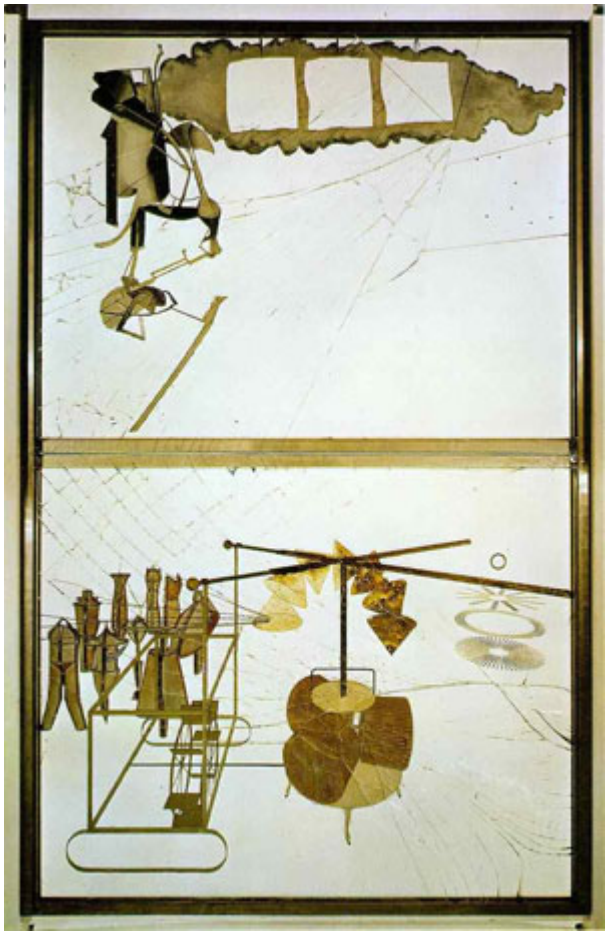
METAMEDIA UTOPIAS



Maybe a positive side of all the proposals for funding we have to write is the dreams and utopias they embody.

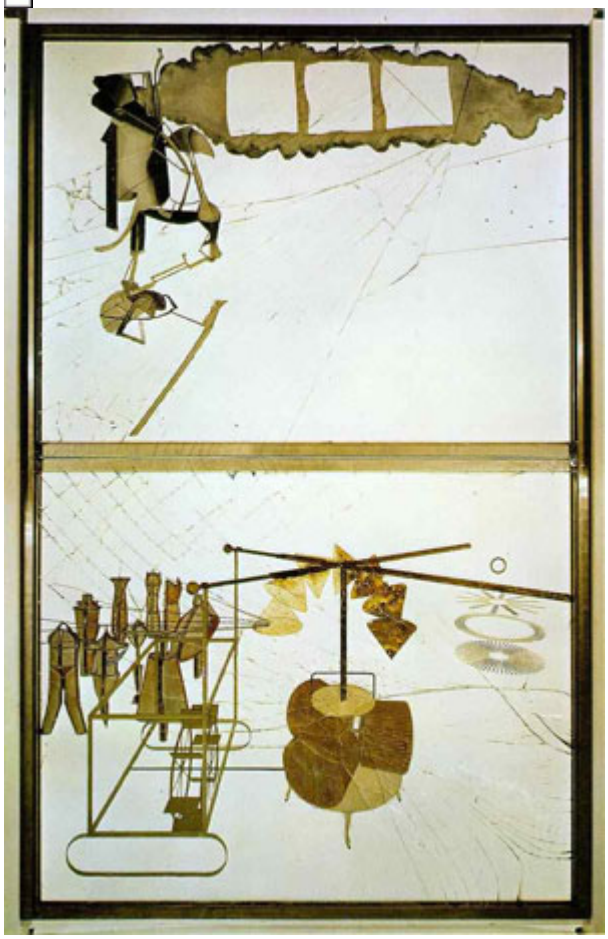
Here is a current proposal from Joe Adler and myself.

What if one could learn about a work of art on-line as if tackling a mystery in a game?
What if each solution creates a new mystery?
What if, during that exploration, one could unlock the work's history, iconology, analysis and discourse?
What if one could add to that discourse oneself?
What if each visitor's engagement could affect that of

the next?

Application

A new media exploration of *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even* (The Large Glass) by Marcel Duchamp.



Pedagogy based upon game and narrative metaphors. Project-based and collaborative learning environments. Student-centered learning. Learning tools for rich cultural content.

Research context

Current research in material culture studies and design history emphasizes the heterogeneous nature of the cultural artifact. Understanding a simple household artifact, for example, requires an investigation and articulation of materials science, mechanics and engineering, style and taste, domestic ethnography, personal and ethnic identity, design history, macro and micro economic contexts, marketing and advertising, and more. The same applies to a work of art, but even more so, because of its designed cultural complexity.

How might we explore this heterogeneity as a learning experience? We propose research into the remediation of a work of art and its underlying components as an immersive interactive experience more commonly associated with video games (such as Myst). We will explore the didactic and experiential value of applying digital technologies such as rich media, simulation, and an array of interactive tools to the analysis and understanding of an artwork.

Questions

What would web-based learning look like if it were not a route to a closed narrative or body of knowledge but

rather an open proposition, where each visitor’s experience is different and affects the experience of others?

What is the didactic value of applying interactive techniques, most commonly found in games, to the exploration of a work of art, its genesis, iconology, history and impact?

The work we have chosen is *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*, also known as *The Large Glass*, by Marcel Duchamp, (1915-1923). This work is a bewildering puzzle, considered one of the most complex, allegorical and esoteric works of art of the Twentieth Century. Its influence on modern art has been profound; some have argued that it is greater than that of Picasso. Accompanying *The Large Glass* is *The Green Box* a collection of Duchamp’s writings, drawings, and calculations for the work, which he provided as the Ariadne’s thread for the work’s interpretation. Surrounding all this is Duchamp’s philosophy of *an-art* and the *beauty of indifference*; provocative ideas that have triggered years of fervent debate.

A puzzle, a box of clues and almost a century of

discourse make for the perfect ingredients of a great mystery and on-line game!

This research is based on early prototypes developed at the metaMedia Lab at Stanford. It is envisaged that it will use the Flash development environment and Java.