THE INVENTION OF NON-ART: A HISTORY

Thierry de Duve on the Salon des Refusés

In the fourth in a series of new essays on the avant-garde for *Artforum*, historian and philosopher Thierry de Duve continues his groundbreaking excavation of the meaning of Marcel Duchamp's 1917 *Fountain*. Here, de Duve argues that to locate the source of the readymade's legendary insurrection against the category of art, we must look to an even earlier schism: the 1863 exhibition of art rejected from the hallowed French Beaux-Arts institution of the Salon. For it is at the so-called Salon des Refusés—and in the debates that erupted around the work of its most famous participant, Édouard Manet—that we find the public emergence of "non-art" in words and in images alike. The sea change is one we do not yet fully understand, but that ushered in the aesthetic conditions under which we are still living today.

Édouard Manet, *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (Luncheon on the Grass), 1863, oil on canvas, 81 7/8 x 104 1/8".

After all, according to what criterion should artistic production be judged, if not by its dialectical capacities of critical negativity and utopian anticipation?[1]

—Benjamin H. D. Buchloh

I DON'T KNOW WHO COINED THE EXPRESSION "NON-ART." But I remember that "non-art" and its supposed twin, "anti-art," were very much in fashion in the art criticism of the 1960s. The terms were used to refer to Dada and early Pop art, then seen as "Neo-Dada." However, by the mid-'70s, critics had realized that Pop art owed very little to the nihilistic thrust of the Dadaists. To imagine Robert Rauschenberg shouting with Hugo Ball at the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich had become counterintuitive; attention had shifted from Dada to the *Neo* in *Neo-Dada*, from the revolution to its recuperation. Consequently, "non-art" and "anti-art" fell out of fashion. It was clear to everyone in the art world that the aggressiveness of anti-art had been tamed, that the negativity of non-art had been in turn negated, sublated, or otherwise mutated into positivity.

Not everyone greeted the erasure of non-art's negativity with indifference or resignation. The epigraph above—by one of the best among those art critics I once called the last partisans of the avant-garde[2]—is exemplary of a school of thought for which negation is an instrument of resistance against the fetishization of artworks promoted by the capitalist socioeconomic order. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh's quest for the right criterion according to which to judge artistic production is, in fact, the remote yet direct descendant of Stendhal's famous line, "Beauty is but the promise of happiness"—rephrased in the post-Adornian lingo that stresses the sobering, skeptical "but" of Stendhal's phrase to imply "critical negativity." Meanwhile, Buchloh's invocation of "dialectical capacities" rekindles Adorno's paradoxical reading of Stendhal: "Art must break its promise in order to stay true to it."[3] The 2012 essay from which I took this epigraph, "Farewell to an Identity," is a strong, salutary, and coherent, if rather despairing protest against the appalling spectacularization fashionable art has reached in today's world. I cannot recommend its reading enough. But it is 100 percent persuasive only to those readers who share Buchloh's post-Adornian convictions. Unfortunately, I don't count myself in that group.[4]

One way of expressing my doubts without venturing onto philosophical terrain is to state my incomprehension of Buchloh's take on Marcel Duchamp. In the past, he has repeatedly praised Duchamp for critically updating art production for the industrial age and for undermining bourgeois authorship. In "Farewell

to an Identity," these achievements are subsumed under "the principle of a total de-skilling, as embodied in Duchamp's work."[5] I can see how de-skilling can be invoked to convey an avant-gardist attack against craftsmanship and authorial agency; I don't see how it applies to Duchamp's work as a whole. The readymades can indeed be seen as de-skilled in a trivial sense, but then only if they are cut off from the rest of Duchamp's oeuvre—I'm thinking especially of the artist's *Large Glass*, 1915–23, and of the eight years of meticulous, highly skilled manual labor it took the artist to fabricate it. It seems a little off the mark to hail Duchamp for his presumed de-skilling and subversion of bourgeois authorship. I'd say his assumption of authorship was bourgeois with a vengeance—dandyish and thus falsely aristocratic, that is.

I have already quoted Robert Smithson's poor opinion of Duchamp.[6] Here is Carl Andre's: "Duchamp I cannot take. I think the archness and the utter gentility of refinement of it all, it's just for giggling ladies on the Upper East Side or something; it's salon art."[7] It may be cruel on Andre's part to send Duchamp to have tea on the Upper East Side. But it sounds less far-fetched than to portray him as a fellow traveler of the Soviet Productivists, as Buchloh and others have occasionally done. Actually, in a less disparaging sense than Andre's, *salon artist* is, historically speaking, the epithet Duchamp most deserves. In some deep and very unexpected way, he belongs in the nineteenth-century French Salon.

Paul Delaroche, *Hémicycle* (detail), 1841–42, fresco, 12' 9" x 81' 11 7/8".

As I have previously argued, when the message Duchamp put in the mail in 1917 with *Fountain* arrived in the '60s, it revealed, like an onion, multiple layers of meaning. A first layer—when a urinal is art, anything can be art—was soon misread as implying a second layer: that anyone could be an artist. Once that misreading is dispelled and the chronology of the facts is reestablished, the implication gets reversed: Given that in 1917, anyone could be a member of the New York Society of Independent Artists, and given that the Society was modeled after the Paris Société des Artistes Indépendants, founded in 1884, it follows that anything could be art as early as 1884. What this really amounts to is a third layer: the announcement that, by 1884, the French Beaux-Arts system had collapsed. One unique characteristic of that system was the monopoly the Beaux-Arts state apparatus had over the careers of artists, and the fact, essential to the fourth layer of Duchamp's message, that it exerted its monopoly exclusively through the institution of the Salon jury: Year after year, Salon after Salon, all artists with professional ambitions had to pass under the yoke of the jury until (or unless) they were medaled and henceforth exempted. It is tempting to jump to the conclusion that Duchamp's message contains a critique—Buchloh would say a "dialectical negation"—of the Salon jury system. Negations are at issue, certainly. But why would Duchamp criticize and negate an institution that had died in the 1880s, before his birth? In fact, he sought

to *revive* that institution when he sent *Fountain* to the Independents' show: He forced the hanging committee to act as a jury and to make him the sole victim of a *salon des refusés*.[8] Negation was on the side of the committee, not of the artist. As we shall now see, the fourth layer of Duchamp's message doesn't negate anything. Rather, it sends us to investigate the circumstances under which negation made its historical appearance in the judgment of art as art. Those circumstances should not be confused with the moment—whenever that was—when the expression "non-art" was coined. Duchamp's message dispatches us to the time and place in which the pragmatic, discursive reality of non-art was established. It is not New York in 1917, it is not Zurich in 1916, it is Paris some fifty-three years before.

THE TITLE OF THIS ESSAY, "The Invention of Non-Art," is in some ways a misnomer, since non-art was more discovered than invented; it was no one's intention to bring non-art into the world. True, the Dadaists at the Cabaret Voltaire intentionally fought the establishment and may thus perhaps be said to have invented anti-art. But they could do so because anti-art's supposed twin, non-art, had established the prerequisite for anti-art long before. As for Duchamp, he has been called an artist, an anti-artist, and an *anartist*, little matter; he was the messenger of non-art. He did not invent it any more than the other Dadaists. He noticed its existence more clearly, and he brought us the news.

Non-art came into being inadvertently, in five successive stages and at the confluence of four factors. We will visit the five stages as we go along, each one made visible by a particular event. The four factors are: (1) the existence of the Beaux-Arts system and the classification of the arts within it; (2) the "all or nothing" paradigm resulting from the binary character of the jury's verdict at the Salon; (3) the convergence of aesthetic expectations in the notion of the tableau; and (4) the psychology of the jury.

The appellation Beaux-Arts refers to arts in the plural and calls them beautiful, something that gets lost in the English "fine arts." Of course, this doesn't mean that all works produced in this system were beautiful but, rather, that the Beaux-Arts strove for beauty as opposed to utility or pleasantness. As for the plurality of the arts, since the relevant context was the nineteenth-century French Salon, how were the visual arts divided there? What was their hierarchy? How did their division and hierarchy evolve over time? What we can gather from a brief inquiry into the titles of the Salon catalogues is a remarkably stable division of visual practices, with a clear hierarchy that puts painting on top, followed by sculpture.[9] Within painting, moreover, the supremacy of history painting remained in force until well into the second

third of the nineteenth century, even as its dominance was eroded by the growing popularity of genre and landscape painting and the advent of a watered-down version of history painting, the *genre historique*.

Perhaps the most significant self-portrait of the Beaux-Arts system was provided by one of the first and best proponents of the *genre historique*, Paul Delaroche, when he was commissioned to allegorize the system as a whole by decorating the hemicycle of the École des Beaux-Arts. He aligned a string of (all male!) painters, sculptors, and architects from antiquity to the seventeenth century (and not beyond!) on either side of a central group comprising three seated ancients—the architect Ictinus, the painter Apelles, and the sculptor Phidias—flanked by an allegory of Gothic art on the left and an allegory of the Renaissance on the right, while on the proscenium the *génie des arts* (in the plural) get ready to hand out wreaths of laurels to deserving students.[10] The ideological message is clear: The Beaux-Arts system has been in place since antiquity; the history of art is a genealogy of great, exemplary men; there are three seats for artists to occupy, and occupy a seat they must. All artists are draftsmen; the printmakers are either painters or subordinate to painters; hybrids such as bas-relief do exist, but its straddling of painting and sculpture has been codified since Donatello. In the Beaux-Arts system (in France and elsewhere), a plurality of well-separated art practices with nothing in between is the rule. For something to be art, it must either be a painting or a sculpture, and so on, or—to extend the categories beyond the visual arts—a poem, a piece of music, a play, etc.[11] The implication is that if a given object were to fall in the no-man's-land between the acknowledged art practices, we would be hard-pressed to call it art at all.

Max Berthelin's 1854 crosssection rendering of the Palais de l'Industrie, Paris, site of the Salon des Refusés, 1863.

The second factor in the birth of non-art is the binary character of the jury's verdict at the Salon, and the way in which it set an "all or nothing" paradigm for aesthetic judgment. Aesthetic experience involves judging along a continuous gradation of quality, and there is no reason to think that the Salon jury experienced art any differently.[12] Although the composition of the jury varies throughout the nineteenth century—the jurors were sometimes state appointees, sometimes elected by the artists, and sometimes chosen from both groups—the majority were most often artists. To give just one example, the 1868 jury comprised eighteen men: five members of the Institut de France; one professor at the École des Beaux-Arts; three future academicians; three outsiders with respect to the academy; and six state appointees who were not artists.[13] Not only did the artists dominate, but in this particular jury all were painters—a striking indicator of the hierarchy still prevalent under the Second Empire. All were highly skilled professionals trained in the appreciation of works of art, capable of making subtle judgments, and whose personal preferences covered a wide range of schools and tastes. But no matter how generously we imagine the jury's goodwill and fairness, in practice its deliberations had to be expedited in record time, leaving little room for nuanced discussion.[14] Moreover, the jury's hand was forced. It saw a brutal either/or superimposed on even the most fine-tuned evaluation of so many shades of quality. Either a work was admitted into the Salon or it was rejected, there was no middle ground. If it was admitted, the jury could avail itself of a whole system of first-, second-, and third-class medals to express the warmth of its admiration, but first it must be admitted. One work might be admitted while another by the same artist might be rejected. Repeated rejection over the years could make an artist's career extremely difficult. Not before the Impressionists did artists boycott the Salon and rely on their dealers to promote their work. Only with the collapse of the Beaux-Arts system in the 1880s did visibility at the Salon cease to be the sine qua non condition of—and success at the Salon the mandatory path toward—a profitable livelihood as a professional artist. It is thus not an exaggeration to say that, funneled through the decisive verdict of the Salon jury, careers were made and unmade at the Salon.

The nineteenth century is punctuated with protests—not so much against the jury's conservatism, as the triumphalist histories of modern art routinely assume, as against its severity and arbitrariness. After the jury of the 1827 Salon eliminated 1,635 works out of 3,469, Étienne-Jean Delécluze, Jacques-Louis David's pupil and biographer, who usually sided with the administration, was so outraged that he proposed an *exhibition particulière* at the Galerie Lebrun, which the press hailed as a *"salon d'opposition*."[15] (The expression "salon des refusés" had not been coined yet.) In 1840, the ratio of

rejected works climbed to an unprecedented 54 percent.[16] Étienne Huard, a liberal critic for the *Journal des Artistes,* appealed to the public to protest against such unspeakable acts of censorship and urged the artists to show the rejected works in the Galeries Artistiques on boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle.[17] In the end, the show was a flop: Many artists chickened out for fear of retaliation or out of shame over their rejection from the Salon.

By contrast, the rejected artists of 1863—the year of the Salon des Refusés proper—were shielded from fear and shame because this time the exhibition of the refused works was held under the auspices of His Majesty the Emperor. Having heard of the artists' protests, Napoleon III ignored the jury and used his supreme authority to grant the rejected artists an exhibition space next to the official Salon. No doubt he did this out of demagogy and not because he disagreed with the jury's taste, but the result was the same. It is a mistake, then, to read the Salon des Refusés as an "alternative" exhibition and as the glorious revenge of the avant-garde against academicism: The public flocked to the Refusés mainly to laugh at the rejected works, and in many instances the crowd was right. As the critic Jules-Antoine Castagnary wrote in *L'Artiste*, "Before the exhibition of the Refused, we were unable to figure out what a bad painting was. Now we know it."[18]

That's the point. That's why I consider the Salon des Refusés the first stage in the invention of non-art. Not that I share Castagnary's wholesale rejection of the rejected: I mean that the public of 1863 had, for the first and almost only time, simultaneous access to good art and bad art in separate "boxes." At the official Salon they could see art the jury judged good enough, and at the *Salon annexe* art not good enough to be shown. Together with the art in these categories, the categories themselves were suddenly made plain. Both the public and the artists could experience in person the binary structure of the one aesthetic judgment that counted: The artists were finally shown what *not* to do if they wanted to please the jury; and the spectators were confronted with the arbitrariness of a new "all or nothing" paradigm of aesthetic judgment.

Charles Amédée de Noé's cartoon published in *Cham au Salon de 1863. Deuxiéme promenade* (Martinet Paris, 1863). Caption reads: "My son, remove your cap! Pay your respects to the failed attempt."

Among the works rejected by the 1863 Salon and shown at the Refusés were three paintings by Édouard Manet: *Young Man in the Costume of a Majo*, 1863; *Mademoiselle V. . . in the Costume of an Espada*, 1862; and *Le Bain* (The Bath) (now called *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* [Luncheon on the Grass]), 1863. There are no minutes of the jury's meetings, so in order to gain an idea of what its expectations might have been, we must turn to Salon criticism of the time. "There has been a lot of excitement about this young

man. Let's be serious. The *Bath*, the *Majo*, the *Espada* are good sketches, I will grant you. . . . But then what? Is this drawing? Is this painting?" Castagnary asks.[19]

"*Est-ce là dessiner? Est-ce là peindre?*" Note that Castagnary does not ask whether the drawing or the painting is good, but whether Manet's skill amounts to drawing or painting at all. At stake is not just the quality of the object, but also its very identity. As Michael Fried has argued (and I rely heavily on him here), the art criticism of the 1860s revolved around a notion that kept in focus all other aesthetic expectations—such as the demand for finish, for balance, for composition—a notion precisely capable of giving a painting its very identity qua painting: the notion of the tableau.[20] It is with respect to this notion that most critics found Manet wanting. Here is Théodore Pelloquet's view on *Le Bain*:

M. Manet doesn't know how to compose a tableau, or rather; he has no idea of what is meant by a tableau. . . . When he places two or three nude figures [sic] on a large canvas, next to two or three of others wearing an overcoat, in the middle of a landscape hastily brushed in, I wish he had helped me understand his intention. I'm not asking him some philosophical lesson, rather the visible translation of some impression. I'm looking for his and can't find it; it is a rebus blown out of proportion, which no one will ever unravel. [21]

The metaphor of the rebus occurs more than once; for example, under the pen of Louis Étienne: "I search in vain for the meaning of this unbecoming rebus."[22] Failure to read a rebus leaves the viewer to struggle with a meaningless string of unrelated fragments, a disparate collection of morceaux never adding to a whole. In the criticism and shoptalk of the time, the word *morceau* was the dialectical counterpart of *tableau*. Alphonse Legros, Manet's colleague in what Fried calls the generation of 1863, expressed this dialectic elegantly: "I would call tableaux all successful morceaux that naturally make a composition without seeking to be one."[23] More often than not, the critics judged that Manet could pull off successful morceaux, which, however, did not amount to a tableau.[24] In 1870, Castagnary concluded:

I have nothing to say about this painter who for ten years seems to have made it his task in each Salon to show us that he possesses part of the qualities necessary to make tableaux. I don't deny those qualities; but I'm waiting for the tableaux.[25]

The convergence of aesthetic expectations on the notion of the tableau is the third factor that I believe explains the birth of non-art as a side effect of the institutionalized verdict of the Salon jury. It comes to reinforce the first two factors—the strong divisions between the arts in the Beaux-Arts system and the "all or nothing" consequence of the jury's aesthetic judgment—so that if a canvas does not fully qualify as a tableau and is rejected on these grounds, then it is prone to fall into a limbo of sorts. This limbo, I argue, constitutes non-art. But for this limbo to acquire theoretical consistency, a fourth factor is needed: the explicit denial of all artistic qualities—and I mean denial in a quasi-Freudian sense, that is, an involuntary admission of a truth in the guise of its negation.[26] The word *no* must be uttered, and its true, unacknowledged meaning must be "yes."

Édouard Manet, *La Gare Saint-Lazare* (The Railway), 1873, oil on canvas, 36 3/4 x 43 7/8".

Let's remember that the majority of the Salon jurors were artists; we might want to look into the psychology behind their decisions. I'll take my clue from

Leo Steinberg: “Whenever there appears an art that is truly new and original, the men who denounce it first and loudest are artists.” This is from his well-known 1962 article titled “Contemporary Art and the Plight of Its Public,” which I find very moving and so relevant to the matter at hand that I’m tempted to retitle it “Salon Art and the Plight of Its Jury.” “As to the ‘plight,’” Steinberg writes, “here I mean simply the shock of discomfort, or the bewilderment or the anger or the boredom which some people always feel, and all people sometimes feel, when confronted with an unfamiliar new style.”[27] The article contains the avowal of Steinberg’s own reaction to “an unfamiliar new style”—a reaction that I think is very close to what must have been that of the Salon jury when confronted with Manet’s *Le Bain*. Recalling his response to Jasper Johns’s first one-man show in New York in 1958, Steinberg writes:

I disliked the show, and would gladly have thought it a bore. Yet it depressed me and I wasn’t sure why. Then I began to recognize in myself all the classical symptoms of a philistine’s reaction to modern art. I was angry at the artist. . . . I was irritated at some of my friends for pretending to like it—but with an uneasy suspicion that perhaps they did like it, so that I was really mad at myself for being so dull, and at the whole situation for showing me up. And meanwhile, the pictures remained with me—working on me and depressing me. . . . If I disliked these things, why not ignore them? It was not that simple. For what really depressed me was what I felt these works were able to do to all other art. The pictures of de Kooning and Kline, it seemed to me, were suddenly tossed into one pot with Rembrandt and Giotto.[28]

If an observer of contemporary art as unprejudiced as Steinberg admits that a new, unexpected work is able to throw him into such a state of depression, you can imagine how upset the Salon jurors must have been in 1863 when they had to appraise Manet’s *Le Bain*. How much easier it must have been for them to judge that it was not a tableau worthy of the name, rather than to recognize that it was done by a painter who, they must have sensed, surpassed them all. We can hear them exclaim: “That’s not a tableau, that’s not painting!” And we would not fail to hear, in the tone of their outcry, the “discomfort, or the bewilderment or the anger or the boredom”—I’d say anger more than boredom—or other such signs of emotional turmoil that give their exclamation away for the denial it really is. As surely as the analysand’s protest that the thought of killing his father never crossed his mind rings as an avowal of his Oedipus complex to the psychoanalyst’s ear, so “That’s not a tableau!” rings to the art historian’s ear as an unacknowledged avowal of the jury’s plight. The jurors *knew* that with *Le Bain* Manet had radically redefined the tableau; they just couldn’t stand it.

The one feature of denials that is crucial to my argument is that if they didn't betray themselves through the anxious or rushed tone of their delivery, they would sound utterly rational. The signifier of a denial—the word *no*—is not different from the symbol of ordinary logical negation; there is no difference in discursive appearance between denials and negations. Indeed, denial actually forms a subcategory of grammatical negation in general: It is a "yes" disguised as a "no." The inadvertent invention of non-art hinges on that lack of perceptible difference and on the confusion it allows.

I HAVE CLAIMED that the invention of non-art took place at the confluence of four factors—we possess them now, the fourth being the jury's denial—but also that it required the succession of five stages or events, and we have not yet gotten beyond the first of these, the Salon des Refusés. The second stage or event involves a variation on the binary structure of the Refusés, and it is crucial because it names the tableau criterion explicitly and formally ushers in negation, thereby making room for the confusion between negation and denial. In 1874, Manet submits four works to the Salon. While *La Gare Saint-Lazare* (The Railway), 1873, and a watercolor are accepted, *Bal masqué à l'opéra* (Masked Ball at the Opera), 1873, and *Les Hirondelles* (The Swallows), 1873, are rejected. The poet Stéphane Mallarmé rushes to Manet's defense in an article where he writes:

Entrusted with the nebulous vote of the painters with the responsibility of choosing, from among the framed pictures offered, those that are truly tableaux in order to show them to us, the jury has nothing else to say but: this is a tableau, or that is not a tableau.[29]

Édouard Manet, *Bal masqué à l'opéra* (Masked Ball at the Opera), 1873, oil on canvas, 23 1/4 x 28 5/8".

Mallarmé is well aware that the worst "framed pictures" are tableaux, nominally speaking; he invites the jury to separate them aesthetically from "*ce qu'il existe véritablement de tableaux*." Let the jurors abstain from all judgment of taste beyond this elementary assessment and let the public decide which pictures, among those that are *truly* paintings, are *good* paintings; which pictures, among those that are tableaux worthy of the name, are tableaux worthy of the public's praise. What is very curious in Mallarmé's admonishment to the jury is that, in practice, the jury already does what the poet exhorts it to do. It has no other choice but to obey the "all or nothing" paradigm that rules over its aesthetic judgment. Mallarmé may be thinking that he is urging the jury to adopt a new behavior; his protest actually acknowledges receipt of the new paradigm and puts words to it: *Ceci est un tableau. Voilà qui n'est point un tableau.* In comparison with the latter judgment, phrases such as "This painting is ugly, unfinished, or terribly executed" don't have the same power of undermining the ontological nature of

the judged object and thus of threatening its status as art. Delacroix already recognized this threat when he said that the painter

cannot take an isolated morceau or even a collection of morceaux and make a tableau out of it. One should make sure to circumscribe the idea so that the mind of the spectator doesn't hover over a whole necessarily cut into pieces: otherwise, there would be no art.[30]

There would be no art—in the singular. Delacroix had died in August 1863, a few weeks after the Salon des Refusés ended. If he visited it and saw *Le Bain*, which is doubtful, he never expressed his opinion. My guess is that despite his possible irritation he would not have refused that painting the quality of a tableau; he would have displayed the same intelligent openness as Steinberg when the latter set out to write on the very paintings that had so depressed him a few years before.[31] Not so the 1874 jury: The jurors took Delacroix at his word and masqueraded their emotional denial as reasoned negation. Like *Le Bain* in 1863, Manet's *Masked Ball at the Opera* fell into the limbo of non-art in 1874.

Ten years later, in 1884, the Société des Artistes Indépendants was founded, and this event signaled the third stage in the invention—or, better, the discovery—of non-art, each stage bringing us closer to full awareness of the existence of such a limbo. Of crucial importance to this third stage is that the Société's no-jury rule implicitly contained the a priori admission that anything a member would present counted as potential art. What the Société did not foresee, even though it logically followed from its no-jury rule, was that a *betrayal* of said rule automatically amounted to the *denial* of the rejected work's potential art status. Whatever the Société refused to show would ipso facto be tossed into the limbo of non-art, where it would keep company with *Le Bain*, *Masked Ball at the Opera*, and all the other paintings that had been banned from public view over the years because the Salon jurors could not, would not, admit that the works were tableaux worthy of the name.

There is to my knowledge no other record of the Société betraying its no-jury rule and rejecting the work of one of its members other than the episode when Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase (No. 2)* was expelled from the 1912 Salon des Indépendants, presumably for not being a *tableau cubiste* worthy of the name. With that event, the fourth stage in the birth of non-art was reached. The event on which the fifth and last stage hinged now leaps to the eye: It is the repetition of the Société's betrayal by its American carbon copy, the New York Society of Independent Artists, in 1917. Of course this time around, the repetition was contrived; the betrayal was shrewdly anticipated;

Duchamp *planned* that the urinal "innocently" handed in by Richard Mutt would be refused and would thus be tossed into the limbo of non-art. He was able to do so because he had firsthand experience of an object in the nature of *Le Bain* having been tossed into it, a painful experience he would neither forget nor forgive: The *Fountain* episode was the voluntary and vengeful replay of the *Nude Descending a Staircase* episode. It brought the invention or discovery—both words are in the end equally inadequate—of non-art full circle when Duchamp published the photo of R. Mutt's *urinal* in *The Blind Man*, with the triple caption: "Fountain by R. Mutt"; "Photograph by Alfred Stieglitz"; "THE EXHIBIT REFUSED BY THE INDEPENDENTS." With that photo, Duchamp pulled R. Mutt's *urinal* from the limbo of non-art and patiently waited for the art critics of the '60s and '70s to fall into his trap—and to make non-art a subcategory of art.

Don't ask whether Duchamp was fully conscious of having put a message in the mail with *Fountain*, a message that, once peeled, onion-like, reveals him as the messenger of non-art. Ask, rather, if there are more layers to the onion. There should be at least one: The circumstances of the progressive birth of non-art are congruent with the time and place in which the Beaux-Arts institution collapsed. When one institution collapses, another takes its place: History, like nature, abhors a vacuum. The new institution, in which we still live and which I call Art-in-General, has *negativity* branded on its birth certificate—negativity resting on *betrayal* and fueled by *denial*. I doubt it's the kind of dialetically *positive* negativity Buchloh has in mind when he argues that artistic production should be judged "by its dialetical capacities of critical negativity and utopian anticipation"—but who knows? Ask the messenger, read the message, there is still more to it.

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Next month: "Part V: The Invention of Non-Art—Theory"

Visit *Artforum*'s archive at Artforum.com for the first three essays in de Duve's ongoing series "Pardon My French" (October 2013), "Don't Shoot the Messenger" (November 2013), and "Why Was Modernism Born in France?" (January 2014).

NOTES

(Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations in French are the author's translation.)

1. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "Farewell to an Identity," *Artforum*, December 2012, 257.

2. See my book *Kant After Duchamp* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996). Chapter eight, "Archaeology of Practical Modernism," raises the question of whether art retains its critical function when it is cut off from the Enlightenment's emancipation project.

3. Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. R. Hullot-Kentor (London: Athlone Press, 1999), 311.

4. See my "Resisting Adorno, Revamping Kant," in *Art and Aesthetics After Adorno*, ed. Anthony J. Cascardi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 249–99.

5. Buchloh, "Farewell to an Identity," 258. On the concept of de-skilling, see John Roberts, *The Intangibilities of Form: Skill and Deskilling in Art After the Readymade* (New York: Verso, 2007).

6. See my "Don't Shoot the Messenger," *Artforum*, November 2013, 267.

7. Paul Cummings, "Taped Interview with Carl Andre," 1972, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. As quoted in Carl Andre, *Cuts: Texts 1959–2004,* ed. James Meyer (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 91.

8. In a letter to his sister Suzanne dated April 11, 1917, Duchamp writes: "I would like to have a special exhibition of the people who were refused at the Independents—but that would be a redundancy! And the urinal would have been *lonely*." Francis Naumann, ed., "Affectueusement, Marcel: Ten Letters from Marcel Duchamp to Suzanne Duchamp and Jean Crotti," *Archives of American Art Journal* 22, no. 4 (1982): 8.

9. Here are a few such titles of Salon catalogues: *Explication des peintures, sculptures et autres ouvrages de messieurs de l'académie royale* (1737); *Ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, et architecture, gravure, dessins, modèles, exposés au Louvre par ordre de l'Assemblée Nationale, au mois de septembre 1791, l'an IIIè de la Liberté* (1791); *Explication des ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, architecture, gravure, et lithographie des artistes vivants* (1848); *Catalogue des ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, gravure, lithographie, et architecture* (1863).

10. See Stephen Bann, *Paul Delaroche: History Painted* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 200–27.

11. I am referring here to empirical object-identification. This does not preclude sophisticated intersections on the art-theoretical level, such as the *ut pictura poesis* doctrine, and even less so ontological speculation on the question of why there are several arts rather than one, and why, as Jean-Luc Nancy has argued, they *touch* (and don't overlap) each other. See Nancy, *The Muses*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996).

12. In an endnote on page 619 of *Manet's Modernism: or, The Face of Painting in the 1860s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), Michael Fried offers this comment to what I had written in "The Monochrome and the Blank Canvas" (chapter four of *Kant After Duchamp*): "Incidentally, de Duve believes that with the Salon des Refusés 'the aesthetic judgment was structurally cast into the binary form "either/or," substituting for the continuous scale of "taste"' and that 'the ubiquity of the paradigm of refusal (together with the very existence of public salons) was largely responsible for the fact that the phenomenon of the avant-garde was born in France' (310n 97). My reading of the pertinent texts suggests, however, that a criticism based on 'the continuous scale of "taste"' came into being only in the wake of Impressionism, which is not to say that de Duve is wrong to associate the rise of the avant-garde at least partly with a critical binarism that was strongly in evidence throughout Manet's career." My argument today is more complex than at the time of *Kant After Duchamp*: I no longer believe that the Salon des Refusés simply *substituted* an "either/or" for the continuous scale of taste. I rather maintain that the Salon des Refusés brought into the open the *superimposition* of an "either/or" onto the continuous scale of aesthetic experience, a superimposition which had been a feature of the Salon ever since the jury was instituted. Fried may be right in claiming that *criticism based on* the continuous scale of taste came into being only in the wake of Impressionism. That is an issue different from the phenomenology of aesthetic experience, which we have no reason to believe changed significantly in such a short historical time span as 1850–80.

13. The five members of the Institut were Isidore Pils, Alexandre Cabanel, Louis-Nicolas Cabat, Tony Robert-Fleury, and Jean-Léon Gérôme. The professor at the École des Beaux-Arts was Charles Gleyre. The three future academicians were Jules Breton, François-Louis Français, and Paul Baudry. The three outsiders with respect to the academy were Alexandre Bida, Eugène Fromentin, and Charles-François Daubigny. And the six state appointees who

were not artists were Alfred Arago, Charles Blanc, Cottier (first name unknown), Théophile Gautier, Louis La Caze, and the minister Maison. See Andrée Sfeir-Semler, *Die Maler am Pariser Salon 1791–1880* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1992), 144.

14. For example, the jury of the 1847 Salon held thirteen five-hour-long sessions to appraise 4,883 works, which comes down to forty-eight seconds per work on average. Sfeir-Semler, *Die Maler am Pariser Salon*, 126–27.

15. Sfeir-Semler, *Die Maler am Pariser Salon*, 122.

16. Out of 3,996 submitted works, 2,147 were refused. Ibid., 41.

17. William Hauptman, "Juries, Protests, and Counter-Exhibitions before 1850," *Art Bulletin* 57, no. 1 (1985): 100.

18. Jules-Antoine Castagnary, quoted by Gérard-Georges Lemaire, *Esquisses en vue d'une histoire du Salon* (Paris: Henri Veyrier, 1986), 54.

19. Jules-Antoine Castagnary, "Salon de 1863," *L'Artiste*, August 15, 1863; quoted in Pierre Courthion and Pierre Cailler, eds., *Manet raconté par lui-même et ses amis*, II (Genève: Pierre Cailler, 1953), 237.

20. Fried, *Manet's Modernism*, 267–80.

21. Théodore Pelloquet, *L'Exposition: Journal du Salon de 1863*, July 23, 1863. Fried cites a slightly different translation and gives the French in an endnote (*Manet's Modernism*, 272 and 560n20).

22. Louis Étienne, *Le Jury et les exposants: Salon des Refusés* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1863), 30; quoted in George Heard Hamilton, *Manet and His Critics* (New York: Norton, 1969), 45. The French, "*Je cherche en vain ce que peut signifier ce logogriphe peu séant*," is given by Fried (*Manet's Modernism*, 570n82).

23. Alphonse Legros, letter to Henri Fantin-Latour, dated February 17, 1858, quoted in a different (and inadequate) translation by Fried, who gives the French in an endnote (*Manet's Modernism*, 272 and 560n22).

24. Thus Théophile Thoré: "I can't imagine what made an artist of such intelligence and refinement select so absurd a composition. . . . But there are qualities of color and light in the landscape, and even very convincing bits of

modeling [*morceaux de modelé*] in the woman's body." Quoted in Hamilton, *Manet and His Critics*, 50. (Translation slightly modified.)

25. Castagnary, "Salon de 1870," 429; quoted by Fried, who gives the French in an endnote (*Manet's Modernism*, 272 and 560n21).

26. Sigmund Freud's word for denial is *Verneinung*, to be distinguished from both *Verleugnung* (disavowal) and *Verwerfung* (rejection, Lacan's *forclusion*). Contrary to the cases of denial analyzed by Freud, the jury's denial involves *involuntary* but not necessarily *unconscious* admission of a truth under the guise of its negation.

27. Leo Steinberg, "Contemporary Art and the Plight of its Public," in *Other Criteria: Confrontations with Twentieth-Century Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972; Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007), 5.

28. Steinberg, "Contemporary Art,"12.

29. "*Ceci est un tableau, ou encore: Voilà qui n'est point un tableau.*" Stéphane Mallarmé, "*Le Jury de peinture pour 1874 et M. Manet*," *Œuvres complètes* (Paris: Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1945), 699. I quote from Hamilton's translation (*Manet and His Critics*, 184), with the French "*tableau*" restored for Hamilton's "painting." In a footnote on page 281 of *Manet's Modernism* that discusses Vincent Descombes's comment on whether Mallarmé's notion of the tableau responded to specific criteria (Descombes answers negatively), Fried writes: "The problem Manet encountered was that Salon juries and all but a few critics behaved *as if there were* criteria for *tableaux* which his submissions shockingly failed to satisfy." The question of criteria is a huge one for aesthetic theory. I avoid raising it here by using the word *expectations* instead.

30. Eugène Delacroix, "*L'Idéal et le réalisme*," *L'Artiste*, June 1, 1868, 339. Fried cites a slightly different translation and gives the French in an endnote (*Manet's Modernism*, 269 and 558n11).

31. Steinberg, "Jasper Johns: The First Seven Years of his Art," in *Other Criteria*, 17–54.