

Marcel Duchamp, French Dada artist, whose small but controversial output exerted a strong influence on the development of 20th-century avant-garde art. Born on July 28, 1887, in Blainville, brother of the artist Raymond Duchamp-Villon and half brother of the painter Jacques Villon, Duchamp began to paint in 1908. After producing several canvases in the current mode of Fauvism, he turned toward experimentation and the avant-garde, producing his most famous work, *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2* (Philadelphia Museum of Art) in 1912; portraying continuous movement through a chain of overlapping cubistic figures, the painting caused a furor at New York City's famous Armory Show in 1913.

He painted very little after 1915, although he continued until 1923 to work on his masterpiece, *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even* (1923, Philadelphia Museum of Art), an abstract work, also known as *The Large Glass*, composed in oil and wire on glass, that was enthusiastically received by the surrealists.

In sculpture, Duchamp pioneered two of the main innovations of the 20th century kinetic art and ready-made art. His "ready-mades" consisted simply of everyday objects, such as a urinal and a bottle rack. His *Bicycle Wheel* (1913, original lost; 3rd version, 1951, Museum of Modern Art, New York City), an early example of kinetic art, was mounted on a kitchen stool.

After his short creative period, Duchamp was content to let others develop the themes he had originated; his pervasive influence was crucial to the development of surrealism, Dada, and pop art.

Duchamp became an American citizen in 1955. He died in Paris on October 1, 1968.

<http://www.beatmuseum.org/duchamp/marcelduchamp.html>