

**1925**  
**EXPO.**  
**ARTS. DÉCO.**



Maison Pirsoul.

## **AUTRES ICONES LES MUSÉES**

Il y a les bons musées, puis les mauvais. Puis ceux qui ont pélemêle du bon et du mauvais. Mais le musée est une entité consacrée qui circonvient le jugement.

Date de naissance du musée : 100 ans ; âge de l'humanité : 40 ou 400.000 ans.

Analysing Le Corbusier's bidet, akin to a Readymade, and examining his provocative *mis-en-scène* in domestic spaces, which function as an institutional place for an unusual exhibition.

## Domestic space as an institutional place for ready-made objects: Le Corbusier's bidet case

Sung-Taeg Nam

*We will equip in the museum a bathroom with its enamelled bath, its porcelain bidet, its wash-basin, and its glittering taps of copper or nickel. [...] Clearly, this museum does not yet exist. Such a museum would be truly dependable and honest; its value would lie in the choice that it offered, whether to approve or reject; it would allow one to understand the reasons why things were as they were and would be a stimulant to improve on them.*

Le Corbusier, 'Autre icônes: Les musées  
[Other Icons: The Museums]'<sup>1</sup>

Le Corbusier's article 'Other Icons: The Museums', published in *L'Esprit Nouveau* in 1924, imagined a 'true museum' exhibiting everyday objects produced by industry. The architect suggested that a bathroom with its sanitary objects, such as the porcelain bidet, should be included. The article's header image also shows a bidet made by the *Maison Pirsoul*, emphasising it as an evocative emblem of the true style of modern times [1]. Some historians<sup>2</sup> evoke comparisons with the most famous *Readymade*<sup>3</sup> of Marcel Duchamp, a urinal entitled *Fountain* that he submitted as an artwork to *The Society of Independent Artists* in 1917 [2].

### Bidet vs urinal

Even though the actual relationship between these two contemporaneous avant gardists at the time is little known,<sup>4</sup> it seems simple to associate two objects based on their similarities. Both mass-produced for sanitarian purposes, the urinal is usually installed in a public restroom for male excretion and the bidet in a private bathroom for female intimate cleaning. On closer examination, this comparison between Le Corbusier's bidet and Duchamp's urinal becomes more complicated, because of the contexts in which they are presented: architecture and art. The analysis develops affinities but raises several questions on this point. In the case of the bidet, an architectural point of view requires the consideration of the utilitarian aspect, which, in the case of the urinal, must not be considered.<sup>5</sup>

In fact, for the sanitary objects described in his article, Le Corbusier specifically uses the verb 'equip' indicating a functional appliance rather than 'expose'

indicating an exhibit. When his imaginary museum<sup>6</sup> requires the display of a bathroom, its elements should be correctly installed and exhibited in an operable condition.<sup>7</sup> This is far from the case of the *Fountain*, turned 90 degrees without a connection to pipes, an obsolete urinal for which 'the water tap [...] stops flowing'.<sup>8</sup> Suppose that in art, the removal of utility seems necessary for the transfigurative phenomenon of a *Readymade*. But in architecture, utility is faithfully upheld as one of the three virtues of Vitruvius.<sup>9</sup> Then how can a ready-made object be valued, or 'ARCHITECTURISED (ARCHITECTURÉ)',<sup>10</sup> in the manner of Le Corbusier's expression?

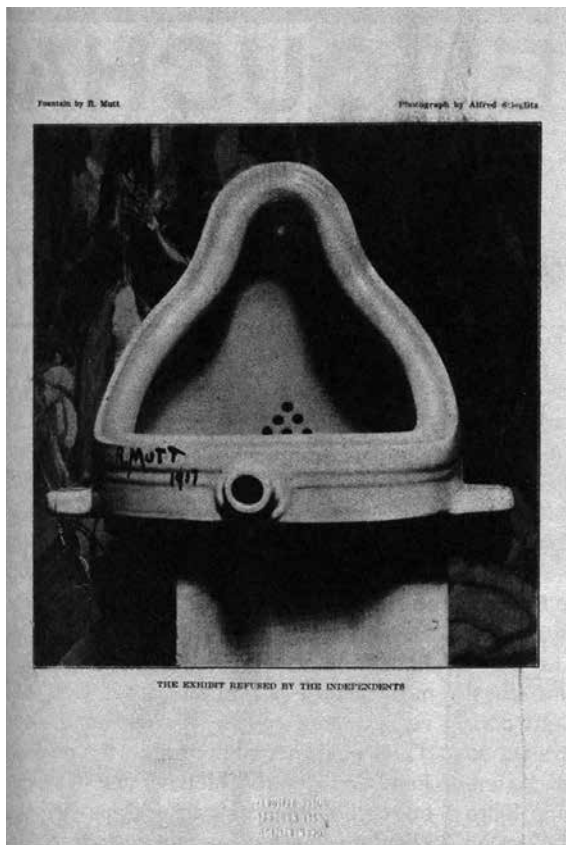
### Two criteria: public and institutional place

Beyond this idea of utility, Le Corbusier's bidet and Duchamp's urinal share their status as objects torn from their original environment to be seen and appreciated out of context. In this way, Le Corbusier also proposes that functional objects like a bidet acquire a new vocation (of being seen and appreciated), different from that for which they were originally designed. This alteration in the status is similar to the theatricalisation of a *Readymade*, which was initially 'something that you don't even look at' or 'that you look at with your head turned'.<sup>11</sup>

In the case of the *Fountain*, the intervention of the artist against the notion of utility is effective in stimulating curiosity in the viewer. However, this intervention itself is paradoxically neither sufficient nor essential for a ready-made object to grant itself a status as an artwork. This was evidenced by Duchamp's *Porte-bouteilles* (1914): often considered the true first *Readymade*, it had not undergone any anti-functional manipulation.<sup>12</sup> Its transformation into an artwork seems to be triggered by something more fundamental: the simple choice of the artist. However, for the announcement of this choice to be fully effective, the object must still be submitted as art for public acceptance.

An artwork is generally intended to be seen and appreciated. Even if it is not admired at first glance, it should spark artistic questions. This is even more essential for a *Readymade*, otherwise, it acquires nothing more than its initial functional identity. The

<sup>1</sup> Le Corbusier, image of a bidet, in 'Other Icons: The Museums', *L'Esprit Nouveau*, 20 (1924).



2 Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain* (1917), in 'The Richard Mutt Case', *The Blind Man*, May 1917.

process of transformation, therefore, follows two stages: a 'release' at the initiative of the artist, and a 'validation' by the public. Duchamp described the Readymade as 'a kind of Rendezvous'.<sup>13</sup> This point in the transformation process of the Readymade is indeed delicate: how to incite the public to consider an industrial object as an artwork, and how to arouse visual interest in an everyday object which is utilitarian and therefore far from the traditional aesthetic criteria?

Concerning the *Fountain*, to assess and question whether 'this is of art', Thierry de Duve introduces in his 1989 book *Résonnances du Readymade* the four enunciative conditions determining an artwork: object, author, public, and institutional place.<sup>14</sup> This methodology is equally useful for addressing architecture and asking whether 'this is of architecture'. If previous research on the two sanitary objects of Duchamp and Le Corbusier has often developed comparisons based on the relation between object and author (stage of release), it is now a question of carrying out a comparative analysis, focusing on the other criteria: public and institutional place (that of validation).<sup>15</sup>

This article begins with the analysis of the *Fountain*. The emphasis is placed on the role of institutional place in declaring and recognising urinal as artwork to the public. Taking this idea further, the second part of the article relates these two criteria, public and institutional place, to the sphere of architecture and investigates Le Corbusier's bidet. The final part of the

article considers Le Corbusier's domestic architecture as institutional place for artistic appreciation of functional objects including the bidet.

### The criterion of public in the Readymade

Regarding the public, it must first be noted that Duchamp's original urinal was refused by the Society of Independent Artists and so it could only be seen by a limited number of people: the jury of the gallery and others close to the artist. Considering them as the public demands caution: these small groups are far from the public in a literal sense.

#### *Urinal and public*

Essentially, the public, here, means anyone who sees and appreciates an artwork, and concerning the Readymade, anyone who 'has acknowledged the enunciative act of Duchamp' on the urinal.<sup>16</sup> It must meanwhile be noted that the public can be an individual: according to De Duve, the art of Readymade is primarily 'not for the masses but for the individual'.<sup>17</sup> In summary, the public begins to form a group of individual 'viewers',<sup>18</sup> each of whom is willing to look at the object and appreciate it as an artwork, and 'the oculist witnesses'<sup>19</sup> who can testify to that miraculous transfiguration from utilitarian object to Readymade. Furthermore, the public should be naïve – with an 'innocent eye'<sup>20</sup> and without any pre-knowledge before encountering the object – and independent of the institutional organisation.

In the case of the jury, they refused to see the urinal as any form of art, and their definite refusal censors any potential public opinion. The object, submitted under the pseudonym of Richard Mutt, is judged as 'a plain piece of plumbing', 'immoral', and 'vulgar', as highlighted in the article, 'The Richard Mutt Case', published in the Dadaist magazine *The Blind Man*: 'They say any artist paying six dollars may exhibit. Mr Richard Mutt sent in a *Fountain*. Without discussion this article disappeared and never was exhibited. What were the grounds for refusing Mr Mutt's foundation: 1. Some contended it was immoral, vulgar. 2. Others, it was plagiarism, a plain piece of plumbing.'<sup>21</sup> By refusing to see the object, each of the jurors may prove to be 'the blind man' evoked in the magazine's title. Besides, they are linked to the constituent part of the gallery, the institution.

Those close to Duchamp, although capable of seeing the urinal as art,<sup>22</sup> also cannot strictly be considered as the public. Presumably sharing the artist's intention, they may have *a priori* favourable attitudes towards his idea. An exhibited Readymade must first provoke an astonishment, which accompanies the reversal of the meaning of the object, in a way unpredictable to the public. Being aware of the methods that the artist uses and condoning the infringement of copyright that makes the work 'secret', the accomplice is therefore deprived of all the surprise that an innocent viewer would experience.

All this leads to considering Alfred Stieglitz as the only real public of the original *Fountain*. It is significant that, according to William Camfield, after the gallery's refusal, Duchamp entrusted this photographer – a friend of Francis Picabia, but not of



his – with taking pictures of the urinal [3].<sup>23</sup> He thus chose an art photographer whom he did not know well, or at least less well than Man Ray, a Dadaist artist with whom Duchamp shared his concept and who also practiced photography. Furthermore, Ray was often suspected of photographing some Readymades that were stored in Duchamp's studio.<sup>24</sup> However, the chosen photographer was a more innocent viewer.

The scene immortalised by Stieglitz testifies not only to the original state of the *Fountain*, but also to his glance through the camera obscura, and to his manner of apprehending the artwork without necessarily seizing the artistic scope of Duchamp, even without knowing the real author.<sup>25</sup> For this photo, a specific *mise-en-scène*<sup>26</sup> is prepared: the urinal, turned 90 degrees, is placed on a base, in front of a painting that serves as a background.<sup>27</sup> The perception of the urinal is intensified by virtue of the powerful overhead lighting and of the viewpoint lowered to the height of the object. All the thought and care given to this *mise-en-scène* transforms the urinal into a beautiful or sublime sculpture, akin even to a religious icon in the way the silhouette resembles a Madonna or a Buddha.

#### The public turned author

This interpretation of the urinal as aesthetic or sacred received the support of only a small number of people favourable to the *Fountain*. But it is interesting to note one of these other occurrences: the unsigned article 'The Richard Mutt Case', which revealed the urinal scandal for the first time and presents the *Fountain* as a 'Buddha of the Bathroom'.<sup>28</sup> Note also that, although favourable, this interpretation does not necessarily fit the pure concept of Readymade in Duchamp's later remarks: 'The choice of Readymade is always based on visual indifference, at the same time, on the total absence of good or bad taste.'<sup>29</sup> In other words, the choice of an object is not determined by any aesthetic potential or any symbolic analogy, but by its neutrality and its lack of distinctive quality.<sup>30</sup>

Therefore, the rapprochement – such as a Buddha – is contradictory to this principle and Duchamp should have theoretically disapproved of it, as one of the three editors of *The Blind Man* and a possible co-author of the article about *Fountain*.<sup>31</sup> However, he did not oppose the publication of this designation, as if the artist was forced to confront the public's reactions and accept the consequences, even unexpected ones. At least, the *Fountain* was recognised as an object of art, and that was, after all, the most urgent thing.

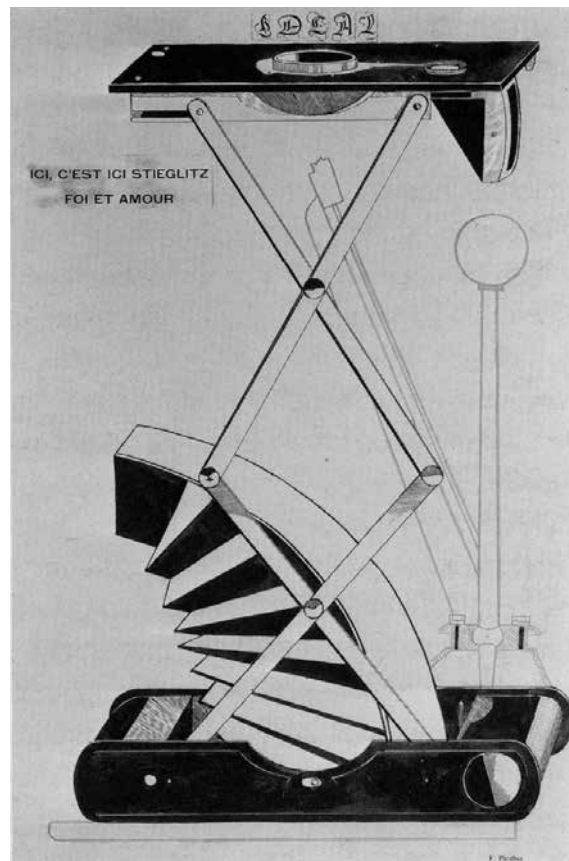
Duchamp also assures: 'It is the viewers who make the paintings',<sup>32</sup> confirming that the affair of the *Fountain* was no longer in the hands of the artist, but in the hands of the public. Duchamp's statement confirms that the accomplishment of the Readymade requires public approval, but more importantly, that it retains all its potential for interpretation and appropriation. We remember that the genesis of the Readymade results from the choice of the artist who imposes on the object an unexpected interpretation, totally different from the initial concept of the manufacturer. This phenomenon can then be

repeated, in which the Readymade undergoes another transformation, this time subject to the public's interpretation. Let's recall that one of the intentions with the Readymade is the creation of 'a new thought of that object'.<sup>33</sup> This new thought is regardless of the origin of the object; it is autonomous and can be replaced by another thought, anytime and without end. The photo published in the article presents the thought in line with not only the *Fountain*, proposed by Mutt (Duchamp), but also the 'Buddha of the Bathroom', whose paternity seems to be attributed to Stieglitz, thanks to the perceptive effect of his photographic *mise-en-scène* ('Photograph by Alfred Stieglitz').<sup>34</sup> In the latter case, 'The Richard Mutt Case' becomes 'The Alfred Stieglitz Case'.

Stieglitz himself exhibits the same photo of the urinal, under his name as the author and in his gallery, Salon 291. It should be noted that the shot's framing has changed significantly. Stieglitz exhibits its cropped version: the lower part of the photo is cut out,<sup>35</sup> so that the outline of the urinal further evokes the silhouette of a Buddha or Madonna [4]. Through the exhibition at Salon 291, Stieglitz – as the public – accentuates his new thought to the point of forgetting the initial interpretation of the *Fountain*, the contribution of Duchamp.

It is also interesting that the cutting eliminated the part where Duchamp's signature appears. Stieglitz's crop fully granted himself the copyright as an author by explicitly excluding 'R. Mutt'. Again, the

3 Francis Picabia, 'Here, This Is Stieglitz, ...' (1915).



3

photographer reiterated an already familiar principle: At first, Duchamp himself was a mere spectator of the urinal at the store of J. L. Mott Iron Works in New York, before projecting his interpretation, imposing it, erasing the name of the manufacturer, and finally becoming the author of the *Fountain*.

#### The criterion of institutional place in Readymade

The *institutional place* for an artwork, according to Thierry De Duve, is an establishment that is 'ready to register [the] object, to attribute it to an author and to communicate it to a public, [thus,] the entity that makes this consideration as the artwork *a priori* possible.'<sup>36</sup> The institutional place then allows a Readymade to be exhibited and appreciated as an artwork by the public.

#### *Urinal and institutional place*

The *Fountain* was the first Readymade that became publicly known, but also the last that was not physically exhibited. No galleries allowed its exhibition. Originally, most of Duchamp's Readymades were made only for personal purposes, with no other ambition than to be kept in his private studio. But it is problematic to consider the artist's studio to be the institutional place for any object it contains. Intended as a place to produce work, Duchamp's studio turns into a collection room like a 'cabinet of curiosities' for found objects that he encountered here and there [5]. Since these objects eventually await a rendezvous with the public – a meeting ultimately necessary for the objects to be qualified as art – the studio can also be interpreted as a waiting room or a place of transition from the everyday context to the art world. According to Duchamp's expression, it is 'with all delays'<sup>37</sup> that the Readymade 'can then be sought'.<sup>38</sup> More explicitly, the rendezvous between the object and the public triggers the artistic event, certainly desired but nevertheless unexpected, and its fateful completion. Therefore these 'unseen' Readymades of the studio can be

considered artistic 'time bombs',<sup>39</sup> whose place and time of explosion are not yet determined.

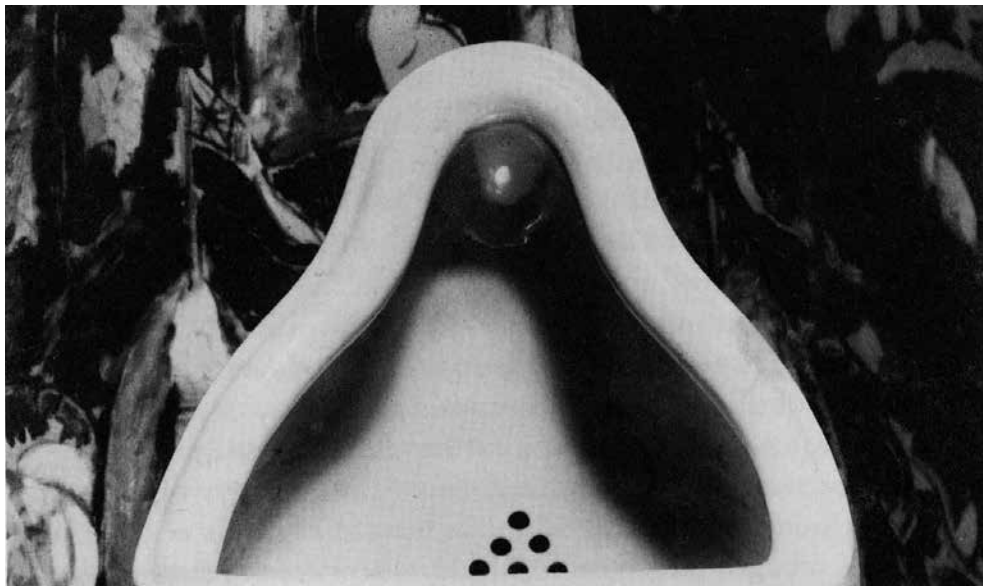
On this point, the necessity of art in organising the rendezvous between the object and the public must also be recognised. Obviously, it is not enough to put the object in contact with the public. The Readymade imperatively requires an exhibition that also creates an artistic context. In their original context, these objects remain banal; the urinal, for example, despite daily contact with the public in public restrooms, or more rarely in stores or catalogues, cannot claim artistic status. Another key element in the art of the Readymade is therefore the reconfiguration of the context for everyday objects such as 'something you don't look at'.<sup>40</sup> Fundamentally, it is the perception of its context that guides the public on how to apprehend and determine the identity of the object.

#### *The Blind Man*

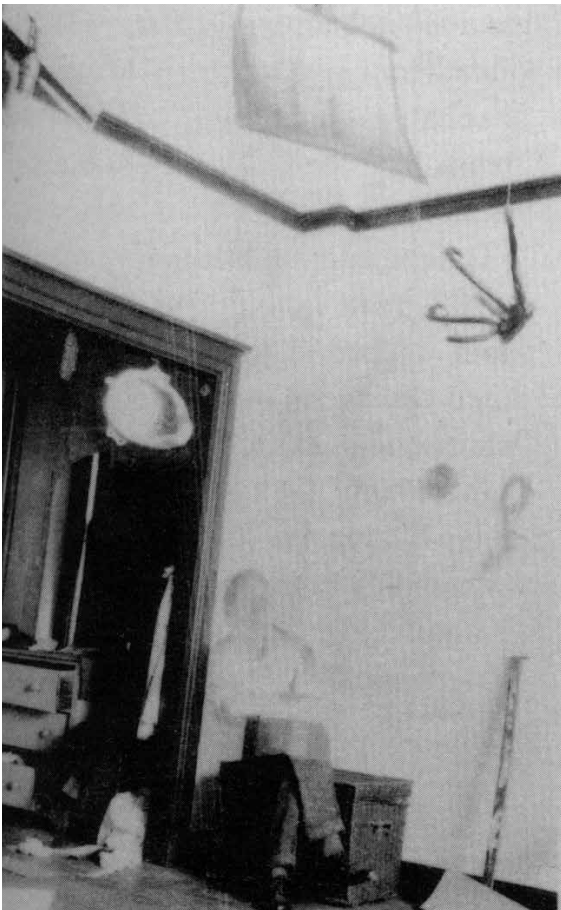
If the object must be torn from its initial environment to be placed in an artistic context, this step of accomplishment comes from the notion of the institutional place that De Duve prosaically names as a place facilitating the meeting between the object and the public, or to be precise, as the spatial interface that makes it possible to declare to the public 'this [the object] is of art'.

In general, this announcement takes place during an art exhibition, so that the role of the institutional place is most often assumed by an art museum or gallery. However, the institutional place is a particular obstacle for the Readymade to cross, because of its radical nature: the original *Fountain*, although recognised as an artwork today, has never been exhibited. Ideally, *the Society of Independent Artists*, which rejected it, should be its institutional place.

Paradoxically the absence of its real exhibition does not necessarily mean that 'artistic declaration' is impossible. As De Duve notes, *The Blind Man* published a photographic reproduction of the



4 Alfred Stieglitz, photograph of the *Fountain*, cropped version, exhibited at his Salon 219 in 1917.



5 The Readymades inside Duchamp's New York studio, unsigned photograph taken in 1917. The original *Fountain* is hanging on the left side of the photo.

original object with the caption 'The exhibit refused by the Independents'<sup>41</sup> and presented the *Fountain* to readers as an avant-garde artwork dismissed by the reactionary gallery that nevertheless advocates the motto 'without jury nor award', which is the famous motto borrowed from its French model the *Salon des artistes indépendants* in Paris. The magazine succeeds in creating a favourable contextual frame for the *Fountain*, denouncing a blatant lack of equity. De Duve finally concludes that, if an institutional place is indispensable for the rendezvous between the original *Fountain* and the public, this place must be *The Blind Man*.

It cannot be ignored that Duchamp was one of its editors. When the galleries refused the role of the institution that was supposed to guarantee the urinal as art, the artist took a detour and established a fictitious institution, the magazine, to fulfil this role.

Using *The Blind Man* as institutional place was a clever compromise, but with two limitations. Firstly, the magazine could not be a pure institutional place because it belonged to the artist. Maybe Duchamp as editor violates the motto 'without jury nor award', by disguising the jury-institution himself. Secondly, the

magazine could not produce a spatial exhibition. Although it was anticipated that the exhibition of the urinal would be a failure, the artist still should ideally realise an exhibition in a space that would allow the viewer to perceive the real object. Duchamp later embraced the *Fountain's* exhibitions in art spaces, albeit through three-dimensional replicas.<sup>42</sup> The perception of the Readymade needs the mediation of the institutional place as a real space.

### Two criteria in Le Corbusier's case

To analyse Le Corbusier's bidet comparatively, it is necessary to question the existence of similar notions of public and institutional place in architecture. These issues do not seem to be mandatory discussions in general since exhibiting an architectural object is not an inherently required part of the architect's duties. However, to analyse Le Corbusier's bidet in comparison with Duchamp's urinal, it is worth trying to apply the same criteria in architecture.

### Public and institutional place in architecture

The term 'architectural object' – in parallel with the term 'art object', which refers to an object created by an artist – is used here to refer to a building created by an architect, or the constituent elements designed or selected as part of that building under the architect's control. In this case, the public or viewers of an architectural object are not only its users, but also anyone who gets the opportunity to appreciate it through the *mise-en-scène* of the architect. The institutional place for the architectural object seems to be a specific condition that creates a background to the object, providing it with a tangible context to guide its intended perception.

The question of the institutional place is more delicate in architecture. Indeed, in art, there is no ambiguity in the change of the status of a Readymade: once exposed and appreciated in the artistic context provided by the institutional place, a functional object is unequivocally considered or registered as an artwork. This simple, unidirectional, transformative process is not common in architecture. A building remains a building. Even to organise the interior, architects usually must deal with a wide variety of objects – everyday objects, furniture, and even mechanical equipment – but not all the objects they arrange must present artistic value beyond utility. It does not mean that architecture systematically overturns the status of any architectural object – this is a notable difference to art – but rather, places a value on it.

Despite a certain ambivalence found in an architectural object, because a building itself or an architectural element could also be intended as an object of appreciation. In the case of Le Corbusier's bidet, it is undoubtedly an object of everyday use, but also a representative object to be celebrated by the modern society. However, to expose this thought, the architect-author needs to create a special condition for the object, which functions as an institutional place allowing to organise an unfamiliar rendezvous with the public.



### *L'Esprit Nouveau*

Le Corbusier's bidet could remain a piece of simple sanitary equipment that is 'something you don't look at' or, conversely, it could exalt an artistic part hitherto ignored – everything depends on the context in which it is placed, everything depends on its institutional place.

At the outset, the image of the bidet in *L'Esprit Nouveau*, an architectural publication, seems obscure in this regard. After careful reading, the text reveals what the institutional place could be and, at the same time, determines who the public is. The image of the bidet presents a situation similar to that of the *Fountain*, for which the art magazine serves as an institutional place. The same logic, therefore, leads us to consider *L'Esprit Nouveau* as the institutional place of the bidet, which *L'Esprit Nouveau* publicly exhibits to its readers as the public. But, unlike *The Blind Man*, which only provides an artistic context, *L'Esprit Nouveau* is a magazine that covers various themes related to modern culture and civilisation in the twentieth century. Its publication of the image allows us to assume the bidet as a cultural object.

### *True museum*

If we focus on the article, 'Other Icons: The Museums', in which the image of the bidet is presented, the article can be considered as the institutional place, which defines a more precise context than the magazine. The gradual experience of discovering this stunning image and reading the text results in the realisation of the following proposition: in contrast to existing museums,<sup>43</sup> the author proposes an imaginary museum, for which the bidet is an emblem. The article therefore creates a context in which the bidet is understood as a museum object. The exhibition of the bidet, if not yet realised, seems to be just waiting 'with all delays', like the Readymades in Duchamp's studio.

For the eyes of these readers as public, guided by the author's words, the bidet is already ennobled as a museum object, whether its real exhibition takes place or not. This evolution of the bidet's perception occurs not through the realisation of the exhibition but through its imagination. The proposal of this 'true museum' – while remaining imaginary in the mind of the architect and the readers – is necessary for the bidet to be perceived as a museum object. The museum isolates the bidet from its everyday context and renews the reader's perception of the object. Designed to exhibit new 'true' objects produced by the twentieth century, the true museum becomes the virtual institutional place of these objects including the bidet.

### *Exposition of decorative arts*

To understand the reason why Le Corbusier wants to constitute this exposition, we must focus on the context in which the article is written. This text is part of a series of articles that Le Corbusier published in *L'Esprit nouveau* between 1923 and 1924, bearing in mind the *International Exposition of Modern*

*Decorative and Industrial Arts* in Paris for 1925. Through these articles, the architect declares his opposition to decorative art and promotes what he defines as its antithesis, the objects produced by industries.

Made to 'deny decorative art'<sup>44</sup> according to him, these industrial products are the pledge of 'modern decorative art',<sup>45</sup> devoid of decorative intention.<sup>46</sup> Thus, 'Other Icons: The Museums' transforms industrial objects into works of modern decorative art, ideally replacing formalist works for the exposition of decorative arts as is clear from the image of the bidet in the article, which has the logo '1925 EXPO. ARTS. DECO.', placed above it. The reader can, therefore, suspect a connection between the bidet and the 1925 event. The exposition of decorative arts constitutes, according to all vraisemblance, the institutional place for the exhibited object, which would endorse its accession to a status close to that of an artwork. If the bidet were accepted to be exhibited in 1925 – contrary to what happened for the *Fountain* – this acceptance would be tantamount to bringing a Trojan Horse into the heart of the exposition, threatening the tradition of decorative art and thus the entire exposition that praises it.

### *Pavilion of L'Esprit Nouveau*

Le Corbusier succeeded in realising the bidet's exhibition. For the exposition of 1925, the architect is able to build the Pavilion of L'Esprit Nouveau, as the realisation of his imaginary museum.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, its interior disposition excludes so-called decorative artworks, in favour of true objects, most of which are industrial.<sup>48</sup>

The bidet, produced by the *Maison Pirsoul*, is on display, but its position inside the pavilion is unusual, radical, and provocative. Installed on the upper floor and isolated from the large bathroom, the bidet is in the middle of a small cylindrical cabin pierced over its entire height without a door [6].<sup>49</sup> The bidet is constantly visible from the boudoir. This bidet's cabin resembles a simple protective case, like a musical instrument case or a jewel case that reveals precious content.

Quite similarly, the pavilion functions as the museum that exhibits industrial objects as modern decorative art. Furthermore, the whole building demonstrates a habitable architecture like a simple box containing new household objects. Therefore, the pavilion not only responds to an exhibition architecture, but also aims to be a model of modern housing. Inside this habitable museum, the architect proposes the selection and arrangement of objects, and creates circumstances that allow visitors, as the public, to look carefully at these objects, and to perceive and discover their quality and nobility – artistic circumstances that remain rare in everyday life. For this reason, the pavilion, entirely organised by the architect, can be considered as the institutional place for the objects that he has chosen. At the same time, the pavilion as a domestic space addresses the ordinary lives of visitors, such that a sense of strangeness penetrates the familiar.

### Architecture as institutional place

It needs to be noted that, in art, finding an institutional place allowing an exhibition has sometimes been difficult: avant-garde artists are often challenged by conservative institutions. The case of the *Fountain* is revisited here to find an alternative solution: Duchamp succeeds in making his artwork known to the public, only through the written and photographic publication, in his own magazine.<sup>50</sup> Stieglitz later uses a similar strategy: he exhibits his photographic version of the *Fountain* in his gallery.

#### *The institutional place organised by the architect*

Establishing and controlling one's own institutional place appears to have been a secret art of compromise for avant-garde artists. The *Boîte-en-valise*, which Duchamp created in 1936, is another way of answering this sensitive question: he chooses a small, banal suitcase to arrange the reproductions of his artworks inside. Once opened, the suitcase becomes the mini-museum hosting the artist's collections, including a miniature urinal [7].<sup>51</sup> Ultimately, to organise an ideal exhibition, the artist-author creates the institutional place he needs for his artworks.

It seems to be the same for Le Corbusier, since, for the bidet's exhibition, he always used his own institutional places, such as his article, his magazine, his imaginary museum and finally his realised pavilion, comparable in many respects with Duchamp's cases.<sup>52</sup> Exhibiting the bidet, all these institutional places are creations under the control of the architect.

If the architect, unlike the artist, cannot ignore the question of utility, they still have a definite advantage: the architect is responsible for creating spaces and organising interior layout. This activity is close to the creation of an institutional place allowing an exhibition. The Pavilion of l'Esprit Nouveau is an exhibition architecture, that Le Corbusier, as the architect, is therefore able to build the interior, which he designs in accordance with his idea of the true museum. In another example of similar exhibition architecture, Le Corbusier, during the *Salon d'Automne* in 1929, exhibited the interior of a modern dwelling in which the completely open bathroom displays all its sanitary objects – a bath, a washbasin, and a bidet – towards the bedroom.

#### *Lived architecture as institutional place*

The experimentation with the exhibition of everyday objects already took place in the interiors of the houses Le Corbusier built. This seems all the more coherent since the pavilion is built as a house, on the basis of unit plan for his unfulfilled apartment project, *Immeubles-Villas* in 1922, for which some perspective sketches reveal the interior, already showing an arrangement of everyday objects similar to those presented in the true museum. The interior of the museum adapts perfectly to that of a house, to everyday space, and the reverse is also true: each creation of Le Corbusier's domestic architecture is likely to be translated as a true museum of ready-made objects.<sup>53</sup> For the architect, the realisation of the bidet's exhibition started at least in 1916, a year before the *Fountain*: on the occasion of the villa



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29. Marcel Duchamp, *Box (de ou par Marcel Duchamp ou Rose Sélavy)*, series of 1961. Shown substantially open. (see cat. no. 18)

6 Le Corbusier, Pavilion of l'Esprit Nouveau, 1925. The boudoir on the upper floor. A bidet is located inside the cylindrical and open cabin, but strangely hidden behind the opened Innovation trunk.

7 Marcel Duchamp, *Boîte-en-valise* (Box in a Valise, 1936).

7





8 Le Corbusier, Villa Schwob, 1916. Interior Perspective of the bathroom.

Schwob he built in La Chaux-de-Fonds, for which, strangely, a perspective drawing of the interior of the bathroom was produced, as if the architect was already convinced by the necessity to show the modernity of this space and its objects – including a bidet – and their visual plasticity [8].

The quasi-automatic self-exposition is also a characteristic particularity of architecture. If the architectural object to be looked at is an entire building, it is immediately visible to the public as soon as its construction is completed. In this case, the notion of the institutional place loses its meaning: it is no longer indispensable. Otherwise, if the object is only a constructed part or an element installed in the building – which corresponds to the bidet – the rendezvous between the object and its user-public occurs instantaneously, without the object having to ‘be sought (with all delays)’ like the works of Readymade. The whole space created by the architect can function directly as the institutional place for revealing the object.

In general, the exhibition of a building or its elements like the objects of ‘outillage’<sup>54</sup> (tools) is held immediately and without delay, because construction or installation by an architect is initiated in response to real needs, to present necessities. If we remember the theory of Adolf Loos, only two architectural examples should be exceptions, ‘the tomb and the monument’,<sup>55</sup> built for the sole purpose of being seen and memorised without satisfying utility needs.

Le Corbusier also argued that house should

respond to needs. But unlike Loos, he believed in the synthesis of architecture and art. Every house is a ‘machine for living’ but also a composition for ‘emotion’,<sup>56</sup> a palace,<sup>57</sup> like a magnificent monument. A similar multiplicity is valid for the domestic objects inside his architectural works: these ready-made objects are excellent because of their functionality, artistry, and symbolism. They are not only meant to be used, but also to be appreciated and celebrated.

The immediate appreciation is, interestingly, conducted by the utility, by use. In art, the exhibited object has almost no tangible vocation other than to be looked at. Architecture places objects in the hands of the inhabitant to use, touch, or manipulate. The occupant becomes the active viewer or performer of the architectural object. By using and living with the object, they comprehend its texture and its ergonomics, as well as its form, even its potential aesthetics. Experimented through not only the eyes but also the body, the architectural object is experienced spatially, lived by the inhabitant public.

#### *The necessity of mise-en-scène and provocation*

There is a certain problem of equivalence. Even if it can be associated with a museum – in the sense of the institutional place – the domestic space is nonetheless

an ordinary space. In fact, it does not induce the same consideration on the object that the spectator gives comparatively on an artwork. Additionally, the arrangement of an architectural object must respect certain principles inherent in its functioning, not necessarily in its aesthetic characteristics. These differences are called to mind when it comes to associating a bidet installed in a living space with an artwork exhibited in a museum. So, a question arises: how can a dwelling space, defined by habit and without surprise, correctly serve the role of the institutional place, disrupt the quotidian context, retain, and intensify attention to the uninteresting object, and transform the conventional perception that the inhabitant has of it?

Even in the context of the Readymade, this problem presents itself. Sometimes it is not enough to extract an object from its usual context and implant it in an artistic place. Duchamp admits to having exhibited two Readymades, which he does not detail, at Bourgeois Galleries in New York in 1916,<sup>58</sup> a year before the *Fountain*. But, at that time, the spectators did not even notice their presence. The displayed pieces, when not the subject of an extraordinary *mise-en-scène*, remain devoid of interest for the public, who do not consider them as part of the artistic exhibition. In this case, despite exhibiting the Readymades, the gallery cannot fulfil its supposed role as an institutional place. This anecdote clearly evokes that the problem of the institutional place is essentially that of 'how to exhibit' rather than 'where'. Therefore, the question of *mise-en-scène* for the phenomenon of the Readymade is important, not only in architecture, but also in art.

#### Provocation of naked *mise-en-scène*

As an architect, Le Corbusier respects the functional nature of the utilitarian objects and their installation in terms of the technical rules. Nevertheless, he tried to interfere with the daily perception of these objects, to surpass traditional conventions, without completely submitting to the literal functionalism and rationalism.

#### *Brothel of Paris*

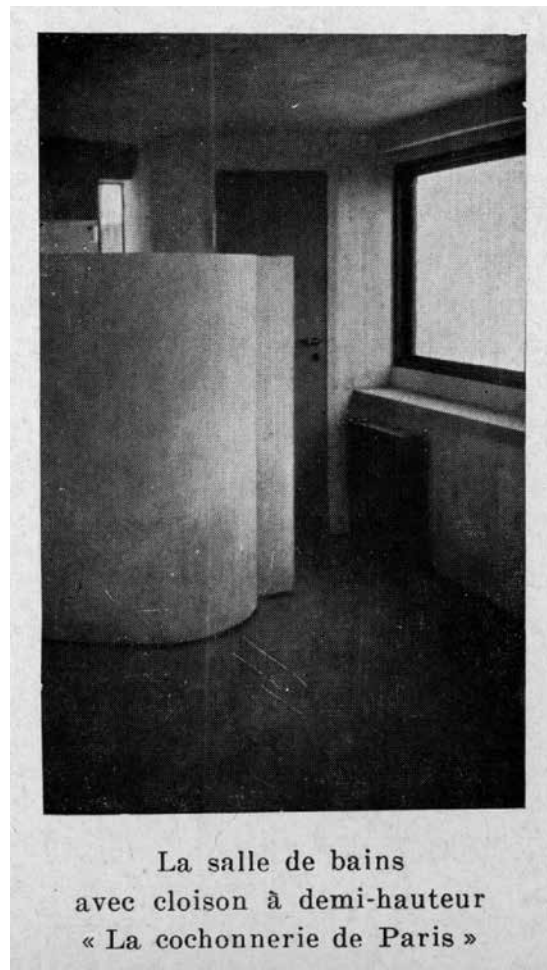
Such was the case with the bathroom of the Citrohan-type house, one of two residential buildings he built for the Weissenhof Siedlung exhibition in 1927. Mesmerised by the curved form of the freestanding half-height partition wall on the mezzanine, the approaching visitors would be struck by a shock: confronted with a bidet and a bathtub dynamically pivoted at 45 degrees, they would realise that the doorless interior was none other than a bathroom.

Siegfried Gideon recounted the scandal at the time: 'Is there any good bourgeois who was not shocked by the low wall of the bathroom?'<sup>59</sup> This open bathroom was described by other critics even as the 'Brothel of Paris'. While it achieved excellence as far as the modernist virtues of hygiene and transparency are concerned,<sup>60</sup> the open bathroom resulted in a violation of privacy, or even its annihilation. Nevertheless, Le Corbusier seemed to be delighted by this, and he uses the obscene term in the caption of a

photograph for his *Œuvre complète*: 'The bathroom with half-height partition "La Cochonnerie de Paris"' [9].<sup>61</sup> Again, this can be compared to Duchamp's use of *The Blind Man* to announce the case of his urinal, which was either persecuted as 'immoral, vulgar' or admired as sacred. Le Corbusier authorised the scandal of his naked bathroom with its exposed sanitary objects, even with the human body laid bare,<sup>62</sup> as a martyrdom destined for an avant garde, as if it were a gospel to be shared.<sup>63</sup> It also served as a litmus test for all viewers, including readers, to verify their own degree of modernity, just as the *Fountain* did.

#### *Naked bidet or body*

The domestic space of the architect and his wife Yvonne, on the top floor of the apartment that Le Corbusier built in 1933 at Rue Nungesser-et-Coli in Paris, provides another radical example [10]. From the table in the dining room, a visitor can easily look into a part of an intimate space, the couple's bedroom, through its large and heavy door, which was strangely fixed to a movable cabinet and normally remained open [11]. Through this opened door, the visitor can even see the interior of the bathroom – a space



9 Le Corbusier's open bathroom in his Citrohan-type House for Weissenhof Siedlung, 1927: 'The bathroom with half-height partition, "The Brothel of Paris".'

containing a washbasin and a small bathtub and does not have a door. However, the most provocative is the bidet: the architect installed it not inside the bathroom but outside, in the middle of the bedroom. This provocative removal of the intimate boundaries of personal hygiene not only happens inside the bedroom, but also expands to the dining and living room, as soon as the large door stays open.

The following anecdote is amusing and meaningful: Yvonne did not share any of the artistic conceptions of her husband who does not respect the minimum of the intimacy and delicacy, required by etiquette and art of living.<sup>64</sup> Unable to accept that her bidet – reminding her of her naked body – was visible, she decided to refuse the exposed bidet and usually covered it with a cloth or towel.<sup>65</sup> While Le Corbusier was able to take advantage of the chance to experiment with his private space as an institutional place, his *mise-en-scène* was effectively rejected by his wife, namely the public-viewer. But his exhibition was not a complete failure, because the bidet must be seen when in use. The fixed and irreversible realisation of the utilitarian object in daily space will prevent the user from eternally refusing its exhibition, and paradoxically not only for its aesthetic quality, but also for its utilitarian vocation. The rendezvous is provoked in everyday life.

#### institutional space

Unlike Duchamp's pieces, Le Corbusier's objects are constrained by practicality and have limited possibilities for artistic manipulation. The above anecdotes denote a specific difficulty or interest in architecture, caused by the constant conflict between the conventional conformity of daily functional space and the extraordinary *mise-en-scène* of the architectural experience that the architect wanted to create. From this point of view, the exhibition of Le Corbusier's bidet, certainly little known, is no less radical and provocative than that of Duchamp's urinal. Its place, above all, is a domestic space, much less spectacular than a museum space, but it is where the real and sensitive life of the person who sees and watches it unfolds, day after day.

It should be noted that while, for functional reasons, the architect cannot arbitrarily determine the location of mechanical equipment, it is relatively easy to adjust and dismantle the partition walls that divide the space, as outlined in Le Corbusier's famous 'Free Plan' theory.<sup>66</sup> Through the art of the wall, Le Corbusier was able to open the bathroom and expose the bidet, which had been isolated and alone beyond its boundary.

This interrelationship between objects and walled spaces is a fundamental question in architecture. If we interpret Duchamp's *Fountain* as an attempt to relocate an object from the restroom to the exhibition hall, this is similar to a practice that architects have frequently grappled with. Meanwhile, with the Readymade, the artist's only act seems to be simply down to choice. But in fact, as mentioned earlier, there is an additional task left for Duchamp: to decide how to display the object in a way that must be as radical as the initial choice.



10



11

10 Le Corbusier and Yvonne's bedroom in the Apartment at 24 rue Nungesser et Coli (1931–3). A bidet is isolated from the bathroom.

11 Le Corbusier and Yvonne's bedroom. The bidet, inside the bedroom, is visible from the dining room through the large open door.

The same is almost true for Le Corbusier, as one of the architectural problems is essentially how to arrange or display selected objects.

It is thus the space – created by the architect and his or her architectural *mise-en-scène* – that serves to orientate the perception of the objects in that space and promotes their value. As the author, Le Corbusier controls the space for the objects. He determines their exact spatial conditions. He dominates the process of how they are discovered sequentially by whoever enters the space. He curates the gaze, the surprise, the meditation and the enlightenment. Like a gift box, the space is designed to experience the process of exploring what is inside. Le Corbusier's gift box monumentalises everyday objects, and the monumentalised objects, in turn, make the box a sanctuary.

The architecture of Le Corbusier becomes a true museum that provokes everyday objects in space and – like the artistic operation of Duchamp – extends the objects from the realm of utility to the realm of beauty. Such an architecture discovers the potential to perform as an institutional place that itself operates through a three-dimensional *mise-en-scène*, hence as an architecture of institutional space.



## Notes

1. Le Corbusier, 'Autre icônes: Les musées [Other Icons: The Museums]', *L'Esprit Nouveau*, 20 (January to February 1924), republished in Le Corbusier, *L'art décoratif d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: G. Crès et Cie, 1925) (Paris: Flammarion, 1996), p. 17.
2. See Beatriz Colomina, 'Architecture et publicité', in *Le Corbusier: Une encyclopédie*, ed. by Jacques Lucan (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1987), pp. 140–5; Stanislaus von Moos, 'Dans l'antichambre du "Moyen âge" and 'Le Corbusier et Loos', in *L'Esprit Nouveau: Le Corbusier und die Industrie 1920–1925*, ed. by Stanislaus von Moos (Zurich-Berlin: Wilhelm Ernst & Sohn Verlag für Architektur und technische Wissenschaften, 1987). See also Hilde Heynen, 'Architecture ou Révolution, Le Corbusier and the Avant-Garde', in *Le Corbusier & The Architecture of Reinvention* (London: Architectural Association Publications, 2003), p. 50; Pedro Feduchi, 'Le Corbusier privado: objetos y sexualidad', in *Massilia* (2008), pp. 147–9; Deborah Gans, 'Big work: Le Corbusier and Capitalism', in *Architecture and Capitalism: 1845 to the Present*, ed. by Peggy Deamer (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014).
3. In this paper, I purposely distinguish the terms 'ready-made' and 'Readymade'. The first term has an adjective value meaning 'already done and produced' in the conventional sense, the second term refers to the proper name that designates the art of Marcel Duchamp, respecting his writing style. Initiated from 1913, the Readymade introduced new possibilities in art by allowing an artist to choose a utilitarian object that he did not produce to become his own artwork.
4. It is unclear how much Duchamp and Le Corbusier knew of each other during the period from the early 1910s to the 1920s. While French Cubist painter Duchamp left Paris in 1915 to emigrate to New York, the Swiss-born architect Le Corbusier returned to Paris in 1917 to settle permanently and found Purism, an art movement succeeding Cubism, with Amédée Ozenfant. It is possible that the existence of Readymade and Purism was indirectly transmitted by the artistic connections between Paris and New York at the time (Marcel Duchamp, Francis Picabia, Albert Gleizes, Jean Crotti in New York, and Guillaume Apollinaire in Paris, for example) On the contribution of French artists for the Society of Independent Artists in New York, see: William A. Camfield, *Marcel Duchamp, Fountain* (Houston, TX: The Menil Collection, 1989), pp. 14–15. Ozenfant recalled receiving Dadaist magazines of Duchamp and Picabia from New York: '[...] I received the Dadaist magazines published in Zurich by Tzara, Arp and their friends, and those from New York by Picabia and Marcel Duchamp', in Ozenfant Amédée, *Mémoires, 1886–1962* (Paris: Seghers, 1968), p. 99. But Purism was certainly not in favour of Dada: 'At that time [...] the avant-garde was simultaneously the negative Dada and the constructive Purism. [...] Their Watchword: DISORDER. A romantic, desperate disorder in Germany', *Ibidem*. On the topic, see also: Stanislaus von Moos, 'The Missed Encounter with Le Corbusier', in *Marcel Duchamp and the Forestay Waterfall*, ed. by Stefan Banz (Zurich: JRP/Ringier, 2010), pp. 258–75.
5. Beatriz Colomina, 'Architecture et publicité'.
6. Arthur Rüegg, 'Der Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau als Musée Imaginaire (Le pavillon de l'Esprit nouveau en tant que musée imaginaire)', in *L'Esprit Nouveau: Le Corbusier et l'industrie 1920–1925*, pp. 134–51.
7. Le Corbusier: 'In this section of the museum we would have no hesitation in displaying other labels explaining that all objects on exhibition had performed some real function [...]', in 'Autre icônes. Les musées', p. 17.
8. Phrase in Marcel Duchamp, *Renvoi miroirique* (1967), original text in French: 'le robinet [...] s'arrête de couler'.
9. In his book *De architectura*, Vitruvius argued for the three virtues for architecture: firmitas, utilitas, venustas – that is often translated to solidity (or durability), utility (or convenience), and beauty. See Vitruvius, *The Ten Books on Architecture (De architectura)* (New York, NY: Dover Publications, 1960), Book I, Chapter III 'The Department of Architecture', p. 17.
10. Le Corbusier: 'I am no longer speaking of the things that exist in a house, but of the way in which those things have been put together, that is to say, the way they have been ARCHITECTURÉES (ARCHITECTURISED). For we must not confuse an army with a battle. The army is made up of those objects constituting the house. The battle is the architecture of the house. I grant that objects necessary and sufficient to make the house have been assembled, as I grant that soldiers, cannons and munitions have been assembled to join battle. But I do not confuse my profession as architect with those whose work it is to install heating, furnish materials, linoleum, or plumbing fixtures.' in Le Corbusier, 'Défense de l'architecture', *L'architecture d'aujourd'hui*, 10 (October 1933). Translated from French by Nancy Bray, André Lessard, Alan Levitt, George Baird, *From Oppositions Reader: Selected Essays 1973–1984* (New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998).
11. 'Conversations avec Marcel Duchamp', in Alain Jouffroy, *Une révolution du regard* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), p. 119. Republished in *Opus International*, 49 (March 1974), p. 89. Original text in French: [on the Readymade] 'une chose que l'on ne regarde même pas'; 'qu'on regarde en tournant la tête'.
12. It was not with the artwork, *Roue de bicyclette* (1913) but with that of the *Porte-bouteilles* (Bottle Holder) that Duchamp began to consider the possibility of an industrial object as an object of art. Duchamp explicitly calls *Porte-bouteilles* 'sculpture tout faite'. The artist said that he has written some sentences on *Porte-bouteilles* in 1914. But for lack of remembering, Duchamp no longer, from then on, put the inscription on his replicas.
13. Marcel Duchamp, *Duchamp du signe: Écrits* (Paris: Flammarion, 1994), p. 49.
14. Thierry De Duve, *Résonances du ready-made: Duchamp entre avant-garde et tradition* (Nîmes: Editions Jacqueline Chambon, 1989).
15. 'Place' in this article means a location where someone or something exists or where an action or event takes place. Thus, 'institutional place', here, refers to the physical location where an artistic institution exists or carries out its work, but also includes non-physical institution that fulfils such a role, for example, an art magazine like *The Blind Man*. 'Space', on the other hand, is an

- empty indoors (or outdoors) space constructed with the materials. Creating space is therefore the primary objective of the architecture. For this article, the term institutional place is mainly used in Thierry De Duve's narrative. But when the institutional place is particularly 'architecturalised' through spatial *mise-en-scène*, I will use the term 'institutional space': it is beyond a mere location that has a definite three-dimensional volume with boundaries and objects are exhibited through an architectural spatialised composition in its interior, such as the case of Le Corbusier.
16. De Duve, *Résonances du readymade*, p. 17. See original text of De Duve: 'le public a accusé réception de l'acte de énonciatif de Duchamp'.
  17. *Ibid.*, p. 39. De Duve argues that the public in Duchamp's Readymade art should be considered first and foremost as each 'individual', a subjective 'viewer'.
  18. *Ibid.*, p. 32: 'regardeur'. Duchamp also said: '[Art] is a product with two poles; there is the pole of the one who makes a work and the pole of the one who looks at it. I give the one who looks at it as much importance as the one who makes it (chosen)', in Pierre Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1971), p. 130.
  19. De Duve, *Résonance*, p. 33.
  20. Louise Norton, 'Buddha of the Bathroom', *The Blind Man*, No. 2, May 1917, p. 6: 'to any "innocent" eye how pleasant is its chaste simplicity of line and color! Someone said, "Like a lovely Buddha"; someone said, "Like the legs of the ladies of Cézanne"'. Cited in Camfield, *Marcel Duchamp, Fountain*, p. 40.
  21. 'The Richard Mutt Case', *The Blind Man*, No. 2, May 1917, p. 5.
  22. Such are, for example, the cases of Louise Norton and Beatrice Wood, 'female friends' of the artist and with whom Duchamp seemed to prepare the publication of 'The Richard Mutt Case'. For this subject, see: Camfield, *Marcel Duchamp, Fountain*, pp. 24–7, 30–41.
  23. William A. Camfield, 'Marcel Duchamp's Fountain: Aesthetic Object, Icon, or Anti-Art?', in *Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp*, ed. by Thierry De Duve (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991), pp. 141, 153.
  24. See De Duve, *Résonance*, p. 91: 'Man Ray [...] had already photographed some Readymades for Duchamp. [...] Perhaps it was he who had photographed the urinal seen hanging in Duchamp's studio in the only two other photos that have come down to us besides the one by Stieglitz.'
  25. Camfield, 'Marcel Duchamp's Fountain: Aesthetic Object, Icon, or Anti-Art?', p. 141.
  26. Beatrice Wood attributed this *mise-en-scène* to the photographer, Stieglitz, although unaware of the exact identity of Mutt. According to her: 'He [Stieglitz] took great pains with the lighting, and did it with such skill that a shadow fell across the urinal suggesting a veil. The piece was renamed: "Madonna of the Bathroom"', in Beatrice Wood, *I Shock Myself* (Ojai, CA: Dillingham Press, 1985), p. 30, cited in Camfield, *Ibid.*, p. 141.
  27. Camfield, *Marcel Duchamp, Fountain*, p. 36. It is the painting drawn by Marsden Hartley, an American painter, and titled *The Warriors* (1913). In the photo of the *Fountain*, it seems an abstract painting but, a figurative painting.
  28. 'The Richard Mutt Case'.
  29. It is said by Duchamp in 1966, interview published in Pierre Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, p. 48: 'Cabanne: What determined your choice of Readymades? Duchamp: That depended on the object. In general, I had to beware, at the end of fifteen days, you begin to like it or hate it. You have to approach something with indifference, as if you had no aesthetic emotion. The choice of Readymades is always based on visual indifference and, at the same time, on the total absence of good or bad taste.'
  30. Duchamp's 1962 letter to Hans Richter: 'When I discovered Readymades I thought to discourage aesthetics. In Neo-Dada they have taken my Readymades and found aesthetic beauty in them. I threw the bottle-rack and the urinal into their faces as a challenge and now they admire them for their aesthetic beauty.' in Hans Richter, *Dada Art and Anti-Art* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1965), pp. 207, 208.
  31. According to William A. Camfield, there are several theories about the authorship of 'The Richard Mutt Case': Beatrice Wood identified herself as the author while Duchamp at one point referred to Louise Norton and at another time Duchamp attributed as the magazine's editor. In any case, Duchamp said he 'agreed with it of course', in other words, he approved of the article. See Camfield, *Marcel Duchamp, Fountain*, p. 37.
  32. See original text of Duchamp: 'Ce sont les regardeurs qui font les tableaux.' in Duchamp, *Duchamp du signe*, p. 247. Duchamp also said: 'the masterpiece is ultimately declared by the spectator', in Cabanne, *Dialogues*, p. 39: 'The important role of the spectator is to determine the weight of the work on the aesthetic balance.' in Duchamp, *Duchamp du signe*, p. 189.
  33. 'The Richard Mutt Case'.
  34. The photo published in 'The Richard Mutt Case' is accompanied by the following captions, top left to right: 'Fountain by R. Mutt'; 'Photograph by Alfred Stieglitz'; and below: 'The exhibit refused by the Independents', *Ibid.*
  35. Camfield, *Marcel Duchamp, Fountain*, p. 42.
  36. De Duve, *Résonance*, p. 18: 'The one that the Readymade makes and verifies could be formulated as follows: there are conditions for the existence of art in a given cultural formation, and of these conditions [...]. Here they are: given 1° an object, 2° an author, 3° a public, 4° an institutional place ready to register this object, to attribute it to an author and to communicate it to a public, the entity that this formation calls a work of art is possible a priori.' See also, Camfield, *Marcel Duchamp, Fountain*, p. 19: 'Finally, there is a need for an ad hoc institution, a decision-making device or a registration instance whose function is to fulfil the first three conditions.' In avant-garde art that deals with non-art objects (Readymade or its successor, Pop Art, for example), the meaning of the institution is particularly important to elicit a special appreciation from the viewer. See George Dickie's 'institutional art' theory or Arthur Danto's 'artworld' theory as foundational studies in this regard. Arthur Danto, 'The Artworld', *Journal of Philosophy*, 61:19 (15 October 1964), p. 580: 'To see something as art requires something the eye cannot describe – an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of history of art: an art world.' George Dickie, *Art and the Aesthetic, An Institutional Analysis* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1974), p. 34: 'A work of art in the classificatory sense is (1) an artifact (2) a set of the aspects of which has had conferred upon it

- the status of candidate for appreciation by some person or persons acting on behalf of a certain social institution (the artworld).'
37. Duchamp, *Duchamp du signe*, p. 49.
38. Ibid.
39. Or 'attentats (attacks)', according to Duchamp. De Duve writes: 'The Richard Mutt case didn't even make the dogs run over in 1917. As a news item it is a bit weak. But it is not the only one involved. It is a succession of diverse facts that must be explained: several collisions seeming to follow each other rigorously ... Duchamp had first written: attentats. A writing remorse made him replace attentats by collisions.', in De Duve, *Résonance*, p. 71.
40. 'Conversations avec Marcel Duchamp', in Alain Jouffroy, *Une révolution du regard*, p. 119: 'The Fountain may be a very useful object in its place, but its place is not an art exhibition and it is not a work of art by any definition.' cited by Francis Naumann, 'The Big Show, The First Exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists, Part I', in *Artforum* (February 1979), p. 38; cited also by De Duve, *Résonance*, p. 73.
41. 'The Richard Mutt Case'.
42. The first exhibitions with full-scale replica of the Fountain, except for its miniature version, are following: 'Challenge and Defy' (Sidney Janis Gallery, New York, 1950) and 'Dada, 1916-1923' (same gallery, 1953) (in Camfield, 'Marcel Duchamp's Fountain: Aesthetic Object, Icon, or Anti-Art?', pp. 155-9).
43. Le Corbusier, 'Autre icônes. Les musées', p. 22: '[...] our educationalists, both in their books and in the schools, disregard the origin and purpose of the objects displayed in the museums, and use them as the basis of their teaching, to urge on their pupils to outdo, if that is possible, examples already exceptional of their kind, and thus encourage them to fill our everyday lives with the impractical showpieces which clutter and distort our existence, leaving it quite simply ridiculous.'
44. Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret, *Le Corbusier et Pierre Jeanneret, Œuvre complète 1910-1929* (Zurich: Les Editions d'Architecture, 1929), p. 98.
45. Le Corbusier, 'L'art décoratif d'aujourd'hui', in *L'Esprit Nouveau*, 24 (June 1924) and republished in Le Corbusier, *L'art décoratif d'aujourd'hui* (1925), op. cit., p. 84: 'modern decorative art is not decorated.'
46. The introduction of Le Corbusier, 'Besoins-Types, Meubles-Types', in *L'art décoratif d'aujourd'hui* (1925), p. 67: 'Works of decorative art are tools, beautiful tools.'
47. See Rüegg, 'Der Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau als Musée Imaginaire'.
48. Le Corbusier about the 'éléments mobiliers standards (standard furniture elements)' exposed inside the pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau: 'non pas faits à l'usage d'une exposition d'art et pour un public conduit à rechercher la surenchère, mais fabriqués dans l'industrie, existant dans le commerce, n'ayant aucun caractère d'art fourni par un décor chargé d'intentions [not made for the use of an art exhibition and for a public driven to seek out outbidding, but manufactured in industry, existing in commerce, having no character of art provided by a decor charged with intentions.]', in Le Corbusier, 'Le pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau', *Almanach d'architecture moderne* (1925), p. 145.
49. Note that the pavilion is a form of house of which the plan is taken from that of Immeubles-Villas, the unrealised project that Le Corbusier designed in 1922. If, in the plan of 1922, a bidet was with other sanitary objects inside the same large bathroom, in that of 1925, it was separated and exhibited towards the boudoir. On this subject, see: Sung-Taeg Nam, 'Los objetos sanitarios en Le Corbusier: La libertad dispositiva y la exposición radical en los años 20', in *RA Revista de Arquitectura*, 15 (2013), 87-98.
50. The artist's goal seems to be only a 'provocation', not the success of the exhibition. The failure may therefore be planned and scheduled.
51. On miniature version of the Fountain, see: Camfield, *Marcel Duchamp, Fountain*, pp. 67-71; Camfield, 'Marcel Duchamp's Fountain: Aesthetic Object, Icon, or Anti-Art?', pp. 155-9; Adina Kamien-Kazhdan, *Remaking the Readymade: Duchamp, Man Ray, and the Conundrum of the Replica* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), pp. 84-6.
52. Colomina, 'Architecture et publicité'.
53. Rüegg, 'Der Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau als Musée Imaginaire'.
54. Le Corbusier, *Almanach d'architecture moderne*, p. 113.
55. Adolf Loos, 'Architecture' (1910), in *Ornement et crime et autres textes: Adolf Loos* (Parks: Payot & Rivages, 2003), pp. 112, 113: 'Only a tiny part of architecture comes under art: the tomb and the monument. Everything else, everything that serves some practical purpose, should be ejected from the realm of art. Only when we have got rid of the great misunderstanding that art is something that can be harnessed to a practical purpose, only when the fallacious catchphrase "applied art" has disappeared from the vocabulary of all nations, will we have the architecture of our times.'
56. Le Corbusier believes that architecture is also art, so architecture should affect emotions (*émouvoir*) like art. Art is also defined as the 'machine à émouvoir' by Amédée Ozenfant. See also Le Corbusier, *Almanach d'architecture moderne* (1926), p. 138: 'The house is made of objects that respond to our functions. [...] Their grouping and solidarity respond to particular needs and provoke particular sensations. This is where the architectural composition manifests itself [...] This is where the word of architecture comes in. The word which is a phenomenon of poetry, which determines a set of indisputable emotions.' In 1927, Le Corbusier also said: 'And now, in 1927, the idea that "the house is a machine for living" has been proclaimed, and the door has been opened on this essential truth. We might as well bury architecture, we might as well rip out man's heart and brain, if all we want to do is give a case to his animal carcass. Baths, toilets, central heating, ventilation, lighting are like the indispensable food for the beast: men are holed up in their boxes and they are satisfied! No, they are not! Precisely not! With distress and death averted, the feeling again overflows; the man says: "[...] But I also think. I want something that serves no purpose, nothing but to please me, to delight me [...] What you call useless is useful to me, is indispensable to me, otherwise there will be an abyss before me and I will commit suicide.", Le Corbusier, 'Où en est l'architecture', *L'Architecture vivante*, 2 (1927), 9.
57. See Le Corbusier, *Une maison: Un palais* (Paris: G. Crès et Cie, 1928).
58. De Duve, *Résonance*, p. 45: 'The



public life of the Readymade began at the same time as its institutional life. Two Readymades (it is not known which ones) were exhibited in April 1916 at the Bourgeois Galleries in New York, and at the same time, Pharmacy was shown at the Montross Gallery. But they conveniently went unnoticed: the readymade is something we don't even look at.'

59. Sigfried Giedion, 'La leçon de l'exposition du "Werkbund" à Stuttgart 1927', *L'Architecture vivante*, 1 (1928), 40. Original text: 'On a certainement beaucoup discuté au sujet des deux maisons de Le Corbusier dans la cité de "Weissenhof". Existe-t-il un seul bon bourgeois qui n'ait pas été choqué par la paroi surbaissée de la salle de bains [...]'
60. For Le Corbusier, the bathroom should be an exemplary hygienic space. He argued, the ideal modern bathroom was to be like a sun-drenched sanatorium, like a spacious living space, and even like a gym for physical health, as did a Roman bath: 'Demand a bathroom looking south, one of the largest rooms in the house or fiat, the old drawing-room for instance. One wall to be entirely glazed, opening if possible on to a balcony for sun baths; the most up-to-date fittings with a shower-bath and gymnastic appliances.' (in Le Corbusier, 'Manuel de l'habitation', *Vers une architecture* (1923), 96). Opening the bathroom with a curved wall at mid-height may be a compromise that allows for more natural light and less cramped space. (See Sung-Taeg Nam, 'Le Corbusier et la salle de bains "ouverte"', *matières*, 10 (2012), 113–16).
61. Le Corbusier [...], *Œuvre complète 1919–1929*, p. 152. Nevertheless, the architect defends himself against these accusations, countering the problem of privacy with the omission, during the implementation, of 'sliding screens allowing the area of bedrooms, bathroom and boudoir to be completely closed off' (in Le Corbusier, 'La signification de la cité-jardin du Weissenhof à Stuttgart', *L'Architecture vivante*, 1 (1928), p. 14).
62. For Le Corbusier, the bathroom is the scene for the Free plan (*plan libre*) with the 'independent organs' under the light: the sanitary appliances, devoid of ornamentation, and also the naked human body. All become plastic objects, a reference to Dr Winter's remarks in the article 'Le corps nouveau', in *L'Esprit Nouveau*, 15 (1922): 'The body will reappear naked under the sun, showered, muscled, supple. It is sketching out its new form and this form will be beautiful. A new body, rich with a new spirit, will express itself tomorrow.'
63. On the sacred character of the sanitary appliances, see: Francesco Passanti, 'The Vernacular, Modernism, and Le Corbusier', in *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 56.4 (December 1997), 441. Regarding a washbasin standing alone in the Villa Savoye's hall, Passanti interpreted it as a modern vernacular symbol reminding of 'ablutions of a ritual entry'.
64. On Yvonne's anecdote with her bidet, see: Arthur Rüegg, in *archithese I* (1985), p. 41. Julius Posener described it as 'Teepuppe' when he visited the apartment (information from Stanislaus von Moos).
65. The exposure of the bidet can transform the entire bedroom into a salacious atmosphere, like the 'the Brothel of Paris' scandal, or even the surreal interior scene of Duchamp's installation *Etant données* (1946–66).
66. Le Corbusier [...], *Œuvre complète 1910–1929*, pp. 87–91.

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 Charles Gérard, 6  
 Fondation Le Corbusier, 1, 6, 8, 9–11  
 Estate of Marcel Duchamp, 2, 5, 7  
 Francis Picabia, 3  
 Albin Salaün, 10  
 Alfred Stieglitz, 4  
 Peter Willi, 11

### Acknowledgements

This work, as a further development of one chapter of the author's PhD thesis ('La question des objets ready-made et son appropriation architecturale') at EPFL in 2012, was supported by the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF) grant funded by the Korea government (MSIT) (No. RS-2023-00248602).

### Competing interests

The author declares none.

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