

LACMA FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EXHIBITION: DRAWING SURREALISM

ON VIEW: OCTOBER 21, 2012–JANUARY 6, 2013

LOCATION: BCAM, LEVEL 2

LACMA PRESENTS THE FIRST MAJOR EXHIBITION TO SPOTLIGHT SURREALIST DRAWING

DRAWING SURREALISM FEATURES 250 WORKS BY ARTISTS INCLUDING ANDRÉ MASSON, SALVADOR DALÍ, LEONORA CARRINGTON, RENÉ MAGRITTE, AND LOUISE BOURGEOIS, AMONG OTHERS



(IMAGE CAPTIONS ON PAGE 4)

(Los Angeles, August 10, 2012)–The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) presents *Drawing Surrealism*, the first large-scale loan exhibition to focus on drawing as a prevailing form of expression for surrealist artists. Co-organized by LACMA and the Morgan Library & Museum, the show features 250 works by nearly 100 artists from fifteen countries. While institutional appreciation for surrealism typically fixates on painting and sculpture, surrealists found drawing to be the most innovative and immediate means of artistic expression. *Drawing Surrealism* highlights LACMA’s burgeoning collection of surrealist works on paper and is a testament to the museum’s ongoing recognition of surrealism’s vital role in art history, demonstrated by a wealth of relevant exhibitions in recent years, including *Magritte and Contemporary Art: The Treachery of Images*, *Dalí: Painting & Film*, and *In Wonderland: The Surrealist Adventures of Women Artists in Mexico and the United States*.

"*Drawing Surrealism* is a celebration of innovation through drawing, which, in my opinion, is the medium best suited to experimentation and risktaking," says Leslie Jones, Curator of Prints and Drawings at LACMA. "The exhibition also addresses the international impact of surrealism by including artists from areas beyond Western Europe like Eastern Europe, the Americas, and Japan."

Surrealism's lasting impact on drawing is addressed within the exhibition by three contemporary projects by Los Angeles-based artists Alexandra Grant, Mark Licari, and Stas Orlovski that were conceived specifically for *Drawing Surrealism*. In addition and as part of the exhibition programming, artists Jim Shaw and Sterling Ruby will each be giving walkthroughs of the exhibition from their unique and individual perspectives on October 25 and November 15, respectively.

Exhibition Overview

Surrealism debuted primarily as a literary movement when André Breton published *Manifeste du surréalisme* in 1924; however, the movement quickly broadened its gaze to include the visual arts as a means of unlocking the imagery of dreams and tapping into the unconscious mind.

While numerous museum exhibitions have extolled surrealist painting and sculpture, *Drawing Surrealism* is unique in its exploration of drawing as a central process and medium employed by surrealist artists such as André Masson, Francis Picabia, Max Ernst, Joan Miró, Salvador Dalí, Yves Tanguy, among others. The exhibition begins with a selection of works by surrealist precursors like Jean (Hans) Arp, Picabia, and Ernst who were first associated with Dada. With the advent of automatic drawing that encouraged aimless (and thereby irrational) meandering of the artist's hand (demonstrated with works by Masson, Miró and others) surrealism found its first visual form of expression. Subsequently frottage (a rubbing technique devised by Max Ernst), exquisite corpses, collage, decalomania, and fumage (drawing with smoke), as well as the more traditional yet distorted drawing practices of Dalí and others, all contributed to broadening and ultimately redefining conventional understandings of drawing.

The exhibition also offers insight into the vast geographical reach of surrealism. The inclusion of Czechoslovakian artists such as Toyen and Jindřich Styrsky speak to the history of cultural dialogue between Prague and Paris—the birthplace of surrealism—while works by Ei-kyu and Ai Mitsu demonstrate Western Europe’s cultural exchange with Japan prior to World War II. In the 1930s the movement gained momentum in the Americas through the likes of Federico Castellón, Roberto Matta, and Arshile Gorky in the U.S. and Agustín Lazo and Gunther Gerzso in Mexico.

Exhibition Organization

Drawing Surrealism is divided into five galleries that roughly trace the movement’s chronological trajectory. The exhibition begins with precursors to the surrealist movement and automatic drawings before moving on to a focus on frottage and exquisite corpses. The show subsequently looks at collage, decalcomania—the act of transferring gouache from one surface to another—and photograms, presented as automatic drawings with light. The exhibition also features a 40-foot vitrine filled with surrealist publications highlighting the continuous dialogue between surrealist literature and visual arts and the revolutionary potential of illustration. *Drawing Surrealism’s* fourth room examines how artists adapted conventional or more technically precise drawing techniques to surrealist ends, often dealing with the grotesque, while the fifth and final gallery looks at the movement’s notable legacy in post-surrealist art practice through 1950, including works by Jackson Pollock, Louise Bourgeois, and Ellsworth Kelly.

Exhibition Publication

Drawing Surrealism’s 240-page eponymous catalogue is edited by LACMA curator Leslie Jones and published in collaboration with DelMonico Books/Prestel. The volume includes 200 full-color illustrations as well as an essay by Jones, who provides an overview of surrealist drawings between 1915-1950 and an illustrated chronology; additional essays were contributed by Isabelle Dervaux, Acquavella Curator of Modern and Contemporary Drawings at the Morgan Library & Museum, New York and Susan Laxton, Assistant Professor of the History of Art at the University of California, Riverside.

Credit

This exhibition was co-organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Morgan Library & Museum, New York, and was supported in part by LACMA's Prints and Drawings Council. Additional funding was provided by Erika Glazer and Myron Laskin.

About LACMA

Since its inception in 1965, LACMA has been devoted to collecting works of art that span both history and geography-and represent Los Angeles's uniquely diverse population. Today, the museum features particularly strong collections of Asian, Latin American, European, and American art, as well as a contemporary museum on its campus. With this expanded space for contemporary art, innovative collaborations with artists, and an ongoing Transformation project, LACMA is creating a truly modern lens through which to view its rich encyclopedic collection.

Location and Contact: 5905 Wilshire Boulevard (at Fairfax Avenue), Los Angeles, CA, 90036 | 323 857-6000 | lacma.org

Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: 11 am-5 pm; Friday: 11 am-8 pm; Saturday, Sunday: 10 am-7 pm; closed Wednesday

General Admission: Adults: \$15; students 18+ with ID and senior citizens 62+: \$10

Free General Admission: Members; children 17 and under; after 3 pm weekdays for L.A. County residents; second Tuesday of every month; Target Free Holiday Mondays

Images: (Left) André Masson, *Delire Vegetal* (Vegetal Delirium), 1925, ink, 42.6 x 30.5 cm, Private collection, Paris, © 2012 Andre Masson Estate/ARS/ADAGP, Paris

(Center Left) Jindřich Styrsky, *Stehyovaci cabinet*, 1934, collage, 33.5 x 23 cm, Annie Le Brun, Photo © 2012 Museum Associates/LACMA, by Hervé Lewandowski

(Center Right) Federico Castellón, *Her Eyes Trembled*, 1939, Pen and ink, 15 3/4 x 11 5/8 in., LACMA, gift of the 2006/2007 Drawings Group, M.2006.202. © Federico Castellón Estate. Digital Image © 2012 Museum Associates/LACMA.

(Right) Matta (Roberto Sebastián Matta Echaurren), *Original art for "Maldoror,"* 1938, ink, gouache and pencil on paper, 41 x 33 cm, Private collection, © 2012 Roberto-Sebastián Matta Echaurren Estate/ARS/ADAGP/Paris

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