

# 1968: A Global Perspective

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## **Duchamp and Gender: Reading *Etant donnés* and Rose Sélavy, 1968-2008**

Following the death of Marcel Duchamp on October 2, 1968, the Philadelphia Museum of art unveiled Duchamp's hitherto unknown work of art, *Etant donnés: 1. la chute d'eau / 2. le gaz d'éclairage* (*Given: 1. the waterfall / 2. the illuminating gas*). Constructed in secret from 1946-1966 and willed to the PMA, *Given* consists of a small room, guarded by a locked wooden door penetrated by two small peepholes. Gazing within, one encounters a brightly-lit room, within which a nude woman lies, legs spread open, upon a nest of twigs. A notorious iconoclast, Duchamp, the "daddy of Dada" and "father of postmodernism," had one more trick up his sleeve. Both mysterious and provocative, *Given* garnered outrage from the general public and artistic community alike, for its suggestive content and its naturalistic imagery (a taboo in art circles of the 1960s). Contemporaneously with the release of *Given*, Man Ray's series of photographs of Duchamp in drag, as "Rose Sélavy," found a new following. Published only once in *New York Dada* in April of 1921, Rose's visage all but disappeared until the late 1960s, reappearing in a series of catalogues and magazines. This paper will trace the reception of these two works in popular and arts-related publications from the 1960s to the present. Often read as companion works, *Given* and Rose Sélavy present an opportunity for investigating the shifting dialogues around art, representation, gender, and sexuality from the 1960s through the present and for drawing parallels between discourses in the late 1960s and today.