



Marcel Duchamp: Appearance Stripped Bare

By Octavio Paz

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Octavio Paz claims in this essential work that the two painters who had the greatest influence on the twentieth century were Pablo Picasso and Marcel Duchamp. If that conjunction surprises at first, Paz makes a convincing case with his analysis and by contrasting the two artists. “I have linked their two names,” he writes, “because it seems to me that each of them has in his own way succeeded in defining our age: the former by what he affirms; the latter by what he negates, by his explorations.” Considering Duchamp’s career and writings from his scandalous *Nude Descending a Staircase* in 1913 to his subsequent investigations, from his *Large Glass* and kinetic art to the Readymades and “physiques amusantes” (“comic calculations”), Paz offers a highly personal assessment, exploring the apparent contradictions and seeming enigmas with the insight and lucidity that characterized all his writing.

When this book was first published, *Publishers Weekly* called it an “extraordinary and indispensable book” and said: “Paz may have come closer to Duchamp’s essence as a philosopher of spiritual freedom than any critic to date.”

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Editorial Review

Review

“There are few studies so good on any artist. . . . Deft and dense with intelligence and . . . exciting to read.”
—*New Republic*

“Probes deeply into Duchamp’s relation to Eastern and Western Cultures.” —*New York Times Book Review*

“When Paz finishes with Duchamp, one feels that every aspect of the artist’s intention has been sympathetically examined.” —*Times Literary Supplement*

About the Author

Octavio Paz was born in 1914 in Mexico City. A poet, writer, thinker, and diplomat, he was the author of many volumes of poetry as well as literary and art criticism and works on politics, culture, and Mexican history. Winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1990, he was also awarded the Jerusalem Prize, the Cervantes Prize, the Neustadt International Prize for Literature, and the German Peace Prize. He died in 1998.

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