

Fountain//

Is it a Lady's or a Gent's?

Documentary by Janko Hanushevsky

Editor: Ulrike Bajohr. Produced by Deutschlandfunk/Rundfunk Berlin Brandenburg 2020.



"Fountain" is regarded as the pioneering object of conceptual art, by many experts even as the most important work of art of the 20th century. But retired British art historian Glyn Thompson is certain that the urinal signed "R Mutt 1917" is by no means the work of Marcel Duchamp.

Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, an eccentric Dada artist from Duchamp's circle in New York, is said to have submitted the object, later entitled "Fountain", for exhibition under the pseudonym "Richard Mutt" in 1917.

Glyn Thompson owns one of the oldest replicas of the urinal. Over the years, he has collected and published evidence which, in his opinion, clearly speaks for the authorship of the almost forgotten Dadaist. International Duchamp-scholars vehemently oppose Thompson's reinterpretation of art history.

Thompson finds support in the writer Siri Hustvedt. She points out that from the cosmos of Freytag-Loringhoven's work "Fountain" can clearly be read as a sculpture - not as a readymade. And if this is the case, the founding myth of conceptual art would be invalidated. Hustvedt sees the baroness' case as an example of how art history is shaped by male narrativ

Foto credits: Art historian Glyn Thompson and his 100-year-old urinal, © Martin Harris.