According to his wishes, Marcel Duchamp’s last work Étant donnés: 1° la chute d’eau / 2° le gaz d’éclairage (Given: 1. The Waterfall, 2. The Illuminating Gas) (1946-64) was unveiled after his death at the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1968. It is a meta-picture that represents the culmination of many themes that preoccupied his practice, including speculative science, eroticism, and paradigms of modernism. As Duchamp no doubt intended, it continues to evade fixed interpretations. He was fond of saying: ‘there is no solution, because there is no problem’. Nonetheless, this lecture will attempt to decode some of Given’s key symbolism, and unravel the meaning at the heart of Duchamp’s final joke.

Slide list:

1. Anonymous, The Duchamp Brothers, 1913, black and white photographic print, 11 x 17cm, Smithsonian Institution collections
2. Marcel Duchamp, The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (The Large Glass) 1915-1923, Oil, varnish, lead foil, lead wire, and dust on two glass panels, 277.5 x 177.8 x 8.6 cm, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia
3. Duchamp, Etant Donnés: 1° la chute d’eau 2° le gaz d’éclairage (Given- 1. The waterfall, 2. The illuminating gas), 1946-64, mixed media assemblage: wooden door, bricks, velvet, wood, leather stretched over an armature of metal, twigs, aluminium, iron, glass, Plexiglas, linoleum, cotton, motor, electric lights, gas lamp (Bec Auer type), 242.6 x 177.8 cm, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia
4. Gustave Courbet, L’Origine du Monde, (The Origin of the World), 1866, 46 x 55cm, Oil on Canvas, Musée d’Orsay, Paris
5. André Masson, Terre Érotic (Erotic Landscape), 1955, 46 x 55cm, Oil on wood panel, Private collection
6. Duchamp, Le Bec Auer, 1968, etching and aquatint on paper, 34.6 x 23.3 cm, Philadelphia Museum of Art
7. Gustave Courbet, Woman with White Stockings, 1864, Oil on canvas, 64.1 x 81.3cm, The Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia
8. Duchamp, Morceaux Choisis d’Après Courbet (Selected Details After Courbet), 1968, etching and aquatint on paper, 34.4 x 23.2cm, Philadelphia Museum of Art
9. Gustave Courbet, Woman with a Parrot, 1866, 129.5 x 195.6cm, Oil on canvas, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
10. Duchamp, Green Box notes for the Large Glass, 1934, box containing collotype reproductions on various papers, 33 x 28.3 x 2.5 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art
11. Duchamp, *Landscape collage on plywood (study for Given)*, 1959, collage of cut gelatin silver photographs over paper, with paint, graphite, crayon-ball-point pen ink, and adhesive on plywood panel, with pressure-sensitive tape, 67 x 99.4cm, Philadelphia Museum of Art

12. Duchamp, *Du Tignet*, 1959, pencil, 31 x 24cm, Collection Mimi Fogg

13. Duchamp, *Cols Alités or Bedridden Mountains, Project for the 1959 Model of The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even*, 32.1 x 24.4cm, Ink and pencil on paper, Private collection

14. Man Ray, *Marcel Duchamp’s Dust Breeding*, 1920, Gelatin Silver Print photograph of the Large Glass, 23.9 x 30.4cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY

15. Marcel Duchamp, André Breton, Enrico Donati, *Le Surréalisme en 1947 or Prière de toucher [Please touch]*, 1947, illustrated book, multiple, edition 89/999, 25.0 (h) x 22.8 (w) cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

16. Albrecht Dürer, *Draughtsman Making a Perspective Drawing of a Reclining Woman*, 1600 Woodcut, 7.7 x 21.4 cm, Metropolitan Museum


18. Duchamp, *Handmade Stereopticon Slide*, Original version, Buenos Aires, 1918-19 pencil over photographic stereopticon slide, each image 5.7 x 5.7 cm, The Museum of Modern Art

19. Richard Hamilton (collaboration with Marcel Duchamp), *Oculist Witnesses*, 1968, laminated glass multiple with screenprint in silver and the aluminum plinth, 65.2 x 50.5 cm, private collection

20. Titian, *Diana and Actaeon*, 1556-9, oil on canvas, 184.5 x 202.2 cm, National Gallery, Washington

Reference:


Banz, Stefan (ed.), *Marcel Duchamp and the Forestay Waterfall*, (Zurich: JRP/Ringier, 2011)


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