936 to the Association of Writers for the Defense of Culture. It is reprinted in André Malraux, *La Politique, La Culture,* ed. Janine Mossuz-Lavau (Paris: Gallimard, 1996).

32. This is discussed by Rosalind Krauss in "Postmodernism's Museum without Walls," in *Thinking about Exhibitions,* ed. Reesa Greenberg et al. (New York: Routledge, 1996). See also Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993).

33. André Malraux, *The Voices of Silence,* trans. Stuart Gilbert (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), 160–161. For a critique of Malraux's speculative and ahistorical tendencies, see E. H. Gombrich, "André Malraux and the Crisis of Expressionism," in *Meditations on a Hobby Horse* (1963; reprint, London: Phaidon, 1994), 78: "There is no evidence that Malraux has done a day's consecutive reading in a library or that he has even tried to hunt up a new fact."

34. Malraux, *The Voices of Silence,* 46. In a related development, German museum director Alexander Dörner investigated the relation between originals and reproductions at roughly the same time in his "Original and Facsimile" exhibition in 1929 and in articles where he proposed exhibitions of photographs of artworks. See Joan Ockman, "The Road Not Taken: Alexander Dörner's Way Beyond Art," in *Autonomy and Ideology: Positioning an Avant-Garde in America,* ed. R. E. Somol (New York: Monacelli, 1997), esp. 94ff.

35. Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," in her *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989), 280.

36. Rosalind Krauss, "Forms of Readymade: Duchamp and Brancusi," in her *Passages in Modern Sculpture* (New York: Viking, 1977), 77.

37. Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," 280.

38. Pierre Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, trans. Ron Padgett (New York: Da Capo, 1971), 42–43.

39. Malraux, "Sur l'héritage culturel," 135.

40. *Le musée imaginaire* (Genève: Albert Skira, 1947) was the first volume in Malraux's trilogy entitled *La psychologie de l'art*, which also included *La creation artistique* (Paris: Albert Skira, 1948) and *La monnaie de l'absolu* (Genève: Albert Skira, 1950). The condensed version of all three volumes appeared as *Les voix du silence* (Paris: Gallimard, 1951).

41. Malraux, *The Voices of Silence*, p. 139.

42. See Curtis Cate, *André Malraux: A Biography* (New York: Fromm, 1997), 357ff.

43. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, xvi.

44. Geopolitical and modernist homelessness, while interconnected, cannot be collapsed, I think, without a consequent loss of historical complexity. Such a move would fail, for instance, to comprehend how modernism and its structures of displacement can also be adopted by nationalist causes, as with the case of Italian futurism, or abstract expressionism in the context of the cold war. On the latter, see Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

45. Cited in Bonk, *Marcel Duchamp*, 172. Clearly, the "deluxe" version also represents a mimicry of an advertisement model of artificial value—another aspect of its internalization of capitalist institutions.

46. Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, 87.

47. Walter Benjamin, "A Berlin Chronicle," in *Reflections*, ed. Peter Demetz, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Schocken, 1978), 16. See Shoshana Felman, "Benjamin's Silence," *Critical Inquiry* 25/2 (winter 1999): 201–235, which expands on Benjamin's notion of history as developed in "A Berlin Chronicle," "The Storyteller," and "Theses on a Philosophy of History."

48. These homesick recollections, for instance, also include his partici-
pation in the radical and antinationalist leftist group Die Aktion, which
struggled to "smash the state" and "abolish the family," as he explains
in "A Berlin Chronicle," 19–20.

49. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illumi-
nations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Shocken,
1968), 257.

50. Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," 257. For Shoshana
Felman,

> In Benjamin's own view, history–a line of catastrophe–is not a
> movement toward progress but a movement toward (what Ben-
> jamin calls enigmatically) redemption. Redemption–what his-
> torical struggles (and political revolutions) are about–should
> be understood as both materialist (Marxist, political, interhis-
> torical) and theological (suprahistorical, transcendent). Re-
> demption is discontinuity, disruption. It names the constant
> need to catch up with the hidden reality of history that always
> remains a debt to the oppressed, a debt to the dead of history, a
> claim the past has on the present. Redemption is the allegory of
> a future state of freedom, justice, happiness, and recovery of
> meaning. (Felman, "Benjamin's Silence," 211).

51. Cited in Rochlitz, *The Disenchantment of Art*, 181.

52. Benjamin, "A Berlin Chronicle," 10.

53. Ibid., 25.

54. Cited in Rochlitz, *The Disenchantment of Art*, 181.

55. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Repro-
duction," in *Illuminations*, 220.

56. Ibid., 229. In this passage Benjamin quotes the Italian playwright and
essayist Luigi Pirandello.

57. Walter Benjamin, "A Short History of Photography" (1931), in *Classic
Essays on Photography*, ed. Alan Trachtenberg (New Haven: Leete's
Island Books, 1980), 210.

58. Benjamin, "A Berlin Chronicle," 6.

59. As Edward Said observes, "almost by definition exile and memory go together" in *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), xxxv. Richard Terdiman situates this crisis of memory historically in *Present Past: Modernity and the Memory Crisis* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

60. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography,* trans. Richard Howard (New York: Noonday, 1981), 80–81.

61. Marcel Duchamp, letter to Katherine Dreier, 4 September 1936; cited in Tomkins, *Duchamp,* 308.

62. Marcel Duchamp, "Notes for a Lecture, 1964," City Art Museum, St. Louis; cited in Anne D'Harnoncourt and Kynaston McShine, eds., *Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1973), 243.

63. Siegfried Kracauer, "Photography," trans. Thomas Levin, *Critical Inquiry* 19 (spring 1993): 433. Originally published in 1927, the essay was reissued by Kracauer in *The Mass Ornament* in 1963. Kracauer's discussion of fetishism was informed by his own displacement. As a German Jewish refugee he was forced to leave Germany in 1933, living in exile for the rest of his life, in Paris until 1941 and then in New York until 1966. He was aware of photography's special relation to homesickness. In an autobiographical novel, *Georg,* which he wrote in 1934 during his time in Paris, the main character remembers his grandmother, just as Kracauer recalls his own grandmother through a photograph in his essay on photography. He discusses this photograph of his grandmother, who, pictured as a younger woman, is at odds with how he remembers her: "Likeness has ceased to be any help." Nevertheless, Kracauer explains that the photograph offers "a reminder of . . . corporal reality" (429), and thus draws out memory-images, even if ultimately they are deeply dissatisfactory.

64. David Joselit's view of Duchamp's "infinite regress" is close to my own, though it overlooks the context of exile: "it may seem that the purpose of the *Boîte-en-valise* is to shore up Duchamp's artistic identity through a coherent summary of his oeuvre, but as an elaborate performance of compulsive repetition—the same form of repetition that Freud associated with the unconscious instinctual drives of death *and* Eros. . . . The act of *copying both constitutes and destroys*

the self . . ." David Joselit, *Infinite Regress* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998), 192–193.

65. *Affectionately, Marcel,* 234.

66. Cited in Bonk, *Marcel Duchamp,* 153.

67. Jacqueline Matisse-Monnier, Duchamp's step-daughter, participated in this process during the 1960s (personal communication, summer 1996). See also Bonk, *Marcel Duchamp,* 225.

68. Marcel Duchamp, "Apropos of 'Readymades,'" in *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp,* 142. For further discussion of the circuit of originals and reproductions within Duchamp's work, see Martha Buskirk, "Thoroughly Modern Marcel," in *The Duchamp Effect,* ed. Martha Buskirk and Mignon Nixon (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996), 191–204.

69. The diary is located in the Walter Benjamin Archive, Institute für Sozialforschung, Goethe Universität, Frankfurt; cited in Ecke Bonk, "Delay Included," in *Joseph Cornell/Marcel Duchamp . . . in Resonance* (Philadelphia: Cantz, 1998), 102.

70. Benjamin, "Short History of Photography," 206–207.

71. Barthes, *Camera Lucida,* 81.

72. Also relevant is the question of why Duchamp wished to have all his work collected in a single museum, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, at the end of his life.

73. Dated 28 September 1937, *Affectionately, Marcel,* 215.

74. From "A Conversation with Marcel Duchamp," the televised interview at the Philadelphia Museum of Art with James Sweeney in 1955; cited in Ecke Bonk, "Marcel Duchamp," in *The Museum as Muse,* ed. Kynaston McShine (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1999), 52.

75. Cabanne, *Dialogues,* 92–93. At the time of his 1963 retrospective at the Pasadena Art Museum, what "warmed up" Duchamp's memories were not only specific works but also their arrangement. The *50cc of Paris Air, Traveler's Folding Item,* and *Fountain* were displayed in the exact same way that the *Boîte* had displayed their miniature replications.

76. He explains that the "Chronicle's" mnemonic images are "like precious fragments . . . in a collector's gallery." Benjamin, "A Berlin Chronicle," 26.

77. Benjamin, "Konvolut H: The Collector," in his *The Arcades Project,* trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 211 (translation modified).

78. Benjamin, "Konvolut I: The Interior, The Trace," *The Arcades Project,* 220.

79. Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever,* trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 91, 10–11.

80. Cabanne, *Dialogues,* 74.

81. As Duchamp came to call the *Boîtes.* See the letter to Walter Pach (3 January 1943), where he refers to his "boîtes-monographies." *Affectionately, Marcel,* 233.

82. See Buchloh, "The Museum Fictions," 47. Also, Walter Benjamin explores how in the collection "the work of art" is "shrunken to a commodity," in "Eduard Fuchs: Collector and Historian," in *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader,* ed. Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt (New York: Continuum, 1993), 251.

83. Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space,* trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 149.

84. Susan Stuart, *On Longing* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 171, 66.

85. As Foucault recommends, "the subject should not be entirely abandoned. It should be reconsidered, not to restore the theme of an originating subject, but to seize its functions, its intervention in discourse, and its system of dependencies. . . . [W]e should ask: under what conditions and through what forms does an entity like the subject appear in the order of discourse; what position does it occupy; what functions does it exhibit; what rules does it follow in each type of discourse?" Foucault, "What Is an Author?," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice,* trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 137–138.

86. See Walter Benjamin, "Allegory and Trauerspeil," in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama,* trans. John Osborne (New York: Verso, 1985), 183–184. Further: If "In the ruin history has physically merged into the setting," then it is later up to the critical "reader" to decipher its sediments (see 177–178, 184–185).

87. From the interview with Georges Charbonnier, broadcast by Radio Française on France Culture, 9 December 1960; cited in *Ephemerides* under that date.

88. Joselit similarly notes the importance of the title in *Infinite Regress,* 192.

89. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia,* trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen Lane (1972; reprint, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 5–6.

90. My use of the theory of Deleuze and Guattari may appear sudden and is certainly disjunctive, following the critical pronouncements of Adorno and Horkheimer and the self-restrictive philosophy of Benjamin. But no easy reconciliation of these incompatible analyses is implied: this methodological fissure is only appropriate for a reading of *La boîte-en-valise,* faithfully doubling its own contradictions.

91. Rosalind Krauss elaborates on this complex function of the *Large Glass* as a self-portrait of "MarCel" in "Notes on the Index, Part 1," in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde,* 192–209.

92. Deleuze and Guattari discuss the *Large Glass* in *Anti-Oedipus,* 17–18. For a provocative reading of Duchamp's project in relation to Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus,* see David Joselit, "Duchamp's Monte Carlo Bond Machine," *October* 59 (winter 1992).

93. For elaborations of fascist subjectivity, see the discussions of Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies,* vol. 1, trans. Stephen Conway (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), and Hal Foster, "L'Armor Fou," *October* 56 (spring 1991).

2 Sculptures for Traveling

1. *Affectionately, Marcel: The Selected Correspondence of Marcel Duchamp,* ed. Francis M. Naumann and Hector Obalk (Ghent: Ludion Press, 2000), 55.

2. The photograph is labeled "Buenos Aires 1918" in *La boîte-en-valise,* although Arturo Schwarz, in *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Delano Greenidge, 2000), locates it in Duchamp's New York studio. Whatever the case, it is appropriate that the *Sculpture for Traveling* is lost to these identifications. Additionally, Richard Hamilton

made a copy of the original in 1966 for Duchamp's retrospective exhibition at the Tate Gallery in London.

3. As he describes in various letters around 1917–18, as cited in *Affectionately, Marcel.*

4. Pierre Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp,* trans. Ron Padgett (1966; reprint, New York: Da Capo, 1971), 59. In France, Duchamp had to come before a medical board for a physical examination, for which he was found too "sick" for service due to a rheumatic heart murmur. He was clearly not upset with this outcome, yet found the life of a noncombatant in mobilized France intolerable.

5. Cabanne, *Dialogues,* 59.

6. 8 July 1918; Cited in *Affectionately, Marcel,* 56. "My plan, as yet very vague, is to stay there for a long time, several years probably, i.e. really make a clean break with this part of the world . . . I will try to give some French lessons over there, as I don't expect to find modern-art lovers and have no intention of exhibiting anything, although it would no doubt be an entertaining country to cultivate in that sense. I'm taking with me all my papers for working on the glass so I can finish, on paper, all the drawings, so that if, one day, I stop by N.Y., I'll be able to have done quite quickly with this big piece of trash."

7. Ibid., 58.

8. Ibid., 57.

9. Roman Jakobson, "Dada," in *Language in Literature,* ed. Krystyna Pomorska (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), 35.

10. Ibid., 34.

11. The Dadaist Richard Huelsenbeck explains that "none of us had much appreciation for the kind of courage it takes to get shot for the idea of a nation which is at best a cartel of pelt merchants and profiteers in leather, at worst a cultural association of psychopaths who, like the Germans, marched off with a volume of Goethe in their knapsacks, to skewer Frenchmen and Russians on their bayonets," in "En Avant Dada: A History of Dadaism" (1920), in *The Dada Painters and Poets,* ed. Robert Motherwell (Cambridge: Belknap, 1981).

12. For more on this understanding of Dada, see my "Zurich Dada: The Aesthetics of Exile," in *The Dada Seminars,* exh. cat., ed. Leah Dickerman (Washington D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 2005); and "Circulations: In and Around Zurich Dada," *October* 105 (summer 2003): 147–159.

13. Jakobson, "Dada," 38.

14. Duchamp's relation to the complex philosophy of Bergson, however, is far from simple. Although the circle of Puteaux cubists with whom Duchamp was earlier involved had to some degree codified the work of Bergson in their understanding of painting (especially in Gleize and Metzinger's *Du "Cubisme"* of 1912), Duchamp's later relation to Bergsonian notions, such as duration and multiplicity, was neither direct nor in complete accord, as we shall see.

15. *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp,* ed. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Petersom (New York: Da Capo, 1973), 72.

16. Marcel Duchamp, *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even,* trans. George Heard Hamilton (London: Edition Hansjörg Mayer, 1960), n.p.

17. Ibid.

18. Marcel Duchamp, "Apropos of 'Readymades'" (1961), in *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp,* 142: "Another aspect of the 'Readymade' is its lack of uniqueness . . . the replica of a 'Readymade' delivering the same message; in fact nearly every one of the 'Readymades' existing today is not an original in the conventional sense."

19. As Duchamp describes it in "The Richard Mutt Case" (1917), in *Art in Theory: 1900–2000,* ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (London: Blackwell, 2003), 252: "Whether Mr. Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view–created a new thought for that object."

20. This is excerpted from the note "Possible," reproduced in *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp,* 73. The neologism "Callistics" suggests the science of the beautiful, or *kalos* from the Greek. Its proximity to

"calisthenics," which likens aesthetics to a repetitive physical exercise, indicates an ironic twist in the use of the term.

21. Duchamp uses this term in a letter from Buenos Aires, dated 3 May 1919, to Florine Stettheimer, reprinted in *Affectionately, Marcel,* 83.

22. Cf. Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism,* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 38: In terms of space: "it is a multiplicity of exteriority, of simultaneity, of juxtaposition, of order, of quantitative differentiation, of *difference in degree*"; and in terms of duration: "It is an internal multiplicity of succession, of fusion of organization, of heterogeneity, of qualitative discrimination, or of *difference in kind;* it is a *virtual and continuous* multiplicity that cannot be reduced to numbers."

23. Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (1968), trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 1.

24. Ibid., 41, 53, 59.

25. Ibid., 105.

26. I borrow this formulation from a point made about repetition in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1980), trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 3.

27. For Bergson too, free will was directly related to the temporality of becoming, as expressed in *Time and Free Will* (1889) and *Creative Evolution* (1907).

28. Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego,* trans. James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1959), 6.

29. Page 57. Freud: "A primary group . . . is a number of individuals who have put one and the same object in the place of their ego ideal and have consequently identified themselves with one another in their ego" (61).

30. As Hal Foster observes in his discussion of the psychic armoring of the body in the cases of Max Ernst and Hans Bellmer in "Armor Fou," *October* 56 (spring 1991), 84.

31. Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies,* vol. 1, trans. S. Conway, E. Carter, and C. Turner (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 418; cited in Foster, "Armor fou," 84.

32. Freud, "Group Psychology," 62.

33. Ibid., 78.

34. This group psychology is key to the formation of the modern nation. Cf. Michael Warner, "The Mass Public and the Mass Subject" (1991), in his *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone, 2002), 160–161:

> The republican notion of virtue, for example, was designed exactly to avoid any rupture of self-difference between ordinary life and publicity. The republican was to be the same as citizen and as man. He was to maintain continuity of value, judgment, and reputation from a domestic economy to affairs of a public nature. And lesser subjects–non-citizens such as women, children, and the poor–were equally to maintain continuity across both realms, as nonactors. From republicanism to populism, from Rousseau to Reagan, self-unity has been held to be a public value, and publicity has not been thought of as requiring individuals to have discontinuous perceptions of themselves.

35. "The European Art Invasion," *Literary Digest* (27 November 1915); cited in Calvin Tomkins, *Marcel Duchamp: A Biography* (New York: Holt, 1996), 152–153.

36. Ibid.

37. Interview with Katherine Kuh, "Marcel Duchamp," in *The Artist's Voice: Talks with Seventeen Artists* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 90.

38. Among the prominent analyses of nationalism on which this definition relies are Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso, 1983); E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2006); Etienne Balibar, "The Nation Form: History and Ideology," in *Becoming National*, ed. G. Eley and R. Suny (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); and Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (New York: Verso, 1991).

39. Homi Bhabha, "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation," in *Nation and Narration,* ed. Homi Bhabha (New York: Routledge, 1994), 300. Even for the xenophobic nationalism described in Freud's scenario, Bhabha writes: "The problem is . . . that the ambivalent identifications of love and hate occupy the same psychic space; and paranoid projections 'outwards' return to haunt and split the place from which they are made."

40. From an interview with George Charbonnier, cited in Jennifer Gough-Cooper and Jacques Caumont, "Ephemerides on and about Marcel Duchamp and Rrose Sélavy," in *Marcel Duchamp: Work and Life,* ed. Pontus Hulten (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), under the date 6 January 1961.

41. Duchamp: "It was fundamentally Roussel who was responsible for my glass, *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even.* From his *Impression d'Afrique* I got the general approach. This play of his which I saw with Apollinaire helped me greatly on one side of my expression. I saw at once I could use Roussel as an influence. I felt that as a painter it was much better to be influenced by a writer than by another painter. And Roussel showed me the way." Interview with James Johnson Sweeney, *Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art* 13, no. 4–5 (1946). Reprinted in *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp,* p. 126.

42. An important precedent for Roussel's thematic of the shipwreck is Mallarmé's famous poem "Un coup de dés," which develops its linguistic disruptions on the typographic and formal levels of the poem's visual appearance. Unlike Duchamp, for Roussel there was no literal connection between geographical travel and aesthetic displacement, as he explained in *How I Wrote Certain of My Books,* ed. Trevor Winkfield, trans. John Ashbery et al. (Boston: Exact Change, 1995), 20: "Now, from all [my] travels I never took anything for my books. It seems to me that this is worth mentioning, since it clearly shows just how much imagination accounts for everything in my work."

43. Of course the surrealists loved Roussel and during his life they formed his most dedicated audience.

44. Roussel, *How I Wrote . . . ,* 3–4.

45. César Dumarsais, *Les Tropes* (Paris, 1818); cited in Michel Foucault, *Death and the Labyrinth: The World of Raymond Roussel,* trans. Charles Ruas (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1986), 15.

46. Foucault, *Death and the Labyrinth,* 38. Coming close to Duchamp's readymade aesthetic, Roussel's writing differs here from the preciosity of Mallarméan language.

47. Cabanne, *Dialogues,* 31.

48. Duchamp later recalled in an interview with John Russell: "I took an intense pleasure in being *away.* I would have gone anywhere, in those days. If I went to Munich it was because I had met a cow-painter in Paris, I mean a German who painted cows, the very best cows of course . . . and when this cow-painter said 'Go to Munich' I got up and went there and lived for months in a little furnished room." "Exile at Large: Interview with Marcel Duchamp," *Sunday Times* (London), 9 June 1968, 54. The cow-painter was the German art student Max Bergmann.

49. Thierry de Duve, *Pictorial Nominalism,* trans. Dana Polan with the author (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991).

50. Duchamp, *Writings,* 142.

51. De Duve, *Pictorial Nominalism,* 159.

52. This event is recounted at length in de Duve, *Pictorial Nominalism.*

53. Duchamp, interview with Tomkins, 83.

54. De Duve, *Pictorial Nominalism,* 14, 15; also 126. The note is dated 1914 and derives from the *White Box.*

55. Duchamp, *The Green Box,* reprinted in *Writings,* 31.

56. Interview with Schwarz, *Complete Works,* cat. no. 338.

57. Cited in Schwarz, *Complete Works,* cat. 340. For an alternate reading of *Rendez-vous du Dimanche 6 Février 1916/à l h. 3/4 après midi* and *With Hidden Noise,* see David Joselit, "Between Reification and Regression: Readymade and Words," in his *Infinite Regress: Marcel Duchamp, 1910–1941* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998).

58. For further discussion of Duchamp's relation to language, see my "The Language of Expatriation," in *Dada Culture: Critical Texts on the Avant-Garde,* ed. Dafydd Jones (Amsterdam: Rodopi Press, 2006).

59. Cabanne, *Dialogues,* 59.

60. Ibid. It is revealing that Duchamp remembers the second *Sculpture for Traveling* in a plural state, as "some rubber objects," rather than a unitary artwork.

61. On Duchamp's industrial drawings, see Molly Nesbit, "Ready-Made Originals," *October* 37 (summer 1986). Nesbit discusses the institutionalization of a certain course of drawing within the educational system of late nineteenth-century France that taught the graphic inscriptions of industry (mainly architecture and decorative arts), the language of which was believed to form "the basis for one universal language that could serve the entire nation whatever one's class" (357). Duchamp's own artistic internalization of this system, Nesbit argues, was also a critical troubling of its gendered terms, nationalist pretensions, and capitalist orientation, a view that corresponds to my own.

62. Duchamp was concurrently working on his *Handmade Stereopticon Slide* while in Buenos Aires, which similarly projects an ideal geometric figure into empirical perceptual conditions of three-dimensional reality. When viewed through a stereoscope, the geometrical figure cast into an atmospheric perspective appears to hover over the water shown in the photographic image.

63. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1972), trans. Robert Jurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983).

64. *Anti-Oedipus,* 17–18.

65. Deleuze and Guattari follow the example of Michel Carrouges, *Les machines célibataires* (Paris: Arcanes, 1954).

66. See Yve-Alain Bois, "The Semiology of Cubism," and Rosalind Krauss, "The Motivation of the Sign," both in *Picasso and Braque: A Symposium*, ed. Lynn Zelevansky (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1992).

67. Yve-Alain Bois, "Kahnweiler's Lesson," in his *Painting as Model* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), 89, 90.

68. Joselit, *Infinite Regress,* 31. Such a strategy confounded the oppositional logic of the Puteaux group's cubism, which pitted art against

science. As Gleizes and Metzinger wrote: "Geometry is a science, painting an art. . . . The absolute of the one is fatally the relative of the other. If logic fears it, too bad!" Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger, *Du "Cubisme"* (1912), trans. English 1913 (Frankfurt: Fischer Verlag, 1993), 40. Yet ultimately Duchamp's practice resonated with the aims of these authors. By rupturing the relation to geometry's idealism, an art of relativity would confirm the immensurability of the self: "The art which ceases to be a fixation of our personality (immeasurable, in which nothing is ever repeated), fails to do what we expect of it," they wrote (38). Duchamp appeared to support this text, asking Henri-Martin Barzun to send him copies in Argentina (in addition to Mallarmé's *Un coup de des* and Apollinaire's *Cubist Painters*), in a failed plan to organize an exhibition of cubist painting in Buenos Aires. See Tomkins, *Duchamp,* 209.

69. Cabanne, *Dialogues,* 61.

70. The photograph was retouched to emphasize the diagrams and lines of text for its reproduction in *La boîte-en-valise.* See Arturo Schwarz, *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Delano Greenidge, 2000), cat. 367.

71. In Harriet and Sidney Jannis, "Marcel Duchamp, Anti-Artist" (1945), in *The Dada Painters and Poets,* ed. Robert Motherwell (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1981), 313.

72. David Joselit, "Dada's Diagrams," in *The Dada Seminars,* ed. Leah Dickerman (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 2005).

73. Ibid., 235.

74. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus,* 142; cited in Joselit, "Dada's Diagrams," 235.

75. Letter to Jean Crotti, 1921, cited in *Affectionately, Marcel,* 97.

76. See Cabanne, *Dialogues,* 65.

77. Dated 8 November 1918, *Affectionately, Marcel,* 66. One further reason behind this resistance to exhibiting may have been Duchamp's wish not to draw attention to himself as a war resister in the cultural context of New York, dominated as it was by a patriotic fervor that bred suspicion of nonconformists.

78. Alice Kaplan and Kristin Ross, "Introduction" to special issue on "Everyday Life," *Yale French Studies* 73 (1987): 3. Helen Molesworth has further specified these institutions as Taylorist modes of rationalization, arguing that Duchamp's readymades troubled the growing regimentation of domestic space during the early twentieth century, in "Work Avoidance: The Everyday Life of Marcel Duchamp's Readymades," *Art Journal* (winter 1998): 58.

79. Cabanne, *Dialogues,* 59.

80. The "union sacrée" was declared to unite political division—e.g., "Socialists, radicals, progressivists, conservatives, republicans, monarchists, Freemasons, clericals, blockists, nationalists," as one writer admonished—into a single socio-political body. Cited in Kenneth Silver, *Esprit de Corps: The Art of the Parisian Avant-Garde and the First World War, 1914–1925* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 25.

81. Silver, *Esprit de Corps,* 360. See also Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "Figures of Authority, Ciphers of Regression" (1981), in *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation,* ed. Brian Wallis (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989); and David Cottingham, *Cubism in the Shadow of War: The Avant-Garde and Politics in Paris, 1905–1914* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

82. This condition of alienation was theorized decades later in Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life* (1947), trans. John Moore (New York: Verso, 1991), 249: "Alienation has stripped life of everything which blessed its primitive frailty with joy and wisdom. . . . This alienation was *economic* (the division of labour; 'private' property; the formation of economic fetishes: money, commodities, capital); *social* (the formation of classes); *political* (the formation of the State); *ideological* (religions, metaphysics, moral doctrines)."

83. For more on this history, see Judith Zilczer, "In the Face of War: The Last Works of Raymond Duchamp-Villon," *Art Bulletin* 65, no. 1 (March 1983): 139. See also Tomkins, *Duchamp,* 208.

84. Duchamp, *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp,* 51.

85. *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp,* 23. The political effect of this last point is developed in Amelia Jones, "Equivocal Masculinity: New

York Dada in the Context of World War I," *Art History* 25, no. 2 (April 2002): 181. Also see her *Irrational Modernism: A Neurasthenic History of New York Dada* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2004).

86. Louis Marin, "Frontiers of Utopia," *Critical Inquiry* 19 (winter 1993): 412.

87. Ibid., 414.

88. See Louis Marin, *Utopics: Spatial Play,* trans. Robert A. Vollrath (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: 1984).

3 Dreams of Industry

1. Duchamp "agreed to supervise the exhibition and provide the basic ideas," records Marcel Jean, who participated in the exhibition. Marcel Jean, *The History of Surrealist Painting,* trans. Simon Watson Taylor (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 281.

2. Pierre Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Da Capo, 1967), 81–82.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Marcel Jean reports that "a loud-speaker blared out the German army's parade march" in *The History of Surrealist Painting,* 282.

6. Ibid., 281. For a thorough description of the exhibition, see Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous: Marcel Duchamp, Slavador Dalí, and Surrealist Exhibition Design* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001) and Daniel Abadie, "L'Exposition internationale du surréalisme, Paris 1938," in *Paris 1937–Paris 1957* (Paris: Le Centre, 1981).

7. See Leah Dickerman, "Merz and Memory: On Kurt Schwitters," in *The Dada Seminars,* ed. L. Dickerman (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 2005), 103–126.

8. Curiously, it is known that Duchamp visited Hannover in 1929 to attend Katherine Dreier's lecture entitled "Modern Art in America," and that during this trip he met Schwitters. Duchamp may have seen the *Merzbau,* but there is no documentation on record. See "Ephemerides on and about Marcel Duchamp and Rrose Sélavy," in *Marcel Duchamp: Work and Life,* ed. Jennifer Gough-Cooper and

Jacques Caumont (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), 8 May 1929. For a systematic analysis of the work of Schwitters, see John Elderfield, *Kurt Schwitters* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987).

9. This development also came into the proximity of Schwitters. Alexander Dörner commissioned Lissitzky's *Second Demonstration Room* in 1926 for the display of the Hannover Museum's Twentieth Century collection, which was installed in 1928. Dörner later became friends with Schwitters, which Joan Ockman notes in "The Road Not Taken: Alexander Dörner's Way Beyond Art," in *Autonomy and Ideology: Positioning an Avant-garde in America,* ed. R. E. Somol (New York: Monocelli, 1997).

10. For an overview of these projects, see Ulrich Pohlmann, "El Lissitzky's Exhibition Designs: The Influence of His Work in Germany, Italy, and the United States, 1923–1943," in *El Lissitzky: Beyond the Abstract Cabinet: Photography, Design, Collaboration,* ed. Margarita Tupitsyn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

11. See Benjamin Buchloh, "From Factura to Factography," in *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography,* ed. Richard Bolton (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989); and Yve-Alain Bois, "El Lissitzky: Radical Reversibility," *Art in America* (April 1988).

12. Under "Collage," in the *Dictionnaire abrégé du Surréalisme* (Paris: Galerie Beaux-Arts, 1938), 7. Also included in the dictionary and relevant here is Lautréamont, whose poetry of heterogeneous assemblage—as in his famous image of "the chance meeting on a dissecting-table of a sewing-machine and an umbrella!"—was viewed by the surrealists as a key precedent for their model of collage. Such a combinatory structure represents the basic logic of the installation.

13. Breton, "Crisis of the Object" (1936), in his *Surrealism and Painting,* trans. Simon Watson Taylor (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 2002), 279. See also "Surrealist Situation of the Object" (1935), in André Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism,* trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1972), and "Surrealist Exhibition of Objects" (1936), in *Surrealism and Painting.*

14. Breton, "Crisis of the Object," 277, 275.

15. Breton, "Limits Not Frontiers of Surrealism" (1937) in his *What Is Surrealism?,* ed. Franklin Rosemont (New York: Pathfinder, 1978), 153. Breton explains that surrealist objects "are particularly enviable in their sheer power of evocation, overwhelming us with the conviction that they constitute the repositories, in art, of that miraculous charm which we long to recapture" in "Surrealist Exhibition of Objects," 283.

16. See André Breton, *Mad Love,* trans. Mary Ann Caws (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 19: "Convulsive beauty will be veiled-erotic, fixed-explosive, magic-circumstantial, or it will not be." Hal Foster argues that the "marvelous" ultimately translates the uncanny in the title essay in his *Compulsive Beauty* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993).

17. Pierre du Colombier, "Chez les surrealists," *Candide* (3 February 1938); cited in James D. Herbert, *Paris 1937: Worlds on Exhibition* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1998), 156.

18. Breton, "Crisis of the Object," 277.

19. This effect of industrial capitalism is famously registered in Marx's notion of commodity fetishism, according to which "direct social relations between persons in their work" transform into "material relations between persons and social relations between things." Karl Marx, *Capital,* vol. 1, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Penguin, 1990), 166.

20. "Travailleurs, vous êtes trahis!" (March 1936), in *Tracts surréalistes et déclarations collectives, 1922–1939,* ed. José Pierre (Paris: Terrain vague, 1982), 300.

21. Breton and Péret, "Amour," in the *Dictionnaire abrégé,* 3.

22. In many ways, Breton's notion forms the exact opposite of Jacques Lacan's roughly contemporaneous theory of the mirror stage, the mimicry within which, of course, led to forms of aggressivity and the subject's self-fragmentation, rather than to Breton's apparent goal of a redemptive reconciliation.

23. As critic Raymond Lecuyer wrote: "At the exposition of the Beaux-Arts, the exhibition apparatus which accompanies the presentation (in the shadows) of the canvases . . . is so voluminous and so

provocative that the painting plays no more than the vague role of accessory." Cited in Elyette Guiol-Benassaya, *La presse face au surréalisme de 1925 à 1938* (Paris: Insitut de Langue Française du C.N.R.S., 1982), 240–241.

24. Man Ray, *Self-Portrait* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1963), 233: "The painters were quite angry with me [for the poor lighting], but I assured them that for the following weeks the gallery would be well lighted, when people came with the intention of seeing the works."

25. Duchamp, from an artist's questionnaire, Museum of Modern Art, New York, Artist's File; cited in Francis Naumann, "Marcel Duchamp: A Reconciliation of Opposites," in *Artist of the Century*, ed. Rudolf E. Kuenzli and Francis M. Naumann (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989), nn. 16, 17.

26. For more discussion, see chapter 2.

27. Duchamp explained that these were "found" in La Villette, yet given his lack of interest in the surrealist *trouvaille*, I read these objects as readymades, especially so considering their basis in repetition–with the qualification that the installation alters the original readymade gesture in important ways, which I discuss below.

28. Alfred Barr, *Fantastic Art, Dada, and Surrealism* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1936), 12.

29. Duchamp would frequently explain how works of art had a limited life, before they became desiccated objects of history: "I believe in the original fragrance [of the work of art], but, like any fragrance, it evaporates very quickly (a few weeks, a few years at most). What remains is a dried up nut classified by the art historians in the chapter 'History of Art.'" *Affectionately, Marcel: The Selected Correspondence of Marcel Duchamp*, ed. Francis M. Naumann and Hector Obalk (Ghent: Ludion Press, 2000), 321.

30. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "The Museum Fictions of Marcel Broodthaers," in *Museums by Artists,* ed. A. A. Bronson and Peggy Gale (Toronto: Art Metropole, 1983), 45.

31. David Joselit, *Infinite Regress* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998), 97.

32. The 1938 International Surrealist Exposition included the following works by Duchamp, as listed in the show's checklist: *Pharmacie*

(1914), *Neuf moules mâlic* (1913), *La bagarre d'Austerlitz* (1921), *Rrose Sélavy et moi nous esquivons les ecchymoses des Esquimaux aux maux exquis* (1925), and an unidentified readymade (1914).

33. The theoretical underpinning of Joselit's argument owes to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia,* trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen Lane (1972; reprint, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992). Undertaking an analysis of modern capitalism, *Anti-Oedipus* defines it as a mutually defining contest of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, of the release of desire and its capture by capitalism and the state. Yet, Europe during the late 1930s was tilting precipitously toward the domination of the latter, thereby diminishing the promise of the former.

34. Marcel Duchamp, "Apropos of 'Readymades,'" in *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp,* ed. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson (New York: Da Capo, 1973), 141.

35. Cf. Breton, "Crisis of the Object," 280: Surrealist objects–including the readymade–"have one thing in common: they derive from the objects which surround us but succeed in achieving a separate identity simply through a change of role."

36. Interview with Katherine Kuh, *The Artist's Voice: Talks with Seventeen Artists* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 90.

37. Seligman papers, cited in Martica Sawin, *Surrealism in Exile* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995), 8.

38. André Breton, "Before the Curtain," preface to the catalog of the 1947 International Surrealist Exhibition in Paris, reprinted in *What Is Surrealism?,* 273 (translation modified).

39. Georges Hugnet, "L'Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme en 1938," in *Pleins et déliés: souvenirs et témoignages, 1926–1972* (La Chapelle-sur-Loire: Guy Authier, 1972), 324.

40. Breton received a stipend of 1,000 francs from the Galerie Beaux-Arts after Wildenstein (who directed the magazine *Gazette des beaux-arts*) and his associate, editor and art critic Raymond Cogniat, offered the large and well-publicized space to Eluard and Breton. See Hugnet, "L'Exposition International," 323, and Mark Polizzotti, *Revolution of*

the Mind (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1995), 445. Wildenstein had earlier associated with dissident surrealists as publisher of the journal *Documents* during 1929–30.

41. "Limits Not Frontiers of Surrealism" (Feb. 1937), in *What Is Surrealism?*, 151.

42. "Neither Your War Nor Your Peace" (September 1938), in *What Is Surrealism?*, 337.

43. Press clipping from Seligman papers, cited in Sawin, *Surrealism in Exile,* 8.

44. For larger political accounts of surrealism, see Helena Lewis, *The Politics of Surrealism* (New York: Paragon, 1988), and Robert Short, "The Politics of Surrealism, 1920–36," *Journal of Contemporary History* 1, no. 2 (1966).

45. Susan Suleiman, "Between the Street and the Salon: The Dilemma of Surrealist Politics in the 1930s," in *Visualizing Theory,* ed. Lucien Taylor (New York: Routledge, 1994), 148. See also Foster's "Auratic Traces," in his *Compulsive Beauty,* which examines the relation between Freud's uncanny and auratic spaces (including the Parisian street) in Bretonian surrealism.

46. Breton, "Nonnational Boundaries of Surealism" (1937), in his *Free Rein,* trans. Michel Parmentier and Jacqueline d'Amboise (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 8, emphasis in original.

47. Georges Bataille: "Isn't it incredible to leave to the worst slaves of capitalism, to the fascistic Croix de feu lackeys of the de Wendels, the rallying cry awaited by the anxious, disconcerted masses, the rallying cry to fight against a capitalism despised by the vast majority of men?" "Popular Front in the Streets," *Cahiers de Contre-Attaque* 1 (May 1936); reprinted in Georges Bataille, *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939,* trans. and ed. Allan Stoekl (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 164. This text was based on a speech given by Bataille at a Contre-Attaque meeting of 24 November 1935. See Allan Stoekl's "Commentary on the Texts," in *Visions of Excess,* 261. The de Wendels, at this time, were an influential French-German banking and industrial family.

48. "Toward Real Revolution," *October* 36 (spring 1986): 37.

49. Cf. Bataille, "Popular Front in the Streets," 164: "In a certain sense, the Popular Front meant nothing more than the revolutionaries' abandonment of the anticapitalist offensive; the move to the defense of antifascism; the move to the simple defense of democracy."

50. Ibid., 163.

51. As Bataille and Pierre Kaan explained in the pages of *Cahiers de Contre-Attaque* in 1936; reprinted in *Tracts surréalistes,* 288.

52. "Popular Front in the Streets," 162.

53. Cf. Bataille: "Toward Real Revolution," 38:

> Like insurrection, moreover, an organic movement develops independently of established political frameworks, in open hostility to parliamentary rule—less from a program shaped by strictly defined interests than from a state of intense emotion. This emotion at once takes on value as a sudden consciousness of superiority. And again like insurrection, an organic movement leads its followers toward violence, organizing them in strict discipline. . . . In its capabilities for immediate realization, it cannot be directly subordinated to rational conceptions.

54. See "La rupture avec 'Contre-Attaque,'" signed by Breton but not Bataille, which accuses it of "surfascism," in *Tracts surréalistes,* 301. Bataille later came to repudiate "la tendance profasciste" of Contre-Attaque in "Notice autobiographique" (1958), *Georges Bataille: Oeuvres completes,* vol. 7 (Paris: Gallimard, 1976).

55. See Susan Suleiman, "Bataille in the Street: The Search for Virility in the 1930s," in *Bataille: Writing the Sacred,* ed. Carolyn Bailey Gill (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 27.

56. Susan Buck-Morss, "The Flaneur, the Sandwichman and the Whore: The Politics of Loitering," *New German Critique* 39 (fall 1986): 117.

57. Consider Jean Grenier's criticism of surrealism in 1936 in the *Nouvelle revue française:* "[Breton] proclaims the rights of the intellect and sides for the ideal Revolution, against actual revolutionaries. But that is quite useless: the age of heresies is over . . . we are now in the age of orthodoxies. . . . To be a revolutionary, today, against Stalin, is

like being a monarchist against Mauras and Catholic against Pius X. These are very noble attitudes, but they are admissible only for young people. Maturity . . . hungers for achievements. What is urgent is not to proclaim a faith, but to join a party." Cited in Suleiman, "Between the Street and the Salon," 157, note 28.

58. Suleiman, "Between the Street and the Salon," 149.

59. Other artists who designed mannequins included Salvador Dalí, Jean Miró, Oscar Doinguez, Man Ray, Leo Malet, Wolfgang Paalen, Kurt Seligman, Yves Tanguy, Marcel Jean, Sonia Mossé, Espinoza, Maurice Henry, Jean Arp, and Matta. Man Ray photographed many of the mannequins, as did Denise Bellon, Joseph Breitenbach, Gaston Paris, Raoul Ubac, and Robert Valency.

60. Cited in Carolyn Lanchner, with William Rubin, *André Masson* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1976), 146.

61. This was *Mains de demi-mijaurées fleurissant des sillons de parterre* (Hands of half-affected women blossoming from the furrows of a flowerbed). For more on the *Street,* see Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous;* Gérard Durozoi, *Histoire du mouvement surréaliste* (Paris: Hazan, 1997); and Uwe Scheende, "Exposition International du Surréalisme, Paris, 1938," in *L'art de l'exposition*, ed. Bernd Klüser (Paris: Edition du Regard, 1998).

62. As Breton wrote in his "Speech to the Congress of Writers" in 1935: "It is not by stereotyped declarations against fascism and war that we will manage to liberate either the mind or man from the ancient chains that bind him and the new chains that threaten him. It is by the affirmation of our unshakable fidelity to the powers of emancipation of the mind and of man that we have recognized one by one and that we will fight to cause to be recognized as such." *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, 240–241. This stance was developed further in the 1938 "Manifesto for an Independent Revolutionary Art," cowritten with Leon Trotsky in Mexico just after the 1938 surrealist exhibition, reprinted in *What Is Surrealism?*

63. See Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, 21: "in the mannequin the human figure is given over to the commodity form–indeed, the mannequin is the very image of capitalist reification."

64. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness* (orig. publ. 1922), trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1971), 88.

65. Foster, *Compulsive Beauty,* 130.

66. Lukàcs, *History,* 91–92.

67. Breton, "Crisis of the Object," 276, 277.

68. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944), trans. John Coming (New York: Continuum, 1994), 6–7, 10–11.

69. Ibid., 12, 20.

70. Morel and Bazaine, in *Les temps présents;* cited in Sawin, *Surrealism in Exile,* 10.

71. Raymond Lécuyer, "Une charge d'atelier," *Le Figaro* (22 January 1938); cited in Herbert, *Paris 1937,* 156.

72. With some reflexivity the entrance to the *Surrealist Street* bore an advertisement for the company from which the mannequins had been borrowed.

73. Cited in Buck-Morss, "The Flaneur," 120. For related discussion of surrealism's interest in mannequins and automatons, see Foster, "Exquisite Corpses," in *Compulsive Beauty.*

74. Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" (1844), in *Early Writings,* ed. R. B. Bottomore (New York: 1964).

75. See Alice Kaplan, *Reproductions of Banality: Fascism, Literature, and French Intellectual Life* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 128. During the Exposition, Leni Riefenstahl's "Triumph of the Will" was projected onto Albert Speer's German Pavilion. Also see Ihor Junyk, "The Face of the Nation: State Fetishism and *Métissage* at the Exposition Internationale, Paris 1937," *Grey Room* no. 23 (spring 2006): 96–120.

76. See Claude Lefort, "The Image of the Body and Totalitarianism," in *The Political Forms of Modern Society,* ed. John B. Thompson (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986), esp. 304.

77. André Breton, "Limits Not Frontiers of Surrealism" (Feb. 1937), in *What Is Surrealism?,* 158, 160. Earlier, the surrealists responded similarly to reactionary criticism that their 1936 London exhibition was too international: "There has been a suggestion that the exhibition was governed by snob-preference for 'foreigners,' in whose honour

it is supposed to have been arranged. This is totally untrue. We have considered only the worth and surreal effect of every exhibit and are in fact, as well as in name, completely international. Surrealism belongs not to any nation but to humanity itself." "International Surrealist Bulletin" (1936), in *What Is Surrealism?*, 336.

78. Cited in *La presse*, 225. R. Lecuyer of *Le Figaro littéraire* noted that "This form of romanticism is hardly French. In order to handle it requires a mindset that the people of our race can acquire only artificially." *Le Figaro littéraire* (22 January 1938); cited in *La presse*, 241.

79. The surrealists attacked the nationalist art criticism of Waldemar George published in Wildenstein's journal *Gazette des beaux-arts*, in "Le Nationalisme dans l'art," *Minotaure* 12–13 (May 1939); reproduced in *Tracts surréalistes*.

80. On this effect of nationalism, see Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1959), discussed at length in chapter 2.

81. Raymond Cogniat, "L'exposition internationale du surréalisme," *XXe siècle*, no. 1 (1 March 1938): 25.

82. Georges Bataille, "The 'Old Mole' and the Prefix *Sur* in the Words *Surhomme* and *Surréalist*" (1929–30), in *Visions of Excess*, 34. This essay was only published decades later, however.

83. Ibid., 41.

84. Ibid., 43, 35.

85. Georges Bataille, "L'esprit moderne et le jeu des transposition," *Documents* 8 (1930): 490–491; on Bataille's materialism, see Denis Hollier, "The Use-Value of the Impossible," *October* 60 (spring 1992).

86. These were in fact the twin opponents of Contre-Attaque: "We are struggling–the goals defined as conditions of that struggle must be precisely expressed–to free men from two systems of blind forces. The first forces them to kill each other in the setting of nation against nation; the second forces them to work for an inhuman minority of producers at a time when the latter have become blind and impotent." Bataille, "Toward Real Revolution," 39.

87. Breton, "Before the Curtain," 273.

88. Duchamp in interview with C. J. Bulliet, *Chicago Daily News,* 1936; cited in "Ephemerides," 15 August 1936.

89. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* 121, 13.

90. Coal supplied 90 percent of French primary energy consumption during the war years. The coal industry had been rationalized during the 1920s and '30s through the use of Taylor's scientific management. Miners, made up mostly of French and migrant laborers, were heavily exposed to the vicissitudes of the market, especially during the depression. See Darryl Holter, *The Battle for Coal: Miners and the Politics of Nationalization in France, 1940–1950* (Decalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1992).

91. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* 28.

92. That alienation materializes itself through a perceptual estrangement was recognized long ago by Marx. As he explained, material objects seem clear enough in terms of use-value, like a chair made from wood whose value is determined by the labor necessary to produce it. "But, so soon as it emerges as a commodity, it is changed into a thing which transcends sensuousness. It not only stands with its feet on the ground, but, in relation to all other commodities, it stands on its head, and evolves out of its wooden brain grotesque ideas, far more wonderful than if it were to begin dancing of its own free will." Marx, *Das Capital,* 163–164.

93. Georges Bataille, "Nietzsche and the Fascists," *Acéphale* 2 (January 1937); reprinted in *Visions of Excess,* 194.

94. Georges Bataille, "Psychological Structure of Fascism," *La critique sociale* 10 (November 1933); reprinted in *Visions of Excess,* 155, 143.

95. Ibid., 150 (reprint).

96. Bataille, "Psychological Structure of Fascism," 151: "In actuality, this negated mass has ceased to be itself in order to become effectively . . . the chief's thing and like a part of the chief himself."

97. Bettina Wilson, "Surrealism in Paris," *Vogue* (1 March 1938).

98. Jean Fraysse, "Pour le Surréalisme: Un art d'insolite grandeur," *Le Figaro littéraire* (22 January 1938); cited in *La presse,* 242.

99. Adorno, "Looking Back on Surrealism," in *Notes to Literature,* vol. I, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 88.

100. Cf. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* 13: "The unity of the manipulated collective consists in the negation of each individual"; and Lukacs, *History,* 91: "Consumer articles no longer appear as the products of an organic process within a community (as for example in a village community). They now appear, on the one hand, as abstract members of a species identical by definition with its other members and, on the other hand, as isolated objects the possession or non-possession of which depends on rational calculations."

101. Eric Michaud, *The Cult of Art in Nazi Germany* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 156:

> The industrial character of the extermination, today regarded as one of the most distinctive features of the Nazi horror, was in fact inseparable from the determination to industrialize the production of the new man. The industrial production of death on the one hand and life on the other constituted two aspects of one and the same process of selection according to the National Socialist Idea, although it quite clearly produced far more death than it engendered life.

102. André Breton, *La clé des champs* (Paris, 1967), 135–138. The commonest interpretation of Duchamp's 1938 installation to date is that it performed the surrealist "marvelous" (see Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous*). However, this view remains incomplete in that it misses the significant ways in which Duchamp's contribution operated on subversive levels, enacting a critical response not only to the art institution, but to surrealism itself, and even to Duchamp's earlier artistic practice. It misreads Duchamp's installation as positive evidence of surrealism's invigoration rather than as a critical sign of its demise.

103. Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community,* ed. Peter Connor, trans. Peter Connor, Lisa Garbus, Michael Holland, and Simona Sawhney (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 3.

104. Ibid., 12, 13: "Thus the logic of Nazi Germany was not only that of the extermination of the other, of the subhuman deemed exterior to the communion of blood of soil, but also, effectively, the logic of sacrifice aimed at all those in the 'Aryan' community who did not satisfy the criteria of pure immanence."

105. Bataille, "The Psychological Structure of Fascism," 151. "Starting with formless and impoverished elements, the army, under the imperative impulse, becomes organized and internally achieves a homogeneous form on account of the negation directed at the disordered character of its elements." If there is resonance between this reading and Freud's analysis of "group psychology," then it is because Bataille considered Freud's study to be "an essential introduction to the understanding of fascism," 160.

106. Bataille, "Nietzschean Chronicle," 204.

107. Maurice Blanchot clarifies this further: "Privation of the Head excluded not only the primacy of what the head symbolized, the leader, reasonable reason, reckoning, measure and power, including the power of the symbolic, but exclusion itself understood as a deliberate and sovereign act which would have restored its primacy under the form of its downfall." *The Unavowable Community,* trans. Pierre Joris (New York: Station Hill Press, 1983), 16 (translation modified).

108. Bataille, "Nietzschean Chronicle," 208.

109. Ibid.

110. Bataille's later thoughts on this glimpse the coming society of consensus, which defines our own social condition: "Where it had once been the sacred—or heterogeneous—elements that established cohesion, instead of constituting society and social bonds, it could well now represent nothing but its subversion." Georges Bataille, "The Moral Meaning of Sociology" (1946), in *The Absence of Myth: Writings on Surrealism,* ed. Michael Richardson (New York: Verso, 1994), 107.

111. Bataille, "Nietzschean Chronicle," 208.

112. Nancy explains: "If the *I* cannot say that it is dead, if the *I* disappears in effect in *its* death, in that death that is precisely what is most proper to it and most inalienably its own, it is because the *I* is something

other than a subject," *Inoperable Community,* 14. We thus return to Rimbaud's expression: "Je est un autre."

113. Nancy, *Inoperable Community,* 14.

114. Michaud, *The Cult of Art,* 41.

115. Nancy, *Inoperable Community,* 2.

116. Man Ray, *Self-Portrait,* 233.

117. Wilson, "Surrealism in Paris," 144.

118. "The illusion that the bags were full and very heavy was enhanced by the fact that coal dust came down from the used coal bags," explains Arturo Schwarz, *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Abrams, 1969), 506.

119. Lacan addresses how the specular dialectic of the mirror phase stands in opposition to the theoretical notion of an absolute subject in "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience," in *Écrits: A Selection,* trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1977). His first public presentation of this theory occurred at the meeting of the International Psychoanalytic Association in Marienbad, Germany, in 1936. During this trip he traveled to Berlin to witness the Olympics, where he experienced the fascist spectacle firsthand, which informs his later analysis of the mirror stage. See Elizabeth Roudinesco, *Lacan and Co.: A History of Psychoanalysis in France, 1925–1985,* trans. Jeffrey Mehlman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 133.

120. See Jacques Lacan, "Of the Gaze as *Objet petit a,*" in *The Four Fundamental Concepts,* ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1973).

121. Jean Fraysse, "Pour le Surréalisme: Un art d'insolite grandeur," *Le Figaro littéraire,* 22 January 1938: 7; cited in *La presse,* 242.

122. The formulation is that of Jean-Luc Nancy, made in an interview with Chantal Pontbriand, *Parachute* 100 (Oct.–Dec. 2000). Nancy, whose study glosses Bataille, articulates these terms in *The Inoperable Community,* xxxviii: "Being in common has nothing to do with communion, with fusion into a body, into a unique and ultimate identity that would no longer be exposed. Being in common means, to the contrary, no longer having, in any form, in any empirical or

ideal place, such a substantial identity, and sharing this (narcissistic) 'lack of identity.'"

123. Blanchot, *The Unavowable Community*, 3.

4 Duchamp's Labyrinth

1. Duchamp commissioned John Schiff to photograph the installation. The catalog credits Duchamp with "his twine," "sixteen miles of string," though probably around one mile was used. For a documentary account of the show, its history and reception, see Lewis Kachur, "The New World: 'First Papers of Surrealism,'" in *Displaying the Marvelous: Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dalí, and Surrealist Exhibition* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001).

2. Sidney Janis, "Foreword," *First Papers of Surrealism*, ed. André Breton (New York: Coordinating Council of French Relief Societies, 1942), n.p.

3. Cynthia Goodman, "Frederick Kiesler: Designs for Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century Gallery," *Arts Magazine* 51 (June 1977): 93–94. See also her more recent "The Art of Revolutionary Display Techniques," in *Frederick Kiesler* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1989). On the relation between Kiesler and Duchamp, who first met in 1925 at the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes in Paris, see Jennifer Gough-Cooper and Jacques Caumont, "Frederick Kiesler and the Bride Stripped Bare," in *Frederick Kiesler 1890–1965*, ed. Yehuda Safran (London: Architectural Association, 1989).

4. Frederick Kiesler, "Design-Correlation: Marcel Duchamp's 'Big-Glass'" (1937), in *Frederick Kiesler: Selected Writings*, ed. Siegfried Gohr and Gunda Luyken (Ostfieldern bei Stuttgart: Verlag Gerd Hatje, 1996), 38.

5. In addition to Duchamp, the German art historian and experimental curator Alexander Dörner must be cited as an important source for Kiesler's design aesthetic. Dörner was already renowned for his support of Lissitzky's 1926 Abstract Cabinet at the Provincialmuseum in Hannover. With Herbert Bayer, Dörner organized "Bauhaus,

1919–1928" in 1938 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, whose design used suspension supports and angled paintings toward the viewer's eye. Bayer wrote in his "Fundamentals of Exhibition Design" (1936) that a display "should not retain its distance from the spectator, it should be brought close to him, penetrate and leave an impression on him . . . ," which figures as an important precursor to Kiesler's strategy. Cited in Joan Ockman, "The Road Not Taken: Alexander Dörner's Way Beyond Art," in *Autonomy and Ideology: Positioning an Avant-Garde in America,* ed. R. E. Somol (New York: Monacelli, 1997), 112.

6. For an extensive examination of the development of nationalism in France, see *Fascist Visions: Art and Ideology in France and Italy,* ed. Matthew Affron and Mark Antliff (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997).

7. The phrase is borrowed from section 377 of Nietzsche's *The Gay Science.* Georges Bataille "Nietzsche and the Fascists" (orig. publ. *Acéphale* 2 [January 1937]), in his *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939,* trans. and ed. Allan Stoekl (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 193.

8. "La patrie et la famille" (1936), signed by Bataille, Breton, Maurice Heine, and Georges Péret, reprinted in *Tracts surréalistes et déclarations collectives 1922–1939,* ed. José Pierre (Paris: Le Terrain Vague, 1980), 293–294. See also "Les 200 familles," "Appel à l'action," "Sous le feu des canons français . . . et alliés," "Ni de votre guerre ni de votre paix!" and "N'imitez pas Hitler!" Bataille's position is remarkable for how it prefigures the later critique of the repressive "generalized oedipalism" of late capitalism elaborated in Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1972), trans. Robert Jurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983).

9. For the history of the avant-garde exodus from Europe during the war, see Martica Sawin's *Surrealism in Exile and the Beginning of the New York School* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995), and *Exiles and Emigrés: The Flight of European Artists from Hitler,* ed. Stephanie Barron (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1997).

10. André Breton, "Originality and Freedom" (1942), in his *What Is Surrealism?*, ed. Franklin Rosemont (New York: Pathfinder, 1978), 208.

11. For more of Breton's statements on this position, see his "Speech to the Congress of Writers" (1935), in *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen Lane (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1982); and André Breton, along with Leon Trotsky, "Manifesto: Towards a Free Revolutionary Art," *Parisan Review* 4, no. 1 (fall 1938), reprinted in *Free Rein*, trans. Michel Parmentier and Jacqueline d'Ambroise (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995).

12. André Breton, "Prolegomena to a Third Surrealist Manifesto or Not" (1942), in *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, 286 (originally published in *VVV* no. 1 [June 1942]).

13. Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny" (1919), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 17, ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute for Psycho-Analysis, 1981), 245.

14. See the discussions of the surrealist uncanny in Rosalind Krauss, "Corpus delicti," in *L'amour fou: Photography and Surrealism* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1986); and in Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993).

15. Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, 206. Breton's long-standing idealism, however, had been challenged earlier by Bataille's materialism. See Bataille's critique of Breton's "Second Surrealist Manifesto," in "The 'Old Mole' and the Prefix *Sur* in the Words *Surhomme* [Superman] and *Surrealist*," in Bataille, *Visions of Excess*.

16. André Breton, "Declaration VVV" (1942), reprinted in *What Is Surrealism?*, 337.

17. Breton, "Prolegomena," 288.

18. Ibid., 293.

19. On the Nazis' relation to myth and Hitler's aspirations as an artist-dictator to fashion a new society, see Eric Michaud, *The Cult of Art in Nazi Germany* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., 338.

22. André Breton, "What Tanguy Veils and Reveals," *View* 2 (May 1942), n.p.

23. The catalog was partially designed by Duchamp. As a barely disguised reference to the reality of violence and warfare during these years, its cover photograph depicts a stone wall perforated by bullet holes, while the back, in parodic reverse, shows a photographic close-up of Swiss cheese.

24. Roger Caillois, "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," trans. John Shepley, *October* 31 (winter 1984): 28, 30. This essay was also included in Caillois' *Le mythe et l'homme* of 1938.

25. Caillois, "Mimicry," 28.

26. Ibid., 31.

27. See Ernst Bloch, *Heritage of our Times* (1935), trans. Neville and Stephen Plaice (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991). Hal Foster discusses Bloch and the potential for the dialectical reclamation of myth as antifascist within surrealism in "Outmoded Spaces," in *Compulsive Beauty.*

28. Quoted from a letter to Kurt Seligman, cited in Sawin, *Surrealism in Exile,* 217.

29. Expressive of the author's own position, these quotes come in the form of a debate between three fictional characters in Harold Rosenberg, "Breton – A Dialogue," *View* 3, no. 2 (summer 1942): n.p.

30. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* trans. John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 1994), 6–7.

31. Kiesler, "Notes on Designing the Gallery," in *Selected Writings,* 44.

32. Kiesler, "Design Correlation," 76.

33. Ibid., 42.

34. Ibid.

35. Frederick Kiesler, "Cultural Nomads" (1960), in *Selected Writings,* 98.

36. Kiesler, cited in Cynthia Goodman's "Frederick Kiesler: Designs for Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century Gallery," 93.

37. "Notes on Architecture as Sculpture," *Art in America* 54, no. 3 (May–June, 1966): 68.

38. "*Mathématique sensible – architecture du temps,*" *Minotaure* 11 (spring 1938), 43; translated in Lucy Lippard, *Surrealists on Art* (New York:

Prentice Hall, 1970), 168. It is the potential collapse of psycho-physiological fusion into its deathly counterpart that leads Vidler to read Matta's "intrauterine" designs as ultimately unsatisfactory: "At once the refuge of inevitably unfulfilled desire and the potential crypt of living burial, the womb-house offered little solace to daily life." Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994), 152–153.

39. "*D'un certain automatisme du goût,*" *Minotaure* 3–4 (December 1933). For his earlier condemnation of nationalism and traditional humanist categories, see "Dada Manifesto 1918," in Tristan Tzara, *Seven Dada Manifestos,* trans. Barbara Wright (New York: Riverrun Press, 1981).

40. Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I" and "Aggressivity in Psychoanalysis," in *Écrits,* trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1977).

41. "Le complexe, facteur concret de la psychologie familiale," in *L'encyclopédie française,* ed. A. de Monzie, vol. 8 (Paris, 1938), 8. For discussion of Lacan's text, see Carolyn Dean, *The Self and Its Pleasures* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

42. For an alternative reading of Kiesler's project, see Mark Linder's "Wild Kingdom: Frederick Kiesler's Display of the Avant-Garde," in *Autonomy and Ideology: Positioning an Avant-Garde in America,* ed. R. E. Somol (New York: Monacelli, 1997). Linder treats Kiesler's designs as productive of a subject construction continuous with those found in Lacan's theory of the mirror stage and Caillois' discussion of mimicry. Such a complex subjectivity, marked above all by psychic division, in my view, appears completely absent in Kiesler's rhetoric and display constructions, particularly around 1942.

43. Benjamin Buchloh, "The Museum Fictions of Marcel Broodthaers," in *Museums by Artists,* ed. A. A. Bronson and Peggy Gale (Toronto: Art Metropole, 1983), 46.

44. "Artist at Ease," *New Yorker* 18 (24 October 1942), 13.

45. "Agonized Humor," *Newsweek* 20 (26 October 1942), 76.

46. Harriet and Carroll Janis, interview with Marcel Duchamp, winter 1953, typescript, Philadelphia Museum of Art Archives, 7–16; cited in Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous,* 226.

47. For example, "The Passing Shows," *Art News* 41 (1 November 1942); and Royal Cortissoz, "George Bellows and Some Others," *New York Herald Tribune* (25 October 1942), section VI, p. 5.

48. "Surrealist Painting," *Nation* 12, 19 (August 1944); reprinted in Clement Greenberg, *The Collected Essays and Criticism*, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), vol. 1, 225.

49. Interview with Francis Roberts, "I propose to strain the laws of physics," *Art News* 67 (December 1968): 47.

50. C. J. Bulliet's interview with Duchamp for the *Chicago Daily News,* cited in Jennifer Gough-Cooper and Jacques Caumont, "Ephemerides on and about Marcel Duchamp and Rrose Sélavy," in *Marcel Duchamp: Work and Life,* ed. Pontus Hulten (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), under August 25, 1936.

51. "Looking Back on Surrealism," in *Notes to Literature,* vol. I, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 87.

52. Ibid., 88.

53. Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life* (1951), trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (New York: Verso, 1991), no. 18, 38–39 (my emphasis).

54. Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. C. Lenhardt (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), 464.

55. Harriet and Carroll Janis, interview with Marcel Duchamp.

56. In relation to a *View Magazine* proposal in 1945.

57. David Joselit, *Infinite Regress: Marcel Duchamp, 1910–1941* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998), 81–84.

58. See William Camfield, *Francis Picabia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 172. Camfield explains that *Danse de Saint-Guy* was refashioned as *Tabac-Rat* sometime before 1949.

59. Duchamp's *Minotaure* guards the back cover of issue no. 6 (December 1934).

60. Marcel Jean, *The History of Surrealist Painting* (New York: Grove Press, 1960), 312; William Rubin, *Dada and Surrealism and Their Heritage* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1968), 160.

61. Rubin makes this argument in *Dada and Surrealism,* 160–169; it recurs in Romy Golan, "Matta, Duchamp et le myth: un nouveau paradigm pour le dernière phase du surréalisme," in *Matta* (Paris: Le Centre Georges Pompidou, 1985); and in Sabine Eckmann, "Surrealism in Exile: Responses to the European Destruction of Humanism," in *Exiles and Emigrés,* 179–180.

62. Duchamp delivered "The Creative Act" in Houston at the meeting of the American Federation of the Arts, April 1957. It is reprinted in *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp,* ed. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson (New York: Da Capo, 1973), 139–140. Thanks to Sheldon Nodelman on this point.

63. See Susan Suleiman, "Bataille in the Street: The Search for Virility in the 1930s," in *Bataille: Writing the Sacred,* ed. Carolyn Bailey Gill (New York: Routledge, 1995).

64. Denis Hollier, "On Equivocation between Literature and Politics," *Absent without Leave,* trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997).

65. Hollier, "Unsatisfied Desire," in *Absent without Leave,* 70.

66. Georges Bataille, "Architecture," trans. Dominic Faccini, *October* 60 (spring 1992). The essay originally appeared in *Documents* 2 (May 1929).

67. Georges Bataille, "The Labyrinth" (originally published in *Recherches philosophiques* 5 [1935–36]), reprinted in *Visions of Excess,* 172. Hereafter, page references will be given in the text.

68. Further: "One need only to follow, for a short time, the traces of the repeated circuits of words to discover, in a disconcerting vision, the labyrinthine structure of the human being" (174). Hollier explains that nevertheless there is a notion of an autonomous identity that threads itself through being's differentiations, represented in what Bataille calls *ipséité:* "whatever differentiating quality there is in an individual that is irreplaceable and incomparable, that is itself (*ipse*) and not another; this *ipséité* implies also that there is a self-identity preserving this individual differential through the changes that affect it." *Against Architecture: The Writings of Georges Bataille,* trans. Betsy

Wing (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989), 71. Yet Bataille remains ultimately undecided, asking further whether "in regard to being, is this autonomy the final appearance, or is it simply error?" ("The Labyrinth," 173).

69. This critical disregard rhymes with how Bataille viewed the museum: "Not only does the ensemble of the world's museums now represent a colossal piling-up of wealth, but the totality of museum visitors throughout the world surely offers the very grandiose spectacle of a humanity by now liberated from material concerns and devoted to contemplation." "Museum" (1930), reprinted in *October* 36 (spring 1986): 25.

70. For Jacques Derrida, the spacings between words represent the structural conditions of their meaningful differentiation. See Jacques Derrida, "Parergon," in *The Truth in Painting,* trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

71. As Hollier explains, even Bataille's writing "must necessarily pass through a pyramidal moment. Like all writing, it is caught between vocabulary and syntactical play, between the tantalization of resemblances and the metonymic expansion of cutoff points." *Against Architecture,* 73.

72. As Derrida defines the *parergon:*

> neither work (*ergon*) nor outside the work, neither inside nor outside, neither above nor below, it disconcerts any opposition but does not remain indeterminate and it *gives rise* to the work. It is no longer merely around the work. That which it puts in place—the instances of the frame, the title, the signature, the legend, etc.—does not stop disturbing the *internal* order of discourse on painting, its works, its commerce, its evaluations, its surplus-values, its speculation, its law, its hierarchies. ("Passe-Partout," in *The Truth in Painting,* 9)

73. Hollier, *Against Architecture,* 60.
74. Cabanne, *Dialogues,* 85.
75. Bataille, "Architecture," 25.

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