

FROM ART TO PERFORMANCE: MARCEL DUCHAMP'S *IMAGERY OF CHESS*
EXHIBITION AT THE JULIEN LEVY GALLERY

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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Title: From Art to Performance: Marcel Duchamp's *Imagery of Chess* Exhibition at the Julien Levy Gallery

In 1944, Marcel Duchamp organized a widely publicized exhibition at the Julien Levy Gallery in New York City, *The Imagery of Chess*. This thesis will explore The *Imagery of Chess* exhibition in terms of the intertwined aspects of Duchamp's identity: artist, chess master, publicist of art, and curator. Using chess as a paradigm, the trajectory of Duchamp's interest in chess as an object to chess as a process will be traced. This thesis will argue that the exhibition synthesized the "successive moves" of Duchamp's career as an artist, chess master, publicist of art, and curator while popularizing European avant-garde art in the eyes of the American art public. *The Imagery of Chess* also served as a precedent for two subsequent performances in which Duchamp participated in the 1960s: his chess performance with Eve Babitz in 1963 at the Pasadena Art Museum and the 1968 *Reunion* performance with John Cage.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I wondered if this was quite fair play, but Marcel laughed at my scruples, ‘Don’t you think your opponent is having as much consultation as possible, too?’ Finally, with Marcel’s help, I won one game so brilliantly that I received an irate card back from my opponent asking, ‘What kind of devils do you have working for you in that confounded gallery?’¹

In his *Memoir of an Art Gallery*, gallery owner Julien Levy recollects the moment after the end of World War II in 1945 in which he had asked Marcel Duchamp for help with a chess games he was playing by correspondence. The anecdote is illuminating for several reasons. First, it highlights the friendship between Levy and Duchamp. As Dorothea Tanning recollected in her essay “The Julien Levy I Knew,” “in chess as in ideas [Levy] was often benignly monitored by Duchamp.”² Secondly, it points to Duchamp’s approach to chess as a collaborative activity in which the identity of the player is less important than the game itself. While Levy was uneasy with the idea of asking for assistance, Duchamp questioned his friend’s naïve assumption that his opponent would play unassisted. What is particularly revealing in this exchange is the response of Levy’s opponent, who discerned based on Levy’s performance in this match that he had received assistance from “devils” in his “confounded gallery.” To Levy’s perplexed and angered opponent, Levy’s gallery was not only a major venue in 1940s

¹ Julien Levy, *Memoir of an Art Gallery* (Boston: MFA Publications, a division of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 2003; first published 1977), 275-276.

² Dorothea Tanning, preface to *Julien Levy: Portrait of an Art Gallery*, ed. Ingrid Schaffner et al. (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1998), 18.

New York for the promotion and exhibition of European modern art, it also represented a community that cultivated unpredictable, “devilish” avant-garde practices that could influence even a long-distance game of chess.

Levy’s unnamed opponent correctly intuited the strong connection between chess and the gallery’s activities. In December 1944, under Duchamp’s direction, the Julien Levy Gallery organized a widely publicized exhibition that brought together the exhibition of works of art with the performance of chess games. At the exhibition entitled *The Imagery of Chess*, on view were, “paintings, sculpture, newly designed chessmen, music, and miscellany,” as indicated on the invitation (Fig. 1; see the Appendix for all figures).³ The folded quarto sheet leaflet or catalogue printed in red and black ink announces the opening of the exhibition on 12 December. On the title page, the black text is contrasted with two bold red silhouettes of the Queen and the Bishop designed by Max Ernst. Inside the leaflet, a short statement about the exhibition “On Designing Chessmen” is accompanied by a list of thirty-two participants of *The Imagery of Chess* exhibition. The number thirty-two corresponds to the number of chess pieces on a board, and the names are arranged to mimic a chessboard in its grid-like pattern with alternating red and black text. Of those included were six couples, seven women, painters, sculptors, musicians, architects, ceramicists, graphic designers, photographers, a research librarian, and a noted psychoanalyst.⁴ The back page of the leaflet is an announcement for the Blindfolded Chess Event in which seven participating artists played seven chess games

³ Marcel Duchamp, “Imagery of Chess Invitation,” 1944, Julien Levy Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

⁴ Larry List, *The Imagery of Chess Revisited* (New York: Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, 2005), 15-16.

simultaneously with the “World Champion of Blindfold Chess,” George Koltanowski. Duchamp acted as a judge or “arbiter” of this “by invitation only” event. Above the event announcement is a diagram entitled *Brotherhood of Sister Squares* from Duchamp’s and chess theorist Vitaly Halberstadt’s book on endgame strategies, *Opposition and Sister Squares Are Reconciled* (1932). The reproduced diagram shows the lines of opposition or obstruction between players in a chess match.

The Imagery of Chess exhibition was widely publicized in popular media. The major publicity surrounding the exhibition and the Julien Levy Gallery included articles and reviews from periodicals such as *Newsweek*, *Art Digest*, *Chess Review*, and *Town & Country* and from local New York television stations like WCBW- Channel 2, who aired a fifteen-minute segment highlighting *The Imagery of Chess* on the evening of 22 December 1944.⁵ It is unclear if the popular reception of the exhibition had informed the scant attention that Duchamp scholars had thus far attributed to the event. However, perhaps Duchamp’s claim about the uselessness of chess also played a role in the superficial consideration the exhibition has received since 1944. As Duchamp insisted, “there is no social purpose [in chess]... that above all is important.”⁶ In Arturo Schwarz’s monumental monograph, *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp*, the exhibition is not

⁵ Ingrid Schaffner, “First Match, Vantages to Gain,” in *Imagery of Chess Revisited*, by Larry List (New York: Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, 2005), 7. J.G. [Josephine Gibbs], “Presenting the ‘Imagery of Chess’” (exhibition review); *Art Digest* (December 15, 1944): 11. Kenneth Harkness, “Chessmen of Tomorrow,” *Chess Review*, January, 1945, 5; “Levy’s Gambit,” *Newsweek*, December 25, 1944, 82; “Radio Today,” *New York Times*, December 22, 1944, 29; Broadcast live from 8:45 to 9:00 p.m. E.S.T., no existing film footage of the program has been found to date.

⁶ Pierre Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, trans. Ron Padgett (London: Thames and Hudson, 1971), 19.

mentioned until the end of the enormous book via a photograph taken of the *Pocket Chess Set with Rubber Glove* (1944; 1966 replica) (Fig. 2). In Robert Lebel's monograph, *Marcel Duchamp, The Imagery of Chess* is only mentioned in passing before the author discusses another exhibition held in the same year at the Yale University Art Gallery, which included the work of Duchamp and his two elder brothers. While Francis Naumann writes at length on Duchamp and his participation in the exhibition with the *Pocket Chess Set with Rubber Glove* in his essay "Marcel Duchamp: The Art of Chess," he examines neither Duchamp's role as organizer of the exhibition nor the exhibition's importance as regards his career. While some scholars mention *The Imagery of Chess*, even if only as a contextual footnote, other scholars fail to mention the exhibition at all. Jean Clair, Octavio Paz, Pierre Cabanne, Calvin Tomkins, and Bradley Bailey all omitted this exhibition from their monographs, books, and essays on Duchamp. Clair's catalogue raisonné in French does not include an image of the *Pocket Chess Set with Rubber Glove*. In Paz's critical studies and essay on Duchamp, he makes no note of *The Imagery of Chess* in either the original Spanish versions or English translations. The only event Paz notes for the year 1944 is an exhibition at the Yale University Art Gallery. Duchamp's official biographer, Tomkins oddly also completely omits *The Imagery of Chess* in his otherwise comprehensive biography.

Given the typical neglect of *The Imagery of Chess* exhibition in major monographs on Duchamp, one owes the only comprehensive account of the exhibition to the artist Larry List. In an effort to recreate a chess table by Isamu Noguchi originally made for Duchamp's exhibition, List re-constructed *The Imagery of Chess* at the Noguchi

Museum in 2005. List's catalogue, *The Imagery of Chess Revisited*, includes many previously unpublished documents and images as well as some first hand reviews and photographs of the exhibition. List's detective work gave the Noguchi Museum the opportunity to re-create the exhibition in 2005. As stated by Bonnie Rychlak, the curator of the Noguchi Museum, the exhibition aligned with her vision of uncovering overlooked aspects of Noguchi, such as his chess-related objects, and relating his Modernist works to social and cultural contexts as well as to the works of other twentieth century artists.⁷ The Noguchi catalogue provides historical context for the exhibition through excerpts taken from the autobiographies of Julien Levy and Dorothea Tanning and from essays written by Richard Filipowski and Levy's son, Jonathan Levy Bayer. List's most important contributions to both the 2005 exhibition and the catalogue include the many replicas of lost chess sets, boards, and tables he recreated according to gallery records, reviews, and photographs. For List, *The Imagery of Chess* represents "oppositions reconciled," insofar as it gathered American avant-garde artists and their European émigré "mentor-rivals"⁸ artists in one coherent exhibition through their common connection with Duchamp, Levy, and chess.

This thesis relies much on List's work but also expands on it by considering the reconciliation of art and chess in *The Imagery of Chess* in relation to Duchamp's career as a curator or publicist of art. With the help of Duchamp, many of the most famous and relatively unknown European and American avant-garde artists were brought together

⁷ Bonnie Rychlak, foreword to *Imagery of Chess Revisited*, by Larry List (New York: Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, 2005), viii.

⁸ List, *Imagery of Chess*, 22.

into a sizable community to create a never before seen exhibition of chess-related works of art. By staging *The Imagery of Chess* at the Julien Levy Gallery, a major Manhattan destination for modern art and photography in the 1930s and 1940s, Duchamp also helped to popularize avant-garde art in the United States. *The Imagery Of Chess* therefore served as important starting points for artists such as Arshile Gorky, Robert Motherwell, and Dorothea Tanning. *The Imagery of Chess* was among the first exhibitions for all three artist's works and they would emerge as leading figures in the avant-garde art world during the 1940s.

Duchamp's patron and chess partner, Walter Arensberg once described his vast collection of works by Duchamp as a "chronological sequence of the successive moves in a game of chess," to which Duchamp replied, "absolutely right... but when will I administer checkmate... or will I be mated?"⁹ This thesis will explore *The Imagery of Chess* exhibition in terms of the intertwined aspects of Duchamp's identity: artist, chess master, publicist of art, and curator. Using chess as a paradigm, the trajectory of Duchamp's interest in chess as an object to chess as a process will be traced. While other scholars have discussed Duchamp's chess related works with an emphasis on his position as an artist, this thesis will examine the trajectory of a selection of his chess related works through his role as a curator, a role that has been overlooked in his scholarship. This thesis will argue that the exhibition synthesized these "successive moves" of Duchamp's career as an artist, chess master, publicist of art, and curator while popularizing European

⁹ Marcel Duchamp to Walter Arensberg, 14 July 1951, and response letter from Marcel Duchamp to Louise and Walter Arensberg, 22 July 1951. Correspondence Series, Arensberg Archives, Philadelphia Museum of Art Archives.

avant-garde art in the eyes of the American art public. *The Imagery of Chess* also served as a precedent for two subsequent performances in which Duchamp participated in the 1960s: his chess performance with Eve Babitz during his 1963 retrospective at the Pasadena Art Museum and the 1968 *Reunion* performance with John Cage. In the conclusion, *The Imagery of Chess Revisited* and subsequent reception of the 2005 restaged exhibition by Larry List will be examined.

CHAPTER II

DUCHAMP AS CHESS PLAYER AND CURATOR

Before delving into the circumstances that gave rise to *The Imagery of Chess* exhibition, Duchamp's second career as a professional chess player and chess critic must be noted. Duchamp's interest in chess is widely regarded as more than a simple diversion in his life, yet, as art historian Bradley Bailey points out, few scholars have explored the significance of chess in relation to his art. The first work in which Duchamp references chess is his painting *The Chess Game* (1910) (Fig.3), exhibited at the *Salon D'Automne* in October 1910. Duchamp's two older brothers, Jacques Villon (formerly, Gaston Duchamp) on the left and Raymond Duchamp-Villon on the right are arranged in a diagonal composition in the background of the picture plane, deeply engaged in a game of chess. In the foreground, are Duchamp's two sisters-in-law, Gaby Villon seated at the tea table and Yvonne Duchamp-Villon reclined on the grass, both seemingly uninvolved and disinterested in the contest occurring beside them. *The Chess Game* is the first in a series of paintings and studies of his two brothers engrossed in games of chess, a favorite pastime for the Duchamp family.

A 1904 etching by Jacques Villon (Fig. 4) shows a young Duchamp and his sister Suzanne playing chess. Four years before the creation of Jacques's etching, his two brothers taught a thirteen-year old Marcel how to play chess. Coincidentally in the same year, Jacques and Raymond began to teach Duchamp how to paint. These teaching moments between Duchamp and his brothers are particularly important in the context of

the later *Imagery of Chess*, as they are the earliest precedents for the combining of art and chess in his life and work. As early as 1900, art and chess are significantly intertwined for Duchamp, which also creates a strong familial bond between him and his brothers. Jacques and Raymond's impulse to coach and advise young Duchamp to be the best, not only in chess but in art as well is perhaps inherent as Duchamp illustrated the same impulse with a young Julien Levy. As noted by Alice Goldfarb Marquis, who refers to Duchamp's brothers as his "surrogate fathers,"¹⁰ a consideration of Jacques and Raymond's paternal relationship to Duchamp may shed light on his determination to perfect his game and become the most accomplished chess player. Citing a 1956 study by Reuben Fine in his essay "Psychological Observations on Chess and Chess Players,"¹¹ Marquis relates Duchamp's chess playing to the urge towards the Freudian Oedipal complex understood by psychoanalysts to be both intrinsic in father-son relationships but also in games played between males; games of conflict, aggression, and war such as chess.¹²

Duchamp admired his two older brothers and eventually emulated them by also becoming an artist. Duchamp not only attended the same grammar school as his older brothers, but he also shared the same drawing teacher. As noted by Duchamp's

¹⁰ Alice Goldfarb Marquis and Marcel Duchamp, *Marcel Duchamp, The Bachelor Stripped Bare: A Biography* (Boston: MFA Publications, A Division of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 2002), 185.

¹¹ This essay by Reuben Fine expands on the theories of a 1931 study of the American chess player Paul Morphy in which psychoanalyst Ernest Jones posited in the subliminal mind of the young male, there exists a Freudian desire to kill one's father. By using Morphy as a case study, Jones argued this scenario can be achieved symbolically via checkmate during a game of chess. Reuben Fine, "Psychoanalytic Observations on Chess and Chess Players," *Psychoanalytica* 4 (1956): 7-77.

¹² Marquis, *Bachelor Stripped Bare*, 183-188.

biographer Calvin Tomkins, Jacques was Duchamp's role model, but it was Raymond who "was and always would be the wunderkind, the family's true genius, the hero whose earthly death cut short a career of unlimited promise."¹³ Bailey highlights Duchamp's desire to occupy himself in serious chess, which revealed itself just after he was informed of Raymond's death on 7 October 1918. A casualty of World War I, Raymond died from complications of Typhoid Fever, which he contracted in 1916 while serving in the military as an auxiliary doctor in Champagne, France. Jacques spent the last two years of his life as an invalid at a hospital in Cannes. Bailey claims, "unable to know whether [Duchamp] could surpass his braver, more talented brother as an artist, perhaps his mastery of chess would instead satisfy his need to outshine his more gifted sibling."¹⁴ Clearly, a sense of sibling rivalry underlies Duchamp's career both as an artist and as a chess player. While it is true that he could effectively reject Cubism (Jacques's chosen style) it would prove to be much more difficult to surpass Raymond, the "wunderkind" who would never meet his full potential.

It is the 1910 painting, *The Chess Game*, that Tomkins believes illustrates Duchamp's earliest ambitions, both in painting and chess. However, the figural painting lacks many of the cerebral and psychological qualities Duchamp would showcase in the years following. Many scholars, and even Duchamp himself, have acknowledged the influence of Paul Cézanne's *Card Players* (1892) (Fig. 5) both in facture and in composition. Tomkins notes that in his formative years, Duchamp was in the phase of his

¹³ Calvin Tomkins, *Duchamp: A Biography* (New York: H. Holt, 1996), 25.

¹⁴ Bradley Bailey, "Passionate Pastimes: Duchamp, Chess, and the Large Glass," in *Marcel Duchamp: The Art of Chess* ed. Francis Naumann (New York: Readymade Press, 2009), 53.

“swimming lessons, moving restlessly but tentatively from Post-Impressionist landscapes to Fauve nudes to Cézanne-influenced portraits and figure studies.”¹⁵ However, the change in the game depicted, from Cézanne’s painting to Duchamp’s, is important to consider. Chess and cards are significantly different games, and as Bailey points out a chess game needs a board. There is also an element of chance that exists in a game of cards that is not inherent to a game of chess. Moreover, chess is a game of total knowledge on the part of both players. There are no secrets: both players have a complete view of the pieces of their opponent.¹⁶

In 1911, a prolific painting year for young Marcel, Duchamp created *Portrait of Chess Players* (Fig. 6). *Portrait of Chess Players* is similar to his earlier painting *The Chess Game* in subject matter, but considerably different in style. Analytical and abstract, *Portrait of Chess Players* illustrates the game as it take place in the minds of the competitors, in this case Jacques on the right and Raymond on the left. The style of the painting illustrates Duchamp’s influence from the Cubists who congregated at the respective studios of Jacques and Raymond in Puteaux, France. They and the Duchamp brothers were part of a circle that included the artists Albert Gleizes, Jean Metzinger, and Fernand Léger, the writers Guillaume Apollinaire and Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes, and the mathematician Maurice Princet.¹⁷ While Jacques and Raymond are depicted participating in a game of chess, the emphasis is placed on the intellectual and mental

¹⁵ Tomkins, *Duchamp*, 44-45.

¹⁶ Bailey, “Passionate Pastimes,” 53-54.

¹⁷ Tomkins, *Duchamp*, 56-57.

aspects of the game rather than on the physicality of the match as it is played out on the board. As Dalia Judovitz explains, “Duchamp is reinterpreting Cubism itself conceptually from the perspective of chess, as a game whose illogical visual character becomes legible once seen from the perspective of chess.”¹⁸ In short, instead of a Cubist representation of a chess game, *Portrait of Chess Players* represents Duchamp’s effort to use chess to re-conceptualize Cubist space and movement. As noted in a 1989 exhibition catalogue from the Museum of Modern Art, Duchamp himself referred to the setting of *Portrait of Chess Players* as “indefinite space,”¹⁹ which perhaps supports the view that the figures represented are present mentally rather than physically.

When discussing *Portrait of Chess Players*, it is equally important to also mention the studies of chess players done in charcoal, ink, and oil that Duchamp completed between October and November 1911. According to art historian David Joselit:

In Duchamp’s studies and paintings of chess players dating from 1911 male figures are represented as stylized profiles- as though they themselves were pieces being played, an impression confirmed by his frequent practice of extending the grid of the game board behind and beside the central figures and placing chessmen not only before them where the board should be but all around them, as though they were the principal objects in the game that has escaped its gridded precincts and colonized the entire world.²⁰

¹⁸ Dalia Judovitz, *Unpacking Duchamp: Art in Transit* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) 40.

¹⁹ Anne d’Harnoncourt et al, *Marcel Duchamp*, exh. cat. (New York: Museum of Modern Art; Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1989 [1973]), 254.

²⁰ David Joselit, *Infinite Regress: Marcel Duchamp 1910-1941* (Cambridge: Massachusetts London, 1998), p.160.

In six studies, Duchamp experiments with movement, arrangement of forms within a Cubist mode, concepts of space, and what he coins as his “theory of demultiplication.”²¹ If one considers the short manifesto from *The Imagery of Chess*, “On Designing Chessmen,” Duchamp seems to be again challenging standards; Cubism in 1911 and the standard of chess set design in 1944. These studies serve as precedents for Duchamp’s attempts to illustrate a chess match that is “more harmonious and more agreeable... to the sight, and above all, more adequate to the role the figure has to play in the struggle,”²² the “figure” in this case being his two brothers, Raymond on the left and Jacques on the right in the studies and the final iteration. The first two 1911 studies done in charcoal (Figs. 7-8) are the most focused on the two players. In both studies, the faces of the two opponents are in close proximity to one another, however in the first study, the players are separated by sketched rectangles that confine each disembodied head. The lines boxing in the heads serve as a reminder that while they are sharing in the experience of the match, they each fit into individual space, physically as well as mentally. Compared to the first charcoal study, the second appears to be simplified, but Duchamp seems to be considering the element of movement as opposed to space, as he was in the first study. In the second study, the two profiled faces meet, at the center of the composition, at the tips of their noses. Both charcoal studies feature an arrangement of various chess pieces at the

²¹ Ibid., 254.

²² Duchamp, “*Imagery Invitation*,” 1944.

center of the composition, however, in the second study, Raymond actually holds a chess piece (perhaps a rook) in his hand with two short diagonal lines above his arm as an indication of movement, a feature not included in the first charcoal study.

As Duchamp continued to execute studies, the chess pieces begin to fill more of the composition. For example, in the third and smallest 1911 study in ink entitled, *For a Chess Game* (Fig. 9), the two disembodied heads are surrounded on all sides by chess pieces. Duchamp also utilizes diagonal lines again, but here to suggest perspective that implies a chessboard receding in depth.²³ As with the fourth subsequent study done again in charcoal (Fig. 10), *For a Chess Game* seems more focused on creating a sense of perspective and a sense of drama. The features of Duchamp's 1911 studies and final painting serve as a model on paper of the goal of redesigning chess pieces, boards, and tables in 1944: "At any moment of the drama its optical aspect would represent (by the shape of the actors) a clear incisive image of its inner conflicts. In the complicated modern game the figures should inspire the player instead of confusing him."²⁴ The inspiration the pieces provide the two opponents in the studies is evident in the various representations of the match occurring between Raymond and Jacques. In many cases, it seems that the players even become the very pieces they are playing with. In the fourth study done in charcoal, coincidentally the only study done on a square piece of paper, Duchamp approaches perspective a bit differently than the previous study. Duchamp

²³ Jean Clair, "L'échiquier, les modernes et le quatrième dimension," *Reveu de l'art* 39 (1978): 60.

²⁴ Duchamp, "Imagery Invitation," 1944.

essentially eliminated any sense of perspective within the composition, leaving the heads to float within the picture plane. Nevertheless, the work is reminiscent of a chessboard due to its square dimensions. In reference to the aforementioned drama, in the center of the study drawing, the abstracted forms create an “X,” perhaps a Duchampian allusion to the conflict inherent in the meeting of the minds of two opponents.

In the fifth charcoal study done in 1911 (Fig. 11), Duchamp experiments with format, choosing to depict the match this time on a triptych, with two small wings flanking a larger central section. One head inhabits each wing and in the central section, a familiar (albeit more complicated) abstraction with chess pieces on a board intensely engaged underneath two pointed noses that meet centrally at the tips of their noses in the top register of the paper. Here, Duchamp is making an attempt at his “demultiplication” technique in which each disembodied head is made up of many overlapping planes in succession, with the chess various pieces floating in “indefinite space.” This technique becomes even more precise in the final 1911 oil study and in the final painting.

Finally, between November and December 1911, Duchamp completed an oil sketch for *Portrait of Chess Players*, entitled *The Chess Players* (Fig. 12). Unlike his previous two studies, Duchamp did not employ the triptych form but he did include the complicated central scene of the figures being surrounded by chess pieces on all four sides. The composition of this oil sketch is particularly important because noticeably, several inches on the right and left sides of the rectangular canvas are painted black, creating a frame suggestive of the square form of a chessboard. The oil sketch also uses a limited color palette of earth tones, similar to color palette seen in the final painting.

However, as can be seen in the final painting, the representation of an actual chessboard is missing (as in his earlier studies) emphasizing again the mental activity of the two players over the physical presence of the field on which the intensity of the match plays out. Tomkins remarked, “an intensity of thought pervades the painting, taking precedence over the mere ‘retinal’ image.”²⁵ It can then be said that from the initial studies through the final iteration of *Portrait of Chess Players*, Duchamp explored the possibilities and limits of Cubism. The oil sketch and the final painting seem to also prefigure of the intensity of the Blindfolded Chess Event staged during *The Imagery of Chess*. While the invited viewer of the chess event may have been surprised at how quiet and slowly paced the simultaneous games progressed, Duchamp is providing a window into the minds of the players and the innate drama involved mentally in the game of chess.

²⁵ Tomkins, *Duchamp*, 64.

Putting Painting at the Service of the Mind

From 1915 to 1923, Duchamp worked on what would become one of his most important (yet unfinished) pieces, *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even* or *The Large Glass* (1915-1923) (Fig. 13). Joselit claims that Duchamp's main goal in this work was to create a type of art that was comparable to the elegance of the game of chess. Joselit believes Duchamp's fascination with the conceptual beauty of chess is the main cause for his low production of art between 1915 and 1923, which coincides with his most focused work on the *Large Glass*. Joselit writes:

The game was no mere idle pastime for the artist, a smoke screen that could block the scrutiny of the art world. Rather . . . chess, like the machine before it, provided Duchamp with a productive conceptual and aesthetic model that was uniquely capable of synthesizing the "spatial realism" or literalness of the readymade and the systemic complexity of the *Large Glass*.²⁶

Bailey likewise sees a connection between Duchamp's career as an artist and as a chess player as illustrated on *The Large Glass*. Bailey posits that chess is a critical and generally unrecognized element of *The Large Glass*. With a specific consideration of the Bachelors, also called the *Nine Malic Molds* (Fig. 14), posited by Claude Levi-Strauss and Arturo Schwarz as being representations of Duchamp, Bailey traces "the triadic relationship between Duchamp, the *Large Glass*, and chess... [which] reinforces the large contention that his association with chess is a central and undervalued facet of the artist's identity."²⁷ One of the earliest and most significant developments in the early

²⁶ Joselit, *Infinite Regress*, 160- 164.

²⁷ Bailey, "Passionate Pastimes," 49.

social history of chess was the emergence of chess moralities, medieval allegorical sermons that used the names and moves of chess pieces as the foundation for, “ethical, moral, social, religious, and political precepts.” These ecclesiastical documents were created to provide moral instructions for the game. The most famous morality titled, *On the Customs of Men and Their Noble Actions with Reference to the Game of Chess*, was written between 1275 and 1300 a Dominican monk named Jacobus de Cessolis. Similar to Duchamp’s first eight *Malic Molds*, which represent various social classes and vocations, the pawns, which represented the commoners, were subdivided by Cessolis into eight vocations: laborers and farmers, smiths, weavers and notaries, merchants, physicians, innkeepers, city guards, and ribalds and gamblers.²⁸

Duchamp’s interest in chess can also be seen in his appropriation of the everyday, his readymades. Joselit believes that “the readymade represents Duchamp’s traversal between art, everyday life, and chess.”²⁹ *Trébuchet (Trap)* (1917) (Fig. 15), a wood and metal coatrack, was submitted by Duchamp to a show at the Bourgeois Art Gallery. Duchamp requested that in installation *Trebuchet* should be placed near the entryway, fixed onto the floor (similar to how it was placed in his studio). Incidentally, the readymade went unnoticed as art during the show. The title, *Trébuchet*, draws inspiration from a French chess term, *trébucher*, meaning “to stumble over.” These two French words, while spelled differently are phonetically similar, a point certainly not lost on Duchamp. There is a possibility of a direct correlation between the analogy of stumbling

²⁸ H.J.R. Murray, *A Short History of Chess* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 34.

²⁹ Joselit, *Infinite Regress*,” 160.

over this readymade and trapping an adversary during a game of chess. The analogy of stumbling, trapping, and/or tripping as expressed in *Trébuchet* was perhaps also examined in Duchamp's *Mile of String* (Fig. 16) installation at the *First Papers of Surrealism* in 1942 and then conceptually during the Blindfolded Chess Event at *Imagery of Chess* in 1944. The possibility of becoming trapped, or tangled in the case of *Mile of String*, is a theme explored by Duchamp through his exhibition organization and installation piece in which works hung at the *First Papers of Surrealism* were connected to one another through a tangle of crisscrossing string forcing the viewer to systematically transverse the gallery to avoid the risk of becoming caught.

Duchamp: "Chess Maniac"

Following a brief self-imposed exile in Buenos Aires from 1918 to 1919, where he became a self-described "chess maniac,"³⁰ Duchamp's interest in the game grew far beyond mere amusement. 1923 is considered a pivotal year in the career of Duchamp as this is the moment when he effectively limited his art production and embarked on a professional career in chess. Regardless of the fact that Duchamp later denied that he had quit making art for chess,³¹ the myth was perpetuated by his friends, the Czech critic

³⁰ In a 1919 correspondence between Duchamp and his patroness Louise Arensberg, Duchamp refers to himself as a "Chess Maniac". Marcel Duchamp, ed. Francis M. Naumann and Hector Obalk, trans. Jill Taylor, *Affectionately, Marcel: The Selected Correspondence of Marcel Duchamp* (Amsterdam: Ludion Press, 2000).

³¹ In this interview, Duchamp is quoted as saying, "It is not true that I retired from painting to concentrate on chess." Harold C. Schonberg, "Creator of 'Nude Descending' Reflects After Half a Century," *New York Times*, 12 April, 1963, 25.

Jindrich Chalupecky, who stated in 1975, “For almost twenty-five years Duchamp devoted himself to roulette, chess, acting as an agent for his friends, and organizing exhibitions for them; he referred to himself only as an ‘antiartist’ and an ‘engineer.’ He almost ceased to believe in art.”³² Others, such as Surrealist Marcel Jean would not believe the myth that Duchamp had given up producing art:

Can it be said that [Duchamp] therefore ceased all activity? Like Lewis Carroll, who discovered a game of chess being played on the other side of the mirror, and like Raymond Roussel, Duchamp is a chess master, and since 1925 he has devoted himself almost exclusively to chess-playing. There is no hint of a renunciation of his own work (we shall see later that he has never lost interest in his production).³³

In other words, for Jean, art and chess were not mutually exclusive in the mind of Duchamp. As mentioned before, Duchamp had learned how to play chess and how to paint at the same time. As seen through the examples of Jacques and Raymond, one did not necessarily have to choose between art and chess. From 1923 to 1933, chess dominated Duchamp’s life through his participation in tournaments and competitions held throughout much of Europe, particularly France and England. During this period, Duchamp played and often defeated top chess players such as the American Edward Lasker and Belgian-born American, George Koltanowski. Chess player and friend Francois Le Lionnais also stated, “It must be stressed that [Duchamp] represented France in the chess Olympiads, and consequently he was always up against stronger players than

³² Jindrich Chalupecky, “Nothing but an Artist,” *Studio International* 189 (January- February 1975; repr., Anthony Hill, ed. *Duchamp: Passim: A Marcel Duchamp Anthology* [Longhorne, PA: International Publishers Distributor, 1994]), 40.

³³ Marcel Jean with Arpad Mezei, *The History of Surrealist Painting* (New York: Grove Press, 1960), 112.

himself. He was often matched against international chess players.”³⁴ Duchamp placed first at the Chess Championship of Haute, Normandy in 1924 and was also awarded the title of Chess Master by the French Chess Federation in 1925. He set a personal goal to win the French Chess Championship, but never achieved the title of Chess Master on the international level.. After a poor performance at the Fifth Chess Olympiad in Folkestone, England in 1933, Duchamp reduced competitive playing while continuing to play via correspondence with friends, particularly his patron Walter Arensberg, Max Ernst, and later, Julien Levy.³⁵ An early example of Duchamp’s long-distance competitive chess playing can be seen in a letter addressed to Louise and Walter Arensberg during his exile in Buenos Aires. In this letter, written at the end of March 1919, Duchamp states that he would like to play chess by cable upon his return to France:

I read it in a book- how to play by cable without incurring huge cable costs... if you get a strange cable from France, it’ll be the opening of a game of chess. We will play two games simultaneously. In my first telegram, I will send my first move in the first game, for example: PK4 will be wired: one GEGO. Walter will send me his reply as follows: one SESOFEFO, which means the first move of the Blacks (Walter) in the first game in SESO (PK4) and that his first move in the second game is FEFO PQ4 (he has the Whites).³⁶

³⁴ Ralph Rumney, “Marcel Duchamp as a Chess Player and One or Two Related Matters,” *Studio International* 189 (January-February 1975): 23.

³⁵ A project by artist Jeremy Millar in Folkestone, England was completed in 2006 to commemorate Duchamp’s last major chess tournament during the 1933 Chess Olympiad. The monument is comprised of six tables and twelve benches. Each table, representing one game played by Duchamp, includes etched stainless steel plates on the tabletop; one for Duchamp, one for his opponent. Also included is an etched steel plate on which their respective chess moves are displayed in chess notation as well as the final position of the pieces at the end of each game. Dillon Brian, *Jeremy Millar: Zugszwang (Almost Finished)* (London: Koenig Books & Plain Editions, 2006).

³⁶ Duchamp, *Affectionately, Marcel*, 79-81.

The letter is significant as one of the earliest examples of Duchamp advising a friend on chess. The subsequent correspondence chess matches that Duchamp would play with various friends were ongoing and lasted over the course of many years. Duchamp also designed a set of rubber-stamp chess pieces and a chessboard for these correspondence games. Enclosed in an undated letter to Julien Levy, found in his archives at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, is a document covered with chess notations and movements made with Duchamp's rubber-stamp set (Fig. 17). For Duchamp, these chess games played through the post seemed almost as important as the letters of correspondence he wrote and received on nearly a daily basis, particularly during his time in Buenos Aires. What probably intrigued Duchamp the most was the discovery of a way to play chess without seeing the other player. The elimination of the "retinal" in chess by post is significant in relation to the Blindfolded Chess Event that Duchamp staged during *The Imagery of Chess*, whereby the blindfolded chess master George Koltanowski played against seven artist-chess players. In both instances, Duchamp's objective was to heighten the sense of invisibility between players, in one way through the removal of physical presence and in the other through the removal of sight.

Duchamp's turn from tournament play in 1933 can also be seen a year prior, in 1932, when Duchamp co-wrote "an artist's book for chess players and a chess book for artists"³⁷ with German chess master Vitaly Halberstadt, entitled *Opposition and Sister Squares are Reconciled*. As noted by Hubert Damisch, to Duchamp, this book was purely

³⁷ Ernst Strouhal, "A Game Within the Game: L'Opposition et les cases conjuguées sont reconciliées par M. Duchamp & V. Halberstadt" trans. Michael Hastik, *Étant donné Marcel Duchamp* 5 (Paris: L'Association pour l'Étude de Marcel Duchamp, 2003): 158.

an intellectual experiment with no real practical use for studying chess strategy as the situations presented within rarely came about in actual game play.³⁸ The book discussed various situations and positions leading to an endgame, such as the very rare Lasker-Reichhelm position. The result was more of an art book that was not practical for chess strategy studies; a beautiful but useless object. According to Duchamp:

The endgames on which this fact turns are of no interest to any chess player: and that's the funniest thing about it. Only three or four people in the world are interested in it, and they're the ones who've tried the same lines of research as Halberstadt and myself. Since we wrote the book together, chess champions never read this book, because the problem it poses never really turns up more than once in a lifetime. These are possible endgame problems, but they're so rare that they're almost utopian.³⁹

Duchamp and Halberstadt were particularly interested in the beauty created in the impossibility of rare endgames. Fundamentally a stage of opposition, the endgame, where the only remaining pieces on the board are two kings and some pawns, may shed light on Duchamp's approach to chess and art. The symmetry created in the opposition and positions of the kings and pawns as defined during the endgame is what most concerned Duchamp and Halberstadt. It is in this endgame scenario that each player is struggling to maintain equilibrium on the board and to survive. For each player, there is security in the symmetry created during such situations because the moves available to the opponent can be controlled or restricted by the other player. However, the same symmetry can force a player into making a move that will trigger his or her own defeat, otherwise known as a

³⁸ Hubert Damisch and Rosalind Krauss, "The Duchamp Defense," *October* 10 (1979): 8.

³⁹ Cabanne, *Dialogues*, 77-78.

trébucher (reminiscent of the title of his 1917 readymade). In one of the extant photographs of the Blindfolded Chess Event that took place during *The Imagery of Chess*, a copy of what is most likely this book is visible sitting open on the windowsill.⁴⁰

Duchamp: Curator and Publicist of Art

It has not been sufficiently remarked that Duchamp's serious turn to chess, which he at first claimed to signify the end of his interest in art making, coincided with his role as an organizer of exhibitions. Duchamp's involvement as an organizer and art publicist is particularly relevant in the context of *The Imagery of Chess* because of the personal and professional connections he had with the artists involved. The precedent for Duchamp as an art advisor, organizer, and curator can be traced back as far as 1916, if his studio in New York is thought of as his first exhibition space. As illustrated in photographs taken by Henri Pierre Roché of Duchamp's studio (Fig. 18), a purposeful organization and display or curation of his readymades is evident. Duchamp was also a founder, director, and served on the hanging committee for the Society of Independent Artists. The Society, modeled after the French Société des Artistes Indépendants, was an American association of artists, patrons, and intellectuals based in New York whose goal was to hold annual exhibitions of avant-garde artists. Famously, Duchamp resigned from his position as Director in 1917 after the Society rejected his submission of *Fountain* (1917).

⁴⁰ List, *Imagery of Chess*, 30.

During his short year in Buenos Aires between 1918 and 1919, Duchamp focused most if not all of his energies on playing chess. However, when he was not wrapped up in studying chess strategies or playing correspondence chess, he also attempted to organize an exhibition of Cubist works that would introduce modern art to a country where “the people are as stupid as they are ignorant.”⁴¹ In a letter written to Walter Arensberg on 8 November 1918, Duchamp indicates that he has written Henri-Martin Barzun in New York asking him to send thirty Cubist canvases. Duchamp informs Arensberg that Barzun will provide him with further instruction, but that he should focus on reaching out to Marius de Zayas, who would be their best and greatest supplier. Because of the newness of Cubism to Buenos Aires, Duchamp was able to find galleries that were prepared to also allow him to install the exhibition for free.

By 1919, Duchamp had ample experience with organizing exhibitions through his time with the Society of Independent Artists in America as the founder, director, and member of the hanging committee. Duchamp took on the task of organizing an exhibition from overseas with little indication of difficulty; his plans were rather thorough. Duchamp stated in a letter to Walter Arensberg, “As [Barzun] will no doubt tell you, I’ve asked the go-between art dealers or the painters themselves to frame their things and to take out insurance (round trip) which, all in all, is not too much to ask. I will take care of all the rest here.”⁴² Duchamp also gave Pach the task of securing de Zayas as a contributor and implored Pach to convince De Zayas to agree to the aforementioned

⁴¹ Duchamp, *Affectionately, Marcel*, 66.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 69-71.

terms. In a letter dated 7 January 1919, Duchamp's mounting concern for the Cubist exhibition became evident when he asked Arensberg if he had seen Barzun. By 19 March 1919, it is clear the Cubist exhibition will not happen:

Dear Lou, dear Walter, ... I wired you immediately, acknowledging receipt of the letter and to reply to your "exhibit or not exhibit" ultimatum. I think the exhibition must be open by now and I would be amused to hear how this officialization of Cubism actually went down. As you know, I have found galleries here where an exhibition could be held. But [Albert] Gleizes and Barzun are so indifferent, I have no word (and I sent a cable in February), it makes me think it will not happen.⁴³

Unfortunately, the Cubist exhibition in Buenos Aires never came to fruition. In a letter to Arensberg written 6 June 1919, shortly before his departure from Buenos Aires to France, Duchamp suggests that Arensberg's pessimism regarding the exhibition was a mistake, claiming that Cubism would have been wildly popular with the Buenos Aires public and would have produced new enthusiasts for modern art. Although the exhibition did not come to fruition, this episode most likely prepared Duchamp for later exhibitions such as *The Imagery of Chess*. What is more, it might have perhaps even pushed Duchamp to work with younger gallery owners such as Levy who would be more open minded to introducing modern art to a wider public.

Upon his return to New York in 1920, Duchamp, Dreier, and Man Ray formed the organization ironically titled, Société Anonyme, Inc., America's first "experimental museum" for modern art.⁴⁴ As stated in a 1926 press release from the Brooklyn Art

⁴³ Ibid., 80.

⁴⁴ Jennifer Gross, *The Société Anonyme: Modernism for America* (Yale University Art Gallery: Yale University Press, 2006).

Museum, “the aim of the Société Anonyme is educational. It is an institution organized for the promotion of the study of the experimental in art for students in America and renders aid to conserve the vigor and vitality of the new expressions of beauty in the art of to-day.” In 1926, the Société Anonyme organized the *International Exhibition of Modern Art* at the Brooklyn Museum of Art. The exhibition included works of art by European and American avant-gardes including Fernand Léger, Piet Mondrian, Paul Klee, Max Ernst, Georgia O’Keeffe, Vasily Kandinsky, Constantin Brancusi, Lázló Maholy-Nagy, and others. The Société Anonyme’s goal of promoting modern art to American viewers in 1926 can be viewed as a precedent for Duchamp’s role in popularizing avant-garde art in the eyes of the American public during *The Imagery of Chess* at the Julien Levy Gallery in 1944. The following year, Duchamp curated a solo exhibition for Constantin Brancusi at the Art Institute of Chicago from 4-18 January 1927. With Duchamp acting in the capacity of art consultant, works by Ernst, Mondrian, and Joan Miró were selected with his expertise and displayed in the 1931 New York Exhibition of the Société Anonyme.

In the context of Surrealism, André Breton invited Duchamp in 1937 to assist in organizing the *Exhibition Internationale du Surréalisme* at the Galérie Beaux-Arts in Paris (17 January 1938- 24 February 1938). In an attempt to radically re-conceptualize the installation of art exhibitions in galleries and museums, Duchamp turned the eighteenth-century interior of the Galérie Beaux-Arts into a darkened “grotto” (Fig. 19) by covering the moldings, ceiling, and lights with, what he described as “twelve hundred sacks of coal suspended from the ceiling.” Duchamp also installed an iron brazier in the

center of the main hall and hung art works on revolving doors taken from a department store. The ceiling undulated, the walls were blackened, and coal dust invariably fell onto the finery of the exhibition guests.⁴⁵ As noted by Elena Filipovic in her essay, “A Museum That is Not,” “the exhibition responded to the conventional space and experience of an art exhibition, constructing elaborate answers to both on an architectural scale.”⁴⁶ In an attempt to get the viewers closer to the art than would be considered the “proper distance” in traditional museums and galleries, Duchamp conceived of installing “magic eyes” that would illuminate automatically the moment the viewer had broken an invisible sensor when passing in front of a painting.⁴⁷ As this vision proved to be impossible to realize, Man Ray adapted the concept for the opening night by turning the lights of the gallery off and providing the guests with hand-held flashlights to view the various works on display.⁴⁸ This strategy exemplifies the Surrealist transformation of the gallery and museum experience by challenging the acceptable distance the viewer must keep between themselves and any given work of art on view. As photographs of the original *The Imagery of Chess* do not exist, it is not entirely possible to accurately comment on Duchamp’s use of space during the exhibition. However, it is important to consider that the chess pieces, sets, boards, and tables created for *The Imagery of Chess* could be touched, a forbidden activity at an institution such as a museum or other galleries. At

⁴⁵ Georges Hugnet, “L’exposition Internationale de Surréalisme,” *Preuves* 91 (1958):38-47.

⁴⁶ Elena Filipovic, “A Museum That is Not,” ed. Elena Filipovic, *Marcel Duchamp: A Work That is Not a Work of Art*, exh. cat., (Buenos Aires: Fundación Proa, 2008).

⁴⁷ Jean, *History of Surrealist Painting*, 280-282.

⁴⁸ Hugnet, “L’exposition Internationale,” 46.

Julien Levy's gallery, the pieces on exhibit were to be touched and played with, and in some cases reproduced and sold as holiday gifts. In both cases, Duchamp challenged traditional practices of major art institutions by allowing the viewers to get as close as possible and even touch what is on display.

Upon Duchamp's return to New York in 1942, Breton invited him again to assist in curating the *First Papers of Surrealism* exhibition. *First Papers of Surrealism* opened on October 14, 1942 at the Whitelaw Reid Mansion in midtown Manhattan. As noted by *Newsweek* magazine, the exhibition was the "biggest all-surrealist show ever seen in the United States."⁴⁹ It announced the arrival of the most celebrated surrealist artists, many of whom had recently left Europe to avoid the war. The exhibition's title "first papers" referenced the official application documents many of the émigré artists had needed to obtain upon their entry into the United States and elsewhere. Additionally, profits from admission to the *First Papers of Surrealism* benefited the Coordinating Council of French Relief Societies, a wartime charity organization whose purpose was to raise money and supplies for French prisoners and to aid in the adoption of French children.⁵⁰ Like the 1938 Surrealist exhibition in Paris, *First Papers* took issue with the conventional practices of institutions such as galleries and museums. Although the exhibition was in part a product of war and a response to the tumultuous political environment of the early 1940s, it retained the same whimsy and humor of the 1938 Surrealist exhibition.

Duchamp's work as a curator, and as an artist mingled high seriousness and playfulness.

⁴⁹ "Agonized Humor," *Newsweek*, October 26, 1942, 76.

⁵⁰ Ticket prices for admission to the exhibition were listed as \$1.10 for the opening preview and \$.50 thereafter. Edward Alden Jewell, "Surrealists Open Display Tonight," *New York Times*, October 14, 1942.

In Duchamp's role as curator and contributor of the *First Papers of Surrealism*, he approached the task of curating inventively and with a playful critique of the museum experience. This is particularly evident in his contribution to the exhibition entitled *Mile of String* (1942). The installation consisted of white twine that Duchamp installed in the gallery with the help of Breton, Jacqueline Lamba, Max Ernst, Alexander Calder, and David Hare, who erected a crisscrossing of webbing that entwined the art on display without completely eliminating the ability to view it, a tension of particular interest to Duchamp. The Blindfolded Chess Event, which occurred two years later at the *The Imagery of Chess* exhibition at the Julien Levy Gallery, may be considered a further elaboration of Duchamp's *Mile of String* installation at the *First Papers of Surrealism*. Just as Duchamp had a group of artists create visible links and obstructions between the works exhibited at the *First Papers of Surrealism*, he repeated this process conceptually at the Blindfolded Chess Event during *The Imagery of Chess* where invisible links were created between the seven simultaneous chess matches.

With Breton, Roberto Matta, and Isabelle Waldberg, Duchamp also created store window installations such as the window display for Breton's *Arcane 17* at Brentano's Book Store in 1945, which subsequently moved to Gotham Book Mart in response to the public protest against the alleged obscenity of Matta's contributions. In addition to these various works, Duchamp organized and designed many art exhibitions within his artistic circles both in the United States and Europe. The title of "idea generator- arbiter" given to Duchamp by Breton, the self-proclaimed "Pope of Surrealism," in 1938 refers to his position within the organization of the *Exhibition Internationale du Surréalisme* at the

Galérie Beaux-Arts in Paris. Duchamp not only assisted Paul Éluard and Breton in generating ideas for the exhibition, he had complete power in the execution of the exhibition. Not coincidentally, the highly prestigious title “arbiter” is also awarded to professional chess players deemed capable of arbitrating championship games in accordance to the rules and regulations of chess of the Fédération Internationale des Échecs (World Chess Federation).

In some cases, Duchamp acted as a promoter of individual artists and advisors to collectors of modern art. He championed the exhibition of Brancusi’s modernist sculptures in 1927 and again in 1933 by acting as Brancusi’s art publicist in New York. It was during the 1927 installation of Brancusi’s works at the Joseph Brummer Gallery, organized by Duchamp, that Levy and Duchamp were introduced. In Duchamp Levy found a trusted art advisor and friend, but he was not the first of New York avant-gardes Levy felt strongly connected to. Levy admired both Alfred Stieglitz and Duchamp and would symbolically adopt them as his mentors. As he later said in a 1975 interview, “I didn’t bring them into the church. I just, in my mind, said ‘I want their blessings,’ and I considered them my inspiration.”⁵¹ It was Stieglitz who informed Levy’s business acumen, but it was Duchamp who kept him abreast of the trends in the art world, especially regarding Surrealism. Levy was not the only person who relied on Duchamp’s opinion regarding art. Duchamp also advised Walter and Louise Arensberg, Katherine Dreier, the three Stettheimer sisters (Florine, Carrie, and Ettie), California gallery owner

⁵¹ Julien Levy, interview by Paul Cummings, May 30, 1975, transcript, Julien Levy Oral History, Archives of American Art, Washington D.C.

Howard Putzel, as well as other gallery owners throughout Europe and the United States. In a letter written by Duchamp addressed to the Stettheimer sisters on 3 May 1919, he endorsed sculptor Gaston Lachaise as “an excellent sculptor in the Nadelman sense of the word.”⁵²

⁵² Duchamp, *Affectionately, Marcel*, 82.

CHAPTER III

IMAGERY OF CHESS BETWEEN ART AND PERFORMANCE

Julien Levy met Duchamp in 1927 at Joseph Brummer's gallery, where a collection of Constantin Brancusi sculptures, curated by Duchamp, was on exhibition. Levy had persuaded his father, Edgar A. Levy, to pay \$1,000 for Brancusi's *Bird in Space* (1923), which led him to Duchamp, who was representing Brancusi in New York. In his memoir, Levy described Duchamp as a "volatile and impish impresario,"⁵³ but after their first meeting, a friendship and partnership began that would last Duchamp's lifetime. Within six weeks of their first meeting, Duchamp invited Levy to join him on a trip abroad to France where Levy subsequently gained his entry into the European Surrealists via Duchamp and Man Ray. The voyage to France via ocean liner was transformative for Levy. Together, Duchamp and Levy concocted various business schemes, such as a scheme for making a wallpaper design based on photographs of graffiti in Paris bathrooms.⁵⁴ During the boat trip, Duchamp also began to teach Levy how to play chess. In an interview, Levy remembered these first lessons: "I was a real amateur at it but learned what his feeling for chess was... He said it wasn't a war game, it's an aesthetic game, and you feel the shape of the board as it begins to shift its pattern and you make it become beautiful, even if you lose."⁵⁵ Once back in New York, Levy set

⁵³ Levy, *Memoir*, 18.

⁵⁴ Schaffner "First Match, Vantages to Gain," 7.

⁵⁵ Levy, interview, 12.

his sights on representing artists and opening his own gallery, which he was able to do in 1931 with a large inheritance from his mother. Levy and others of his generation, such as Harvard classmate Alfred H. Barr, Jr., would become the greatest advocates of the European avant-garde and proponents of the institutionalization of Modernism in the United States. In 1932, Levy staged the first Surrealist group exhibition in New York City which included works by Pablo Picasso, Max Ernst, and the first showing of Salvador Dali's *Persistence of Memory* (1931), which Levy later purchased for his personal collection.

In the summer of 1944, Levy rented a home on the cove of Great River on Long Island with Max Ernst and Dorothea Tanning. As Levy recollects in his memoir, Ernst had shifted his focus from painting and was instead designing a chess set and a large sculpture titled, *The King Playing with the Queen* (1944) (Fig. 20).⁵⁶ Levy, Ernst, and Tanning enjoyed spending time sunbathing and swimming at the beach. Early on in the summer, Ernst and Levy found themselves on the beach wanting to play chess, however, they had no chess set. This gave them the idea to design portable chess sets of their own that could be taken to the beach and anywhere else they wanted to go. Levy's design, the "Humpty-Dumpty" chess set, with round bottoms that could be pushed into the sand, was ideal for playing on the beach. Levy created the prototypes by pouring plaster into empty eggshells (Fig. 21). The chessboard was drawn directly into the sand with their fingers. Within Ernst and Levy's "newfound enthusiasm for chess,"⁵⁷ and in designing their own

⁵⁶ Levy, *Memoir*, 271-271.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 272.

sets originated the initial concept for *The Imagery of Chess*. Levy invited other artists that he knew and represented to create innovative chess sets, boards, and chess-themed art that would be exhibited together in his gallery in the winter. While the initial concept for the exhibition was conceived of without Duchamp's assistance, Duchamp's expertise as a chess player and his involvement as a curator lent credibility to the gallery and the event.

To the gallery-goers of 1944, the complex blend of participants would have certainly promised a compelling interpretation of chess and chess-related imagery. The purpose of *The Imagery of Chess*, according to the statement, "On Designing Chessmen," was to combat the visual crisis of the standard Staunton sets.⁵⁸ The issue concerned the confusion that arises when playing with the standard sets due to the similarity in the forms of the chess pieces. How is one meant to successfully play a game of chess when "in the French Set for example, the Bishop is a little Queen and the pawn is a little Bishop?"⁵⁹ Through this short statement, which could also be considered a manifesto of sorts, *The Imagery of Chess* declared war on the traditional and standardized forms of chess sets in favor of those designed to be "more harmonious and more agreeable to the touch and to the sight, and above all, more adequate to the role the figure has to play in

⁵⁸ The French "Regency" set was the most popular design of chess set from the mid eighteenth century to the turn of the twentieth century. The World Chess Federation approved the Staunton set designed by Nathaniel Cook in 1924, when it was selected as the official set design for use in all future international chess tournaments. The set was endorsed by its namesake, Howard Staunton (1810-1874), a William Shakespeare scholar and chess champion. According to Gareth Williams, the endorsement, may be the first time a celebrated named was used to promote a commercial product. In terms of appearance, the chess pieces were, "based on [Neoclassical] style, and the pieces were symbols of 'respectable' Victorian society: a distinguished bishops miter, a queen's coronet and a king's crown, a knight carved as a stallion's head into clean classical lines, projecting an aura of strength and security." Gareth Williams, *Master Pieces, The Story of Chess: The Pieces, Players, and Passion of 1,000 Years* (London: Apple Press, 2000), 58-61.

⁵⁹ Duchamp, "On Designing Chessmen," 1944.

the struggle.”⁶⁰ Considering Duchamp’s own interest in the visual possibilities and beauty of chess, this statement sums up not only the exhibition as a whole, but also his previous conceptual works such as *Portrait of Chess Players (1911)*, *Mile of String (1942)*, and the *Blindfolded Chess Event (1944)*.

List states, ”The proposition was alluring to Duchamp and the Surrealists because it offered a challenge that was both dynamic and contradictory: create a beautiful, functional design for a social activity that essentially had no function.”⁶¹ Trying to recreate *The Imagery of Chess* exactly as it was is a difficult prospect, as there is no known checklist for the original exhibition. However, in attempting to reconstruct the exhibition at the Isamu Noguchi Museum in 2005, List was able to find many original works and recreate the works that have since been lost but for which documentation exists.⁶² Based on the 2005 reconstruction *The Imagery of Chess*, chess sets and tables included in the original were Levy’s *Plaster Chess Piece Prototypes (1944)*, Alexander Calder’s *Traveling Chess Set and Box (1942)* (Fig.22), Yves Tanguy’s *Chess Set and Table Board (1939, 2004 replica)* (Fig. 23), Isamu Noguchi’s *Chess Set (1944, 2003 replica)* (Fig. 24) and *Chess Table (1944)* (Fig. 25), and about a dozen more. The only known documentation of the exhibition exists in the form of three photographs of the *Blindfolded Chess Event in progress* taken by Julien Levy (Figs. 26-28). One can speculate what the exhibition may have looked like based on these three photographs.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ List, *Imagery of Chess*, 15.

⁶² Ibid., 15-16.

Noticeably, the room the chess event took place in looks relatively small. On the walls of the gallery were Kay Sage's oil painting *Near the Five Corners*; a shadowbox displaying Levy's *Plaster Chess Piece Prototypes*; Carol Janeway's ceramic *Chess Set*; Matta's *6 Threats to a White Q*; one of Xenia Cage's wood and rice-paper mobiles suspended in the window; Duchamp's *Pocket Chess Set with Rubber Glove*; and Leon Kelly's *The Plateau of Chess*.

In comparison to the surrealist exhibitions Duchamp curated previously, the installation of the works in the gallery was rather conservative. It is possible that Duchamp's curatorial decisions were informed by Levy, who believed avant-garde art, specifically Surrealism, needed to be presented in a less subversive way in order to be accepted by an American art public. Recalling his first Surrealist exhibition in 1932 in his memoir, Levy states:

If Breton had been there at that time there would no doubt have been a more orthodox representation. Manifesto heavy, it would have collapsed of its own rigidity. I wished to present a paraphrase which would offer Surrealism in the language of the new world rather than a translation in the rhetoric of the old.⁶³

Due to the position of the Julien Levy Gallery as a major destination for avant-garde art during the 1930s and 1940s, perhaps Levy felt it pragmatic monetarily to introduce the art displayed and the game of chess in an easily accessible manner.⁶⁴ The curatorial collaboration was financially successful; according to

⁶³ Levy, *Memoir*, 79-80.

⁶⁴ Keith L. Eggener, "'An Amusing Lack of Logic': Surrealism and Popular Entertainment," *American Art* 7 (1993): 33.

the gallery sales receipts, the original exhibition totaled \$14,461.85 in sales (\$195,161.83 in 2015 US dollars).

Similar to the line of separation on Duchamp's *Large Glass* visible between the Bride and the Bachelors Duchamp also created a division of gallery space through the traversing twine and wrapping of works of the *Mile of String* installation at the *First Papers of Surrealism*. The notion of crossing between domains also touches on a major theme of *The Imagery of Chess* and served as a precedent for Tanguy, Calder, and Noguchi in their respective designs for the exhibition. Many of the artists who contributed to the show were European émigrés of the war and their nomadic existences influenced many of their chess-related works in the exhibition. While they each take different stylistic approaches, the main focus for each is portability and materiality. In Tanguy's chess set, the pieces were reduced to their functional and directional essentials. While it is uncertain which works Tanguy contributed to the exhibition, F. Lanier Graham mentions Tanguy's aim to include a chess set in the exhibition. Most likely, the set in question is one pictured and documented by Graham as having been a "replica of one carved from a broom handle that Tanguy gave to the sculptor Brancusi before leaving Paris."⁶⁵ This emphasis on form and function is possibly informed by Tanguy's experiences in the merchant marines in the French Army, where tools, equipment, and cargo must be clean and organized routinely on the ship. In this environment, manual deftness and the ability to improvise with whatever materials were at hand would have been critical. Tanguy's interest in precision and his ability to work with what materials

⁶⁵ F. Lanier Graham, *Chess Sets* (New York: Walker and Company, 1968), 66-68.

were available to him can be seen among the chess pieces formed by cutting them from the same wooden dowel or broomstick. Each piece also received cuts that would indicate their importance and movement. For example, the King is the tallest piece, followed by the Queen and Bishops. The Knights received cuts splaying their cylindrical forms off the ninety-degree vertical axis shared by the other pieces to indicate the diagonal movements across the board.⁶⁶

Calder, one of the American contributors to *The Imagery of Chess*, had moved across the United States and Europe more than fifty times by 1944. Perhaps in acknowledgement of the war and with the element of mobility in mind, Calder created his *Traveling Chess Set and Box*, which originally came with a canvas cloth “board” that could be folded or rolled up quickly. All the pieces packed efficiently into the small wooden box for quick mobility. As with Tanguy’s chessmen, the pieces in Calder’s set were made with whatever materials were easily accessible, in this case broom handles, scrap sheet metal, metal screws, and screw eyes.⁶⁷

Japanese-American, Isamu Noguchi was interested in “the relationship of objects in totality, and to life, and to people... not an individual object.”⁶⁸ Noguchi had spent time in the Japanese-American relocation camp in Poston, Arizona in 1942. While he was there, Noguchi noticed many of the prisoners playing chess to pass the time. The conflict inherent in a game of chess as well as the changing sculptural relationships that were

⁶⁶ James Thrall Soby, *Yves Tanguy* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1955), 18-19.

⁶⁷ List, *Imagery of Chess*, 67-68.

⁶⁸ Chisaburoh F. Yamada, *Dialogue in Art: Japan and the West* (Tokyo; New York: Kodansha International, 1976), 290.

created with the moving of each piece would have been intriguing to Noguchi, who saw his invitation to contribute to *The Imagery of Chess* as a way to transform his aesthetics and sculptural forms for more practical uses, such as tables. Noguchi's set was well received. In the December 1944 review in *Newsweek*, the critic stated:

[Noguchi] has created the most beautiful piece in the show- a black plywood chess table of curved design with quarter-sized pieces of inlaid plastic to indicate alternate playing squares. The table, which would also be nice for tea, can be raised or lowered, and the top opens out revealing a pocket to hold the chessmen. Noguchi's men are angular abstractions of red and green plastic (acetate).⁶⁹

The theme of function and portability is clearly emphasized in Noguchi's work in its ability to function as something other than a chess table and in the ease in storage of the chessmen. As evidenced in one of the extant photographs of *The Imagery of Chess*, Dorothea Tanning used Noguchi's set and table designs during the Blindfolded Chess event. While his *Chess Set and Chess Table* are considered seminal works in his career, Noguchi never again revisited chess in his works after the submission of his chess set and table to *The Imagery of Chess*.⁷⁰

The sum of the exhibition's program was the Blindfolded Chess Event, held on 6 January 1945, which elaborated on many of the themes of the exhibition. This event, which Levy called a "pre-happening happening," was arranged by Duchamp and was highly publicized.⁷¹ It set in opposition seven participants, whose works were also being exhibited, against the reigning blindfold chess master George Koltanowski, whom

⁶⁹ "Levy's Gambit," 82-83.

⁷⁰ List, *Imagery of Chess*, 127-130.

⁷¹ Levy, *Memoir*, 275.

Duchamp defeated in 1929 in fifteen moves at a Paris chess tournament. A close friend of Duchamp, Koltanowski shared an office space with the artist and the two co-founded the Greenwich Village Chess Club in 1942. Blindfold chess is a popular way to play competitive chess, whereby play is conducted without the players having visual or physical contact of the pieces. The lack of sight forces the player to maintain a mental picture of the positions of the pieces on the board. An intermediary, or arbiter, communicates the moves verbally via a recognized chess notation. Blindfold chess was first played early on in the history of chess, with perhaps the first game being as early as the late fifth to sixth centuries in the Middle East.⁷² In Europe, playing chess blindfolded became a widely popular means of handicapping a chess master when playing a weaker opponent, or as a way to simply display a chess master's advanced abilities. In a notable blindfold exhibition in 1858, chess master Paul Morphy was pitted against eight of the strongest Parisian chess players at the time. Morphy finished with six wins and two draws. Increasingly, many chess masters competed in blindfold exhibitions in attempts to break any previous record. In Philadelphia in 1900, Harry Nelson Pillsbury played twenty games simultaneously. However, it was Koltanowski who would set the world's blindfold chess record on 20 September 1937, in Edinburgh. During the chess event, Koltanowski blindly played thirty-four chess games simultaneously, winning twenty-four games in thirteen hours. Koltanowski's record was included in the Guinness Book of Records in 1937.

⁷² French musician, composer, and chess player François-André Danican Philidor (1726-1795) visited London, Berlin, and Postdam in 1747 where he famously participated in a blindfolded chess game in the presence of Prussian king and chess enthusiast Frederick the Great. Williams, *Master Pieces*, 45.

At first glance, a blindfolded chess event may seem uneventful; the room is typically very quiet, and there is very little movement from the players who are studying their respective chessboards. Among the players at this particular event during *The Imagery of Chess* were gallerist Levy, architect Frederick Kiesler, Museum of Modern Art Director Alfred H. Barr, Jr., composer Vittorio Rieti, and artists, Xanti Schawinsky, Dorothea Tanning, and Max Ernst. Seven games were played simultaneously between the artists and Koltanowski with Duchamp serving as the arbiter. As the referee, Duchamp was not physically engaged with any of the matches but announced the move played by the player at the first table using alphanumeric chess notation. The master, Koltanowski, would then respond in the same language with a move, leaving the player to process and strategize their next move. Duchamp and Koltanowski then repeated this process one by one with the remaining six players. For the Surrealists in attendance such as André Breton, Roberto Matta, and David Hare, this process was most likely understood as a ritual; the seer (chess master) illuminating the fates of the artists (chess players) one move at a time.⁷³ With the Blindfolded Chess Event, Duchamp again “eliminated the retinal” through the blindfolding of Koltanowski and the highlighting of the beauty inherent to the intellectual process of a game of chess. As suggested earlier, the Blindfolded Chess Event is an expansion to the conceptual precursor, Duchamp’s *Mile of String* installation at the *First Papers of Surrealism* in 1942. The seven games played against Koltanowski metaphorically, “filled the gallery with a web of lines of connection,

⁷³ List, *Imagery of Chess*, 20-21.

obstruction, attack, and defense.”⁷⁴ Similar to the links and obstacles created by the twine between the gallery space and works exhibited at the *First Papers of Surrealism*, Duchamp conceptually achieved the same beauty in the movement of chess pieces during *The Imagery of Chess* event through the simultaneous blindfolded chess matches.

In order to fully understand the significance of Duchamp’s curatorial work and *The Imagery of Chess* exhibition, it must be situated within the historical context of the status of Surrealism in New York City during the 1930s and 1940s. As Dickran Tashjian states in his book, *A Boatload of Madmen: Surrealism and the American Avant-Garde, 1920-1950*, momentous events like the 1913 Armory Show did not automatically create an American avant-garde. Although many American artists were experimenting with innovations from the European avant-gardes, it was clear that the Americans could not simply appropriate styles and deem them avant-garde. Tashjian states that Americans needed avant-garde art communities that would provide the social and cultural environment needed for the formation of avant-garde art; Americans needed to create their own art that met their own distinct social and cultural experiences.⁷⁵ Galleries provided such an environment. The Julien Levy Gallery, for example, was one of the few Manhattan-based galleries in the 1930s that was willing to step into this role and to exhibit modern art.

The Imagery of Chess was widely popularized so scholars thought it trivial. The exhibition was covered extensively in *Newsweek* (December 1944) (Fig. 29), *Art Digest*

⁷⁴ Ibid., 21.

⁷⁵ Dickran Tashjian, *A Boatload of Madmen: Surrealism and the American Avant-Garde, 1920-1950* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1995), 6.

(December 1944) (Fig. 30), *The Chess Review* (January 1945) (Fig. 31), and *Town & Country Magazine* (February 1945) (Fig. 32). In “Chessmen of Tomorrow,” Kenneth Harkness referred to *The Imagery of Chess* as “revolutionary” and a “glimpse into the future [of chess playing].”⁷⁶ In the February 1945 issue of *Town & Country* the article “Checkmates” depicted the exhibition as a backdrop for fashion models such as Mrs. T. Dennie Boardman who modeled in a Daventweed black and white checked suit in front of a painted chessboard designed by Ernst (Fig. 33).⁷⁷

The Imagery of Chess also an important precedent for Duchamp’s subsequent use of chess as a format for two chess-related performances in the 1960s. In her essay “Serious Play: Games and Early Twentieth Century Modernism,” Claudia Mesch points to Duchamp’s performance with Eve Babitz at his 1963 retrospective at the Pasadena Art Museum as a defining moment when his work combined both art and chess beyond figural or abstracted representations of the game in play. According to Mesch, in the 1960’s Duchamp began to see chess as a more conceptual “visual event.” Mesch believes Duchamp used the game as performance art, elevating it the realm of high art.⁷⁸ Additionally, Bailey believes the brilliance of the performance and famous photograph taken by *Time* photographer Julian Wasser on 18 October 1963 (Fig. 34) lies in the fact that both incorporated three major themes prevalent in Duchamp’s life and art: art,

⁷⁶ Harkness, "Chessmen of Tomorrow," 3-4.

⁷⁷ "Checkmates," 6.

⁷⁸ Claudia Mesch, "Serious Play: Games and Early Twentieth Century Modernism," in *From Diversion to Subversion: Games, Play, and Twentieth-Century Art* (University Park: Penn State Press, 2011), 70-71.

eroticism, and strategy.⁷⁹ While Bailey makes a valuable point, this particular performance also adds a heightened element of eroticism that is contingent on gender that is not as apparent in *The Imagery of Chess* and the Blindfolded Chess Event. The more germane point to consider here may be that for Duchamp, the eroticism of the performance with Eve Babitz is an addition, or a heightened explicitness of sexuality.

In 1966, Duchamp organized *Hommage a Caissa: Exhibition for the Chess Foundation of the Duchamp Fund* at the Cordier & Elkstrom Gallery in New York. For the exhibition Duchamp produced thirty readymade chess sets for commercial sale. As in previous chess performances Duchamp played a match, this time with Surrealist Salvador Dali. Adding a layer of popular culture to this event Andy Warhol, another widely admired figure, had the rock band Velvet Underground (the Factory's house band that was also managed by Warhol) sent to provide entertainment for the event. Duchamp raised over \$32,000 to fund the Marcel Duchamp Chess Endowment Fund, which supported the American Chess Foundation's mission to sustain American chess.

Another chess performance, a collaboration of John Cage, Duchamp, and his second wife Alexina (Teeny), occurred in 1968, just months before Duchamp's death on 2 October 1968. Titled *Reunion* (Fig. 35), it opened in Toronto on the 5 March 1968 at the Ryerson Theatre. Cage had also contributed a chessboard on paper to *The Imagery of Chess* entitled, *Chess Pieces* (1944) (Fig. 36), which similar to Duchamp also combined opposites: music and chess. The musical score written onto the board in alternating black and white ink creates the grid-like form of a chessboard. In this case, the board can

⁷⁹ Bailey, "Passionate Pastimes," 50.

literally be played as well as played on, however, the music for *Chess Pieces* has ironically never been publically performed. Cage's work, made specifically for *The Imagery of Chess*, exemplified the non-retinal beauty and splendor found in "one's gray matter" where game pieces and movements, like musical notes "aren't pretty in themselves" but become so when composed and played.⁸⁰ Cage had met Duchamp in New York during the summer of 1942 and Levy in 1943 when Cage purchased a Matta drawing from the Julien Levy Gallery.⁸¹ Just as Duchamp had coached Walter Arensberg and Julien Levy to improve their chess games, in the early 1960s he also gave Cage advice regarding his chess game and even gifted Cage an autographed a copy of *Opposition and Sister Squares Are Reconciled*.⁸²

Organized by Cage, *Reunion* also included musicians David Tudor, Gordon Mumma and David Behrman. The chessboard (Fig. 37), created by University of Toronto graduate student Lowell Cross, was originally designed as a mixing board, which transmitted up to sixteen channels of sound, depending on the configuration of chess pieces on the board. Two games were played: the first between Cage and Duchamp, and a second game between Cage and Teeny. The game between Duchamp lasted only half of an hour (even with Duchamp's typical handicap of playing with less a knight), while the second game against Teeny remained unfinished at one in the morning, at which point

⁸⁰ Cabanne, *Dialogues*, 18-19.

⁸¹ Xenia and John Cage, "Account Sheet," April 1944, Estate of Jean F. Levy and the Julien Levy Archive, Philadelphia, PA.

⁸² John Cage, *Conversing with Cage*, ed. Richard Kostelanetz (New York: Limelight Editions, 1988), 18 and 179.

Duchamp memorized the last moves and positions of the pieces. The game was continued and finished in New York five days later. Teeny won. During each game, the moves made by Teeny and Duchamp, respectively, on the wired chessboard triggered electronic sounds and music produced by Tudor, Mumma, and Behrman.

When asked about the performance, Cage commented that Duchamp was fascinated by the idea of the moves of the chess pieces changing the music that was heard.⁸³ That this performance would be Duchamp's last public appearance before moving back to France, where he died six months later seems somewhat fitting. While derivative of the previous chess performances that involved Duchamp, *Reunion* added the elements of technology and music, elements unused during *The Imagery of Chess*. Duchamp's ever-present concern with eliminating the retinal was accomplished beyond the physical or visual. Unlike the *Mile of String* installation or the Blindfolded Chess Event, *Reunion* provided somewhat of an ending to the exploration of the visual attractiveness of chess through the use of auditory processes; the beauty of chess could now be heard.

⁸³ William Fetterman, *John Cage's Theatre Pieces: Notations and Performances* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1996), 91.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Concomitant with Larry List's recreation of the 1944 exhibition, *The Imagery of Chess Revisited* (October 2005 – March 2006) at the Noguchi Museum in New York, the museum sponsored competitions at a number of local art schools to make chess sets. Students from the Pratt Institute and The New School's Parson School of Design participated in the competitions by first submitting works and chessmen designs on paper. Seven works were constructed physically for *The Imagery of Chess Revisited*. Included were Patricia Tower's *Chess Set* (2005) (Fig.38), Deborah Tan's *Chess Set* (2005) (Fig. 39), Brian Thomas's *Chess Set* (2005) (Fig. 40), and Sergio Silva's *Chess Set* (2005) (Fig. 41).

As mentioned previously, the 2005 exhibition included original works and replicas. At the opening of the exhibition, a blindfolded chess match was also staged in the main gallery of the Noguchi Museum. Six artists-players opposed seventeen-year-old Grand Master Hikaru Nakamura in his first blindfolded chess exhibition ever. Just as in the chess event at *The Imagery of Chess* exhibition, the artist-players in the restaged event were also artists. Some were even related to artists that were involved with the exhibition in 1944, such as Paul Matisse (Duchamp's stepson), Eric Ernst (Ernst's grandson), Jonathan Bayer (Levy's son), Alexander Rower (Calder's grandson), Ben Schawinsky (Xanti Schawinsky's son), and Roger Browner (Man Ray's nephew) (Figs. 42-43). But unlike the original Blindfolded Chess Event in 1944, the 2005 matches were

not played with chess sets designed specifically for the exhibition. In fact, the sets played with were most likely the standardized Staunton set. Nakamura sat in a separate room with a video camera fixed on his position (Fig. 44-45). Doug Bellizzi, the president of the Marshall Chess Club, acted in Duchamp's role as arbiter relaying each move back and forth via walkie-talkie. Ben Schwinsky, whose father had a piece in the original exhibition stated, "I've never been hemmed in so beautifully in my life," as Nakamura captured his queen.⁸⁴

In a 1963 interview by Jean-Marie Drot Duchamp claimed, "if you start playing chess when you are young, you'll likely still play chess when you grow old and die... [it] very likely helped me to achieve what I wanted."⁸⁵ In Duchamp's mind, chess incorporated many of the qualities he found essential in his own art: inventiveness and play based on skill, not chance; ritualized forms and iconography; explorations of the artist/viewer/player relationship; distinctive spatial organizations; and contradictions that could be transposed to aesthetic or anti-aesthetic objectives.⁸⁶ Duchamp explored the beauty of chess as an object to chess as a process not only through his "successive moves" as an artist, chess master, publicist of art, and curator. As Francis Naumann stated in his essay "Aesthetic Anarchy," Duchamp "wished to be remembered [as] a person who, like serious chess players, gives a great deal of thought to what he is doing

⁸⁴ Gary Shapiro, "Reigning U.S. Chess Champ Fells Six Opponents in Reprise of Famous Match of 1945," *The New York Sun*, October, 21, 2005.

⁸⁵ Jean-Marie Drot, *Marcel Duchamp: A Game of Chess*, Home Vision Entertainment, Chicago, videocassette, 1987.

⁸⁶ Larry List, "Chess as Art," in *Duchamp, Man Ray, Picabia*, ed. Jennifer Mundy (London: Tate Publishing, 2008), 133.

and, even more importantly, as an artist whose works is inseparable from the intellect that created it.”⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Francis Naumann, “Aesthetic Anarchies,” in *Duchamp, Man Ray, Picabia*, ed. Jennifer Mundy (London: Tate Publishing, 2008), 66.

APPENDIX
FIGURES



Fig. 1:
Marcel Duchamp, *Imagery of Chess Invitation*, 1944.
Image taken from: Julien Levy Archives, Philadelphia Museum of Art

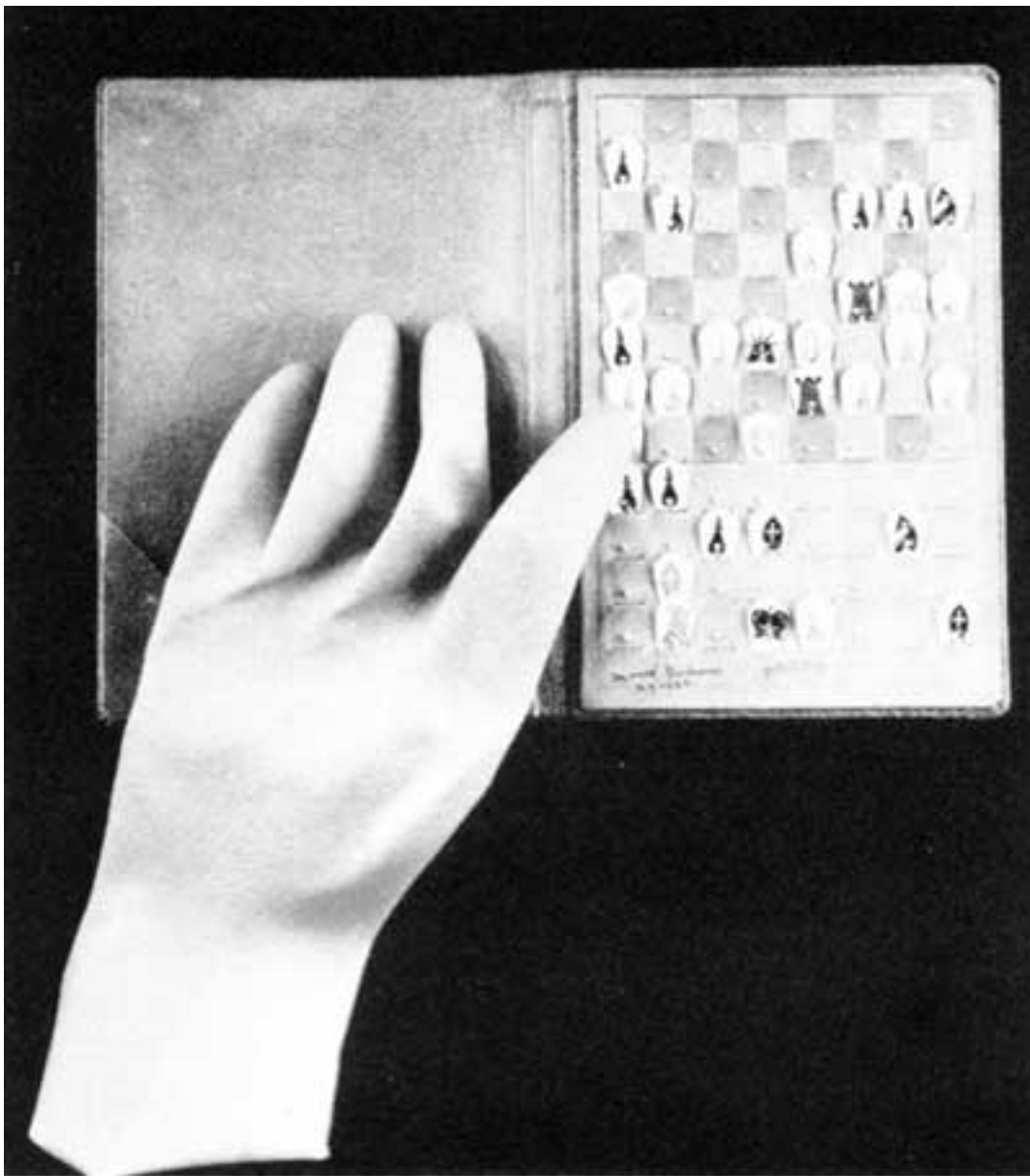


Fig. 2
Marcel Duchamp, *Pocket Chess Set with Rubber Glove*, 1944, 1966 replica.
Image taken from: Naumann, Francis. *Marcel Duchamp: The Art of Chess*.
New York: Readymade Press, 2009.

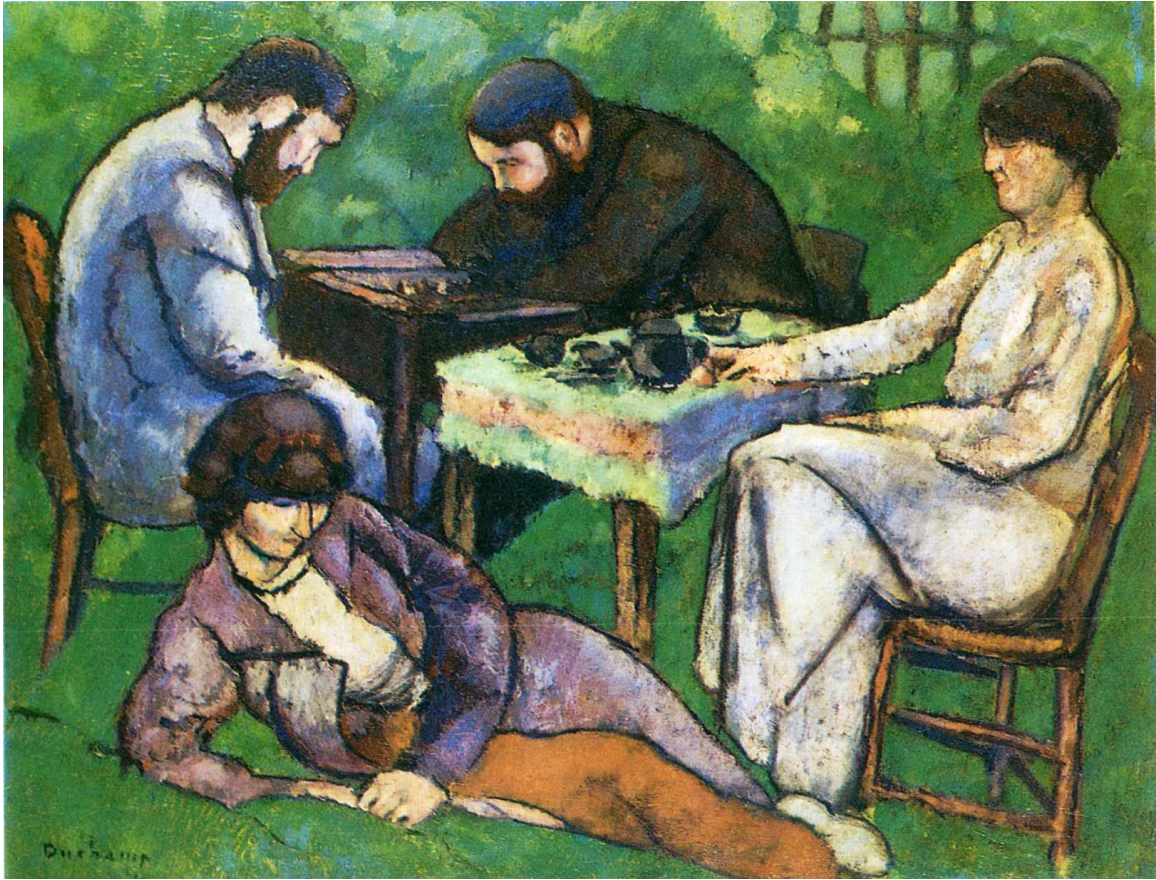


Fig. 3
Marcel Duchamp, *The Chess Game*, 1910.
Image taken from: Naumann, Francis. *Marcel Duchamp: The Art of Chess*. New York:
Readymade Press, 2009.



Fig. 4
Jacques Villon, *Marcel and Suzanne Playing Chess (The Chess Game)*, 1904.
Image taken from: Naumann, Francis. *Marcel Duchamp: The Art of Chess*. New York:
Readymade Press, 2009.



Fig. 5
Paul Cézanne, *The Card Players*, 1892.
Image taken from: Naumann, Francis. *Marcel Duchamp: The Art of Chess*. New York: Readymade Press, 2009.



Fig. 6
Marcel Duchamp, *Portrait of Chess Players*, 1911.
Image taken from: Bailey, Bradley. "Passionate Pastimes: Duchamp, Chess, and the Large Glass." In *Marcel Duchamp: The Art of Chess*, edited by Francis Naumann. New York: Readymade Press, 2009.

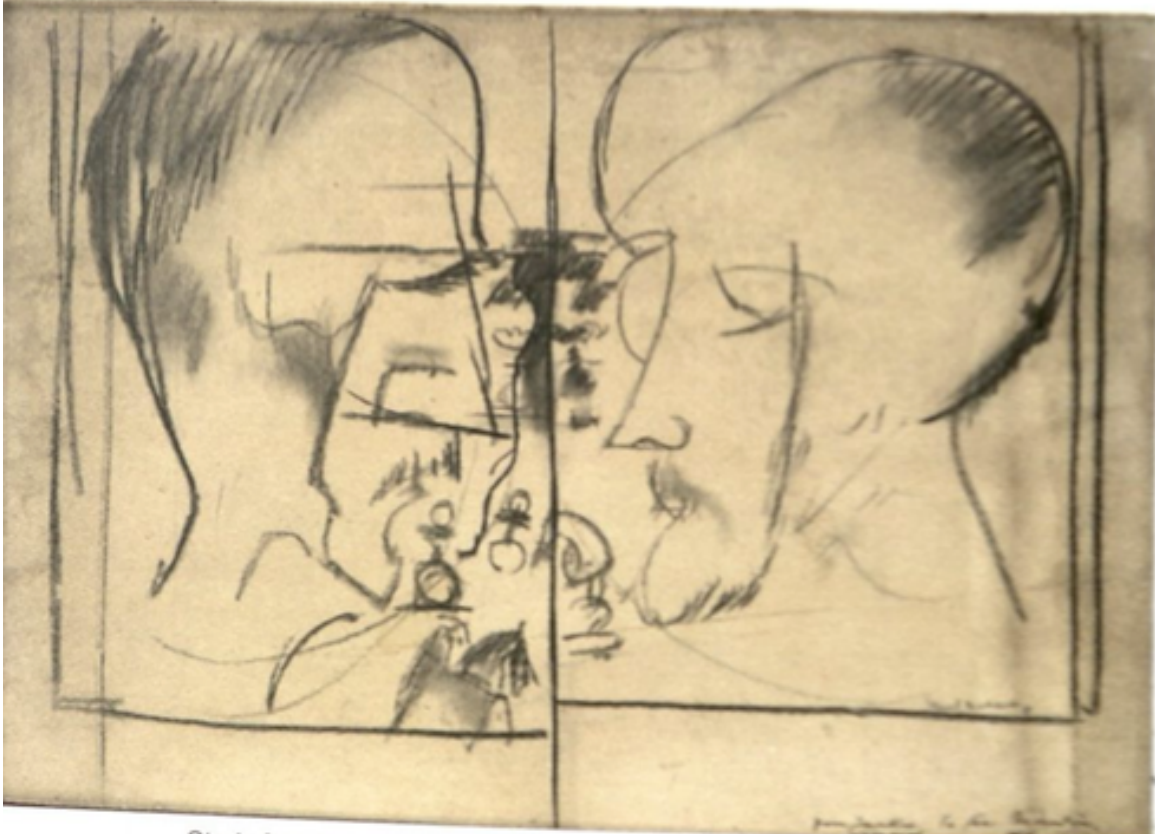


Fig. 7
Marcel Duchamp, Charcoal Study for *Portrait of Chess Players*, 1911.
Image taken from: Bailey, Bradley. "Passionate Pastimes: Duchamp, Chess, and the Large Glass." In *Marcel Duchamp: The Art of Chess*, edited by Francis Naumann. New York: Readymade Press, 2009.

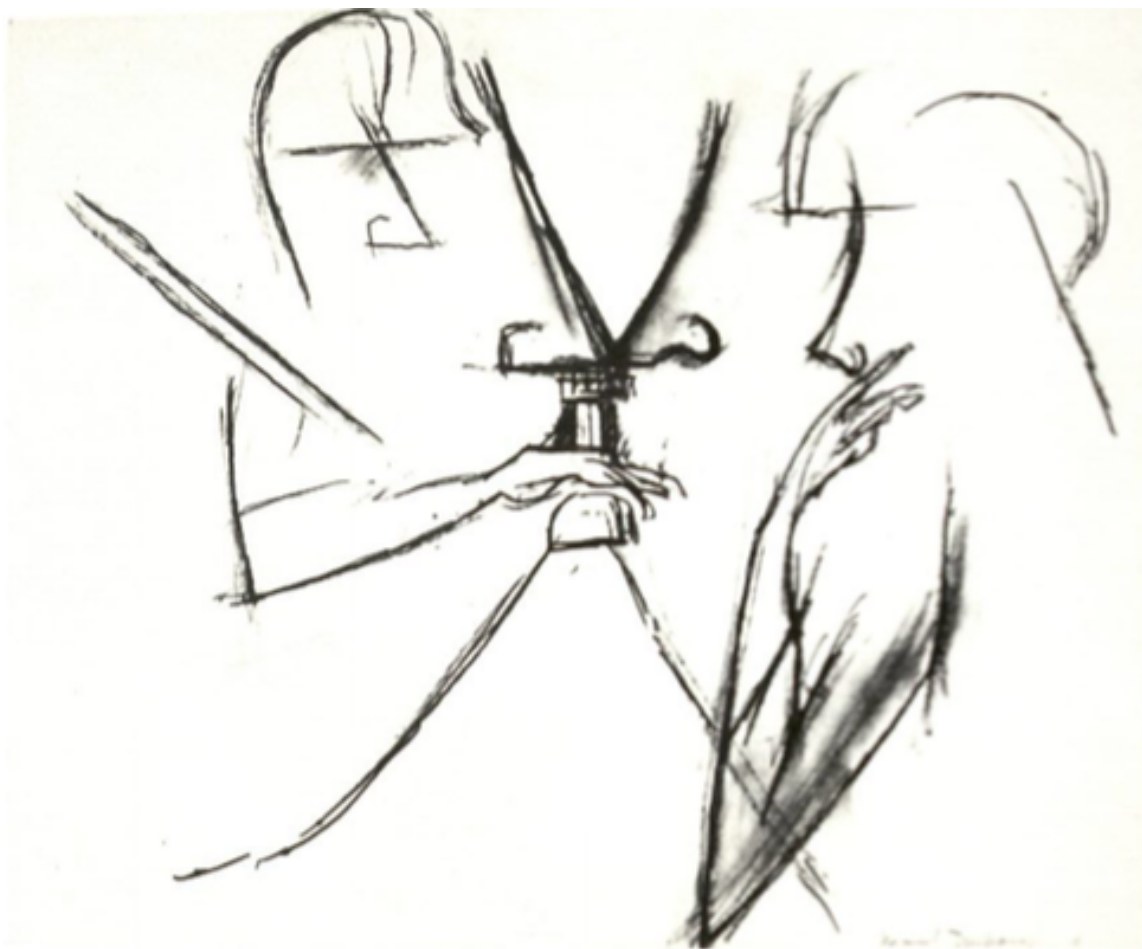


Fig. 8
Marcel Duchamp, Charcoal Study for *Portrait of Chess Players*, 1911.
Image taken from: Bailey, Bradley. "Passionate Pastimes: Duchamp, Chess, and the Large Glass." In *Marcel Duchamp: The Art of Chess*, edited by Francis Naumann. New York: Readymade Press, 2009.



Fig. 9

Marcel Duchamp, *For a Game of Chess*, 1911.

Image taken from: Bailey, Bradley. "Passionate Pastimes: Duchamp, Chess, and the Large Glass." In *Marcel Duchamp: The Art of Chess*, edited by Francis Naumann. New York: Readymade Press, 2009.



Fig. 10
Marcel Duchamp, Charcoal Study for *Portrait of Chess Players*, 1911.
Image taken from: Bailey, Bradley. "Passionate Pastimes: Duchamp, Chess,
and the Large Glass." In *Marcel Duchamp: The Art of Chess*, edited by Francis
Naumann. New York: Readymade Press, 2009.

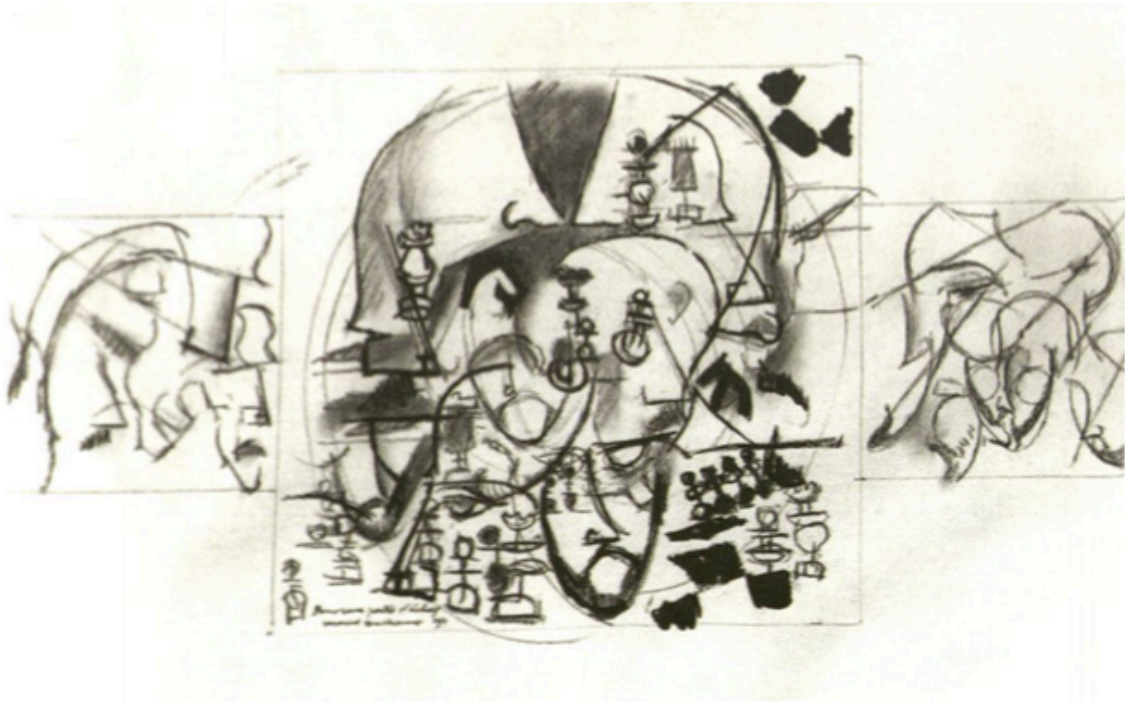


Fig. 11
Marcel Duchamp, Charcoal Study for *Portrait of Chess Players*, 1911.
Image taken from: Bailey, Bradley. "Passionate Pastimes: Duchamp, Chess, and the Large Glass." In *Marcel Duchamp: The Art of Chess*, edited by Francis Naumann. New York: Readymade Press, 2009.



Fig. 12
Marcel Duchamp, Oil Sketch for *Portrait of Chess Players*, 1911.
Image taken from: Bailey, Bradley. "Passionate Pastimes: Duchamp, Chess, and the Large Glass." In *Marcel Duchamp: The Art of Chess*, edited by Francis Naumann. New York: Readymade Press, 2009.



Fig. 13
Marcel Duchamp, *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (The Large Glass)*,
1915-1923.
Image taken from: Meredith Lancaster, photograph taken March 2015, Philadelphia
Museum of Art.

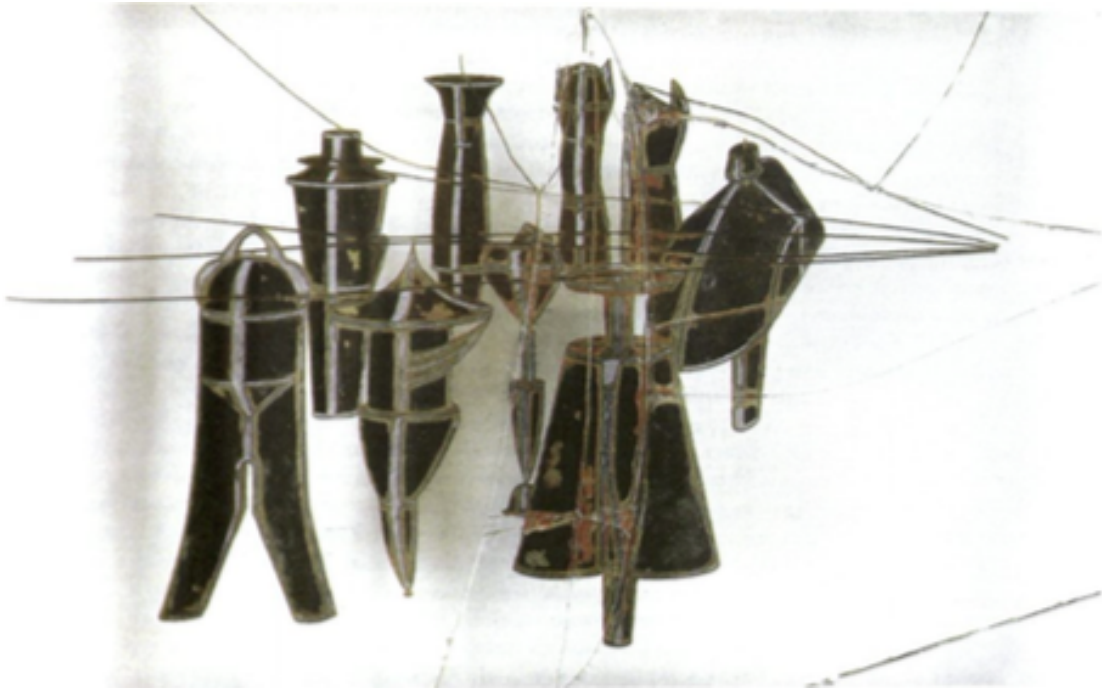


Fig. 14

Marcel Duchamp, *Nine Malic Molds*, Detail from *The Large Glass*, 1915-1923.

Image taken from: Bailey, Bradley. "Passionate Pastimes: Duchamp, Chess, and the Large Glass." In *Marcel Duchamp: The Art of Chess*, edited by Francis Naumann. New York: Readymade Press, 2009.

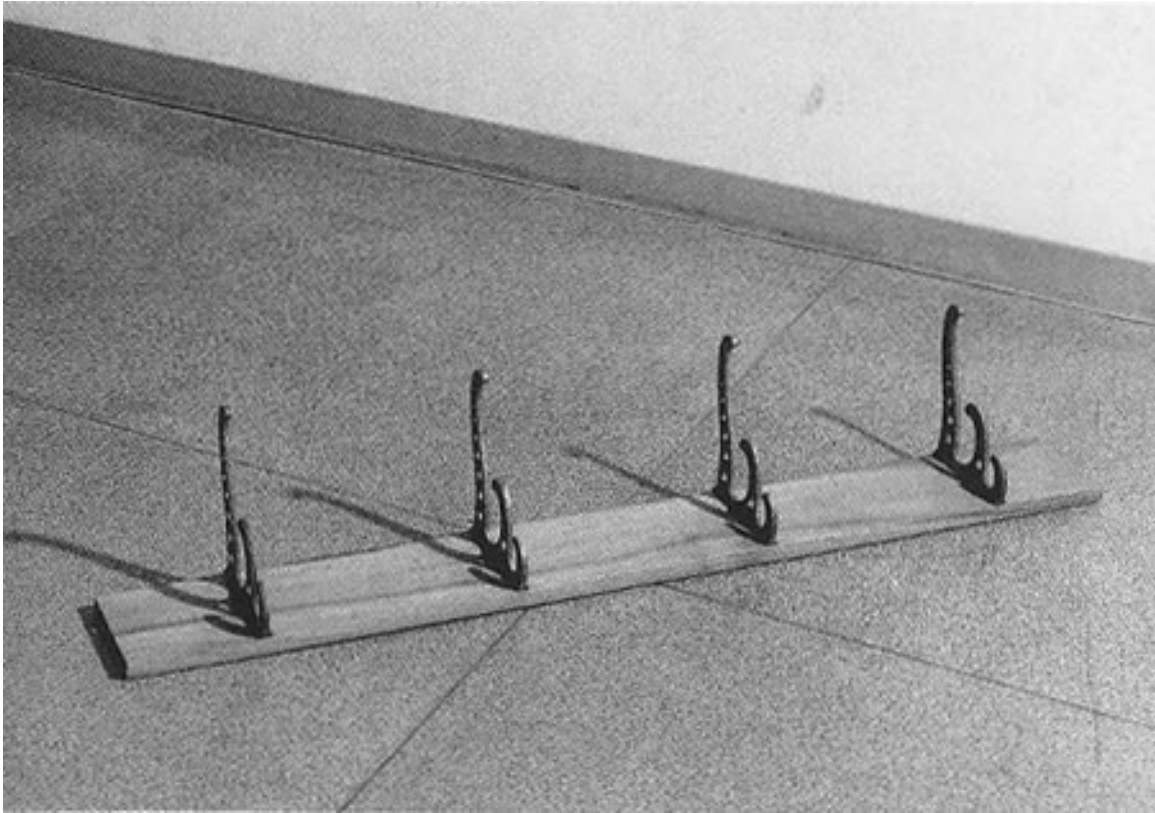


Fig. 15

Marcel Duchamp, *Trebuchet (Trap)*, 1917.

Image taken from: Dadart.com

<http://www.dadart.com/dadaism/dada/035a-duchamp-cage.html>

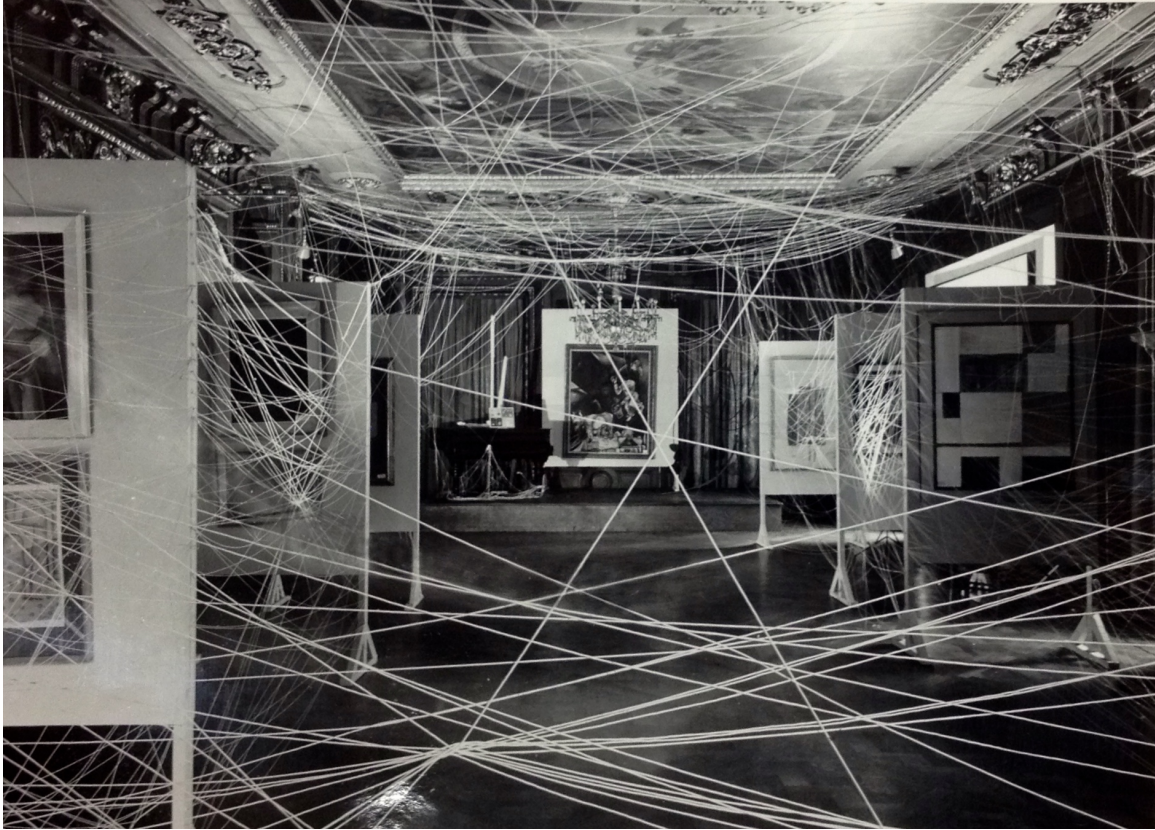


Fig. 16
John D. Schiff, *Mile of String, First Papers of Surrealism*, 1942.
Image taken from: Julien Levy Archive, Philadelphia Museum of Art.

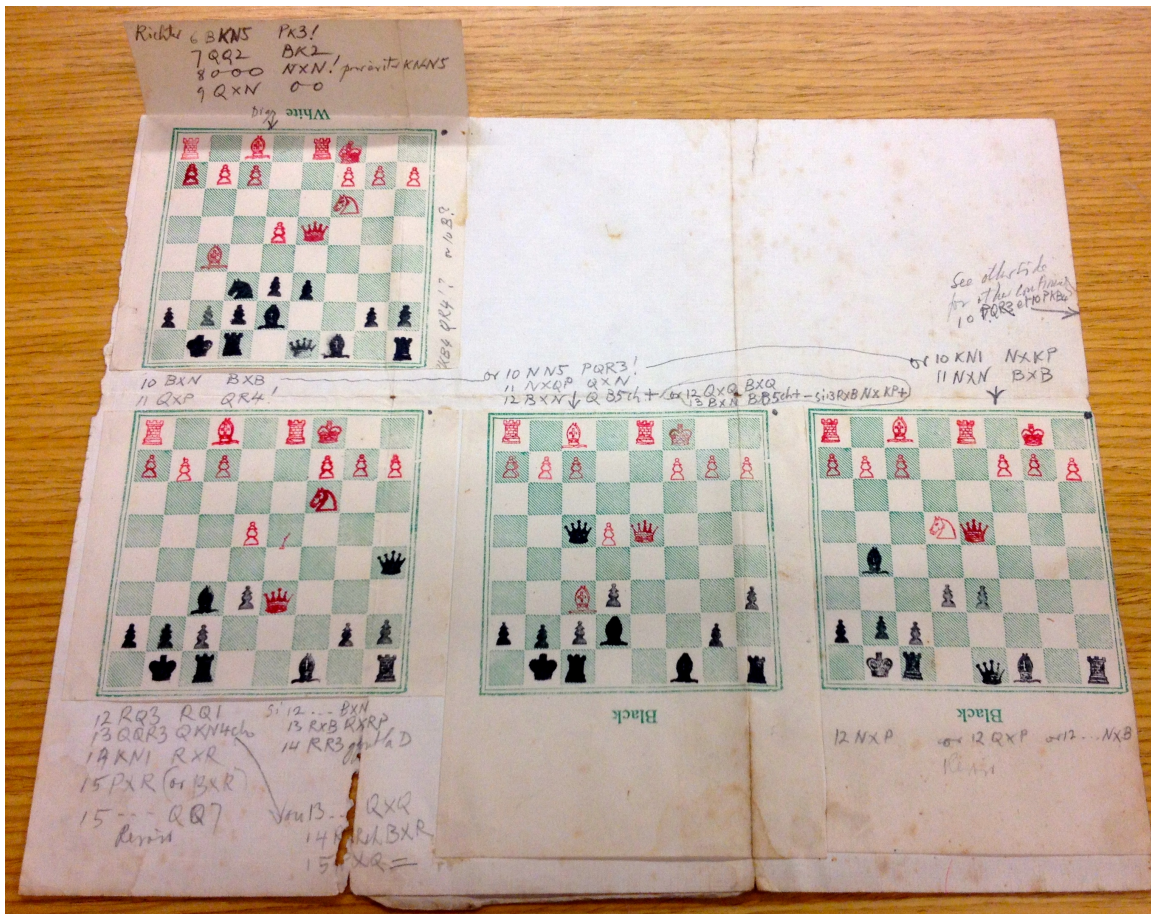


Fig. 17
 Marcel Duchamp, Correspondence Chess Game Between Julien Levy and Marcel Duchamp, undated.
 Image taken from: Meredith Lancaster, photograph taken March 2015, Julien Levy Archive, Philadelphia Museum of Art.

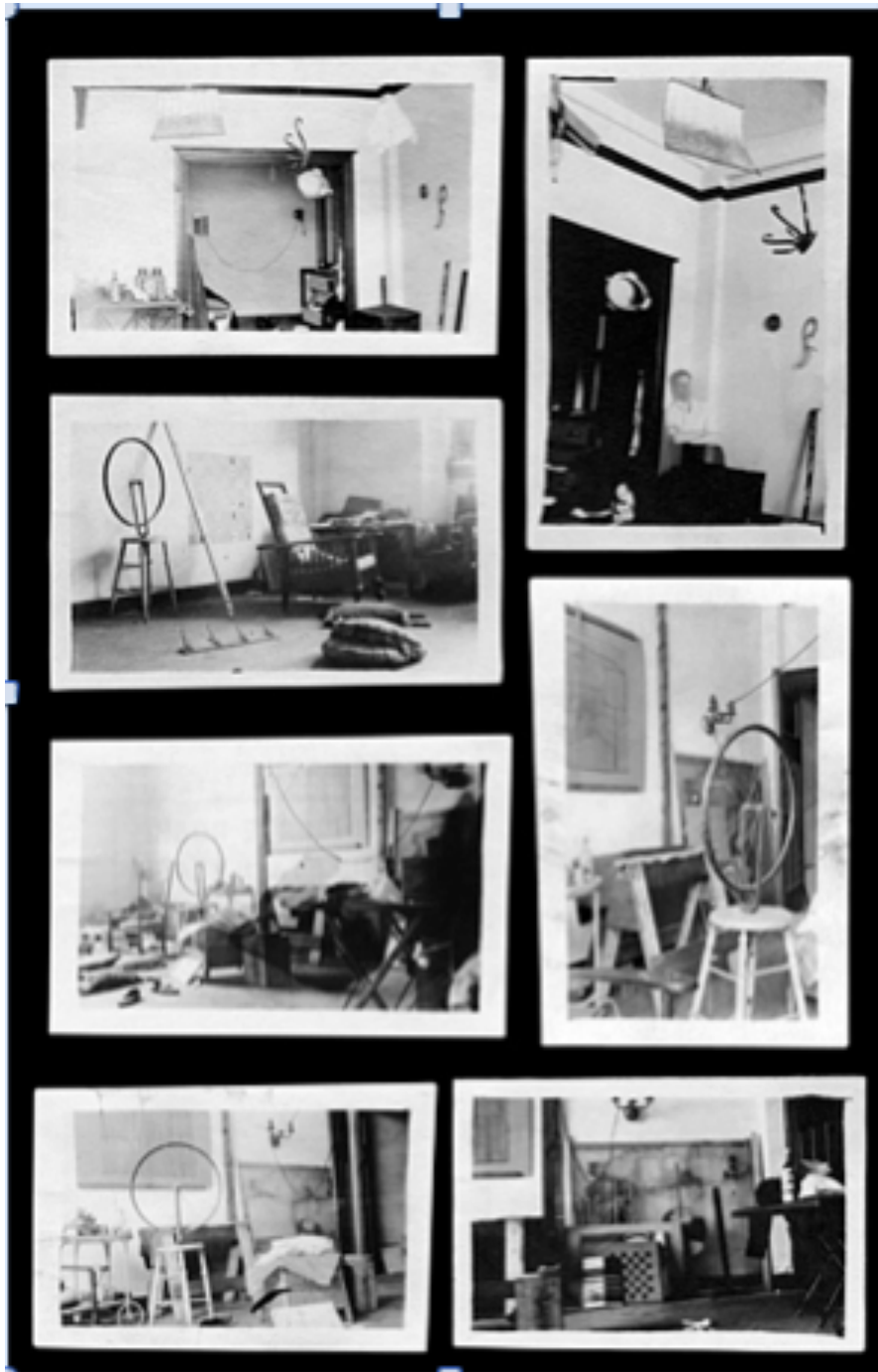


Fig. 18
Henri Pierre-Roché, Studio of Marcel Duchamp, New York, 1916.
Image taken from: Filipovic, Elena. "A Museum That is Not." Edited by
Elena Filipovic, *Marcel Duchamp: A Work That is Not a 'Work of Art'*.
Exh. cat. Buenos Aires: Fundación Proa, 2008.



Fig. 19
Marcel Duchamp, "Grotto" at the *Exhibition Internationale du Surréalisme*, 1938.
Image taken from: Filipovic, Elena. "A Museum That is Not." Edited by Elena
Filipovic, *Marcel Duchamp: A Work That is Not a 'Work of Art'*. Exh. cat. Buenos
Aires: Fundación Proa, 2008.



Fig. 20

Max Ernst, *The King Playing with the Queen*, 1944.

Image taken from: List, Larry. *The Imagery of Chess Revisited*. New York: Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, 2005.



Fig. 21

Julien Levy, *Plaster Chess Piece Prototypes*, 1944.

Image taken from: List, Larry. *The Imagery of Chess Revisited*. New York: Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, 2005.



Fig. 22

Alexander Calder, *Traveling Chess Set and Box*, 1942.

Image taken from: List, Larry. *The Imagery of Chess Revisited*. New York: Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, 2005.

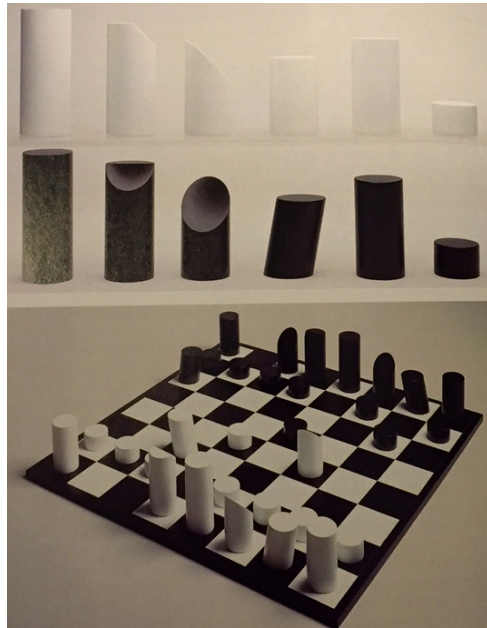


Fig. 23
Yves Tanguy, *Chess Set and Table Board*, 1939, 2004 replica.
Image taken from: List, Larry. *The Imagery of Chess Revisited*. New
York: Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, 2005.



Fig. 24
Isamu Noguchi, *Chess Set*, 1944, 2003 replica.
Image taken from: List, Larry. *The Imagery of Chess Revisited*. New York: Isamu
Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, 2005.

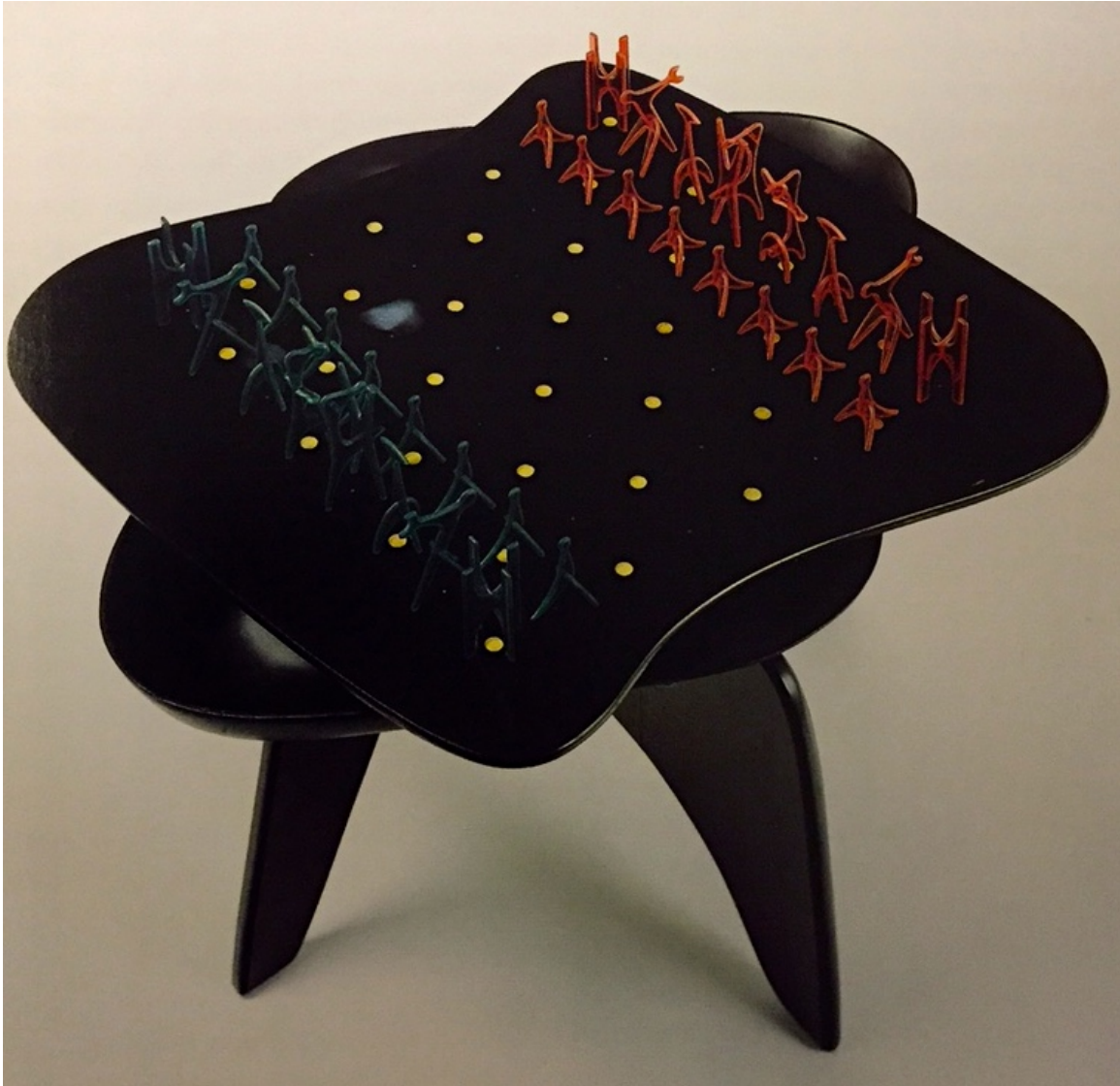


Fig. 25
Isamu Noguchi, *Chess Table*, 1944.
Image taken from: List, Larry. *The Imagery of Chess Revisited*. New York: Isamu
Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, 2005.



Fig. 26
Julien Levy, *Blindfolded Chess Event, Imagery of Chess*, 1944.
Image taken from: List, Larry. *The Imagery of Chess Revisited*. New York: Isamu
Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, 2005.



Fig. 27

Julien Levy, *Blindfolded Chess Event, Imagery of Chess*, 1944.

Image taken from: List, Larry. *The Imagery of Chess Revisited*. New York: Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, 2005.



Fig. 28

Julien Levy, *Blindfolded Chess Event, Imagery of Chess*, 1944.

Image taken from: List, Larry. *The Imagery of Chess Revisited*. New York: Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, 2005.



Max Ernst and his chess set.



Sage: spook on a diving board.

ART

Levy's Gambit

Even the centuries old, solemn game of chess, which originated as a war game, is not sacred to the surrealists. Of course through the years there have been hundreds of varieties of chessmen (including even a Communist set with the enslaved worker as the capitalist pawn), but the conventionalized English Stanton set has been in general use since 1849. That, to the surrealists, is too long a time.

Last summer Julien Levy, the New York art dealer who first brought Salvador Dali to America, invited a group of artists to paint canvases inspired by the game, or, preferably, to design original chessmen. Last week the returns were in, and "The Imagery of Chess," first of its kind ever held, opened for a seven weeks stay. In the paintings - one by Kay Sage is typical - the surrealist landscapes are giant chess boards instead of desolate deserts and are inhabited by imaginative chessmen. But the show's prime interest is in the chess sets, some of which, amazingly are eminently practical.

Cockeyed Chess: On the prankster side, though, is the concoction of the surrealist writers Nicolas Calas and Andre Breton (whose manifesto of 1924 launched the official surrealist movement). These two think chess a useless foolish game - and narcissistic besides. Their board is made up of mirrors so that the "narcissistic" players can

see themselves, and the chessmen are ordinary drinking glasses of various sizes and shapes, the "blacks" filled with red wine, the "whites" with white wine. When a player captures a piece he "must drink the symbolic blood of the victim." Breton and Calas have also hung a proclamation on chess called "Profanation" as what they sum up: "The game should be changed, not the pieces."

One of the most serious sets was contributed by the well-known psychiatrist Dr. Gregory Zilboorg. Zilboorg's set is of functional design. For instance: Since the Bishop moves diagonally across the board, he is made in the shape of an "X" and because the pawn and the castle move straight, they are square.

A more romantically functional set is that of the surrealist painter Max Ernst who peoples his canvases with meticulously painted bird monsters. His chessmen are greatly simplified, almost primitive versions of the conventional pieces. Rounded solid forms, they are pleasant to handle and easy to play with. Ernst's knight (a jumping piece with a horse's head in the conventional set) is simplified to a soaring half-crescent and his queen looks like an abstracted Helen Hokinson lady.

Tea-Table Game: The sculptor Noguchi, who is a modernist but no surrealist, and has designed playgrounds as well as the

panel over the door of the Associated Press Building in Rockefeller Center has created the most beautiful piece in the show - a black plywood chess table of curved design with quarter-sized pieces of inlaid plastic to indicate alternate playing squares. This table, which would also be nice for tea, can be raised or lowered, and the top opens out revealing a pocket to hold the chessmen. Noguchi's men are angular abstractions of red and green plastic (acetate).

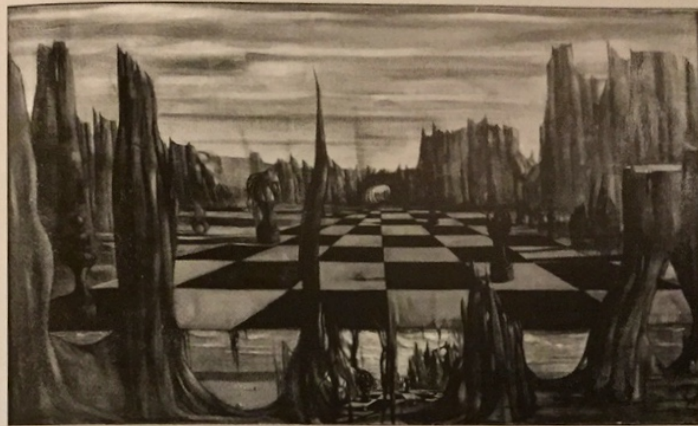
The most professional surrealist chessplayer is represented by the smallest exhibit. He is Marcel Duchamp, who painted the sensational "Nude Descending a Staircase" and later gave up painting, which had become too easy, to devote his time to chess, which he considered more difficult. His personal contribution is a leather pocket chess set with celluloid men that hang on nails.

After the holidays the new chessmen will be put to the test. George Koltanowski, world champion of blindfold chess will play simultaneous games against Levy, Zilboorg, Ernst, Fredrick Kiesler (architect who designed the lighting of the show), Dorothea Tanning (who contributed a painting), and Alfred Barr, Jr., former director of the Museum of Modern Art (he was last week appointed to a newly created research chair of painting and sculpture). These six, all amateurs, confidently expect to lose.

Fig. 29

Newsweek, "Levy's Gambit," December 25, 1944.

Image taken from: List, Larry. *The Imagery of Chess Revisited*. New York: Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, 2005.



Chess Landscape: LEON KELLY

Presenting the "Imagery of Chess"

CHESS, the oldest and most universally played game known to man, is the theme of an exhibition which just opened at the Julien Levy Gallery. The prevailing school of thought is that this game of strategy and tactics was invented by Buddhist monks as a means of sublimating man's all too fundamental martial instincts—but modern psychologists see in it sublimated patricide and a great many other startling things. Usually more the subject of legend and literature than of art, it is time the artists spoke their piece. Everyone else has.

"The Imagery of Chess" is an intimate show, made up of paintings, sculpture, newly designed chessmen, "music and miscellany" that is serious and frolicsome by turns. It is pretty well dominated by Max Ernst, whose large sculpture of the horned god—or demon—of chess presides at the gallery entrance in an eerie light, and his Mondrian-like chess board composition that is somehow both exciting and satisfying is centered on the front gallery wall. Ernst's chessmen, gracefully creative embodiments of their functions, make a devotee of the game itch to get his hands on them—they give the impression of *wanting* to move.

In spite of Ernst's abstraction, and a smaller one by Duchamps (a lovely thing, superbly brushed, but in which we were unable to find the chess motif), most of the paintings are to a greater or lesser extent surrealist. Leon Kelly contributes an imaginative beauty,

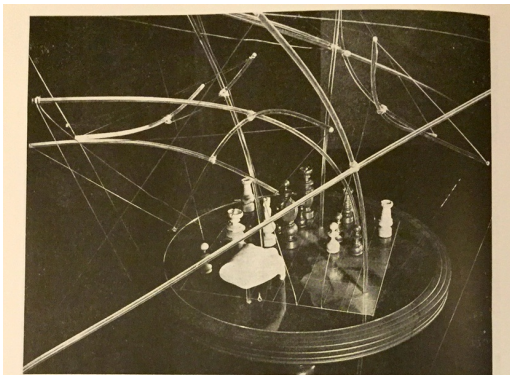
striking in color and fascinating in detail. Kay Sage and Harold Sterner, too, see most of the visible world a giant chess board; and a board serves Dorothea Tanning as a background for a brilliant *trompe l'oeil* arrangement of a queen's satin slipper squeezing bubbles out of a bishop's miter.

Several other sets of chessmen are interesting, if not quite so perfect as Ernst's. Man Ray's, executed in silver, is made up of classical cones, pyramids, urns, etc. (it is these that are set up on the vast expanse of squares in the painting by Kay Sage). Filipowski's graceful little lucite miniatures are built on the cylinder; Dr. Gregory Zilboorg's, an adaptation of the Bauhaus set, come out of the clumsier cube; and Julien Levy's quite amusing ones were developed by pouring plaster of Paris in his breakfast egg shells. For some reason, a table set up dada fashion by Breton and Calas, with various sizes and shapes of glasses and bowls filled with this and that, was a little irritating. But perhaps at this point one should consider a trip to Looking-Glass Land and

"Then fill up the glases as quick as you can,
And sprinkle the table with butter and bran:
Put cats in the coffee and mice in the tea—
And welcome Queen Alice with thirty-times-three."

—J. G.

Fig. 30
Art Digest, "Presenting the 'Imagery of Chess,'" December 15, 1944.
 Image taken from: List, Larry. *The Imagery of Chess Revisited*. New York: Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, 2005.



The dynamics of chess are depicted in this symbolic illustration by famous designing artist Maxt Bhabovsky. The lines crisscrossing in all directions (formed by bars of Lucite) represent the moves of the chessman in the mind of the player. The chess position is from a Lasker-Capablanca game.

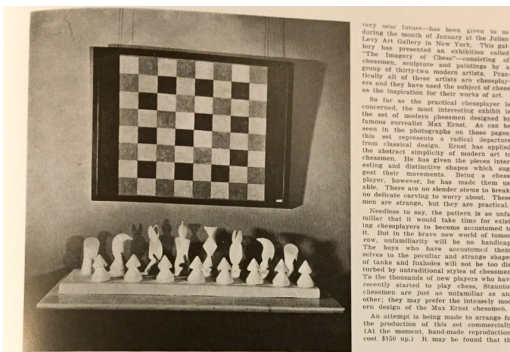
CHESSMEN OF TOMORROW

by KENNETH HARKNESS
With Photographic Illustrations
by AI POKH for CHESS REVIEW

FOR thousands of years, the history of man has been portrayed in the representations of living forms or inanimate objects which have been used as chessmen. In days gone by, players of this ancient game have used pieces modeled after Minotaur, ministers and merchants, Generals, Judges and jesters, soldiers, ships and warfts, birds, fish, birds, bears and bishops, chariots, animals, castles and castles. The last in addition, Wars, revolutions, religious, social life and artistic fashions have all been depicted in the changing designs of chessmen through the ages.

Today, there are many styles of chessmen—but the most popular, in English-speaking countries, is the conventionalized Staunton design, an imitation of H. The true Staunton move (made by J. Jacques & Son of London since 1849) combine a simple, classical beauty with great utility. At any rate, we have become accustomed to these chessmen. Although some of the imitations of this design are ugly and crude, they resemble the original sufficiently to give us a feeling of familiarity when we play with them. We feel distinctly mentally when we are confronted with sets of entirely different designs, such as the so-called French Set, in which the Queen, King and Pawn all look alike and can only be distinguished by their different sizes.

But what of tomorrow? What kind of chessmen will the players of 1960, or 1970, or even 1980 be using? Will they still be playing with Staunton chessmen? Perhaps not! There is nothing in past history to substantiate the idea that there is any permanency in the design of chessmen of the names of the pieces. Staunton men have been used for a long time now. Are there any strong indications that a change is rapidly approaching? We may be about to witness a revolution—total departure from our accustomed styles of chessmen. If modern artists, sculptors and designers have used up chess-and-stone men and models of a rebellion against our Staunton chessmen. They say that present-day chess pieces are too static, too



The plastic chessmen in both these photos were designed by surrealist painter Max Ernst. From these original models, Ernst sculpted the wooden chessmen pictured on the next page. Gradations in the black and white tones (emphasized here in the process of reproduction) portray the fact that the squares of the chessboard are of equal in value.



Small, too repetitions, too classical. They threaten to overthrow our familiar conceptions of Kings, Queens, Bishops, Rooks, Knights and Pawns and present us with entirely new figures, new shapes, even new names for the pieces. The modern artist, only game that expresses artistic feeling, the graceful, geometrical patterns of the chess moves—and he believes that the chessman should better portray the activity of the game.

How successful this new movement will be cannot be foretold—but the same artists have revolutionized the designs of commercial products in other fields. And these artists have taken to chess with enthusiasm. Their desire to develop new styles of chessmen comes from the heart. A glimpse into the future—perhaps the

CHESS REVIEW, JANUARY, 1945

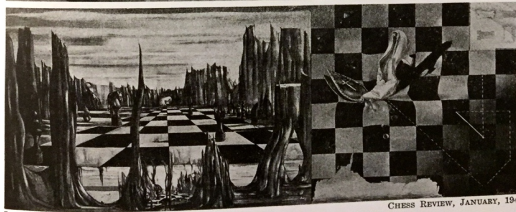


—is a collection of fantasies and abstractions in which chess is the incidental or central subject.

One of the most interesting—and certainly the most photogenic—of these abstractions is the "Chess Game" by Gaudi and on page 2. Bhabovsky's is one of America's leading experimenters and teachers of applied art, conducts a school of commercial design. He is also an enthusiastic chessplayer.

On the evening of January 6th, blindfold master George Kotlaunski gave an exhibition of his skill at the Levy gallery. He tells, who called out the moves, was Marcel Duchamp—the artist who created a sensation many years ago by his "Bicycle Wheel" and "Fountain"—Duchamp stopped playing when he took up chess and is now one of the leading artists in the "art stop" to chess movement. Most of Kotlaunski's seven opponents were the artists whom we find on the walls or in the photo on pedestals in the exhibition room. The pieces were made of boards on which four reproductions of the Max Ernst chessmen and other modern styles of sets were arranged.

"The blindfold champion survived the peculiar pieces with which his opponents were to play, then declared with feeling: 'This must be the first exhibition in which the blindfold player has the advantage.' Chess—marble on!



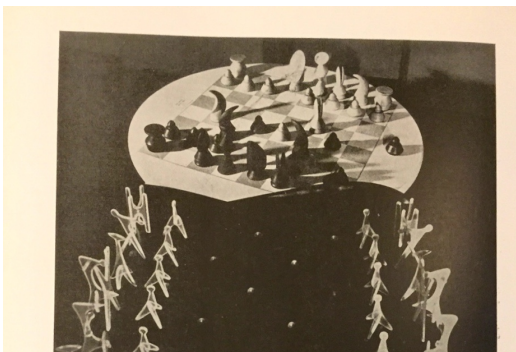
Left: Surrealist Max Ernst casts a wary eye at the allegorical sculpture of "The King of Chess." The poetic, classical Caravaggio of chess, bold as appeal for the modern artist.

Below, left: "Chess Landscape"—a painting by Leon Kelly.

Below, right: "White Queen Stepping on Black Bishop"—a painting by Charles Tanning.

Photo in this page by courtesy of the Julius Levy Gallery, New York.

CHESS REVIEW, JANUARY, 1945



Above: In this photographic composition, two sets of chessmen are pictured in the foreground are transparent Lucite pieces and wooden table designed by sculptor Isamu Noguchi. In the background are the more classical chessmen designed by Max Ernst.

Right: Another view of the Max Ernst chessmen. The designer has broken away from tradition but has retained utility. The position on the board is after 1 P-K4, P-K3, 2 Kt-K3, Kt-QB3, 3 B-B3, Kt-K4, 4 Kt-K4, P-Q4, 5 P-K4, White (left) has made in the Two Knight Defense. The Black King and Queen are misplaced and stand in front of the Queen is the tallest piece in this set.



designs is too radical that institutions are needed. It may not be possible to speed up the process of evolution in this respect—but it is clear that Max Ernst has founded a new school of chess men. These chessmen, or others patterned after them, may be the chessmen of tomorrow.

A description of the other exhibits at the Julius Levy Gallery is mentioned outside on page 2. Bhabovsky's is one of America's leading experimenters and teachers of applied art, conducts a school of commercial design. He is also an enthusiastic chessplayer.

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"The blindfold champion survived the peculiar pieces with which his opponents were to play, then declared with feeling: 'This must be the first exhibition in which the blindfold player has the advantage.' Chess—marble on!

CHESS REVIEW, JANUARY, 1945

Fig. 31
Chess Review, "Chessmen of Tomorrow," January 1945.
Image taken from: List, Larry. *The Imagery of Chess Revisited*. New York: Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, 2005.

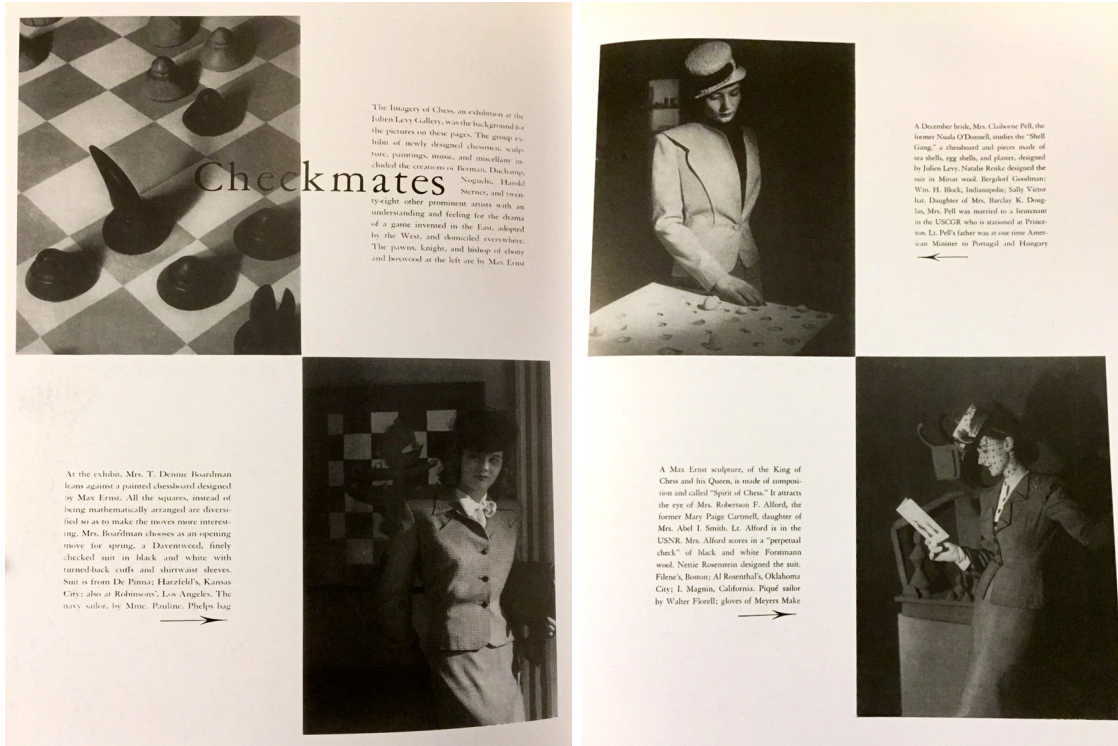


Fig. 32
Town & Country, "Checkmates," February 1945.
 Image taken from: List, Larry. *The Imagery of Chess Revisited*. New York: Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, 2005.



Fig. 33
Town & Country, "Checkmates," February, 1945.
Image taken from: List, Larry. *The Imagery of Chess Revisited*. New
York: Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, 2005.



Fig. 34

Julian Wasser, Marcel Duchamp Playing Chess with Eve Babitz, Pasadena Art Museum, 1963.

Image taken from: Mesch, Claudia. "Serious Play: Games and Early Twentieth-Century Modernism." In *From Diversion to Subversion: Games, Play, and Twentieth-century Art*, 2011, edited by David Getsy, 69. 2011.



Fig. 35

Reunion, 5 March 1968.

Image taken from: [Johncage.org](http://www.johncage.org), photograph by Lynn Rosenthal,
courtesy of The John Cage Trust.

<http://www.johncage.org/reunion/>

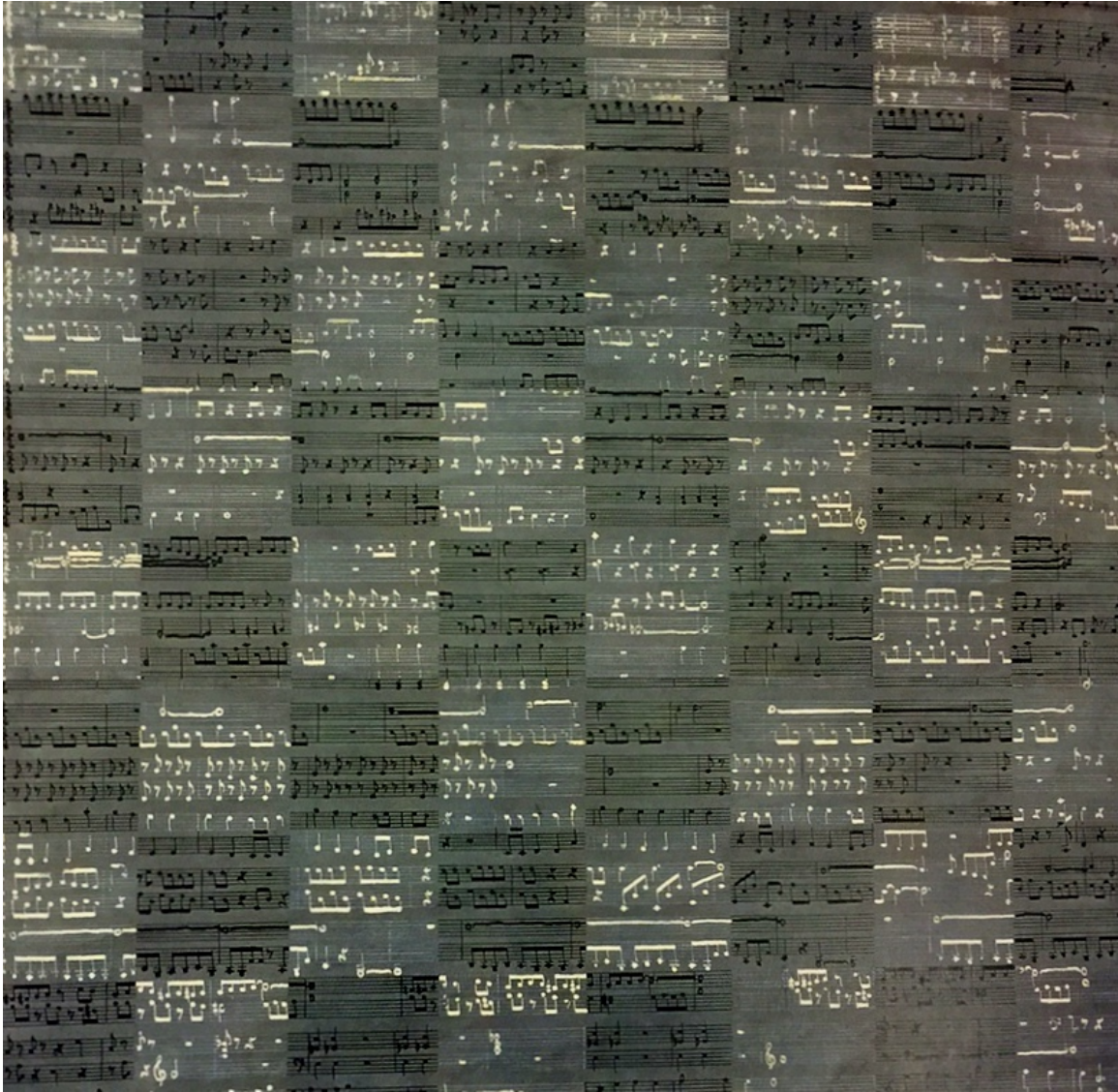


Fig. 36
John Cage, *Chess Pieces*, 1944.
Image taken from: List, Larry. *The Imagery of Chess Revisited*.
New York: Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, 2005.



Fig. 37

Lowell Cross, *Wired Chessboard*, 1968.

Image taken from: [Johncage.org](http://www.johncage.org), photograph by Lynn Rosenthal, courtesy of The John Cage Trust.

<http://www.johncage.org/reunion/>

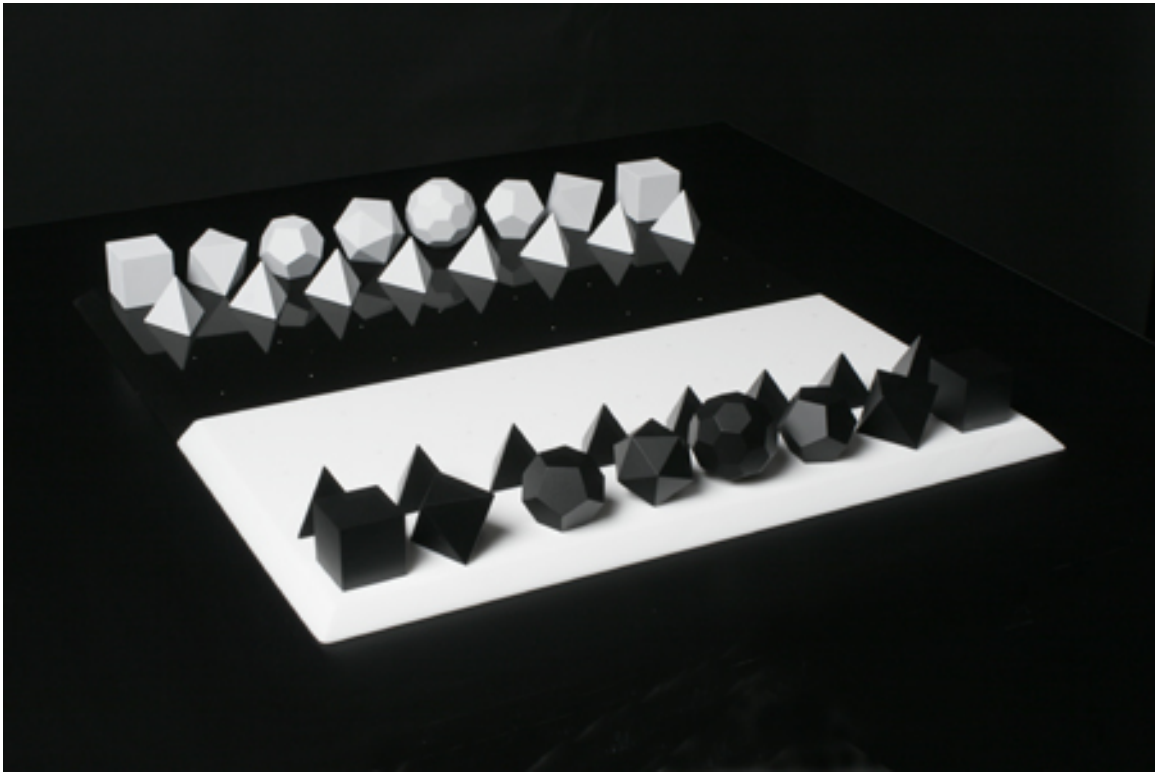


Fig. 38

Patricia Tower, *Chess Set*, 2005.

Image taken from: Noguchi Museum and the Museum of Modern Art, 2005.



Fig. 39
Deborah Tan, *Chess Set*, 2005.
Image taken from: Noguchi Museum and the Museum of Modern Art, 2005.

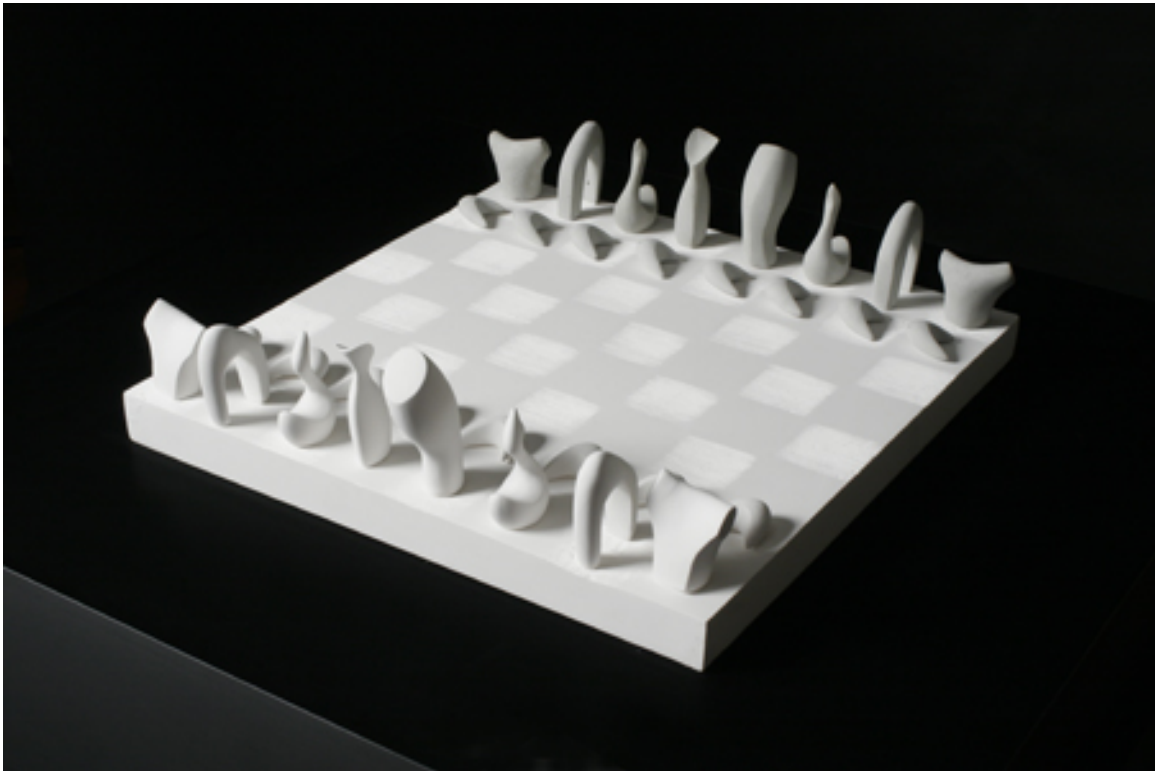


Fig. 40

Brian Thomas, *Chess Set*, 2005.

Image taken from: Noguchi Museum and the Museum of Modern Art, 2005.



Fig. 41
Sergio Silva, *Chess Set*, 2005.
Image taken from: Noguchi Museum and the Museum of Modern Art, 2005.



Fig. 42
Paul Matisse, Eric Ernst, and Jonathan Bayer playing at *The Imagery of Chess Revisited*, 2005.
Image taken from: Fitch, Gordon. "The Imagery of Chess Revisited at the Noguchi Museum." 2005, Artzine.com, <http://www.artzine.com/issues/20060701/imochess.html#im15>.



Fig. 43
Alexander Rower, Ben Schawinsky, and Roger Browner playing at *The Imagery of Chess Revisited*, 2005.
Image taken from: Fitch, Gordon. "The Imagery of Chess Revisited at the Noguchi Museum." 2005, Artzine.com,
<http://www.artezine.com/issues/20060701/imochess.html#im15>.



Fig. 44
Hikaru Nakamura projected onto a screen in the playing hall, *The Imagery of Chess Revisited*, 2005.
Image taken from: Fitch, Gordon. "The Imagery of Chess Revisited at the Noguchi Museum." 2005, Artzine.com,
<http://www.artezine.com/issues/20060701/imochess.html#im15>.



Fig. 45
The Blindfold Chess Match, *The Imagery of Chess Revisited*, Noguchi Museum, 2005.
Image taken from: Fitch, Gordon. "The Imagery of Chess Revisited at the Noguchi
Museum." 2005, Artzine.com,
<http://www.artzine.com/issues/20060701/imochess.html#im15>.

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