

Marcel Duchamp/Alfred Stieglitz (Mutt and Jeff) Photograph an Impossible Urinal, Fountain (in a slapstick kind of way).



Figure 1. Alfred Stieglitz, Fountain, silver gelatin print, 1917. Artwork in the public domain.



Figure 2. Fountain (seen in reverse).

"But I've had some fun in photographing." -Alfred Stieglitz to Georgia O'Keeffe, April 19, 1917. (Sarah Greenough, Faraway One).

Alfred Stieglitz, one of the world's best known photographers, photographed Marcel Duchamp's urinal, delivered to his 291 gallery by Duchamp et alia, as Stieglitz wrote to Georgia O'Keeffe, to make a 'frontispiece' in the second issue of the oedipal *The Blind Man*, a cheaply produced, avant-garde magazine whose primary purpose, scholars have claimed, was to defend in writing this urinal's rejection from the first non-juried Society of Independent Artists Exhibition, chosen though not presented by a never-seen Richard Mutt, held at the no longer standing Grand Palace in Manhattan and opened officially on April 10 of 1917. The urinal is titled *Fountain*, although with some editorial ambiguity. The first unsigned defense in *The Blind Man* 2, *The Richard Mutt Case*, incorrectly names it a quotidian object, a fountain instead of a urinal, in lower case, "Mr. Richard Mutt sent in a fountain." The second defense by Louise Norton assigns the urinal the status of a proper name "... sculpture called the *Fountain* ...", upper case. On another page, the photograph by Alfred Stieglitz carries the label 'Fountain by R. Mutt', which also denotes a different production connotation. The urinal, as fountain/Fountain then, fluctuates between and slips into different utilitarian and aesthetic roles or language games: urinal qua recognizable urinal as NYC's defense against the phobia of immigrant diseases, fountain as source of upstate drinking water (repulsive in a urinal), and a work of art

called Fountain, normally the focal point of public monuments such as the two made by Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, the exhibit's financier and well known, though classical, sculptor. It almost seems as if the editors parlayed Bertrand Russell's then famous 'The present King of France is bald.', a grammatical sentential proposition which has no sense, meaning or reference into the defense with R. Mutt being the 'present King of France'. If Duchamp were aware of the early linguist Ferdinand de Saussure's signifier/signified distinction, as some scholars maintain, then fountain/Fountain would be a signifier short-circuited from its signified. The titles of the two magazines attending the exhibition, the first acting to advertise the exhibition, differ probably for these reasons. The first The Blindman, all one word, titles something, such as a theater piece; the second, The Blind Man, denotes a description. The photograph will do the same, preempting photography's theory of ostensive reference, leaving it stuck in neutral like the gear shift in Picabia's 1915 machine aesthetic portrait of Stieglitz as a discombobulated camera.

The images of Fountain (Figures 1 & 2), taken from the uncropped original Stieglitz print, which first surfaced in 1993, with one version reversed with computer software, clearly show that something is wrong with the photographic lay of the land. Duchamp and Stieglitz did not make a straight photograph, yet wanted to give the illusion that the photograph was not a contrived combination print of different photos, like the then popular Spiritualist photographs. The photograph itself, claimed here, is a subtle Cubist-like composite of different shots of the same scene, perhaps best thought of as Duchamp's notion of a rehabilitated perspective as photographic surgery. Impossibly, the upper half of the urinal seems to face the viewer, more or less parallel to the camera's film plane, though it actually turns slightly right, while the lower section's grossly out of focus rim and spud are turned obviously to the viewer's left. The undulating lip on the opposite side of R. Mutt, the one closest to the viewer, should be larger or wider but is in fact narrower. This will be elaborated later. Antecedents for such an paradoxical object exist in the impossible bed of Duchamp's *Apolinère Enameled* (1916). This article will also claim things like the painted signature of R. Mutt, which also should be out of focus, was NOT on the urinal at the Independent's presentation, or at the time of Stieglitz's photograph at his 291 gallery.

As an appetizer, or introductory comedic error(s), Duchamp and Stieglitz attempt a sleight of hand, they removed from the interior of the urinal the camera lens reflection, as well as most of the reflections normal to vitrified porcelain. A urinal in 1917 is a semi-skilled labor thing, produced in assembly line fashion by hand packing clay or slipcasting into a plaster mold. The greenware is then brushed with several final layers of glazing and fired into a highly reflective, glass surface. Ironically, given Duchamp's well known polemic against painting, Fountain, then, is a hand painted object, its paintedness alluding scholars. As well, Fountain was not a machine produced object as so often is written, though it is a machine with its plumbing. So, the interior surface of the urinal should mirror the camera lens, one of the most unsolvable problems in photographing shiny, highly reflective objects prior to Photoshop. It does not. Such a visual nuisance could be eliminated in a number of ways. One could use Farmer's Reducer, a ferricyanide/hypo bleaching agent, which Stieglitz owned, to whiten out the area in the print. This would be time consuming and not totally effective, though the shadow inside the urinal appears washed out and doctored, not unlike the effects of Farmer's Reducer. Most likely someone 'ghosted' the figure in Pierre Roche's snapshots of Duchamp's studio this way. An opaque paint applied to the actual glass plate or cellulose negative could block out the lens given the large amount of white areas, called blocking. This would be tricky to integrate into the smooth white surface of the porcelain. Collaging in a whole section to the Fountain print from another print, the most likely scenario, would work also. A distant possibility, something more related to commercial photography, entails spray painting with an atomizer or an airbrush the urinal's interior with some opaquing medium to create a matte surface. Stieglitz with Duchamp's

help may have engaged mirrors to hide the camera, though this does not seem so and nothing in the historical record suggests such trick photography until Duchamp's Coney Island 5-way Portrait done in June of the same year. At any rate this deletion of the tell tale camera lens's presence signals right off the bat something unusual about this photograph. Additionally, in photographing china, such as a large soup caldron, for example, which the urinal resembles, the photographer would eliminate extraneous light reflections in the shadows so they read smoothly without distraction. The highlight in the upper cavity does the opposite, calling attention to a seemingly vacuous spot, and establishing that this section is not unreflective, contradicting the lower portion. This will be shown to be highly motivated. The highlights seen on the triangular configuration of drain holes are not consistent and appear to be added to the negative or print. Moreover, where there should be light, namely inside the interior of the projecting spud, it is totally black, which it should not be since the drain holes were needed to create a rinsing waterfall. The later urinal replica's exhibit these omitted drain holes.



Figure 3. Alfred Stieglitz, Fountain, reproduction from *The Blind Man*, No. 2, 1917. Artwork in the public domain.

Given these initial most obvious anomalies, it is interesting that scholars have not investigated Fountain as a photomechanical work. However, Fountain's introduction in *The Blind Man*, No. 2 as a photo-based media event has been demoted historically. (Figure 3). Duchamp, starting with the Box in a Valise (1935-41) and the replica's of the 1950's and the Arturo Schwarz 1964 editions, appropriated the urinal from its Futurist-oriented, *Blind Man* photo-image context, and transitioned it to a stand alone object, which, with the advent of the Pop Art tsunami, subsumed the sanitary pottery piece into the category of a found object and an antecedent to Warhol's consumer based Campbell's Tomato Soup Can. The original accompanying entrance card, string, and background prop were not included in the recycling. Fountain's birth as a

photographic spectacle and its association with Stieglitz or Futurism faded even further than it already had since 1917. Starting in the late Thirties, Clement Greenberg's ascension to the role of supreme being of American art criticism with its asocial formalism further pushed the anarchistic Stieglitz out of the picture of American Modernism, along with Stieglitz's death in 1946. Fountain's inclusion with the replication of other readymades helped to concretize, baptize and thus stabilize it officially as a readymade, instead of an avant-garde publicity stunt. Duchamp also maintained that the urinal's reconstruction was based upon the original photograph, which would make the original urinal a real one, in theory. As will be argued, scholars who have assumed the urinal in the Fountain photograph is real or porcelain do so at their own risk, as there will be features to discount that assumption. One can only speculate why Duchamp was so careful to redirect the ontological foundation of Fountain from being a media fact and to discount the *Blind Man*, No. 2 magazine association to a secondary role, as suggested by the lack of didactic information at Duchamp's 1963 Pasadena retrospect with a Fountain replica or presently at the MOMA's installation of the urinal. Consequently, the original photo of the urinal and its reproduction in the *Blind Man*, No. 2 fell into a scholarly lacuna.

Art history scholarship has not felt a need to examine the photograph simply because that is not its traditional domain. The sketchy attempts made by art history scholarship suffer from a basic lack of knowledge of Stieglitz's photographic modus operandi and, most likely, Duchamp's interest in photographic punning. Knowing the photosyntactical logistics of Stieglitz, such as his use of orthochromatic film plates, or the tilt capability of the lens board on his Eastman Kodak view camera helps explain the above and subsequent mentioned anomalies, especially the crazy depth of field. On the other hand, the history of photography scholarship likewise has not investigated the photograph since it was not considered a true Stieglitz photo, like *The Steerage*, the O'Keeffe nudes, or the *Equivalents* series, and was tainted by Duchamp's ironical chess with Modernism. In fact, there is a marked hostility in this camp toward Stieglitz's participation in Euro-based Modernism. Fountain, the uncropped version, was not published as part of Stieglitz's oeuvre until 83 years later in 2000 by Sarah Greenough in *Modern Art in America: Alfred Stieglitz and His New York Galleries*, accompanied with standard tropes from art history, such as Fountain being a machine-made entity. Allegedly Stieglitz did not keep the final uncropped print, Duchamp did, interpreted to mean by the photo camp its insignificance to Stieglitz. However, the claim here holds that Stieglitz photographed the various shots needed for the composite image, but did not necessarily do the collaging. More than likely, Duchamp et alia carried out augmentations, especially the cropping of the bottom for the *Blind Man* issue. Naturally, Duchamp himself may have wanted to preserve the only photo that was an assemblage under his direction, and Stieglitz obliged. Stieglitz may have invested more value in the photograph than scholars allow. Given the urinal's labial, vulva features and its whiteness (purity), it is not that hard to believe the 'veiled' urinal recycles Stieglitz's Photo-Secessionist interest in Whistler's white enshrouded woman/mother/child, an interest still at play in Stieglitz's post-291 erotic semi-nude, kimono clad photos of Georgia O'Keeffe from the summer of 1918.

This attempt treats Fountain and the BM2 in its 1917 NYC context as a Futurist document, and as an antecedent to New York Dada, similar to the role of Futurism in both Zurich and Berlin Dada. It also assumes that the Duchamp/Stieglitz (Mutt, Jeff) photograph is a joint venture parody of correct photography, with Picabia, to be elaborated elsewhere, involved as the butt of a visual prank, the urinal acting as a caricature of Picabia. As a result, this critique gestures toward other social, aesthetic discourses at work in Fountain, meaning this photograph is not only about the rejection from the Independent's Exhibition, and, would have been created as a 'faux readymade' without the context of the Society of Independent Artists Exhibition. One could imagine the same photo being printed in the 291 gallery's in-house magazine, also titled 291, with Stieglitz's blessings. The other critical theorem employed here relates to Duchamp's

involvement, just described as a joint venture between Duchamp and Stieglitz. It is thought by Duchampian scholars that Stieglitz made the photograph on his own. The view here suggests that is only partly true. Duchamp came to Stieglitz for his technical photographic knowledge and fame, hoping to generate publicity for the Independents Exhibition in the wake of America's declaration of war on April 6. Stieglitz, though, would have relished the chance to use the opportunity to avenge an earlier public embarrassment done to him by Picabia in a machine aesthetic caricature of Stieglitz as a broken camera, denoting Stieglitz's failure to educate America with European Modernism and the financial shortcomings of the 291 gallery. Duchamp knew this. So, here in Fountain, as we shall see in another article, Stieglitz portrays Picabia in the sense of Marius De Zayas's abstract caricatures, as a urinal. However, the lower torquing of the spud against the frontally stated upper section, the unexplained cropping of the original photo in The Blind Man, or the bizarre shadows cast upon the pedestal as well as the urinal's interior, and the strange highlight in the upper cavity in this porcelain shoot will be shown to be most likely the tactics of Duchamp. Underlying the critique here also, the impossible mis en scène implies that this was not an improvisational staging by Stieglitz only, being instead a practiced spectacle rehearsed previously by Duchamp. The excessive cord tethering the flimsy entrance card clues the reader in later. On a broader level, one could argue that the neutral objectivity of the camera itself is on trial as well. The essentialist axiom that the camera never lies falls to a 'there's more here than meets the eye' disposition, that reading a photograph is a learned behavior, like writing, and not a natural given.

As well, Duchampian scholarship, until recently, never perceived this photograph within the slapstick context of then mass entertainment spectacles and film shorts of Charlie Chaplin and Fanny Arbuckle, in addition to the association of Richard Mutt with the Mutt and Jeff newspaper comics. It is easy to imagine a half hour short with one of these characters dropping off a urinal at a high society art exhibit as a gag, only to see some high brows admiring it as art. The film's credits would list Duchamp as Director. In effect, Fountain pimps the whole New York avant-garde in the movie fan magazine style of The Blind Man, delivering the artists to a questionable art scandal as if they were the Keystone Cops. Fanny Arbuckle's 1917 short, titled Coney Island, filmed at the Brooklyn amusement park Duchamp visited, points to the privileging of a mass entertainment consumer spectacle, where interestingly enough the main male character sloughs his male suit for women's dress to achieve his goals in drag. Joseph Stella, one of the participants, along with Duchamp's patron Walter Arensberg, of the origin myth of Fountain, is represented in the BM2 with a painting of Futurist form, color, and movement within a circus of electric light titled, interestingly, Coney Island, Stella being one of the many Futurists along with Mina Loy present in the BM2, though never critically assessed. It is worth mentioning that Duchamp probably still thought of himself in 1917, like Loy, as a tentative Futurist of sorts. Scholars have also missed the comedic implication of Duchamp's well-known photographs from Coney Island, the staged photo of himself and Beatrice Wood, with Picabia standing nearby, riding a bucolic wagon pulled by a bull-like beast of burden, and especially the 5-way mirror trick photo's of Duchamp, Picabia and Roché, for now dated June of 1917. The staged-ish and perspectival tricks of both images indicate a line of comedy lacking in the critiques of Fountain. The wagon image seemingly jokes about Picabia's many photos testifying to his love of fast cars (Wood holds onto her hat), or Marinetti's projection of the auto as raw male power, while the 5-way photo's parody Cubism's multiple perspectives in a readymade vision kind of way. Stieglitz seems to forecast this slapstick photography, cited at the outset here, at the time of The Blind Man's photo's production, "But I've had some fun in photographing."

In discussing the photograph of Fountain a few logistical ground rules need explanation. The image of Fountain has survived in three forms, the first as a photographic reproduction in the little magazine, the Blind Man, No.2, (Figure 3), the follow up issue to The BlindMan, The

Independent's Number, which came out a month earlier in April to promote the exhibition. The reproduction is attributed to Alfred Stieglitz, and the urinal to R. Mutt. America's declaration of war on April 6 pretty much blew everything off the front pages of newspapers, so the first magazine's publicity was overshadowed and the BM2 attempted to counterbalance the war press tidal wave. The body count for the exhibition, nevertheless, was good, while sales were so-so. The magazine image of Fountain was of a low dot screen count and was printed on a paper stock slightly better than newsprint, like the popular movie star magazine Photoplay. Emulating a star-studded, consumer based magazine primarily aimed at women to present the Case of Richard Mutt and, as well, the American avant-garde, suggests a contextual prelude to the coming star status of Rose Sélavy. Perhaps a short time frame may have dictated the low quality, since Duchamp had more than qualified magazine producers at his disposal in both the Arensberg and 291 circles, Stieglitz especially. The New Woman underwriter of the Independent's Exhibition, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, flexing her economic muscles Village Bohemia style while estranged from her philandering husband, donated a little over \$30,000 in today's currency, and easily could have contributed more to a superior printing production, though her financial support leaned more in favor of The Eight, who were members of the board of Directors.

The second example takes the form of an actual photograph of the mis en scène, again attributed to Alfred Stieglitz, kept by Duchamp and surfacing in 1993 from a private collection inherited from Duchamp's second wife. (Figure 1). It is roughly 9 X 7 inches in size and would seem to indicate a contact print from Stieglitz's large format Eastman view camera. The current owners have not permitted any archival assessment so the paper it was printed on is not known. This image shows a greater amount of the urinal's pedestal, indicating the full photo was cropped in the Blind Man. Nonplussed scholars have never bothered to ask or have not been able to explain why the image was cropped, although there is no apparent photologistical reason, and space for a larger image existed in the page's lay out design. Reasons will be provided subsequently elsewhere. It is huge.

A third photograph came from the Walter Arensberg collection, accessioned into the Philadelphia Museum Of Art in the early 1950's, which shows only the upper half of the urinal. This is a complete photo, not a test strip, with factory finished edges. Test strips usually accompany the use of enlargers, something Stieglitz did not own or use. Duchamp, though, did resort to an enlarger in his commercially produced 1916 remake of Nu Descendu L'Escalier for Arensberg. What is of interest, the PMA photo displays the hallmarks of a print developed in Amidol or some hydroquinone biased developer, yielding a more cool, but smooth, almost bluish tonal range. Stieglitz used such a developer. This print is not on Stieglitz's favorite paper, platinum, rendered scarce and expensive due to the war, (actually Kodak stopped making it in June, 1916), nor his other palladium papers. It is hard to tell if this print is on double weight or single weight paper, seemingly more single weight. Without any conservation information, the PMA photo could be a number of commercially available, silver gelatin, baryta-based stocks from Kodak Bromide, Cyko Studio from Azo, or Satista (Platinotype) a silver-platinum paper associated with Paul Strand, who had replaced Edward Steichen as 291's other photographer. The uncropped Stieglitz photo is sepia in tonality suggesting a warmer toned developer and selenium or sepia toning, although this warmer tonality could also be yellowing due to exhausted hypo or fix as apparently Stieglitz was not always the most caring and archivally-minded technician. A warm toned buff paper or a thermally warm developer could also have been involved as well as a number of other additions to the print processing. Stieglitz wrote to O'Keeffe of a warm April. Photographers often finished their prints with varnishes including beeswax emulsions, which adds another variable. Yellowing is also a hallmark of palladium papers. Both prints show evidence of silver mirroring, an archival degradation of a complex

nature. As such, neither of the two surviving photo's printing paper has been identified. At the least, the difference in tonal temperature between the partial PMA photo and the full photo may indicate they were developed at different points in time, possibly by different people, or on different types of printing paper. Granting for a moment that Fountain is a composite photo, it is plausible that Stieglitz photographed the parts and printed them on one type of stock, and the final cut and pasted image on another stock. Why immerse in a warm toning agent or print the final image on a warm-toned buff paper, remains perplexing given its final outcome in a so-so quality publication. However, though only having seen the Stieglitz photo for a limited amount of time, upon a more extended study, the PMA photo seems to have greater detail, and seems to indicate the urinal is of a more porous material such as plaster, greenware (possibly spray painted), or marble.

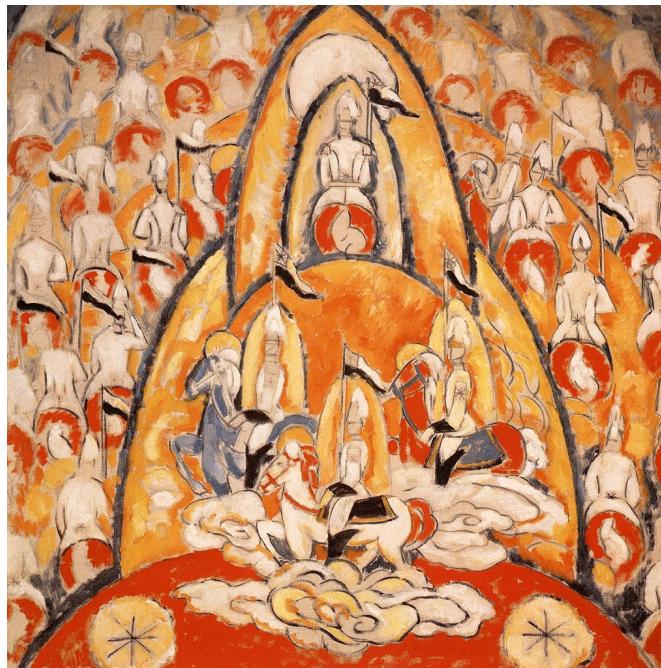


Figure 4. Marsden Hartley, The Warriors, o/c, 1914, 49" X 49". Artwork in the public domain.

The first primary photographic transgression, a little complex, with the photograph of Fountain has to do with the upper right half of the image. Propped behind the urinal, probably on a prominent ledge seen in photo's of 291 exhibitions, is a modernist-looking painting, later discovered by scholars in 1986 to be *The Warriors* by Marsden Hartley, one of 291's regular painters. (Figure 4). The upper right section of Marsden Hartley's painting in the photographs is noticeably obfuscated as well as the printings of the BM2 from 1917, and even more obscured in later reproductions in the Fifties by Arturo Schwarz. Since the electric photoflood Stieglitz might have used and the skylight of the gallery had to be from the viewers upper right, judging from the cast of the shadows in the cavity and from the rim's spud, the upper right section being closer to the light source should be brighter. It is not, and must have been deliberately darkened. Stieglitz could have attached a flap type gobo to his photo lamp, seemingly implied by the strange shadow highlight previously noted, which would block a portion of the light, or, in printing the negative, he could have allowed more light to that section, thus deepening its tone.



Figures 5. Marsden Hartley, The Warriors; Fountain, photo reproduction from The Blind Man, No. 2. Artwork in the public domain. Proprietary graphics.

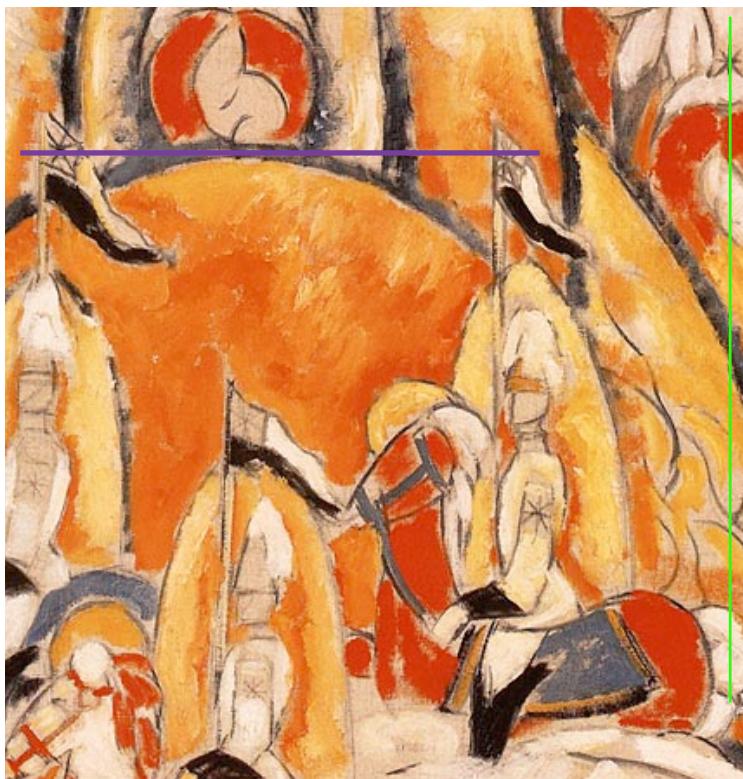


Figure 6. Marsden Hartley, The Warriors; Artwork in the public domain. Proprietary graphics.

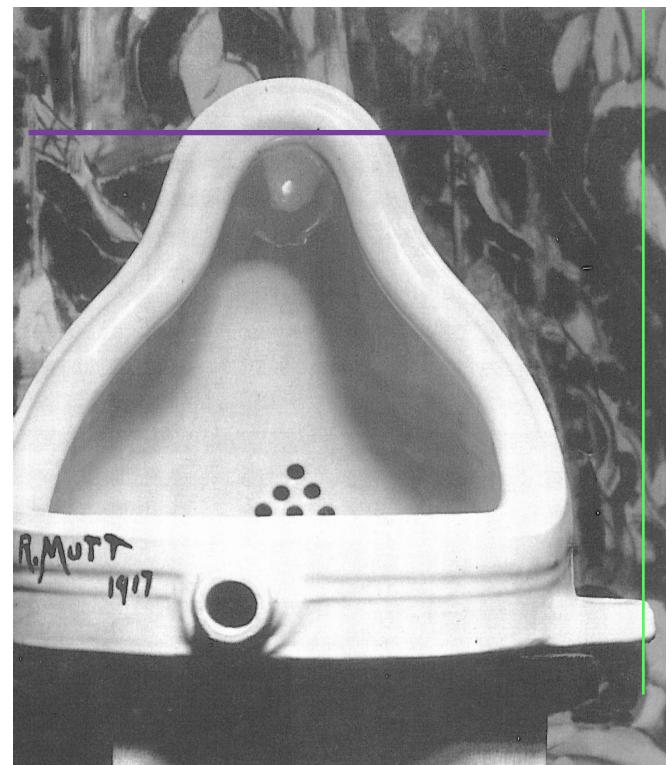


Figure 7. Fountain, photo reproduction from The Blind Man, No. 2. Proprietary graphics.

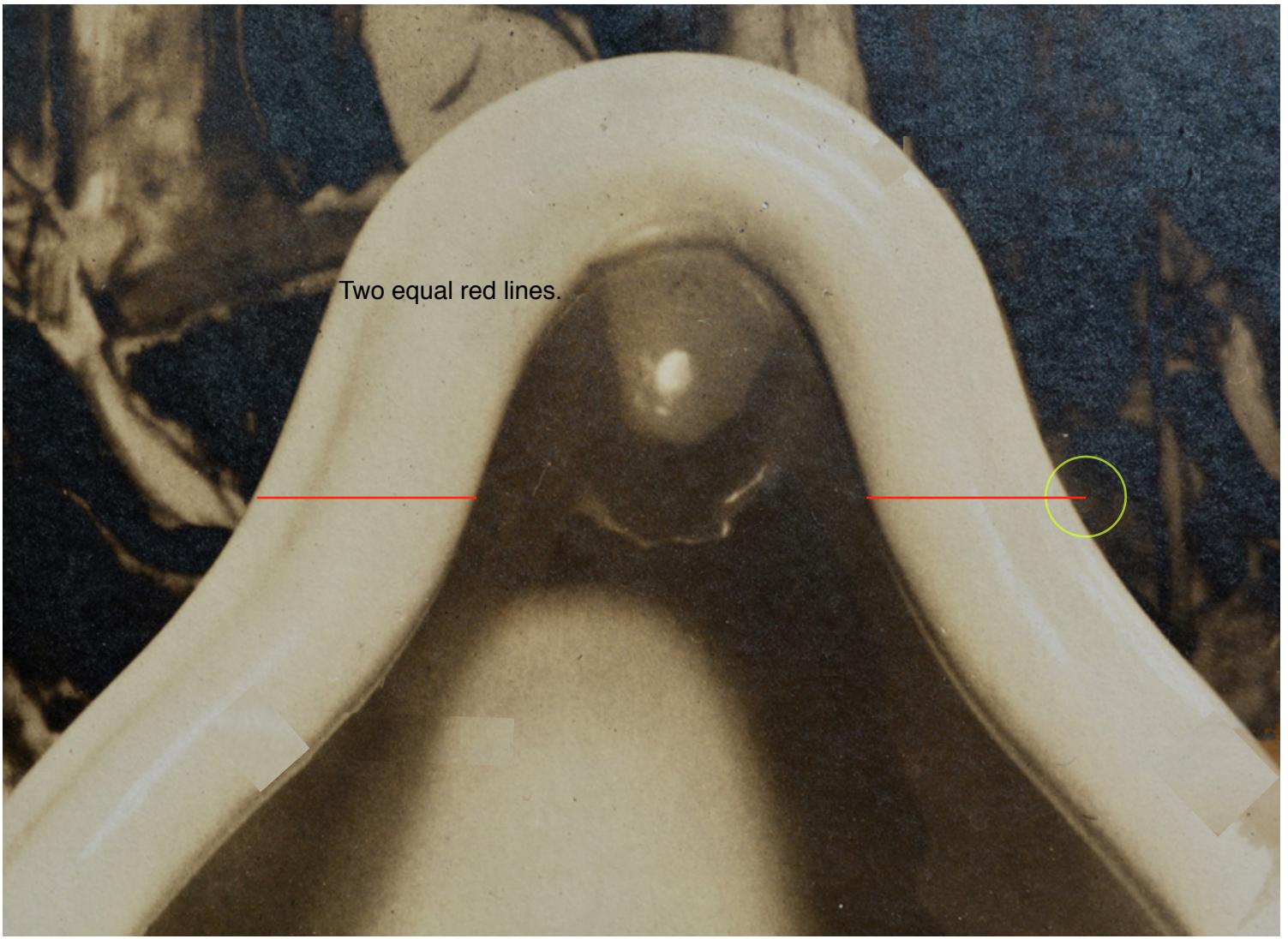


Figure 8. Fountain, close up detail, Artwork in the public domain.

If a composite photo theory is allowed, Stieglitz could have made two different shots and printed the right side darker, or treated the negative with reducer to thin its density. Given that Stieglitz reportedly did not use enlargers, attempting to increase exposure of a limited area of the paper on a contact print, known as burning in, is possible, though tricky. The negative and developing out paper were probably exposed by an opened window in 291, or in the dark with gas light. Another means would be to direct a solution of hydroquinone to the area, one of the developing agents in Stieglitz's most common developer Amidol, though this is very hard to control and probably would have darkened part of the urinal as well. Finally, the finished print itself could have been darkened with anything from retoucher's ink to printer's ink before being sent to the printer.

Upon close examination, it becomes apparent why Duchamp and Stieglitz attempted to disguise this quadrant of the photograph, mainly since this portion of the painting is of a different scale, being smaller, than the rest of the image. This is detectable if one compares the photograph of the Hartley to the original painting itself. (Figure 5). In the photograph of Fountain the mounted lancer or cuirassier to the right is cut off fairly close to his shoulder, while in the painting a line following the same horizontal path on the left side will not cross the lancer in the same place, going instead, lower to the center of the back. This is because the lancer is proportionally larger in the painting. The same relationship exists with the two flags visible on either side of the urinal, though in the Blind Man the flag to the right is hard to discern. A line

perpendicular to the sides drawn through the center of the rosette on the flag to the left in the photograph will cross the top of the flag on the right. In the painting the same line will cross closer to the center of the rosette on the flag to the right. (Figures 6, & 7). This can also be checked on the vertical axis as well. If a line is drawn perpendicular to the top edge of Fountain through the center of the right lancer's rosette, it will cross the circular rump of the horse below next to the bracket. In the painting, the same line will cross the tail but not the horse's body since the center of the rosette is more to the right. (Figures 6 & 7). This reduction in size follows through to the urinal's side lips as well. The lip to the right should be larger or wider given that according to the spud on the rim, the urinal is turned to the viewer's left. It is not, as the illustration shows, the right lip is in fact impossibly narrower. (Figure 8). Thus, the upper misregistration of the urinal, following perfectly and explaining the existence of the photograph of the upper half now in the Philadelphia Museum of Arts print collection, reveals a part of a urinal virtually turned to the viewers right, while its lower body, namely the spud, is in fact torqued to the viewer's left. Again this is an impossible object, unless one accepts the fact Fountain is a hybrid photograph. The upper right side of the Hartley being smaller in scale in the photo than in the original painting means the PMA photo is a composite photo. More than likely the scaled down section was made by making another shot of the scene with the camera moved back from the urinal. This negative was printed darker and collaged to a normal left side of the upper section of the urinal, perhaps by someone other than Stieglitz, perhaps Duchamp, or the editor J. B. Kerfoot, who was a New York Camera Club member. An enlarger could also accomplish this, that is, print a differently scaled section. The survival of this working section of the photograph more than suggests that someone (Arensberg, Duchamp, Stieglitz) was attempting to call attention to the constructed nature of Fountain. Why else would this partial study be preserved in Arensberg's collection?

The scholarly simulations of the urinal cut out from the Stieglitz photo and positioned against a reproduction of the original Hartley all fail for the above reason. The urinal simply can not fit into the original painting, as Francis Naumann's use of Vogel's attempt shows, since the upper right side of the painting does not match the photograph in scale. Likewise Camfield's account in his Fountain book fails since he does not fully account for all of the photosyntactical elements at play, such as tilting lens board and stationery film plane. Rhonda Shearer, in her *Tout Fait* articles, knows something is up with the photograph and partially diagnoses the problem, but can't explain why, ultimately relying upon a problematic CAD simulation to solve what is a photo-specific problem.

The second thing wrong or wronged with the photograph is the grossly out of focus rim upon which the R. Mutt signature appears to rest. There is no rational photographic reason for the rim, occupying such a prominent part of the image, to be out of focus. Stieglitz most likely photographed the urinal on a pedestal with his 8" X 10" large format Eastman Kodak view camera mounted on a tripod. The subject matter is stationary and the possible Arista arc lamp or Mazda photoflood fill plus whatever daylight filtered in from the overhead skylight of the 291 gallery, where the photo took place, provided adequately constant lighting, though this is not totally determinable. Stieglitz could have stopped down his aperture to increase the depth of field and have all of the object in focus. There is the possibility for what is known as reciprocity failure due to long exposures, something Stieglitz would have known about, and prevented the use of too small of an aperture. The front lens board of the Eastman view is on a double track, meaning it could not swing left to right, but it could tilt to correct for perspective distortions when photographing in front of a tall building. According to the Schiemflug-Hinge rule, tilting the lens board would have provided a focal plane that could easily have included the projecting part of the urinal and the upward apex with only a minor increase to the aperture and exposure times. As well, any concerns for the claims above being due to the Hartley painting leaning at a slant

fail, due to the lens boards perspectival correction. However, the projecting rim is totally out of focus; therefore Stieglitz somehow disregarded the normal photo logic. Again, if this were a catalogue shoot for china, which is what a porcelain urinal in effect is, such a large unfocused area would be avoided. Moreover, to add to the irrationality of the situation, other details in the rim's plane of focus (the entrance card, cord, wall brackets, black pedestal top) are in focus, which is photographically impossible in a single shot. Usually everything in one plane of focus is in focus. Most scholars do not realize the urinal sits on a black top, which is in focus, though these are seen in installation shots of the 291 gallery. Most conspicuously, the wall mounting brackets to either side are in focus while attached to an out of focus rim. Depth of field and focus are usually consistent depending upon the f/ stops used in front of the point of focus and behind. Stieglitz's lenses, whether on his large format Eastman Kodak view or his smaller format Graflex, were all anastigmatic with uniform focus of light rays. The best suggestion concludes that the rim is a section cut physically from an unfocused urinal photograph and pasted onto or collaged into a photo of a focused urinal and pedestal. This would explain the heavy-handed retoucher's ink visible where the rim joins the wall bracket on the R. Mutt side. This is the second proof that Stieglitz's Fountain is a combination print with at least two photosyntactical problems, the upper right section and the spud and rim.

The spud, actually the inlet port for the cleansing water fall, located toward the center of the rim, reveals another problem. The upper section of Stieglitz's urinal is more or less frontally stated, that is, more parallel to the film plane of the camera. The spud should be located at the center of the rim. Instead, it lists to the viewer's left, indicating a turn in space, contrary to the upper frontal half of the urinal. Impossible. The spud also appears to have a higher point of view.

The third area of interest with the Stieglitz/Duchamp photograph of Fountain focuses upon the background Marsden Hartley painting, the Warriors, introduced above, and its translation into black and white photographic tones. (Figure 4). The oil, a 49" square canvas, done in Berlin in 1914, synthesizes Cezanne, Kandinsky, and Franz Marc within an Eastern format of the Tibetan Thangka scrolls. It depicts a parade of mounted Imperial lancers or cuirassiers in Prussian calvary regalia, horsemen soon to be utterly erased from modern warfare by motorized divisions of armored vehicles and airplanes in the coming war. Overall, in color, the painting is fairly bright with considerable use of cadmium red and ochres or raw sienna. However, in Stieglitz's uncropped photo and the image reproduced in the Blind Man no. 2, the Hartley painting translates in black and white as much darker. Technically speaking, there is no photographic reason for the Hartley's presence since Stieglitz could have simply let the gallery's linen wall show as a background. A war argument will be shown to be problematic. Since 291 is never mentioned in the texts of the BM2, perhaps Stieglitz did not want his closing gallery to be referenced visually, though his name certainly went hand in hand with 291. Graphically speaking, the darker tonality does contrast nicely with the white urinal, setting it off in relief, especially in the BM2 reproduction.

Stieglitz at this point was known to rely upon orthochromatic emulsion glass plates or nitrate sheets for his black and white work. Stieglitz acquired Orthonon plates in 1915 and most likely had the ubiquitous Hammer plates, both orthochromatic emulsions. One account of his portrait making refers to such plates. The slow light absorption of this film would probably preclude too long of an exposure to achieve maximum depth of field due to reciprocity failure, as mentioned previously, i.e., an imbalance of film speed or photon sensitivity to the aperture and shutter speed. Slightly faster in speed, panchromatic emulsions existed having the disadvantage of needing total darkness in developing. Stieglitz apparently preferred orthochromatic film since it allowed one to inspect the development process of the wet negative's density by using a ruby red gas or electric light. Orthochromatic film was well known to be biased toward blue light,

which it absorbed faster than other colors, especially red. To prevent too much blue light being absorbed, especially with a blue sky outdoors, and not enough orange and red light, rendering them too dark, photographers would place a yellow filter in front of the lens, usually a round glass element screwed to the lens. Stieglitz owned such filters. In photographing *The Warriors*, it is apparent Stieglitz did not use any yellow filters, rendering the Expressionist stained glass reds and ochres as equivalent to a black since they are in effect underexposed. This represents a third kind of intentional photographic faux pas with the then normal conventions of photography. Stieglitz did not own the filters to render the reds deeply with panchromatic film.

The motivation toward stating the Hartley with greater contrast pertains possibly to Duchamp's interest in camouflage and the war effort. Camouflage was one of the minor military innovations of the war, overshadowed, of course, by the advent of wireless technology, tanks, machine guns, gas warfare and the airplane with its aerial surveillance and bombing ability. The type of camouflage of concern here is not the MARSPAT or digital variety of today. Most of the camouflage used in the battlefield in WWI was an improvised attempt to break up the shape of something, such as the railroad car, airplane, tank, or artillery cannon, mainly from aerial surveillance. Interestingly, much of the initial phase of the French use of camouflage was done by painters. Duchamp's brother Jacques Villon was a member of one of the first companies of camoufleurs, stationed at Amiens in 1915. Camouflage would also fit nicely into Duchamp's polemic, however ill defined, against the retinal in painting. This is an amusing connotation, the comedic irony of painting something to render it invisible or gestalt-challenged as a modus operandi would be very Duchampian. Interestingly, early airplanes were essentially metal and wood skeletons covered in linen, sealed with cellulose type doping, similar to rabbit skin glue ground in painting. Camouflaging patterns were painted onto this skin in addition to national markers and personal imagery for friendly identification. Flying paintings would be a humorous concept probably not lost on Duchamp. Scholars often note Duchamp's bold proclamation at a Paris air show to Leger and Brancusi regarding the Chauvière prop on the Louis Bleriot XI monocoque, though like so much with Duchamp this has not been verified fully. On the other hand, they have not noted his continued meditation upon airplane technology. Another interesting presence of military camouflage in the NYC avant-garde might be the striped costume or possible bathing suit, of the Baroness Else Von Freytag-Loringhoven seen posing as a car ornament Winged Victory, a pilot, or Futurist femme fatale. It resembles the dazzle patterns being used at the time by Allied warships attempting to disrupt German submarine's use of a periscope. (Figure 9).

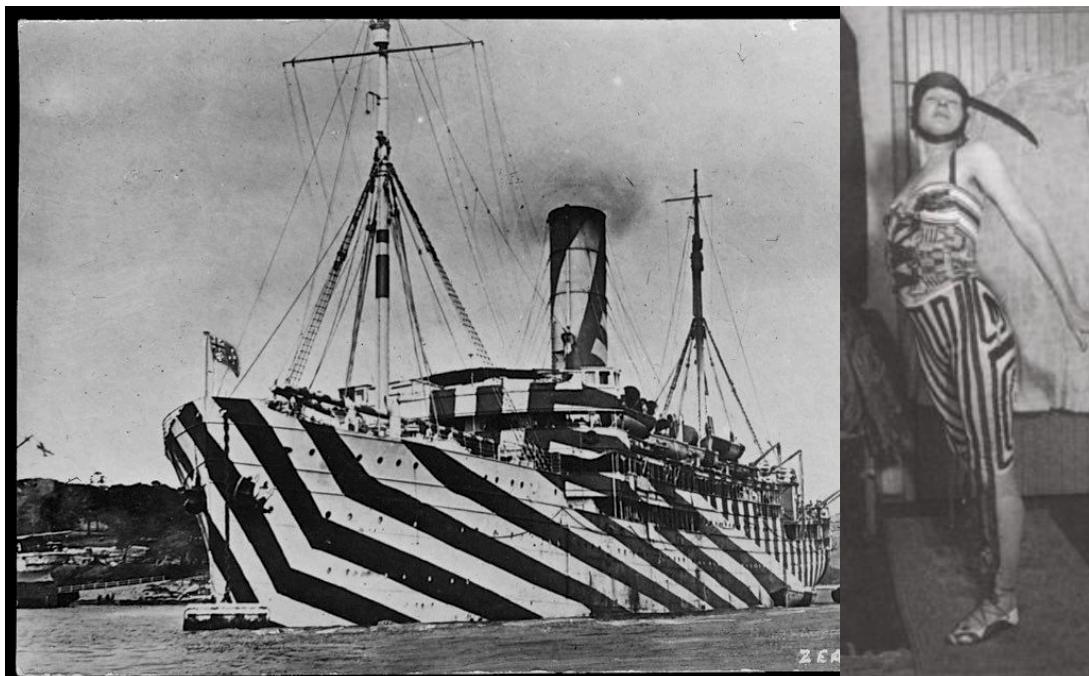


Figure 9.

Scholars have attempted to steer the Hartley along a variety of semantic pathways. Since the subject matter is titled *The Warriors* and it does show a Berlin military parade, often it is assumed this painting was added only to mark America's entrance into WWI a few days earlier. This is hindsight. Similar to other unexamined rumors surrounding this work, to say the pre-war German parade plus declaration of war against Germany equals why Stieglitz or Duchamp chose this work as backdrop has problems. Since Hartley was known to be a homosexual, there are claims that Fountain relates to any gay culture associated with public bathrooms, known in 1917 NYC as comfort stations. Some simple logistical problems attend the latter claim. There were only about 10 comfort stations in Brooklyn and Manhattan at this point, and they were usually maintained by paid attendants. Small enclosures accompanied subway stops.

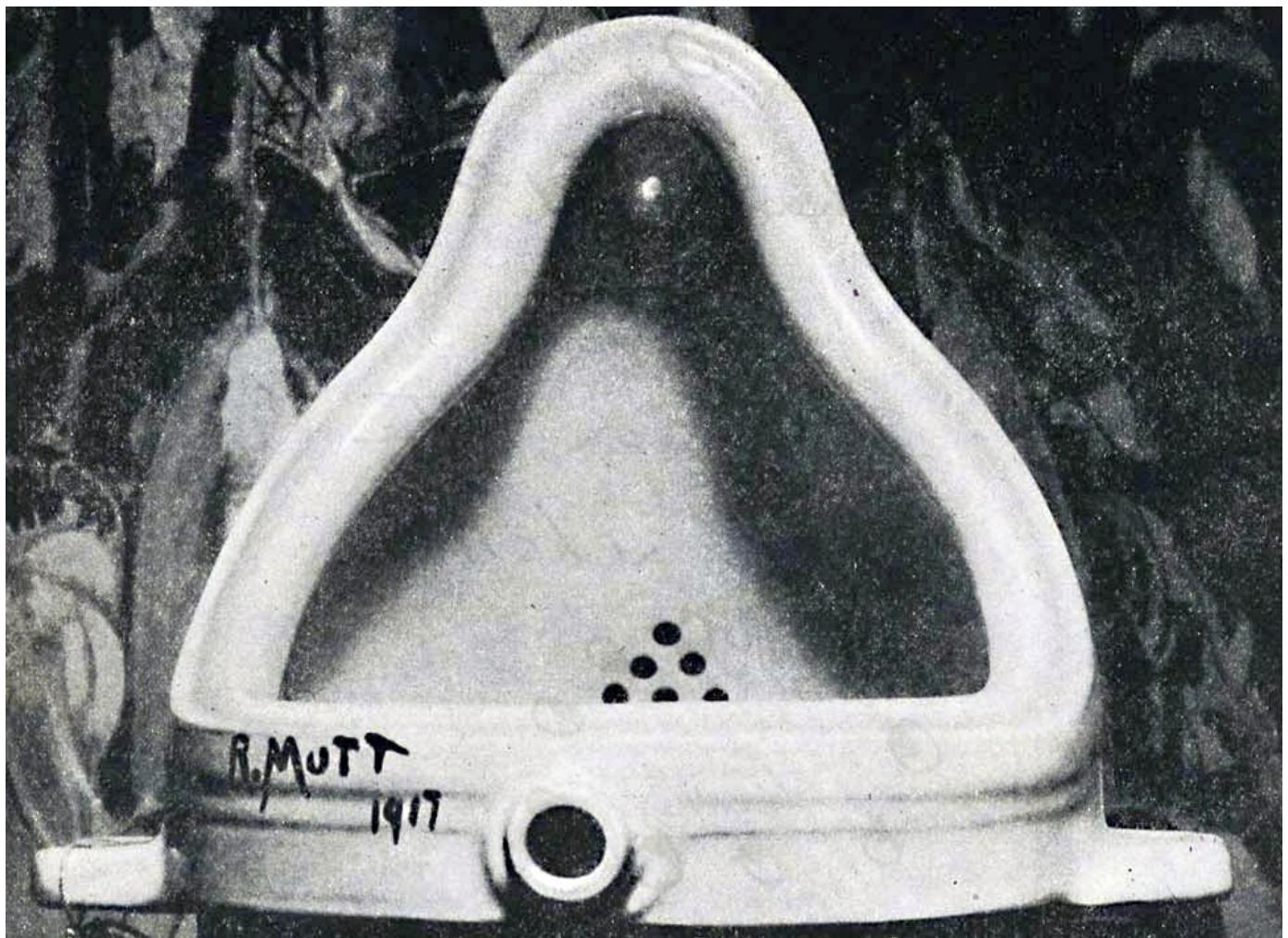
Phalanxes of urinals existed in many of the skyscrapers being built or as wall length rows in schools, where loitering would be difficult, and it makes no sense why Stieglitz or Duchamp would, in effect, attempt to out Hartley, unless requested. Hartley himself was in Bermuda with a 291 gallery member Charles Demuth at the time, also claimed to be homosexual. These liminal zones of contestation were not secretive or seedy since they stood for the city's war against germs and disease. The greatest problem with the war reference centers upon the fact very few knew the work was a Hartley, or that it was an Imperial cuirassiers parade, hence its late 1986 identification, a little ironical given the camouflaging claim here. Stieglitz had written to O'Keeffe, letters not published until decades later, then in Texas, that the Hartley looked good with the urinal, but he never names which Hartley. The background in the Blind Man photo reads as a jumble of shapes like much of the improvised camo, except for the one flag on the left with a rosette as previously cited. This reads as a flag of neutrality which would be perfectly acceptable to Duchamp and equally acceptable to Stieglitz who spoke fluent German, and admired Germany despite the dubious status of people of Jewish descent there. One could equally argue this was a reference to Kandinsky or Blaue Reiter since primitive rosettes occurred often in their work. Attempting to get the background to pass for camouflage does secure a war reference, it is worth mentioning, but via a different, almost abstract route. One must consider also the subject matter of German military in a anti-German climate. Duchamp or Stieglitz would not want to risk the appearance of being pro-German, as Hartley most probably was, in addition to possibly violating the censoring Comstock laws of the time period with a urinal photo. Moreover, they would not want to alienate the money source of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney who was pro-war and had lost relatives to unrestricted German submarine warfare. Another possibility for the inclusion of the cloaked background painting, given the labial, female genitalia remarks often written about Fountain, mainly in the murkier BM2 printing, the Hartley portion has curvilinear lines that vaguely could be construed as pubic hair, the aforementioned fautif highlight acting as a clitoris. Sitting opposite the vulvar/vaginal porcelain, then, the camera with projecting lens, whether Stieglitz's Eastman view or one of his many Graflex's can be perceived as a phallus. Scholars often say the Hartley was chosen because of the niche like structure, quite normal to tanga scroll paintings, perhaps the reason for the "Art of China" reference Stieglitz makes. Again, the urinal blocks this motif and the upper contour of the urinal does not look Buddha-like. Lastly, an interesting possibility, the Hartley could be a 'ghost' painting, hovering since painting had been declared dead by Duchamp. Spiritualist activities had resurfaced with the many dead from the war. This parallels the Roche photo of a ghosted figure.

The presence of a painting behind the urinal illustrates a further possibility. Functionally, as mentioned, it is not needed, as the linen covered wall of 291 would have been acceptable, though the handrail seen in the installation shots may have seemed intrusive. Stieglitz may have been motivated to prop a painting behind the urinal to simulate the portrait formatting found in all his male portraits within his circle, a definite gendering on his part. Stieglitz had photographed

Picabia in this manner earlier. Again, in particular, Stieglitz may have intended the urinal as a caricature of Picabia to settle a vendetta for the 1915 front cover of 291's July-August issue where Picabia presented a machine aesthetic portrait of Stieglitz as a discombobulated camera. This image ended their relationship. The urinal's overall disposition could be said to resemble a fleshy face executed in the abstract caricature style of Marius De Zayas with the spud acting as a Picasso-esque mouth, the triangulated drain holes a nose, and the unusual highlight above a single eye recalling the single-eyed creature in the caricature of the first Blindman cover by Alfred Frueh, who like De Zayas, exhibited a body of caricatures at 291.

The signature of R. Mutt 'brushed' on the rim, a reduced version of Richard Mutt which someone deemed too large to fit, comprises a fourth photographic faux pas. The rim as stated above is out of focus, therefore if the rim is unfocussed, then the signature's letters, resting in the same surface, should also be unfocused. They are not, and read quite legibly. (Figure 10).

Figure 10



Anyone who has ever attempted china painting knows how difficult it is to achieve a solid black since it requires several passes and firings, given the objects non-absorbent surface. It is highly improbable that Stieglitz had access to a high fire kiln capable of such a large object, unless he trained down to Trenton from NYC to Trenton Potteries, where the urinal was most likely made. Time, again, would have been an issue. The signer, probably Duchamp, since the R and the M match exactly his Mariee and the R in Escalier, may have used Sapolin Enamel, the paint spoofed in Apolinère Enameled, since this thick one coat paint, most likely could create in two passes perfectly opaque letters in black, though this is not for sure. However, the letters do not have the glossy light reflection characteristic of enamels, and do not follow the light and shadow change of the rim. Moreover, except for the R, most of Mutt does not follow the curve of the rim and appears to float on a flat surface, consistent with brushing the letters onto a photograph or piece of white paper. This is especially true of the date 1917, which does not actually dip into the water channel of the rim. (Figure 10, lower). All the letters seem to have softened contours as if the paint bled into the halide emulsion and baryta bed of the silver gelatin print, totally at odds with the nature of vitrified porcelain. The theory here then is that no one attempted to paint/sign the porcelain urinal; the signature was stroked onto the out of focus rim photograph itself before being collaged into the master photo. Certainly too many board members or Directors at the Independent's submission would have recognized Duchamp's hand in the R. Mutt signature on the urinal's rim, Albert Gleize, e.g., minus Walter Arensberg and Futurist Joseph Stella who were already in on the joke, possibly Man Ray. The urinal, then, was not signed R. Mutt at its presentation to the Independent's exhibition, or for that matter, at its arrival to Stieglitz at 291. The composite photograph was signed before it went to the printer. Nothing exists in the literature about the printer of the magazine. Perhaps this is why Stieglitz does not name R. Mutt in his account to O'Keeffe on April 19 and earlier Duchamp only mentions Richard Mutt, signed on the entrance card, in the now famous letter to his sister: R. Mutt did not exist until lettered onto the out of focus photo of the second Blind Man. This article is skeptical of accounts such as Beatrice Wood's that put the R. Mutt signature on the urinal at the Independent's Exhibition, written much later and most likely influenced by the photograph in the BM2 or Duchamp's direction.

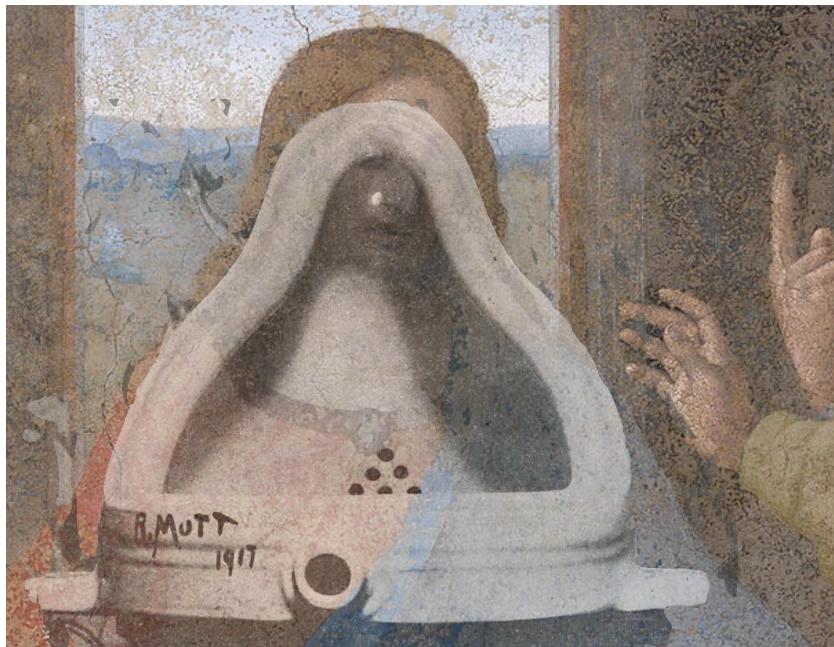
The highlight in the upper cavity of the urinal is the most intriguing faux pas of all. (Figure 8). Stated earlier, when photographing China or plate ware the photographer attempts to keep the shadows clean and unobtrusive. The highlight we see in the apex of the urinal's cavity, which simulates an electric bulb's glowing element, and is totally unnecessary, if not annoying, would have been avoided in the shoot, or, spotted out with retoucher's ink before going to press. 'Photoshopped out' would be today's terminology. The highlight, though, was very important since it ties into other imagery as will be elaborated in subsequent attempts. Stieglitz from his Pictorialist experience of adding artificial effects to achieve a goal may have used a dental mirror or another lens, hidden out of view inside the urinal, to achieve the reflection. More interestingly, the highlights on the urinal's undulating lips do not appear to be part of the scene, suggesting a litho crayon on the negative or the print, or as is sometimes attempted, a translucent mixture of condensed milk and sugar. Those around the drain holes do not align properly, most likely added on by retouching either the negative or the print with grease pencil as well. The vagrant highlight in the upper cavity could have been painted directly on the print or negative with the milk and sugar, or a grease pencil, a fairly common trick. Such physical manipulations exist elsewhere with Duchamp's imagery and retouching was the norm at this time, as both the Rrose series and Tonsure have significant retouching, especially Rrose's eyebrows, the ear, and the kohling around the eyes. With a muslin screen seen filtering the light from 291's skylight, highlights remained diffusely dull. 291 exhibition installation shots of Brancusi's marble, wood, and bronze surfaces reveal rather lackluster highlights. One could

argue the highlights stem from an electric light source, such as the common Arista arc or Mazda tungsten lamps, possibly the gallery's own overhead lights. The blanket of light, though, is strangely uneven, meaning one would also expect highlights on the projecting spud rim, right wall bracket, and, equally problematic, the flat surface of the Hartley, in addition to the darkened portion previously discussed. The shadowed highlight then, a luminous slit given the urinal's vulva like appearance, accompanied with a lapping tongue behind it, seems to have been added to the print to create the illusion of electric light. This highlight though, strangely seems less the reflection of a tungsten bulb filament and appears to resemble a half moon, not unlike the orb-type moon/star in Van Gogh's Starry Night.

Figure 11



Figure 12



Those who have taught art history survey courses at the university level or Italian Renaissance painting will recognize some of the distinctive features of the image of the urinal. The overall disposition of the urinal resembles an organic, undulating equilateral triangle, matching key parts of the triangulated figure of Christ in Leonardo's Last Supper, especially the head and sloping arms. (Figures 11 & 12). The urinal's wall brackets or handles parallel the gesturing hands of Christ on the table. This might be the first clue as to why the Stieglitz photo was cropped in the the Blind Man, No. 2, to recreate a closer resemblance to the Last Supper's frontal table. The most striking feature is how closely the urinal's wayward highlight, when superimposed over the image of Christ matches the eye of Christ, the vanishing point of all perspective lines in the painting. (Figure 11). This is a literal concretization of the a popular monicker of Christ as the light of the world. Thus, the urinal with its triangulated drain holes, seemingly too large suggesting they may have been cut and pasted from another source as well, seems to imply it was intended as a semi-abstract version of Christ from the Last Supper, if not a means to remove the reflected camera lens. These drain holes also seem to reference the 'V' wedge squadron formations of developing air combat tactics in the European war, as if

viewed in the sky while seen from below. Duchamp's affinity with Leonardo da Vinci, of course, is well known given Duchamp's interest in flying machines, water, science, engineering, and the Mona Lisa. The silhouette of the Mona Lisa also matches the urinal's undulating contours, while interestingly the urinal is much different than most buddha's, except at the base. The Blind Man version of Stieglitz's photo notably displays the writing of Carlton Brown's poem from the other side seen in reverse, true of the deluxe pink sheathed and regular printings of the Blind Man and the later Schwarz facsimiles as well. (Figure 10). This of course resembles the reversed writing of Leonardo's notes, pen and ink notes being part of Duchamp's Large Glass.

Positioning this textual handwriting to bleed through from the other side of the page may be why Stieglitz's image was never used quite like the frontispiece he related to O'Keeffe. The introduction of text seems intentional, an intent to associate writing, poetic writing, with the cleansing purification of flushing water. As well, the word shell showing through raises the topic of the Birth of Venus, since she is often shown riding a sea shell and the urinal resembles a sea shell. Conversely, one could also claim the manuscript suggests the profane streaming urine from a male, although urine may not necessarily be perceived negatively. Needless to say, the ring of floating eyes near the spud suggests retinal phenomena to be elaborated elsewhere, anticipating the ring of 10 eyes constituting Duchamp's 5 Way Trick Mirror photo.

At this point, it is worth attempting to summarize the making of the photo, best considered in terms of how to photograph a urinal with Mutt and Jeff, or a type of anemic photography. Stieglitz and probably someone else labored to get the 50 to 60 pound urinal onto the pedestal. The urinal is decidedly off-center, mainly so the spud casts a certain shadow, something which will be pursued elsewhere. Although Duchamp had a hand in determining the image, he may have not been around for the actual shoot, although that seems doubtful given his tendency to micro-manage and this was an important monument. The pedestal is most likely the same one crowned with a wasp nest in the installation shot of a Picasso-Braque staged exhibition. The size of the known Picasso drawing in that exhibition, borrowed from Picabia's collection, helps determine the size of the urinal, which Stieglitz called 'large', namely 15" X 18". This pedestal was topped with a slightly larger black or red platform, and was turned to the viewers right. Most scholars don't know it is there. Then the camera was positioned and leveled in front, and/or the Hartley propped behind the porcelain on the gallery's ledge. If there was electric light involved, it was established at this point. Burning magnesium tape was still employed in this era, but doubtful here. Stieglitz would have draped a black viewing cloth over himself and the large format Eastman view camera and placed a focusing device on the camera's ground glass. Given the absurd depth of field of this picture it is not sure if fine focusing was attempted. Stieglitz would have been viewing the scene upside down and reversed since the view camera does not have a through the lens mirror viewing system like his 4X5" Graflex camera's. The low point of view of the photograph, natural to a waist finder type camera, suggests the composite photo could have been made with a Graflex. Anyway, an overall establishing shot with the Eastman was probably made first, the negative developed, dried, and printed. Stieglitz often processed his work at 291. Then, possibly with the Graflex, a shot was taken a little further back, to make the upper right reduced scale section. In each of these two shots the urinal would have been frontally disposed so that what we see today was parallel to the camera's film plane. Next an out of focus shot of the urinal was made, the spud now turned to the viewer's left, with either camera, and the negative developed. We are not sure how long it would take for the orthochromatic emulsion to dry and harden sufficiently to make contact prints. The urinal's highlights already existed on the porcelain surface or were added to the print at this point, possibly a combination of the two occurred. Stieglitz probably determined his exposure times from experience, having done installation shots of 291 before. Light meters were in their infancy and not considered reliable.

The various prints are collaged together, the PMA half-photo probably first, which means combining the upper left section of the overall photo with the more distant shot to compose the upper right side. Given the strange shadow sections seen inside the urinal it is hard to determine where the join or seam occurs. The rim section on the bottom of the overall photo is gutted and its blurred equivalent is dropped in its place, along with the not quite accurate shadows cast onto the pedestal. The very deep blacks of these shadows, certainly richer than the somewhat washed out shadows of the urinal's interior, may have been added onto the print like the R. Mutt letters. In fact, the cavity's shadows bear some unmistakable manipulations from Farmer's reducer, not detectable in the Blind Man reproduction. As well, one cannot rule out the use of an airbrush to further augment the shadows, as this will come into play with the more airplane minded Tu m'. Some retouching is done to disguise the obvious joins especially where the rim joins the wall brackets, and then the whole montage is photographed either with Steiglitz's large format Eastman or a commercial Kodak copy camera. This collaged photo is printed. The bottom section is cropped most likely by Duchamp & Co. since as we shall see this helps emphasize the shadows cast upon the pedestal. This copy photo is taken to the printer; it has not survived, nor has the actual collage. To summarize, a collage of photo's yields two prints or more, one kept by Duchamp the other being used by the Blind Man printer, unless only one print was used and then retrieved from the printer.

The photograph of Fountain also offers non-photographic anomalies not addressed by scholarship. The entrance card, deleted from all the replica's of Fountain, hangs from the urinal's wall bracket with cording, discussed earlier, knotted in an abbreviated hangman's noose, a type of seine knot associated with fly fishing and maritime netting, threaded through one of the urinal's bracket holes, the same as that seen in Henri-Pierre Roché's photos of Duchamp's studio. The thickness and length of the cord is excessive for the task, which might explain why the two attempts at punching a hole in the card is such a butchered mess. The length, its overkill, left visibly in the photo, implies this cord was the same seen in the Roche photo of the urinal hanging in Duchamp's studio. The type of knot capable of great dead load stress makes no sense in relation to the flimsy card, let alone tied upside down close to the bracket. The cord passes through the same bracket hole in both photos. This would suggest then, that the same string was tied onto the urinal before its presentation at the Independents Exhibition. Given that the urinal does not appear to be signed or dated in Roche's photo, the photo might be re-dated early 1917, or late 1916, instead of the customary 1918.

This article so far has put off discussing the 'origin myth' of the urinal itself, since the purchase is not specifically photographic and does not get referenced in the Blind Man 2. The urinal was supposedly the doings of Richard Mutt, who was unknown in 1917. Most scholars know the account of the acquisition of the urinal, as well as the Mutt and Jeff association, came much later. However, the recitation does symptomize much of the underlying skepticism this author has, though in a humorous way, toward the scripted narratives of both Duchamp himself and scholarship in general, similar to questions other scholars have made about the chance configurations of string in Duchamp's 3 Standard Stoppages. The sanitary pottery storyline told by Duchamp and carried on by scholarship states in effect that Duchamp, his patron Walter Arensberg, and Italian Futurist painter Joseph Stella were discussing the idea of using a urinal to send to the Society of Independent Artists Exhibition, and promptly went to the J. L. Mott Ironworks showroom in Manhattan to purchase one. There are problems with that storyline. Why the Mott showroom and not another is never questioned. If this motley crew, all members of the Society's board of directors, had gotten into a cab and simply instructed the driver to take them to the nearest plumbing store, the driver would have had a choice of at least six stores in Manhattan alone from 108th St. to Houston. It did not matter where the urinal originated, and the name did not have to be Mott. Anyway, most plumbing suppliers, known as jobbers, usually

sold plumbing and steam fixtures to licensed plumbers. Jobbers were the so-called middle man between manufacturers such as Trenton Potteries or Standard Sanitary and plumbers. Selling sanitary pottery to an unlicensed person risked housing code violations being committed, which could reflect badly upon the store. After outbreaks of diphtheria, tuberculosis, and typhoid, the city of New York paid close attention to the proper installation of sewage systems through health inspectors. Since Duchamp & Co. most likely did not purchase metal fittings and conduit, they would have been perceived as unlicensed, if not just plain weird. Licensed plumbers were heavily unionized and selling to others would be perceived by them as possibly selling to cheap non-union labor sources. The southern Italians and Russian Jews crowding tenements in the LES and Brooklyn particularly worried the earlier generation of Irish and German plumbers. Jobbers could not alienate their clientele. Joseph Stella being fluent in Italian and looking like a Comoro crime boss would not have helped.

With America entering the war on April 6, New York City in 1917 was fully besieged with war time fever and German sabotage was more than a threat. Nationally, aside from anti-German renaming of things like sauerkraut to Freedom Cabbage, Congress was in the process of passing The Espionage Act. New York police were on high alert for German spies in light of the explosion on Black Tom Island on July 30, 1916, located next to the Statue of Liberty, today annexed to Jersey City. The United States was shipping ammunition, fuel, explosives, etc. to the Allies; Black Tom Island was a primary storage facility. The suspicion was a pencil or cigar bomb was used to start the chain reaction explosions, which killed 4 people and shattered windows across the harbor in Manhattan. These same type bombs with time delay chemical fuses had been used effectively to sink Allied shipping. An innocuous urinal shipped in a crate with its hidden drainage cavity packed with TNT, nitroglycerin, gun powder, etc. and a small pencil bomb detonator most definitely could work to destroy the plating on a merchant vessel. Thus, the likelihood of Duchamp & Co. buying a single urinal on a lark is questionable, or they were clueless idiots. Hence, the slapstick reference in the title here. Urinals were not commodity fetishes symbolizing middle class ascension as were pedestal sinks, or side-cladded alcove bathtubs, and, urinals were usually purchased in large quantities for skyscrapers, schools, comfort stations, etc. So the purchase of one by a dilettantish non-plumber(s) would look suspicious. Duchamp with his provisional immigration status might not want to risk deportation. Moreover, with the urinal eventually delivered to the German speaking Stieglitz, the resident from German town Hoboken, NJ, at a place that regularly ships and receives things overseas, namely 291, this could easily look too suspicious. The threat of German sabotage should also be considered when entertaining the scenario of a German accented Baroness Elsa Von Freytag Loringhoven, hauling around Manhattan a 50-60 lb. urinal, in her corset-free, dazzle-like patterned outfit.

A secondary problem with Duchamp scholarship worth mentioning involves the material conditions of his surviving work. Similar to a lack of identification of Stieglitz's photographic papers mentioned above, archival information on Duchamp's pieces could improve. It would be helpful to know, for example, the type of wood used in the templates of the 3 Standard Stoppages, since it might relate to engineering practice of the era. Likewise the glass used in the Large Glass, if identified, might point to the windows used in the Woolworth building, one of the NYC skyscrapers enamored by both Duchamp and Stieglitz and named by Duchamp as a possible readymade with an inscription. Given the importance of cameras here, the LG's glass might also be that used to make the ground glass for camera viewfinders. The string in Duchamp's With Hidden Noise (1916) seems identical to that of the string shown in Fountain attached to the entrance card. The Philadelphia Museum of Art lists the cording just mentioned as 'nautical' in their didactic information, discussed earlier. Identifying that might help determine if the strings or twine in each piece are the same, which might mean Duchamp had the urinal

hanging in his studio as early as 1916. More investigation might substantiate the opinion held here that the string is related to women's corsets or the rib lacing used in airplanes, which may not have had nautical sources. The former, corsets, were being abandoned for the most part in the New Women's pursuit of the relaxed, pencil silhouette of the drop waist dress and rejection of the corseted, hour glass figure. The ostentatious orientalizing of Paul Poiret gave way to the minimalist couture of Coco Chanel. Many of the displaced corset female factory workers though often transferred to airplane production for the war effort, stitching linen to the skeletal ribs of wings, hence the importance of rib lacing cord.

On a micro level, the photograph points to a number of concerns, especially how much importance Duchamp attached to the role of photography in the broader social contract. Duchamp with the help of Stieglitz, two diametrically opposed minds on photography, brilliantly exposes the photograph to be not a natural, organic window into the world, but a construct we learn to read and encode based upon habits of seeing. When we slightly misregister the construct, as with the photo of the urinal, often the brain gets confused and asserts the behavioral habits we have learned, not what we actually see. This basically extends Picasso's insight into Cezanne, that the 2-d rearrangement of the part to whole relationship of an object, say a guitar, will still be reassembled by the brain into its given order and identity. Duchamp changes the urinal's normal spatial perception and adds an unfamiliar context, seen upside down with the incoherent Hartley behind, straining the normal figure/ground relationship. The urinal shown in the composite presentation of Fountain was rendered abnormally, yet we perceive it as normal despite the contradictions in form: a large section left impossibly out of focus, the right lip being too narrow compared to the other side, the spud telling us the urinal is turned to the left when the upper half is in fact turned slightly to the right, creating a helical movement, enhanced by the pedestal's turning. The survival of the PMA photo on a significant page of 291, and likewise the survival of the complete Stieglitz photograph were Duchamp's clues or keys as to the composite or edited nature of the Blind Man reproduction, most surely the seemingly insignificant cropping of Stieglitz's 'original' photo. One other minor detail worth mentioning here, Carl Van Vechten in his account of the urinal to Gertrude Stein writes that the urinal Fountain is at 291 and Stieglitz made some wonderful 'photographs', plural, of it. The key question is how many photographs were there? Were they placed on the gallery ledge next to the painting? It is intriguing to ponder which photographs he means: the PMA half photo and the 'master' photograph Duchamp kept, or did this group also include the out of focus photograph and the cropped version that was sent to the printer?

On a macro level, not as photo related, Duchamp leveraged the avant-garde of NYC in the Blind Man again as if they were the Keystone cops in Fatty Arbuckle's short, Coney Island, restoring order. He also later played the art historians of Modernism, gaming a comedy of errors. Stieglitz's account of the rejection places the "Urinal" as a photograph finished at 291 gallery on April 19, while Duchamp claims he and Man Ray secured the urinal from behind a partition at the Grand Palace at the end of the exhibition, which would have been in May. This suggests more than one urinal existed, though Duchamp's Mott story describes the purchase of only one urinal, though another could have been purchased. Later accounts like Beatrice Woods' has William Glackens arguing with Arensberg at the Independent's, then she switches her story to Rockwell Kent, probably put up to it by Duchamp himself. Duchamp recites the Mott/Mutt/Urinal story, with the unexplained and unchallenged implication he had no choice but to use the Mott store. And, why using Mott as a signature was "too close", forcing him to use Mutt as a signature needs further investigation, to say the least. Duchamp could have also used Mett, Mitt or Matt. In the recounting of the tale in Camfield's monograph *Fountain*, undetected by Camfield and subsequent scholarship, Duchamp blatantly gets the characters of Mutt and Jeff wrong. If as Robert Motherwell writes in the introduction to Cabannes Conversations with

Marcel Duchamp, which took place just before Duchamp's death in 1968, that his memory was as sharp as a tack, then this a purposeful wronging or he never knew the difference between the two, like most scholars. Mutt was the taller thin man and his horse track buddy, Jeff, was the smaller man, not unlike Duchamp and Stieglitz, who was also small. In Camfield's Fountain (p. 68) Duchamp relates "Thus from the start there was an interplay of Mutt: a fat little funny man, and Jeff: a tall thin man ..." Duchamp probably intended a fractured and fragmented narration of the facts modeled upon the disjunctive master composite photograph of the urinal. This seems to accord with the problems Rhonda Shear (*Tout Fait*) has had attempting to make sense of Duchamp's account of the 3 Standard Stoppages.

What does all this gamesmanship achieve? Duchamp was the first artist to become a meta-artist: Fountain is an art work about the making of an artwork, by way of a photograph about the making of a photograph, a construct. While Picasso still labored at traditional categories of drawing and painting, keeping up conventions and stereotypes of heterosexual hegemony over women, essentially remaining 19th Century in form, Duchamp moved on to a whole new genre reflecting Twentieth Century industrial capitalism's managerial class, being financed by them via Medici style patronage. So Neo-Classical. The Boîte-en-valise is a brilliant example of this, a traveling salesman's sample kit or a portable museum. In Fountain as a totality, we see Duchamp full blown as The Blind Man's art director, managing editor, as well as the theater director of an avant-garde production called The BlindMan. The photograph ultimately must be seen as part of this greater whole, but its strategy yields a deeper understanding of Duchamp as the first true Twentieth Century artist. On the other hand, as will be forthcoming, the question to ask: what is the point of this photographic surgery? In effect, there is more fun and games which will explain why the then obscure Chocolate Grinder is on the front cover of the Blind Man, No.2, other than being a machine, and why the Stieglitz photo was cropped, both seemingly irrelevant details scholars of Duchamp have not questioned. While some claims about Duchamp are questionable, such as his painstaking putting the smashed Large Glass back together by himself, with Fountain the devil is clearly in the details.

