

THE SCHIRN PRESENTS THE FIRST RETROSPECTIVE OF THE
PIONEERING DADAIST AND ARTIST SUZANNE DUCHAMP

**SUZANNE DUCHAMP
RETROSPECTIVE**

OCTOBER 10, 2025 – JANUARY 11, 2026

PRESS PREVIEW: OCTOBER 9, 2025, 11 A.M.

From October 10, 2025, to January 11, 2026, the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt is presenting the world's first comprehensive solo exhibition dedicated to a pioneer of the Dada movement, Suzanne Duchamp (1889–1963). The retrospective shows the multifaceted oeuvre of an artist whose work extended over a period of fifty years and who contributed to the development of Dadaism during the 1910s and '20s. Although Duchamp's works are represented in world-famous collections, and she had strong connections to major art world figures during her lifetime, her artistic significance has long been overshadowed by her brothers Marcel Duchamp, Raymond Duchamp-Villon, and Jacques Villon, as well as by her husband, Jean Crotti. The retrospective contains around eighty works, some of which were rediscovered during the extensive research for the exhibition, and includes experimental collages, figurative representations, abstract paintings, photographs, and prints, as well as findings from the archives. Together, the works illustrate Duchamp's artistic independence and freedom. The exhibition particularly focuses on her innovative treatment of materials and media, but also on her broad artistic range, which often defies art-historical categories. Humor and an air of mystery lend Duchamp's art its characteristic voice. By the mid-1910s, she had developed a subtle pictorial language that was unique within the Dada movement for its combination of the readymade, poetic inscriptions, and geometric forms. In addition to her Dada works, the exhibition illuminates Duchamp's early Cubist interiors and urban landscapes, and late figurative paintings with frequent ironic undertones, as well as landscapes of the 1930s and '40s and her late works, which verge on abstraction.

Developed in cooperation with Kunsthau Zürich, the retrospective includes important loans from a number of international museums and public collections, such as MoMA in New York, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Bibliothèque nationale de France and the Bibliothèque Littéraire Jacques Doucet in Paris, the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Rouen, and important private collections such as the Bluff Collection and the Collection Francis M. Naumann and Marie T. Keller. The retrospective was conceived in close cooperation with the Association Duchamp Villon Crotti.

The exhibition "Suzanne Duchamp: Retrospective" is supported by the Dr. Marschner Stiftung and the Ernst Max von Grunelius-Stiftung, with additional support from the Fontana Stiftung, the Georg und Franziska Speyer'sche Hochschulstiftung, and the SCHIRN LIGA.

SEBASTIAN BADEN, DIRECTOR OF THE SCHIRN: "In this first retrospective of Suzanne Duchamp, the Schirn is directing the focus toward an artist of modernism who, despite her participation in the European avant-garde and her contributions to Dadaism, has so far not received a comprehensive appreciation of her oeuvre. This is an astonishing gap that the Schirn is now filling with this exhibition and the results of new research into her works. It thus presents a lively and thorough overview of the creative work of the Dada artist. In all of its phases, Duchamp's work reflected her alert mind as she kept her finger on the pulse of time with her highly individual pictorial language, originality, and subtle sense of humor."

INGRID PFEIFFER AND TALIA KWARTLER, CURATORS OF THE EXHIBITION: “Suzanne Duchamp entered the art scene in a confident and self-assured manner at an early stage. Unlike many other modern women artists, she did not have to assert herself in the face of the obstacles that barred the way of many of her female colleagues. As a result of the support she received from her family, and especially her close relationship with her brothers, she moved within a smoothly operating network and received official recognition as an artist during her lifetime. However, the significance of her work was posthumously neglected within art history; her late work in particular is little known. Duchamp was a subtle and ironic observer and commentator, who over a period of some fifty years left her mark on modern art with her individual artistic style.”

A TOUR OF THE EXHIBITION

The exhibition presents the entire oeuvre of Suzanne Duchamp in a chronological framing. The show integrates some works—especially her photographic and painted self-portraits, and the portraits she made of family and friends—into the biographical section. The exhibition inaugurates the new Hall 1 at Schirn Bockenheim.

EARLY WORK AND BEGINNINGS IN THE AVANT-GARDE

From 1911, Suzanne Duchamp's work appeared for the first time in prestigious exhibitions in Paris. In her early paintings she incorporated Cubist elements, a movement she was familiar with through her older brothers Jacques Villon and Raymond Duchamp-Villon. Through weekly meetings in their studio apartments in Puteaux near Paris (now La Defense), the Cubist Puteaux Group was formed. The subjects of Suzanne Duchamp's paintings during this phase range from portraits and domestic interiors to urban landscapes. The first work that Duchamp exhibited in modern art circles was a portrait of Jacques Villon (*Jacques Villon*, 1910), which shows him painting a self-portrait. Multiple perspectives and fragmentation are also found in the painting *Jeune fille au chien* (*Young Girl with a Dog*, 1912), depicting the artist's sister with her dog; the work is considered to be Duchamp's most important contribution to the Cubist circle in Paris. In *Construction* (1913), Duchamp abstracts what is probably the industrial town of Puteaux. The artist's layering of horizontal and vertical lines and surfaces forms a “moderate” Cubism, capturing the modern character of the urban landscape.

DADA INTERNATIONAL

In February 1916, the revolutionary Dada movement was established in the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich by Tristan Tzara and others as an artistic protest against the First World War and the prevailing social order. They wanted to disturb the public and demonstrate the absurdity of reality through the usage of new materials and found objects, as well as language and performance. Dada groups soon arose in New York with Marcel Duchamp, Jean Crotti—whom Suzanne Duchamp married in 1919—Francis Picabia, Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, and Beatrice Wood, as well as in Cologne, Berlin, and Paris. Suzanne Duchamp, who was part of the Paris group, worked as a nurse during the First World War, and also provided independent contributions to Dada magazines and flyers. It was also during these first years that she developed some of her pioneering key works. The Schirn shows various large Dadaist material collages such as *Radiation de deux seuls éloignés* (*Radiation of Two Distant Solitary Beings*, 1916–20) and *Ariette d'oubli de la chapelle étourdie* (*Arietta of Oblivion of the Dazed Chapel*, 1920), in which she incorporated a number of found elements—beads, metallic paper, string, glass, and wood. Inspired by her brother Marcel Duchamp and her exchanges with the New York Dada scene, Suzanne Duchamp helped invent the technique of collage. In her works *Multiplication brisée et rétabli* (*Broken and Restored Multiplication*, 1918–19) and *Solitude-Entonnoir* (*Solitude-Funnel*,

1921), she also probed the boundaries and possibilities of various media. Like other Dadaists, Duchamp also integrated poetic language into her pictorial works. The titles of her pictures and her painted inscriptions became independent elements of the composition. For example, the minimalist yet visually striking compositions *Usine de mes pensées* (*Factory of My Thoughts*, 1920) and *Fabrique de joie* (*Factory of Joy*, 1920) took up the visual language of industrial architecture and the then pressing question of the relationship between mechanization and emotions. The artist also worked with her brother Marcel Duchamp on his readymades. In the retrospective, her large-format painting *Le Readymade malheureux de Marcel* (*Marcel's Unfortunate Readymade*, ca. 1919–20) emerged from the siblings' exchanges.

AN INDEPENDENT ARTIST

The year 1922 represented a turning point in the art of Suzanne Duchamp: After her successful Dadaist phase, she returned to figurative painting—now, however, in a humorous and caricaturing way. This period also marked her return to independent artistic work and is characterized by a dynamic use of color. She freed herself from fixed movements like Dadaism and Cubism, and after 1923 exhibited her works less frequently alongside her husband Jean Crotti. Instead, they were shown in group exhibitions with artists like Marie Laurencin, who also explored new forms of figuration. The Schirn will be showing the principal work *La Noce* (*The Wedding*, 1924). With its palette of bright red and subdued shades of gray, Duchamp's painting is an ironic study of a wedding that indicts the institution of marriage as a bourgeois convention.

From the mid-1920s until the '30s, Suzanne Duchamp worked in Paris and on the French Riviera and earned increasing international attention. The close cooperation with the American artist and collector Katherine Dreier led to exhibitions in New York, including a solo exhibition of her watercolors in 1933. She was also represented in galleries in Paris and in international group exhibitions. A wide range of subjects can be observed in her works during these years: portraits, landscapes, beach scenes, still lifes, and unconventional scenes of everyday life. In her paintings, Duchamp repeatedly combined these subjects in new configurations. She worked mainly in oil and watercolor and used drawings to plan her compositions. This resulted in eye-catching works like the quirky interpretation of the Garden of Eden, *Le Paradis terrestre* (*The Earthly Paradise*, 1924), and the unusually direct and dynamic portrait *Lorenzo Picabia* (c. 1927), depicting the son of her friends Francis Picabia and Germaine Everling; Lorenzo who go on to become a recurring motif in her pictorial cosmos.

WORLD WAR II AND LATE WORK

The Second World War represented a major turning point for Suzanne Duchamp. We know very little about her artistic works from these years. She spent most of the time with Jean Crotti in the south of France and at various locations in the country, accompanied on occasion by her brothers Marcel Duchamp and Jacques Villon. Her paintings were now limited to scenes from her daily surroundings, most often landscapes painted in intensely hued colors that diverged from those of nature, as in *La ferme Toussus* (*The Farm of Toussus*, 1943) and *Sans titre* (*Paysage*) (*Untitled* (*Landscape*), 1943).

After 1945, Suzanne Duchamp had new opportunities to exhibit her works, and she traveled abroad. Family portraits remained central to her oeuvre. In 1952, Marcel Duchamp organized a group exhibition of his siblings in New York. In the 1950s, Suzanne Duchamp received prominent attention in several exhibitions for her important contribution to the avant-garde, in particular for her dynamic combination of painting, poetry, and collage. From the mid-1950s, in line with the spirit of the times, she devoted herself increasingly to abstraction, especially following the death of Jean Crotti in 1958. The late work *Le Monde souterrain* (*The Underworld*, 1961) reflects her ongoing examination of the painterly interaction of color and lines within pictorial space, while

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simultaneously exploring the boundaries of life. Duchamp remained active as an artist who consistently sought new forms of expression until her death in 1963.

An exhibition in cooperation with Kunsthau Zürich.

CATALOG *Suzanne Duchamp: Retrospective*, published by Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft / Kunsthau Zürich and SCHIRN KUNSTHALLE FRANKFURT, with contributions by Anne Berest Picabia, Carole Boulbès, Cathérine Hug, Talia Kwartler, Jean-Jacques Lebel, Effie Rentzou, and Amy Sillman, as well as a foreword cowritten by the director of Kunsthau Zürich, Ann Demeester, and the director of the SCHIRN KUNSTHALLE FRANKFURT, Sebastian Baden; German and English editions, each 192 pages with approx. 150 illustrations, 22.5 x 27.5 cm, hardcover, Hatje Cantz Verlag, ISBN 978-3-7757-6039-3 (German edition), ISBN 978-3-7757-6038-6 (English edition), €35 (SCHIRN), €48 (trade edition)

SCHIRN PAPER The new print magazine SCHIRN PAPER will be published at the new location of the SCHIRN three times a year beginning in fall 2025. It complements the digital SCHIRN MAG, which is celebrating its fifteenth anniversary. On the occasion of the exhibition "Suzanne Duchamp: Retrospective," the print magazine will contain contributions by Talia Kwartler and Ingrid Pfeiffer.

SCHIRN PAPER, issue no. 1, fall 2025 (to be published on November 14, 2025), published by the SCHIRN KUNSTHALLE FRANKFURT, with contributions by Hera Chan, Anna Deller-Yee, Odile Kennel, Marc Krause, Talia Kwartler, Anja Nolte, Ingrid Pfeiffer, raumlabor, Philine Sollmann, Gün Tank, and Sasha Waltz & Guests, German/English edition, approx. 80 pages, approx. 50 illustrations, 19 x 26 cm, soft cover, €15 (SCHIRN)

DIGITORIAL® To accompany the exhibition the Schirn is offering a Digitorial®, which provides an overview of the entire artistic oeuvre of Suzanne Duchamp, with useful background information, art-historical contexts, and important content regarding the exhibition. This free digital educational information will be available in German and English at duchamp.schirn.de.

VENUE SCHIRN KUNSTHALLE FRANKFURT, GABRIEL-RIESSER-WEG 3, 60325 FRANKFURT **DURATION** OCTOBER 10, 2025 – JANUARY 11, 2026 **INFORMATION** SCHIRN.DE/EN **EMAIL** WELCOME@SCHIRN.DE **TELEPHONE** +49.69.29 98 82-0 **GUEST CURATOR** TALIA KWARTLER **CURATOR** INGRID PFEIFFER, SCHIRN KUNSTHALLE FRANKFURT **CURATORIAL ASSISTANT** CORNELIA EISENDLE **SUPPORTED BY** DR. MARSCHNER STIFTUNG, ERNST MAX VON GRUNELIUS-STIFTUNG **ADDITIONAL SUPPORT BY** FONTANA STIFTUNG, GEORG UND FRANZISKA SPEYER'SCHE HOCHSCHULSTIFTUNG, SCHIRN LIGA **HASHTAGS** #SUZANNEDUCHAMP #SCHIRN **FACEBOOK, YOUTUBE, INSTAGRAM, PINTEREST, TIKTOK, SCHIRN MAGAZIN** SCHIRN.DE/EN/MAGAZIN

PRESS JOHANNA PULZ (HEAD OF PRESS/PR), JULIA BASTIAN (DEPUTY HEAD OF PRESS/PR), REGINA LANG (TRAINEE) **SCHIRN KUNSTHALLE FRANKFURT** GABRIEL-RIESSER-WEG 3, 60325 FRANKFURT **EMAIL** PRESSE@SCHIRN.DE **NEWSROOM** SCHIRN.DE/EN/PRESS **TELEPHONE** +49.69.29 98 82-148