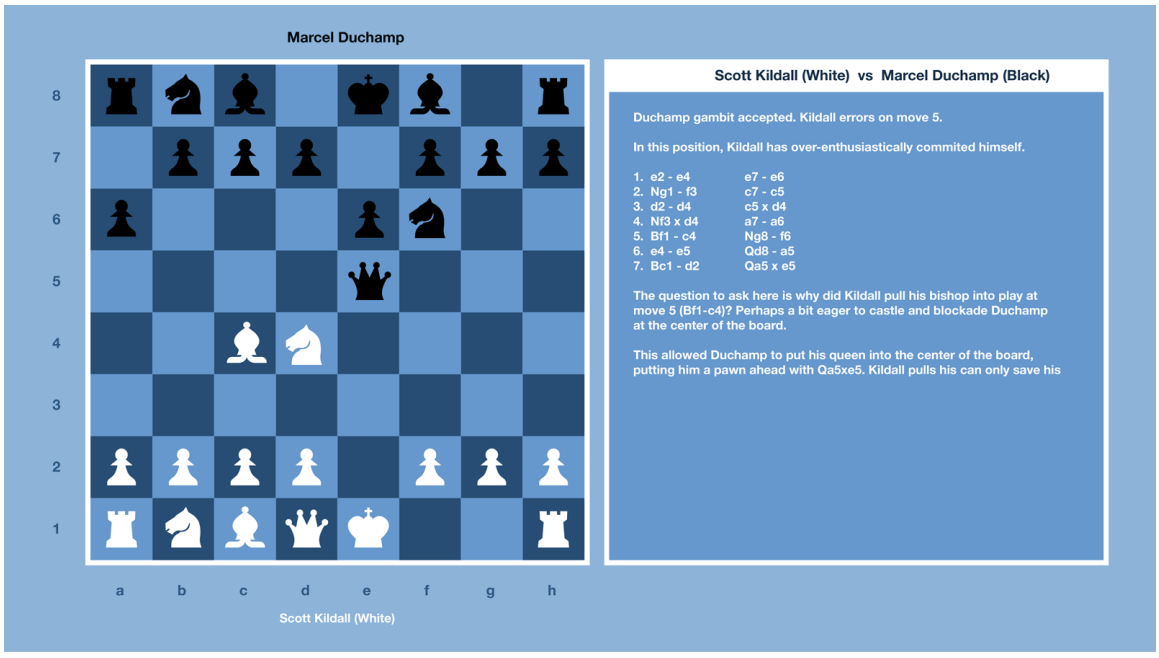
Playing Duchamp
by Scott Kildall
2010
Net Art with Physical Installation

Abstract
“I have come to the personal conclusion that while all artists are not chess players, all chess players are artists.” — Marcel Duchamp

Marcel Duchamp is widely recognized for his contribution to conceptual art, but his lifelong obsession was the game of chess, in which he achieved the rank of Master. Working with the records of his chess matches, I have created a computer program to play chess *as if it were Marcel Duchamp*. In a series of open challenges, I invite all artists, both skilled and unskilled at this classic game, to play against a Duchampian ghost.

The game itself will be available for general play on the web — this is the networked portion of the artwork. The chess games will be playable by anyone who registers.

For the physical installation, I will work with a chess expert to identify the critical junctions then develop analysis with commentary. Additionally a table with a chessboard and a monitor of Duchamp (displaying a look-alike actor) will watch a game in-progress, with audible breathing to lend a virtual presence. In an absurd gesture, since most artists cannot defeat Duchamp or even know how to play chess, each game indicates a struggle with past legacies and constructed notations.



Technical Specs
This will be a very low bandwidth application. I expect the flash module to be less than 2mb in size.

Traffic may be up to 100 people/month who actually play full games. I would expect no greater than 1 gigabyte/month of bandwidth.

Additional installations:
Support for Flash

Budget
The bulk of the cost for *Playing Duchamp* will be in the development of the chess algorithm and recoding of a commercially-available chess engine.

While I will set up the basic framework for this, I will have to hire an expert chess programmer to develop the Duchamp-thinking algorithms. Additionally, I will require a visual designer for the chess game itself who will also serve as a Flash expert to decipher some of the Flash chess engine code.

SparkChess engine licensing	**$525**
Expert chess programmer for algorithm development	**$2500**
Graphic/Flash designer to redesign chess pieces	**$1000**
Flat screen monitor for physical display	**$200**
Look-alike actor and gear for recording session	**$200**
Card table, chess board other physical props	**$150**

Total: $4575

Artist's Info
Scott Kildall's website is at: http://www.kildall.com/

His CV is at: http://www.kildall.com/cv/cv.html

Five work samples include:

No Matter (2010)
Portable Testing Kit and Custom Video
http://www.kildall.com/artwork/2010/after_thought/index.html

No Matter (2008)
Mixed-reality installation with Second Life and real-life gallery
http://www.kildall.com/artwork/2008/no_matter/no_matter.html

Paradise Ahead (2007)
Digital prints from Second Life
http://www.kildall.com/artwork/2007/paradise_ahead/paradise_ahead.html

Video Portraits (2007)
Single-channel video
http://www.kildall.com/artwork/2007/something_to_remind_me/strm.html

Uncertain Location (2007)
Video installation with prints
http://www.kildall.com/artwork/2007/uncertain_location/uncertain_location.html