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The Colour of My Dreams: The Surrealist Revolution in Art
The Vancouver Art Gallery Presents Ground-breaking Exhibition
Featuring 350 Works by Surrealist Masters
May 28 – September 25, 2011

VANCOUVER, BC – The most comprehensive exhibition of Surrealist art ever to be shown in this country will open at the Vancouver Art Gallery on May 28, 2011. *The Colour of My Dreams: The Surrealist Revolution in Art* features 350 works by leading Surrealist artists, including André Breton, Salvador Dalí, Max Ernst, René Magritte, Joan Miró, Alberto Giacometti, Leonora Carrington, Brassai, André Masson, Man Ray, Edith Rimmington, Wifredo Lam and many others.

Guest curated by Dawn Ades, internationally renowned expert on Surrealist art, *The Colour of My Dreams* will be shown exclusively at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Ades has selected works of art that underscore the Surrealists' radical sense of experimentation and the expansive range of mediums in which they worked, including painting, sculpture, collage, photography and film. The exhibition provides a stunning overview of one of most important movements of the 20th century and features a number of signature works by more than 80 artists including Dalí's *Lobster Telephone*, Ernst's *The Forest*, Miró's *Photo: This is the Colour of My Dreams*, Giacometti's *Spoon Woman*, Carrington's *The House Opposite* and Man Ray's *Emak-Bakia*, among many others. It will also reveal, for the first time, the Surrealists' passionate interest in indigenous art of the Pacific Northwest and the little-known influence of early Hollywood cinema on the development of Surrealist film.

This historic exhibition brings together loans from more than sixty of the world's foremost private collections, museums and galleries, including the Guggenheim, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, the Israel Museum, the Musée du quai Branly, the Centre Georges Pompidou, and Tate.

"This is an unprecedented exhibition that was four years in the making," said Gallery director Kathleen Bartels, "So many of the investigations done by the Surrealist artists continue to reverberate in contemporary art. We are delighted to have the opportunity to share the masterpieces of this tremendously influential movement with Canada, and – especially – to tell the story of Surrealism's special relationship with British Columbia and this part of the world."

André Breton wrote the first *Manifesto of Surrealism* in 1924, launching a movement which continues to exert a powerful influence. Inspired by Sigmund Freud's own investigations, Breton was fascinated by dreams and set out to create an artistic process which would tap directly into the unconscious mind and dreams freeing artists from what he saw as "false rationality."

The installation of the exhibition is designed to create a variety of environments and moods in which to contemplate the themes that the Surrealists explored over a period of three decades such as desire, androgyny, violence and transmutation. The exhibition also highlights the many techniques developed by Surrealist artists including automatism, frottage, fumage, Rayographs and 'the surrealist object,' an approach to sculpture in which several unrelated components—most often found objects—were joined together.



Max Ernst,
The Forest, 1923
oil on canvas
Philadelphia Museum of Art:
The Louise and Walter
Arensberg Collection, 1950
© Estate of Max Ernst /
SODRAC (2010)

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“Visitors to the exhibition will be immersed in the radical spirit of Surrealism,” said guest curator Dawn Ades. “This was a movement which was revolutionary in its time and hugely expansive in ambition. *The Colour of My Dreams* showcases the depth and breadth of the Surrealists’ provocative vision, and explores areas that have been virtually unexplored in the past.”

The Colour of My Dreams brings to light for the first time in an exhibition the Surrealists’ fascination with First Nations art. Breton and some of his colleagues felt European culture was in total decay in the decade preceding World War II, leading many of the Surrealist artists to develop a passionate, if complex, interest in indigenous ceremonial art, including that of the Pacific Northwest. The Surrealists were drawn to the “authentic” quality, inventiveness of form and visual brilliance of First Nations art. Some of the movement’s members collected, wrote about and even exhibited their own work alongside First Nations art from British Columbia and Alaska. Included in the exhibition are a number of spectacular masks and other First Nations pieces such as a Kwakwaka’wakw headdress from Alert Bay, British Columbia, which once belonged to Breton; two Alaskan Yup’ik masks acquired by Enrico Donati; and a sketchbook by Robert Lebel depicting First Nations masks. This important component of the exhibition also highlights, through a selection of never-before-exhibited documentary photographs, the seminal trip made to British Columbia and Alaska in the late 1930s by artist Kurt Seligmann.

Another ground-breaking aspect of *The Colour of My Dreams* is an examination of the little-known influence of early cinema on the development and evolution of Surrealist film – perhaps one of the most influential legacies of the movement. The exhibition reveals the formative early films that captured the Surrealists’ imagination – ranging from F.W. Murnau’s *Nosferatu* to Betty Boop cartoons to Hollywood movies featuring Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton. Displayed throughout the various galleries of the exhibition, nearly 30 films reveal the provocative nature of Surrealist filmmaking and its antecedents.

A media preview of *The Colour of My Dreams* and curator’s tour with Dawn Ades will take place on Thursday, May 26th at 9am.

On the occasion of the exhibition a 336-page hardcover book edited by Dawn Ades will be published by the Vancouver Art Gallery. One of the largest books produced by the Gallery, it features essays by Ades and thirteen other internationally acclaimed scholars.

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Photographs for publication are available on request.

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Edith Rimmington
The Oneiroscope, 1947
oil on canvas
The Vera and Arturo Schwarz
Collection of Dada and
Surrealist Art in the Israel
Museum
Photo: © The Israel Museum,
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