

Question 7

The artists' intentions in making an artwork are an integral part of their meaning. In 1916, Zurich, Switzerland a movement formed which changed all previous values held of art. Beginning as a reaction to the grief & outrage of the Second world war Dada was more a cultural revolt than an artistic movement. More artists intentions changed from any that had previously been shown. In no time at all it had spread all over Europe.

Dada produced fascinating & illogical works which were anti-art in approach. Its aim was to shock audiences, an ~~intention~~ intention never previously explored. Hans Richter described the mood of the era to be "we destroyed, we insulted, we despised & we laughed." It was a movement which dealt with the whole of society, not just the visual arts, and at its very centre was artist Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968)

Duchamp was born in France & had most of his early artistic training in Paris where he learnt to paint in a Post-Impressionistic then cubist style.

After having many of his paintings rejected from exhibitions he decided to detach himself from convention & along with a number of his colleagues he began what became known as Dada.

By placing a bicycle wheel on a stool & calling it an artwork, Duchamp created the first 'ready-made'. At the time this gesture was looked upon as being very extreme & this was exactly Duchamp's intention. Even today, as this style of anti-art becomes increasingly more popular, it is still looked upon by some with scorn.

By placing the bicycle wheel on the stool Duchamp was forcing the viewer to reevaluate his or her preconceived ideas

ideas about art. Art gradually became a series of questions to be answered rather than an expression in itself.

Duchamp's work was revolutionary as it introduced the audience to the concept of objects from the ordinary world elevated to the status of artworks.

~~the viewer~~ Awareness moved the viewer from the passive role of connoisseur to the active role of question answer.

Another of Duchamp's 'ready-mades' called 'Fountain' consisted of a lying porcelain urinal. The only change made to the object's surface occurred as Duchamp signed it 'R Mutt 1917', the name of the urinals manufacturer.

In creating this work Duchamp's intention was to compare art, life & the value of human creation.

When the work was first placed on

display, audiences became very confused as to its significance & as a result it had to be removed from public view.

Dada showed that aesthetics, effort & skill were no longer required in the evaluation of art. Duchamp would make simple changes, ~~to~~ if any at all; to objects he found & undoubting this is making the viewer consider questions such as "Is time & effort any longer required in the process of art making?" "Why is the artist doing this?" & "What kind of society do we live in if time or effort are no longer needed to create an artwork of great value?"

Man Ray, another prominent Dadaist, created many works which dealt with the growing materialism ~~and~~ in Europe. One of his works called "The Gift" of 1921 consisted on an iron made impractical by having sharp nails

protruding from the ironing surface.

This type of work was created with the intent of reflecting the bourgeoisie of the time, their control over art & culture as well as their idea of art as a commodity.

The simple iron was transformed into a potentially dangerous item.

Jean Arp created many works which dealt with chance & the 'automatic'.

These included "Squares placed according to the laws of chance" & "automatic drawing." He believed that through the use of chance he could avoid predictable or learned responses & instead rely more on his subconscious.

Poet Izora relied on a similar method when creating his poetry. Words were selected, cut & placed in a bag from which they were selected randomly to form poems.

Izora's intent in doing this was to

create a poem which more clearly "was a representation of your true self."

Dada was a movement in which artists all tried their hardest to express a message, & say something new. & this was strongly shown within their 'anti-art' approach to art.

Their intentions did, however, transform all previous values of art & pave the way for artists to follow in their ~~own~~ own 'extreme' suit, eg Pierre Manzano who canned his own excretion & labelled it 'Artist's Shit' which he sold for large sums of money.

Dada influence can be seen in much artmaking today. The surrealists who followed shortly after they did showed obvious influence & I can even see their influence in my own artmaking today. Their

intent to express a strong message was effective. In Dada there were no limitations! As Duchamp once said "use Rembrandt as your ironingboard."