

Duchamp's Second Cut: The Encounter Is the Altar

"The art is not the object, nor even the idea — it is the encounter."

By Dorian Vale

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Marcel Duchamp, in one of his most heretical confessions, once said: "*I don't believe in art. I believe in artists.*" With that single utterance, he dismantled centuries of gold-framed idolatry. He stripped the object of its divinity and turned our gaze to the maker, not as a priest delivering relics, but as a conspirator in the sacred crime of meaning. Duchamp reminded us that art is not a thing but a tension; not a monument but a moment; not something we see, but something that stares back and dares us to remain.

This book doesn't stand in opposition to Duchamp. It walks with hi, further, deeper, and unshackled. He taught us that the *idea* was the art. What we offer now is the next evolution of that thought: the art is the *encounter*. The breath between the one who made and the one who stayed. Not the object. Not the origin. Not even the idea in its sterile brilliance. But the moment of contact, fleeting, unrepeatable, and unwilling to be possessed.

From this insight arises **Stillmark Theory**, the first pillar of the Post-Interpretive Movement. It's a philosophy of vanishing as value. It names presence as the proof. It names what disappear, because it disappear, as the most irreducible form of beauty. Where the old world crowned permanence as sacred, Stillmark answers: no, it's the moment that can't be kept that reveals what matters most. The encounter becomes the altar. The witness becomes the evidence.

Post-Interpretive Criticism begins here, at the edge of interpretation. It doesn't seek to explain the work to death, but to preserve the trembling of its breath. It's not built on mastery, but on mercy. It doesn't archive the object; it protects the moment. What follows in this book, doctrines, treatises, hauntmarks, thresholds, is not a theory of art as possession, but a declaration of art as passing.

Duchamp once warned us, "*Art is either plagiarism or revolution.*" Let this be the latter. Not the theft of his flame, but a torch passed with reverence into new terrain. He shattered the pedestal. We dismantle the frame. He freed the idea. We sanctify the encounter. And in that brief collision, raw, unowned, and never again, the work is no longer something merely seen. It becomes something received. And in the soul of the one who receives it, it lives anew.

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