

“““And we shall play a game of chess”””

Marcel Duchamp vs. Professor VJ  
Game 1, Philadelphia, February

Starting with the arrival of Picabia, Berliet then films the chess sequence, which is from a scenario commissioned by Rolf de Maré for the Ballets Suédois. Duchamp and Professor VJ sit astride the low balustrade at the edge of the roof with the chessboard between them. An IBM technician is nearby. As they play, a medium close-up of Duchamp's head, a chimney on the left and an aerial view of Philadelphia in the background, is followed by a close-up.

Duche to play...

**1. e4 c5 2. c3**

D: Think of the artist as a medium

VJ: Think of the artist as a postproduction medium

D: As a remixologist or artist-medium tapping into their unconscious readiness potential, what do you suppose it means to render into vision the next VERSION of Creativity coming?

**2..... d5 3. exd5 Qxd5 4. d4 Nf6 5. Nf3 Bg4 6. Be2 e6 7. h3 Bh5 8. O-O Nc6 9. Be3 cxd4 10. cxd4 Bb4**

VJ: Vito Acconci once wrote that the contemporary artist did not need to specialize IN a medium, but should instead BECOME a medium, or what he refers to as an INSTRUMENT that acts on whatever ground is available at any given time

D: All of the decisions we make while performing involve what I call The Creative Act

VJ: Performing the "self" -- and these days this usually takes place in networked and mobile media culture -- performing the "self" is essentially how we become the next VERSION of Creativity coming because, as every devoted remixologist eventually finds out, only through a process of creative visualization can you even BEGIN to become the Next Version of Creativity coming and this visualization process requires RENDERING INTO VISION

what our spiritual unconscious, OUT OF NECESSITY, intuits FOR us, to the point where THAT'S what we become

D: But think of the role pure intuition plays in locating that indeterminate space of creative potential

VJ: In fact, if you listen closely to what I'm doing here you'll see that I am performing the Next Version of Creativity coming -- that is to say the Next Version of Constructed Self AS a kind of generative remixologist performing their "always live" postproduction sets. For me, remix performance is really about accessing the Source Material Everywhere so that I can role-PLAY the Next Version of Creativity Coming

D: In many ways, what we are doing here, whether you see it as theory or remix or performance, is really just a kind of INTENSE BECOMING. Here's a question: if we are all artist-mediums, how do we trigger novel states of creativity?

VJ: Could we say that the contemporary artist AS remixologist or provocateur of postproduction art, EMBODIES what it means to FEEL aesthetic?

D: Sometimes I wish we had enough time to unpack these terms more fully, like what does it mean to AESTHETICALLY FEEL ONESELF?

VJ: By the way, whenever I use the term "aesthetic feeling" or "aesthetically feeling oneself" I am referring to the free flow sensation of experiencing life as *an intense aesthetic fact*

D: You could say that what we are doing here is postproducing a kind of INTENSE AESTHETIC FACT

VJ: Think of this emerging theory as a structured improvisation, a semi-composed performance art work entitled "The Postproduction of Presence: A Generative Fiction"

D: Can we say that remixologists are aesthetically inclined to play with prior information?

VJ: Ornette Coleman once said that he didn't know you had to LEARN to play, he thought you just had to PLAY to play. And have I mentioned that Miles Davis quote, the one where he once said "Sometimes it takes a long time to play like yourself"?

D: And yet even as we know that contemporary remixologists cannot escape the past -- the renewable tradition they are the current manifestation of demands that they perform their work in the *present*

while their processual media bodies intuitively engage *with* the compositional potential of **Source Material Everywhere**

VJ: That is to say you are forever finding myself moving-remixing and/or naturally selecting your source material while evolving whatever stylistic tendencies that seem appropriate in order for you to survive in the network culture

D: Who still talks like that? sounds like an instructional audio book on "telepresence"

VJ: As a contemporary remixologist I am always turning toward the intuitive present and make my necessary moves *in* a **Total Field of Action**

11. a3 Ba5 12. Nc3 Qd6 13. Nb5 Qe7 14. Ne5! Bxe2 15. Qxe2 O-O 16. Rac1 Rac8 17. Bg5

D: But then I take a break away from the computer and jot down some notes phrases and other potential source material from David Antin's book *what it means to be avant-garde*

VJ: Given the fact that there is **Source Material Everywhere** I will survive in network culture by compostproducing the present into an intense aesthetic experience that will simultaneously historicize my performance as a "durational achievement" that makes me feel like a mutant fictioneer

D: Perhaps this is what it means to be avant-garde in that it never feels as though I am emptying myself into the blank canvas of the American future

VJ: I often feel like someone who does what he does because he does not know any better and continues doing what he does regardless of the outcome which then somehow strategically situates me as part of the avant-garde tradition

D: But then the question emerges "Whose avant-garde tradition?"

VJ: Summoning the ghosts of Burroughs - McLuhan - Williams - and Olson not to mention the recent idea-riffs of Ornette Coleman and Miles Davis above I have no choice but to write

D: This happens regularly in the life of artists even those who become hermits or whose situation is out of their control as they become totally isolated from any local community that might turn on the spigots

VJ: I have been lucky because I am always fluid using my open-ended wanderlust to move around the world and meet up with those whose work most turned me on. Moving-remixing for the nomadic networker is just another way of saying *I am a writer* i.e. that I identify with writing because it's the only thing that keeps me alive and gives me such pleasure

D: Which brings up another question we might want to address to postproduction artists: Would you rather pretend to be creative or just make shit up out of whole cloth ripped off the bodies of those who came before you?

VJ: We don't even really have to be aware of our past influences while we participate in these "primary bursts of creativity immersed in their own remixological potential"

D: They reside in the body like a second or third or fourth -- nature ... something that enables us to "play ourselves" without having to think about it (and who better to play *you* than that on-the-fly persona you keep generating in asynchronous realtime!)

VJ: Yes it's true there is **Source Material Everywhere** so that I can perpetually postproduce the present with each new technological advance making that postproduction process all the more intense for me as a digitally inclined applied remixologist

D: This can lead to some serious contradiction in ones ongoing lifestyle practice

## 17.... Bb6 18. Bxf6 gxf6

VJ: Think of it as compostproduction where the leftovers of literature past get reconfigured into innovative forms of art meant to breathe life into an always on the verge

(of dying)

creative life force struggling for survival

(perpetually perishing while "making it new").

D: In some ways this all seems *so* obvious to me: I mean, what is a writer anyway but a simultaneous and continuous fusion of remixologically inhabited bodes of work?

VJ: For the contemporary writer as interdisciplinary media artist

the lyrical conceptual poetic narrative movements come in wildly assorted forms, everything from dance to cinema to performance art to the scribbling of pen or pencil on paper

**19. Nc4! Rfd8 20. Nxb6! axb6 21. Rfd1 f5 22. Qe3!**

D: For instance I remember a passage from Sukenick's *Down and In: Life in the Underground* where he self-consciously (and remixologically) inhabits the style of Norman Mailer circa *Armies of the Night*

VJ: We can also see this kind of well executed stylistic mimicry being expressed in Amerika's second novel *Sexual Blood* which was nothing if not a remixological inhabitation of the style Count Lautréamont (aka Isadore Ducasse) initiated with his acerbic *Songs of Maldoror* where Amerika knowingly and even greedily pla(y)giarizes Lautréamont's own pla(y)giaristic style as source material

D: Why does he find it necessary to pla(y)giarize Lautréamont's style as source material?

VJ: You'll have to ask Amerika that question

D: We don't even really have to be aware of our past influences...

VJ: But if it's everywhere all the time does that also not mean that I will never be able to truly get away from it?

D: OK OK OK OK

**22... Qf6 23. d5!**

VJ: I'm now recalling how my late colleague Kathy Acker once told me that she took on *the body-language* of Hawthorne Faulkner Rimbaud and Verlaine to name just a few as a way to embody their spiritual unconscious

D: Acker would embody these spirit precursors as part of her intense investigation into writing as an extreme force of (h)activism

**23... Rxd5 24. Rxd5 exd5 25. b3! Kh8?**

VJ: In an essay she titles "Critical Languages" Acker addresses her speech to a group of writers whose work centers on contemporary art criticism. She meets them head on by saying

D: "I want to talk about the body and languages of the body. Which art criticism has denied. And about what art criticism could come out of the languages of the body"

VJ: Yes, at which point she starts riffing on a list of possible body languages that she would prescribe

D: She also lists the languages of wonder

**26. Qxb6 Rg8 27. Qc5 d4 28. Nd6 f4 29. Nxb7**

VJ: If Borges is correct in suggesting that we all quite literally create our own precursors by embodying their source material without either their or our knowledge *while creating*, then these remixes included here could be considered part of a larger biological imperative

D: So much depends on literary presence

VJ: Moving in and out of these "ghost tendencies" that mark the outlines of a body language once performed by another artist of the past also necessitates a certain amount of lived experience –

D: I think of it as an enduring embodied praxis

VJ: A deep interiorization of someone else's creative rhythm

D: Think of it as literary hauntology

**29.... Ne5 30. Qd5**

VJ: The laws of (strange) attraction

D: It's cosmic

**30.... f3 31. g3 Nd3**

VJ: Cosmic inflation snapping back to haunt us in a way that gets our creative attention

D: "An indefinite series of identities and transformations"

VJ: Professor VJ [me-myself-an-Eye]

### 32. Rc7 Re8

D: I think of it as an enduring embodied praxis

VJ: This is where the aim of philosophy is revealed as the charging nature of Creativity itself

### 33. Nd6 Re1+ 34. Kh2 Nxf2 35. Nxf7+ Kg7 36. Ng5+ Kh6 37. Rxh7+ 1-0

D: Play to play

VJ: Is this strategy of *playing against* the apparatus while simultaneously playing *with* the apparatus indicative of self-contradictory behaviour?

D: Or is it part of a larger visionary agenda that buys into this avant-gardist notion of being ahead of one's time?

VJ: In the old days we used to call this style of literature that plays-against-the-media-apparatus while-playing-with-the-media-apparatus *Avant-Pop*

D: A term generated from a Lester Bowie jazz album signaling the artist's willingness to play *with* but subvert from *within*

VJ: Is this still possible in the electronic literary scene especially given its rapid move toward academic institutionalization?

D: Or does the move toward electronic literature's academic institutionalization potentially enable a below the radar (h)activist gesture that unassumingly aligns itself with a desire to subvert from within?

VJ: Within what?

D: Within the institution

VJ: Within the disciplines?

D: Within ourselves

### 40. Rf7 and 40. Qd5

VJ: If I was to tweet everything I have said or am going to write here, it would go something like this: "Remix your life or someone else will remix it for you"

D: If I was to tweet everything you have said or written here, it would go something like this: "I have remixed your life in 40 moves"

Professor VJ resigns

Duche heads back to New York deciding to give up chess and make art instead. Picking up the pieces of the renewable tradition in literature along the way he mutters to himself about renaming the *Étant Donnés* to something more lyrical. When he is collected from Penn Station by Miss Dreier she proffers the suggestion, "pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door..." (the ellipses, she mischievously avers, being an allusion to the "definitively" unfinished nature of the work).

By this time Professor VJ is on a plane bound for Oahu and already considering a rematch. He carries with him the last remaining copy of the *Boîte-en-valise* that is not held in a private collection. He plans to use it as a portable mixing desk for a performance of *Source Material Everywhere* scheduled for the following night in Kailua. While President-Elect Obama and a distant relative of Jean Cocteau are said to be attending, he plans to dedicate the remix to the memory of Teeny Duchamp.