

MARCEL DUCHAMP VISITS NEW YORK



who became famous because of his "Nude Descending a Staircase", and who is now in New York

MARCEL DUCHAMP has arrived in New York!

You don't know him? Impossible! Why, he painted the "Nude Descending a Staircase," a painting which made such a turmoil here a couple of years ago.

It is safe to say that no other painting ever caused such a furore. It was the one thing that was not missed by any of the hundred thousand odd persons who visited the International Exhibition at the Armory, or the two hundred thousand who went to the same show at the Chicago Art Institute, or the sixty thousand who flocked to the Copley Society Gallery in Boston. How many have seen it since it found a happy home in San Francisco, it is impossible to say.

It was discussed at dinner parties, at dances, in boxes at the opera, in editorials, and by the writers of so called "witty paragraphs." It caused more disputes than politics. Every humorist among the illustrators took a whack at it, and it was reproduced in newspapers in every city of the United States.

If you said you understood what the artist was driving at, some of your friends said that you were an affected humbug; if you said that you didn't, others of your friends said that you were stupid. Mr. W. M. Chase laughed loud and long before it. Mr. Kenyon Cox was surprised and shocked, and most of the members of the National Academy shook their heads sadly. To one critic it suggested an explosion in a lumber mill. Another professed to have discovered the figure of the nude—which wasn't there, for the painting is a story in motion, that and nothing more. Anyhow it was, as Southey might have said, a famous victory—for Mr. Marcel Duchamp.

Marcel Duchamp would be at the front, fighting for France, but the doctors wouldn't let him go. His immediate family is well represented by his brothers Raymond Duchamp-Villon, the architect and sculptor and Jacques Villon a painter like himself. He is only twenty-eight. He speaks English like an Englishman: has an insatiable curiosity about everything in New York, from Coney Island to the Metropolitan Museum; is completely without affectation and is much more interested in hearing the opinions of other people than in expressing his own.

Marcel Duchamp is not going to play while here. He is anxious to see what ideas America—a great new experience—will supply; ideas that may be expressed in his work. His standing in French art is secure. As far back as 1910 he was recognized as a leader of the advanced men and was elected a member of the Society which gives the exhibition commonly known as the Salon d'Automne.

WHEN you ask him if he is a Cubist, or a This, or a That, he says simply that he is a painter, trying to express his ideas in his own way. The tags and definitions, and names of schools, have, he says, all been invented and applied by outsiders, and the poor artists are not to be blamed if they are card indexed and thrust into pigeonholes by those who talk about them.