

# Marcel Duchamp's influences on modern art



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

## **Marcel Duchamp's Influence on 20th/21st Century Art**

### 1: Introduction

The influence of Duchamp's notion of readymade art has had widespread and profound connotations for the development of art in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century. Firstly, Duchamp's art attempted to avoid many of the traditions of art at the time; his use of readymades stigmatised the notion of the artist as a creator. This radical redefinition of the role of artist informed future Conceptual artists in their attempts to relocate the boundaries that would define their role. Duchamp's role was precisely the opposite role as those artists concerned about formulating an ideal form of subjective expression – Duchamp was more concerned about the political role of the artist and the institutions that serve to create art, rather than of the production of art itself. His readymade work challenges many of these conceptions and institutions by drawing attention to the political and social processes behind the production of art. Secondly, Duchamp's readymade work also broadened what could be defined as art. This placed art within a broader philosophical, structural and linguistic field of discourse in which the placement of art was more ephemeral. Ultimately, Duchamp's project was to untie and disassemble art entirely; this is linked to the postmodern notion that categories and objects do not possess any inherent meaning, but only contain the meanings that we ourselves assign to them. As such, Duchamp's legacy in both a practical and a theoretical and philosophical sense has served to inform cultural and artistic debate throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, from Jasper Johns, to pop art, performance art and other forms of avant-garde art that challenge the underlying principles behind artistic production.

<https://assignbuster.com/marcel-duchamps-influences-on-modern-art/>

Duchamp's readymade has left a profound legacy across the board of contemporary art for a number of reasons. Responses to the readymade and the challenge that it poses for a redefined art divorced from the artefact are widespread. Firstly, the elevation of a readymade work of art alters the role of the artist in the production process: Buchloh comments that the extent of Duchamp's influence on art can be answered by responding to three particular points for discussion. Firstly, he suggests that Duchamp's influence can be seen in how "the specific forms of how traditional forms of mark-making can be displaced by an exclusively photographic or textual operation of recording and documentation" (Buskirk & Nixon, 205). The impact of this method is to erode and to redefine the role of artist. Whereas we can say that the classical and modernist form of the artist was to present us with a version of reality authenticated by the presence of the artist and the subjective aesthetic rules that made that artist "good" or "bad", Duchamp's readymade work, namely *The Fountain*, challenges this approach by stressing the role of the artist as a collector and an assembler rather than as a creator. Because it is obvious that Duchamp's Fountain would not be considered a work of art if it were presented to us in a lavatory, Duchamp highlights and challenges the prejudices inherent to artistic production: namely, the traditional methods for artistic production and for "mark-making" are redefined and with it, the artist. Of course, this implication has had a profound impact on the development of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century art, from Jasper John's flags to Warhol's pop art, and has served to change the material conditions behind the production of art. The mechanistic connotations invoked by Duchamp and his readymade radically challenges and redefines the aesthetic palette available to artists; Duchamp's influence

<https://assignbuster.com/marcel-duchamps-influences-on-modern-art/>

was to challenge the subjective aesthetic of artistic production – Duchamp's systemic use of a readymade on the one hand broadens the philosophical and conceptual basis for art production while on the other hand exposing the fallacies of art production in its more traditional sense. Of course, the impacts of this challenge have served to inform critical debate about the role of the artist in art ever since.

2: Readymades In Advance of The Broken Arm, Trebuchet (Trap), Hat Rack, Bicycle Wheel, Bottle Dryer, Air de Paris (400 words)

“ The elevation of a common object to the level of a work of art did not consist in merely choosing and signing it. It implied following a set of four rules: de-contextualisation, titling, limiting the frequency of the act and, the most esoteric of all, the necessity of a ‘ rendez-vous’ – the meeting of the artist and the object” (Schwarz, 126).

Duchamp's readymade also served to interrogate the principles by which we define objects themselves; because Duchamp's readymade work inherently interrogates the status of objects by changing their relation to one-another, it can be asserted that Duchamp's project was to challenge how categories and objects are defined by their intrinsic properties rather than by their relationship to their broader environment.

Buchloh points out that Duchamp facilitated the “ radical dismantling of all traditional definitions of objects and categories – the ‘ dematerialisation of the work of art,’ as Lucy Lippard called it – and its transfer onto the linguistic, the photographic, and the site-specific operations within which Conceptual art was defined” (Buskirk & Nixon, 205). Of course, the linguistic and

<https://assignbuster.com/marcel-duchamps-influences-on-modern-art/>

structural properties of Duchamp's readymade serves to interrogate and dismantle the traditional role of artist. It also broadens the scope and the context of art itself. However, perhaps more significantly, the nature of Duchamp's readymade does not allow for a particularly easy redefinition of art's aesthetic role. For example, if it is asserted that Duchamp's role was to reposition items of artistic worth and to place them into the political space of a gallery, this highlights the political rather than the aesthetic role of the gallery and the artist in measuring items of subjective worth. In addition, Duchamp's process of selection is also telling:

“ The great problem was the act of selection. I had to pick an object without it impressing me and, as far as possible, without the least intervention of any idea or suggestion of aesthetic pleasure. It was necessary to reduce my personal taste to zero. It is very difficult to select an object that has absolutely no interest for us not only the day we pick it but which never will and which, finally, can never have the possibility of becoming beautiful, pretty, agreeable or ugly” (Paz, 88).

Duchamp's aim, therefore, was to divorce art from its meanings and from the methods of judgement that are usually assigned to it. His desire to locate an object that had absolutely no interest whatsoever highlights both his desire to challenge the centrality of the artistic object, and also helps us to trace his legacy through what can be construed as an attempt to apply Duchamp's philosophical theory on locating a work of art that can never be “ beautiful, pretty, agreeable or ugly”, and the inevitable failure entrenched within the politics of the readymade: despite Duchamp's intention to create art that did not have any meaning, the assignation of meaning to Duchamp's

readymades as a series of fetishised objects seemed inevitable and also influenced other Conceptual artists in their project to erode the stability and the legitimacy of the artefact via a number of means: the fetishisation of art in late capitalism, for example, causes art to amass a capitalistic value regardless of whether the artist him or herself wishes for a value to be attached to it.

Trebuchet: a coat rack, which means a “ trap for small birds and is a pun on the phonetically identical ‘ trebucher’, meaning to stumble over.” (Schwarz 126-7).

### Section 3: Duchamp as Rose Selavy (400 words)

Duchamp and the dada movement in general were concerned about elucidating through irony and humour the role of the artist in the production process. Although the concept of the readymade changed this role from that of creator to selector of appropriate works of art, the role and identity of the artist was questioned in a more thoroughly mocking way with his invention of his female alter-ego, Rose Selavy, whom several works of art were ascribed to. Naumann (2008) suggests that the invention of Rose Selavy served the grander purposes and preoccupations of Duchamp’s work, whose interests and themes include “ disguise, reflection and signature” (70).

Taken generally, the invention of an alter-ego who has as much artistic authority as the artist himself serves to obfuscate, delude and disorient the viewer of the art in itself; the notion of disguise functions as a means of disrupting the traditional role of the artist as singular creator of the work in question. Rose Selavy also has a performance aspect to it, which, among

other things, helps to blur the boundaries between the work of art and the artist himself.

Along with this, Duchamp's alter-ego also has obvious connotations through the paradigm of gender studies. The peculiarities of Rose Selavy's role is particularly problematic concerning this. As well as satirising the role of artist, the construction of Rose Selavy also expressed many of the reservations expressed by Duchamp about the increasingly blurred boundaries between gender. Hopkins (2008) argues that Duchamp's views were deeply conservative regarding the growing concern over gender equality: " he was deeply wary of the growing autonomy and mannishness of contemporary ' liberated' women. [...] The evident preoccupation with gender indeterminacy [...] became thematized conclusively in the photographs of his female alter ego Rose Selavy" (Hopkins, 81). But while Rose Selavy can be read as a satire of the mannish women who had become increasingly empowered in 1920s France, the role of Selavy could also be seen as a satire of the " traditional" French aristocratic woman, whose conservative sensibilities are also mocked by Duchamp's character.

This problematic is also supported by the texts that frequently anchored the print representations of Rose Selavy. *Litterature* magazine tagged one of his portraits with the following sentence: " Here is the Domain of Rose Selavy - how arid it is - how fertile - how joyous - how sad" (from Hopkins 2008, 87), which demonstrates warmth and empathy with Rose Selavy rather than irony or satire. Hopkins adds that " The Paris group may well have understood Duchamp to be killing off his old ' dry', dusty male persona and being reborn as Rose (Eros)." (Hopkins, 86-7).

Section 4: Duchamp's use of language, wordplay, puns, paradoxes and humour in his work *Fresh Widow*, *Why Not Sneeze Rose Selavy*, *L. H. O. O. Q.*, *Ready Made Rectified (Wanted \$2000 Reward)* (400 words)

Duchamp's assault on the art establishments and its values was executed in a manner that used a great deal of wordplay, irony and often cryptic allusion to more salacious and scandalous depths. *Fresh Widow*, for example, features a play on the words for French Window and can be read, as Hopkins comments, as "a salacious allusion to the sexual availability of bereaved women in Paris after the war". Other puns assist in denigrating the stature of the traditional artistic canon by anchoring them in a completely different, and somewhat lewder context. This eroticism is exemplified by Duchamp's famous work, "L. H. O. O. Q.". Mundy (2008) suggests that humour and eroticism were key components to this Dada aesthetic, as Duchamp reinvented himself as a woman, disfigured a Mona Lisa with a moustache and printed underneath the letters "L. H. O. O. Q." which, in French when pronounced phonetically translates as "she has a hot arse". The intention of this clearly stems from an attempt to intentionally sabotage works treated with reverence by the establishments at the time by using sexual innuendo and wordplay. In addition, the linguistic addition draws attention to what exists outside of Da Vinci's original framing, perhaps drawing attention to extraneous factors in artistic production and reproduction that cannot be framed as easily.

In many respects, the titles of Duchamp's works have almost as great a significance as the works themselves; Mundy (2008) comments that this focus intentionally blurs the boundaries between traditional points of

<https://assignbuster.com/marcel-duchamps-influences-on-modern-art/>



anchorage in the artistic production process: “ The title-cum-impossible-question of another readymade, *Why Not Sneeze Selavy?* , posits unfathomable relationships between objective reality and subjective intentionality” (35). Paradox between different elements of the sculpture are brought into question and serve to defy simple, certain interpretation.

Duchamp’s famous readymade *The Fountain* challenges the utilitarian role of the urinal by placing the signature horizontally rather than vertically, thus metamorphosing the work into a piece of art by defying its utilitarian purpose. For de Duve, the challenge of Duchamp’s legacy is, in part, linguistic: “ I went straight for what I think to be the heart of the issue, namely the status of the sentence: ‘ this is art.’ It entails no definition or redefinition whatsoever, neither of ‘ this,’ nor of ‘ art.’ To take a shortcut, I’d say it is the *modern* formula for the aesthetic judgement” (213). Because Duchamp primarily and explicitly asserts that his fountain is art because it is socially defined as such (by its location, its reception etc.), he places art within an unfamiliar field of discourse – namely that, anything can be seen as art providing it is anchored by the notion that what is being done is art. As such, Duchamp’s interrogates and problematizes any objective qualities that may have previously been considered “ artistic” by nature. Of course, this has impacted significantly on conceptual and avant-garde art throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup> .

His work *Ready Made Rectified* utilises Rose Selavy by juxtaposing his own portrait with a wanted poster, on the one hand emphasising his role as *enfant terrible* of the artistic establishment and drawing ironical attention to the fallacious nature of the spectacle in itself. Humour and irony is always

<https://assignbuster.com/marcel-duchamps-influences-on-modern-art/>

used to expose these central paradoxes and to create a detachment between the various angles that are interrogated by these pieces. Mundy (2008) suggests that, for Duchamp, “humour is always of a tragic nature. Humour signals a total independence of mind and is, essentially, a revolt of the spirit and of the unconscious against the conditioning of life and society. Humour has an endless power to challenge and provoke. It is a factor of opposition, superbly subversive in so far as it establishes a victory of the pleasure principle over the reality principle.” (35).

#### Section 5: Duchamp's work with *Chance Three Standard Stoppages* (400 words)

Duchamp also interrogates the place of art in society by using chance operations. *Three Standard Stoppages* provides an example of this strategy, and again serves to undermine and interrogate the role of artist in the production process, as well as interrogating a number of other devices and standards. Firstly, *Three Standard Stoppages* draws attention to the authority of standardised meters. Judovitz (1995) suggests that, because the work is on the one hand based on standardised measurement, but on the other hand does not produce consistent results, undermines the legitimacy of “universal” systems of measurement, which has metaphorical connotations for the way in which value judgements are made: “it demonstrates the recognition that the meter itself as a unit of length is generated through approximation: the straightening out, as it were, of a curved meridian. Duchamp sets the viewer straight by graphically showing that the authority of the meter as a measuring device relies upon distortions that he corrects through chance operations” (Judovitz 1995, 48).

In addition, the work also interrogates notions of artistic authority: *Three Standard Stoppages* “ puts into question the voluntaristic and intentional logic that defines the creative act and the identity of the artist. To assume chance as a locus for production is to understand causality itself not as an origin but as a productive event, whose plasticity can redefine the notion of artistic creativity” (Judovitz 1995, 49). The utilisation of chance, therefore, metaphorically serves to emphasise the temporal element of artistic production – the “ traditional” role of the artist as an objective, isolated producer of universal and timeless works is drawn into question by these chance operations. As such, the prior legitimacy of artistic creativity being equated to notions of timelessness are jeopardized.

Section 6: Duchamp (or more accurately his alter-ego Rose Selavy) *The Green Box* the use of Photomechanical Printing, instead of the usual autographic printing methods (400 words)

The use of unusual printing methods in Duchamp's *The Green Box* draws significant attention to the traditional methods associated with mechanical reproduction of works of art. The mechanical drawings of *The Green Box* , combined with the intentionally disruptive printing methods utilised draw attention to the very process of printing and the relationship between mass production techniques and the innately singular nature of hand-made works of art. Judovitz suggests that Duchamp's use of mechanical drawing does not base itself around physical or scientific principles. Instead, “ they represent a ‘ symbolic way of explaining,’ one that privileges the logic of the machine, only to reveal its ironic underpinnings” (Judovitz 1995, 58). Significantly, the use of photomechanical printing further emphasises the problematic nature

of these drawings which, on the one hand aesthetically reproduce the visual methods of mechanical drawing, while on the other hand is representative of a more outlandish, pseudoscientific principle that disrupts the legitimacy of the rubric, codes and language used to construct such mechanical, scientific devices. The use of photomechanical technology to construct these prints also draws attention to the more invisible process of production, rather than to the mere surface of the production itself.

The legacy of Duchamp's mixing and matching of various print processes has been widespread, both in terms of its philosophical qualities (questioning the authority of a single method of printing, and of the singular importance of a single work of art) and also its more technical aspects. Of course, this interrogation of the notion of artistic originality can be found in pop art, that reconciled notions of art, commerce and mass production in the generation of works of art that were no more artistically meaningful (meaningful in the traditional sense) than mass produced wallpaper or a newspaper advertisement. Thirkell (2005) comments that " Duchamp's questioning of the notion of originality has also had a profound influence on modern print, ultimately triggering the revolution in print expression exemplified by photomechanically driven vehicle of Pop Art." *The Green Box* , therefore, in its playfulness with printing processes would prove influential in the emerging debate surrounding artistic legitimacy, authority and originality.

Section 7: Duchamp's work in Optics in Motion Rotary Demisphere,  
Rotaryrelease (400 words)

Many of Duchamp's optical works focussed on optical illusion and the ambiguity of depth perception. His *Rotoreliefs* in particular create the illusion of depth and draw attention to the role of the artist as a magician or trickster. In addition, many of these works also had erotic connotations, as the voyeuristic proclivities of the viewer of the art are made explicit by overt and metaphorical sexualised content. Mundy (2008) comments that the *Rotoreliefs* and their disorientating movement echoes that of eroticism: "the visual sensation of movement back and forth had an erotic undertone" (31). This work in optics was also drawn from Picabia's optical work, which was more overtly eroticised (*Octophone II*, for example). This draws attention to the innately subjective nature of sexualised imagery, and suggests that sexual content somehow alters and transfigures the technical quality of art in itself; by suggesting that sexuality is in itself a subjective illusion, Duchamp erodes the boundary that is arbitrarily placed between the art and the consumer of the artistic product. Mundy suggests that "he took the eroticisation of vision - the power of the corporeal and mental responses to control the interpretation of what is seen - to new heights" (31). This fragmentation of the process of interpretation serves metaphorically to activate the subjective, sensual feelings of the viewer of the art, who interprets the illusion as though it was not illusory. The use of optical illusion questions the boundary between what is "real" and what is "illusory", as the eyes of the viewer effectively trick the viewer into perceiving the illusion as real.

Perspective and depth and its illusory nature is made explicit by Duchamp's works in optics. In *Hand Stereoscopy*, special glasses are required to give

the work a level of depth, and also equates the use of colour and the use of depth: Judovitz comments that “ these dots of pigment are the projection of the perspectival (mathematical) principles underlying optics” (138-9). In addition, the drawing together of depth illusions and colour serves to blur and make explicit the relationship between these technical attributes of the artistic product itself: as Duchamp himself suggests, “ perspective resembles color” (Sanouillet & Peterson 1973, 87).

Section 8: Duchamp's work influencing artists: Cornell: Duchamp's work *With Hidden Noise* influenced Cornell's *Untitled (Rattle and Music Box)*; Cornell's *Cabinet of Natural History (Object)* (one of the bottles containing shards of glass and labelled *Method de M. Duchamp*) alludes to Duchamp's work *The Large Glass*. *Box Assemblages* have become the process for Cornell's entire oeuvre. (400 words)

The legacy of Duchamp's work has been significant, as many artists serve to draw attention (either explicit attention or implicit, coded reference) to the themes and codes of Duchamp's disruptive oeuvre. Perhaps the most explicit reference to Duchamp's legacy can be found in the work of Cornell, whose works drew directly from Duchamp and utilised much of his iconography. In particular, his *Untitled* works, such as *Mona Lisa*, *Rattle and Music Box* serve to use imagery popularised by Duchamp; in the former piece, the *Mona Lisa* is placed in a significantly different context, perhaps drawing more attention to Duchamp's *Mona Lisa of L. H. O. O. Q.* than it does the original. The repetition of this imagery also draws attention to the mechanical processes of production that Duchamp used to interrogate the notion of the artist as a producer of singular works of art.

Cornell's use of readymade works can also be traced back directly to the influence of Duchamp. His *Cabinet of Natural History*, for example, is an assemblage of various found pieces of art placed in a glass cabinet.

Apothecary bottles, maps and photographs are recontextualised in a manner thematically similar to Duchamp. In addition, Duchamp is also referenced directly, as if to interrogate further the concept of artistic authority and originality: Kosinski (2006) notes that "one bottle, containing shards of glass and labelled 'Methode de M. Duchomp' alludes to Duchamp's key work, the *Large Glass* while playfully toying with the correct pronunciation of his French name" (39). The significance of Duchamp to Cornell is made explicit by the direct reference he makes to Duchamp's legacy. In addition, his use of economy and meticulous, scientific rigour echoes the attention to detail of Duchamp's scientific works. Thirdly, Cornell uses linguistic anchorage, wordplay and the discrepancy between speech and writing (via the use of puns and misspellings) in a manner that echoes Duchamp's work that places classical works of antiquity within a surprising new context.

Section 9: Duchamp's work influencing artists: Johns: Johns work *Device* makes reference to diagrams and sketches found in Duchamp's *Green Box*. Johns acknowledged the powerful provocation of the readymade in his work *Thoughts on Duchamps*, published in 1969 in *Art in America*. (400 words)

Duchamp's aesthetic statements on the role of artist was explored in an aesthetic sense by artists such as Jasper Johns, whose use of flags and collage sought to redefine what was considered as authentic art, Duchamp's legacy also permeates into more conceptual fields. Buchloh comments that "the legacy of Duchamp was transformed from its first level of reception in

<https://assignbuster.com/marcel-duchamps-influences-on-modern-art/>

the work of Jasper Johns to the second level in Morris - what one might call the semiological, or the structural / linguistic axis" (205). The effect of Duchamp on Jasper Johns is, by Johns own admission, significant. Again, Johns utilises Duchamp's iconography and reformulates classical imagery in a manner that echoes Duchamp's original idea to redefine the role of the Mona Lisa. For example, in Johns ambitious work *The Seasons*, explicit attention is drawn to the figure of the Mona Lisa in the first of the four paintings. Kosinski comments that irony is utilised in a manner that resembles the work of Duchamp himself: "The shadow in each panel of *The Seasons* is Johns himself, melancholic perhaps and surely self referential, although it is executed after a drawing of his cast shadow that was executed by someone else. This game of ironic distance is surely rooted in Duchamp's play with shadow portraits" (32). This drawing of attention away from the subject and onto peripheral objects surrounding the subject draws immediately from Duchamp's attempts to raise speculation about the single classical subject of painting. In addition, the dual authorship of these pieces raises questions about artistic integrity in a manner similar to Duchamp.

Section 10: Duchamp's work influencing artists: Rauschenberg: Duchamp's influence is present in Rauschenberg's boxes.

He was influenced by *With Hidden Noise* for his work *Music Box (Elemental Sculpture)*. (400 words) Thirdly, Duchamp's legacy is explicitly referenced in the works of Rauschenberg, which look at the different ways in which the relationship between artistic modes of production and the increasingly fraught and disturbed relationship between artist and viewer.

Rauschenberg's *Music Box (Elemental Sculpture)*, for instance, bears

<https://assignbuster.com/marcel-duchamps-influences-on-modern-art/>



significant resemblance to Duchamp's readymade *With Hidden Noise*, which demands the viewer to activate the piece in order for it to make a sound.

The challenge that this poses for the viewer is similar to that of

Rauschenberg: "Unwieldy, the box demands the physical engagement of the spectator-turned-performer, and the central issue is not the mysterious hidden object, but rather the potential sound itself, and the implied demands on the viewer to wrestle with the cumbersome crate" (Kosinski 2006, 19).

The boxes that demand the attention of the viewer, and disturb the cherished role and piece of the artistic piece disturbs and challenges the traditionally voyeuristic relationship between the artist and the work in question. In addition, Rauschenberg's boxes are more expansive in their approach to the role of art in the society that surrounds them; in a manner similar to Duchamp's readymades, Rauschenberg takes directly from the society that surrounds it rather than approaching the production of art in a purely "creative" sense. Of course, this draws significantly upon the thematic content of Duchamp's legacy, and draws explicit attention to the paradoxes and the frustrations that both artists had with the traditionally impotent role of art regarding the broader society that served to pigeonhole it.

Rauschenberg's process, while drawing upon Duchamp's legacy, serves to reappropriate many of its central motifs and preoccupations in a manner that distinguishes it from the work of Cornell and Johns. While both Cornell and Rauschenberg utilised boxes in a manner that drew upon the work of Duchamp to frame its preoccupations, the nature and the content of these boxes were very different in their overall thematic context: "Cornell's boxes

are highly refined and rich in their variety of cultural allusion.” Kosinski (2006, 44) comments: “ Rauschenberg’s early boxes, though small, are cruder, atavistic and dangerous rather than delightful” (44). As such Rauschenberg can be seen as taking a specific element of Duchamp’s thematic approach to readymade art and pushing it to its logical conclusion; his work is more confrontation than Cornell, who sought to beautify and protect his modified readymades by placing them in a more aesthetically pleasing context, surrounding them in glass, etc. Rauschenberg’s work, by contrast, offers a more directly political assault on the establishment ethics at the time, drawing more upon Duchamp’s concept of the readymade as “ junk from life” (Kosinski 2006, 46).

Section 11: Duchamp’s work influencing artists: Robert Morris: Morris’s work *Mirrored Cubes* is influenced by Duchamp’s *Green Box*. Morris’s *Three Rulers* was influenced by Duchamp’s *Three Stoppages*. (400 words)

The work of Robert Morris is also framed significantly by the central paradoxes opened up by dada and by Duchamp in particular. It’s attention, according to Benjamin Buchlow, is secondary to the primary reception in the artists described above. Here, the response to Duchamp’s work is based on “ what one might call the semiological, or the structural / linguistic axis” (Buskirk and Nixon, 2005). By this, Buchlow suggests that Morris’s *Cardfile* piece in particular draws attention to these categories of meaning regarding the tension between artistic subjectivity and anonymity. The development of Conceptual art in America, which is epitomised by Morris’s problematic work which draws attention to notions of artistic validity and of the tension between this structural and linguistic axis, is heavily indebted to the <https://assignbuster.com/marcel-duchamps-influences-on-modern-art/>

particular tensions opened up by Duchamp and his technical works which oriented itself around an exploration of the role of subjectivity in the artist. While this is drawn attention to, it is significant to note that the problematic surrounding artistic subjectivity in a given artistic piece continues to remain prevalent even in Morris's deeply deconstructive and polymorphous work. Alberro comments that " Behind the Duchamp / Morris legacy I always see the figure of the artist; the artist / agent is always there. It's there in both Duchamp and Morris, even in the *Cardfile* where he's trying to remove it" (209). Thus, the drawing of attention to the purely linguistic sphere in Morris's work equates to Duchamp's utilisation of processes of artistic production that were traditionally outside of the traditional camp of visual, plastic art production. Like the readymades, Morris's *Cardfile* is conceptual as it draws explicit attention to its own inherent aesthetic meaninglessness. It does not connote anything by itself; rather, it is defined by its context as an exhibition piece. In addition, its purely linguistic role serves to disturb the previous aesthetic determinants of giving a piece artistic value as such.

The role of artist in Duchamp's readymade has been transfigured in a radical way into a political and social figure - namely, he is not defined by the artwork that he / she produces, but is defined by his / her position within the political space offered - this is explored by conceptual artists such as Robert Morris and in performance art where the artist does not decide to entrench himself in the dogmas of an accepted aesthetic tradition, and does not distance himself fro