

# OBJECTS OF DESIRE

LARGE PRINT GUIDE

the  
DESIGN  
MUSEUM



**ROOM 1**

**OBJECTS  
OF  
DESIRE**

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# Bloomberg Connects

Download the free arts and culture app, Bloomberg Connects, to enjoy an audio tour of ten key highlights from the #ObjectsOfDesire exhibition.



Look for the icon next to 10 objects in the exhibition and enter each number in the Lookup tab on the app.



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# OBJECTS OF DESIRE

## SURREALISM & DESIGN 1924 - TODAY

Surrealism recognises dreams and desires as our constant companions. The relationship between this influential art movement and design is one of the most exciting and creative of the last hundred years. Surrealism liberates design from the rational and utilitarian. It shifts our focus from an object's practical function to its hidden messages. It inspires designers to resist habit and challenge everyday convention.

Surrealism began as a literary movement shaped by symbolist poetry and Dadaist art. Its success story dates from the mid-1920s, when French poet André Breton and his allies extended Surrealist principles to painting and then to objects. Over the next decade, Surrealism's energising and disruptive impact was felt across architecture and interior design, furniture, fashion and film.

Surrealism was in part a reaction to the horrors of the First World War (1914–18) and the 1918 influenza pandemic. Today, in the context of dizzying technological change, war and the Covid-19 pandemic,

the Surrealist spirit feels relevant once again.  
It inspires designers to change more than the  
material world, shaping our inner worlds too. ■■■■■

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*Cadeau* (Gift), 1963 replica of lost 1921 original  
**Man Ray**

A domestic tool becomes a dangerous weapon. Man Ray's bold yet ambiguous 'Gift' is one of the earliest and most famous Surrealist objects. What is the gift? To rip clothes instead of ironing them neatly? Ripped and torn fabric featured in surrealist fashions by Salvador Dalí and Elsa Schiaparelli, prefiguring punk subculture by nearly four decades.

Iron, nails  
Vitra Design Museum

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*The Uncertainty of the Poet*, 1913  
**Giorgio de Chirico**

*My eyes saw thought for the first time.*

**René Magritte**, on discovering the work  
of Giorgio de Chirico

De Chirico painted the world as he saw it, coloured by his personal emotions and associations. The early Surrealists were deeply inspired. One of de Chirico's paintings hung on the wall of their headquarters in 1920s Paris. De Chirico also wrote poems, one of which begins, 'Life, life, great mysterious dream!'

Oil paint on canvas

Tate: Purchased with assistance from the Art Fund (Eugene Cremetti Fund), the Carroll Donner Bequest, the Friends of the Tate Gallery and members of the public 1985

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► **Chandelier hanging from ceiling**

*Lunar Camel (1 & 2), 2022*

**Jonathan Trayte**

*There has to be a fly in the ointment, there has to be a conflict. In the natural world nothing is ever perfect.*

**Jonathan Trayte**

Trayte's sculptural furniture is punchy, fantastical and deliberately imperfect. Like the Surrealists, he is alive to the impact of objects on the mind and senses. The suspended weight of bronze, contrasted with a delicate and unexpected cascade of horsehair, creates the right degree of sensory conflict in this piece.

Polished bronze, stainless steel, horse hair, light fittings  
Courtesy of Jonathan Trayte

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*Metamorphosis of Narcissus*, 1937

**Salvador Dalí**

What can be seen in this painting? The metamorphosis, or transformation, in the title happens in the viewer's own eye. Intricate double images shift and change as we look closer: a hand becomes a crouching figure, a stone becomes a seed. Dalí claimed this painting began with 'delirious phenomena': images that arose spontaneously in his mind. Some Surrealists worked only to capture this delirium. Dalí treated it as a starting point, skilfully developing personal visions into works of technical brilliance.

Oil paint on canvas

Tate: Purchased 1979

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Portrait sketch of Sigmund Freud, 1938

**Salvador Dalí**

Smythson notebook with list of Freud's visitors,  
including Dalí, 1938-39

Dalí sketched Freud, pioneer of psychoanalysis, during their only meeting. Freud was a reserved and uncommunicative host, but he was impressed by his visitor. The next day, he wrote, 'I was inclined to look upon Surrealists – who have apparently chosen me for their patron saint – as absolute (let us say 95 per cent, like alcohol) cranks. The young Spaniard, however, with his candid fanatical eyes and his undeniable technical mastery, has made me reconsider my opinion.'

Ink on paper

On loan from the Freud Museum London

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*Tête de femme ayant la forme d'une bataille*  
(Woman's head in the form of a battle), 1936

**Salvador Dalí**

Manipulating the human form to capture psychological states was a repeated theme of surrealist art.

Dalí played with double images throughout the 1930s, relishing their ambiguity, mystery and technical challenge. His skill is evident in both this work and the painting *Metamorphosis of Narcissus*, on display nearby. This painting belonged to collector Edward James, patron of Dalí.

Oil on wood

Private collection

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Portrait of Edward James, 1936

**Salvador Dalí**

Edward James, poet and patron of the arts, owned a significant selection of works by Dalí. During the late 1930s, Dalí and James developed surrealist designs together for James' homes in Sussex and London. These included the iconic Lobster Telephones and Mae West Lips sofas. This intimate ink portrait study of James by Dalí highlights their close friendship.

Ink on paper

West Dean College of Arts and Conservation

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# EVERYDAY OBJECTS

From the 1920s onwards, the Surrealists attached central importance to everyday objects: bicycles, telephones, chairs – even apples. These objects were treated with humour or irony, given new purpose and meaning in new contexts, or combined to make curious hybrids. A chair with arms and also hands. An iron studded with nails.

The 1924 *Manifesto of Surrealism* by poet André Breton called for the fusion of subconscious and conscious thought in a new ‘absolute reality, a surreality’. Although Surrealism is often seen as escapist, its founders were more interested in changing perceptions of reality. The Surrealists defined their new world of objects in journals and publications. Breton spoke of ‘convulsive beauty’ and Salvador Dalí of ‘objects with symbolic function’. Group exhibitions of art, objects and performance in Paris and London were a key vehicle for these early Surrealist ideas. ■■■■■

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International Surrealist Exhibition poster,  
London, 1936

**Max Ernst**

The Surrealists approached exhibitions as collective artworks. This exhibition, the first on Surrealism in the UK, was created by artist Roland Penrose and critic Herbert Read in collaboration with Max Ernst, Salvador Dalí and others. Model Sheila Legg attended the opening with her head covered in roses – embodying Dalí’s 1935 painting *Femme à tête de roses*. Her image featured on the cover of the *International Surrealist Bulletin* No. 4. Dalí himself arrived wearing a deep-sea diving suit.

Colour lithograph on paper  
The Penrose Collection

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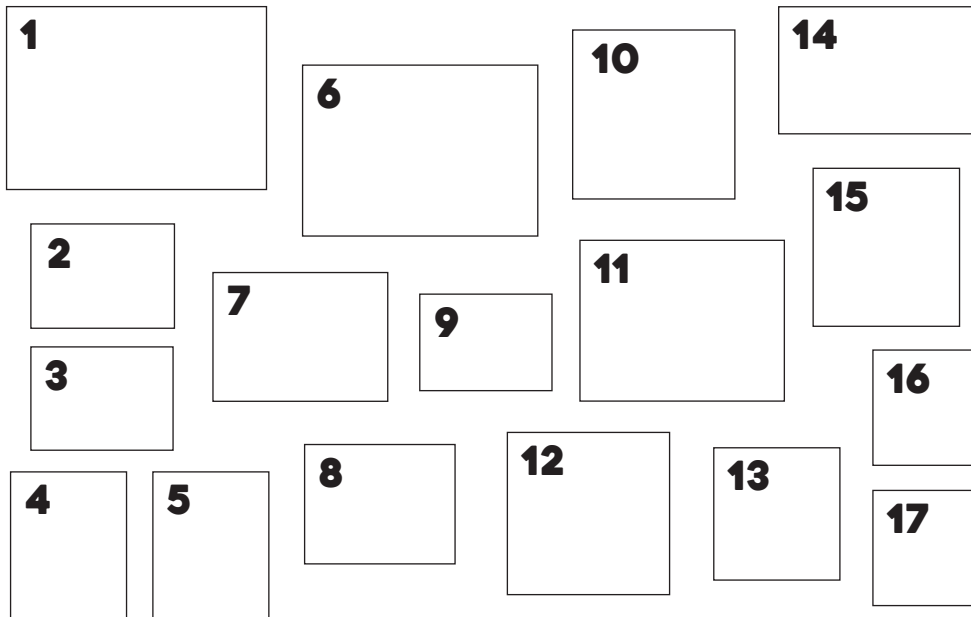
Exhibition poster, E.R.O.S. (*Exposition inteRnatiOnale du Surréalisme*), Paris, 1959

**Mimi Parent**

Artist Mimi Parent created the Surrealist object featured on this poster. Titled Masculin-Féminin, it combines a man's shirt with a tie made from women's hair. The 1959 exhibition E.R.O.S. was a wide-ranging exploration of eroticism, and the last Surrealist exhibition involving the movement's founding member, André Breton. The contribution of women to this exhibition counterbalanced the focus on the sexualised female body typical of Surrealist shows before 1939.

2019, courtesy of Gallery Ronny Van de Velde, Belgium

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- 1** Surrealist artists including Salvador Dalí wearing a deep-sea diving suit, International Surrealist Exhibition, New Burlington Galleries, London, 1936  
2019, Tate
- 2\_3** *Exposition Surréaliste* (Surrealist Exhibition), Galerie Pierre Colle, Paris, 1933  
Photographs **Man Ray**
- 2** 2019, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 125th Anniversary Acquisition. The Lynne and Harold Honickman Gift of the Julien Levy Collection
- 3** 2019 © bpk/Centre Pompidou-MNAM, Paris

- 4\_5** Surrealist Objects and Poems exhibition,  
The London Gallery, London, 1937  
Photographs **Roland Penrose**  
2019, Lee Miller Archives
- 6\_9** *Exposition surréaliste d'objets*  
(Exhibition of surrealist objects),  
Charles Ratton, Paris, 1936  
Photographs **Man Ray**  
2019 © bpk/Centre Pompidou-MNAM, Paris
- 10\_13** *Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme*  
(International Exhibition of Surrealism),  
Galerie des Beaux-Arts, Paris, 1938  
Photographs **Roger Schall,**  
**Josef Breitenbach & Denise Bellon**
- 10** Roger Schall, 2019 © The Museum of  
Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence
- 11** 2019, The Josef and Yaye Breitenbach  
Charitable Foundation, courtesy of  
The Center For Creative Photography
- 12\_13** 2019 © Denise Bellon/akg-images
- 14** André Breton's *Le Désordinateur*  
(The Dis-computer) installation,  
*L'Écart absolu* (The absolute gap)  
exhibition, Galerie de l'oeil, Paris, 1965  
2019, Victoria and Albert Museum, London



- 15** *Salle de Superstition, Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme* (Superstition Room, International Exhibition of Surrealism), Galerie Maeght, Paris, 1947  
Design **Frederick Jakob Kiesler**  
Photograph **William Maywald**  
  
2019, Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private Foundation
- 16** *Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme* (International Exhibition of Surrealism), Galerie Maeght, Paris, 1947  
Design **Roberto Matta**  
Photograph **Denise Bellon**  
  
2019 © Denise Bellon/akg-images
- 17** E.R.O.S.,  
*Exposition internationale du Surréalisme* (International Exhibition of Surrealism), Galerie Daniel Cordier, Paris, 1959  
Photograph **Roger van Hecke**  
  
2019, Association Atelier André Breton
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► **In vitrine**

*L'Art décoratif d'aujourd'hui*

(The decorative art of today), 1925

**Le Corbusier**

Modernist architect Le Corbusier sought to revolutionise the design of everyday life. He maintained an important engagement with surrealist ideas, which were also concerned with transforming the everyday. The essays collected here were first published in his magazine *L'Esprit Nouveau*. Illustrations of bidets and pipes in these pages call to mind iconic surrealist works by Marcel Duchamp and René Magritte.

Vitra Design Museum

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Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution  
(Surrealism in the service of the revolution),  
no. 3, December 1931

This issue of the Surrealist journal contains an important essay by Dalí defining L'objet surréaliste (The surrealist object). Dalí and sculptor Alberto Giacometti were among several Surrealists who began to design objects, assemblages and interiors alongside the development of their art practice.

Vitra Design Museum

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*Dictionnaire abrégé du surréalisme*  
(Concise Dictionary of Surrealism), 1938; reprinted 1969

**André Breton**

**Paul Éluard**

This dictionary of surrealist terminology and works was an ambitious attempt to redefine the world of everyday objects in surrealist terms. It was originally produced to accompany the 1938 International Exhibition of Surrealism. Dalí contributed an entry, Téléphone Aphrodisiaque (Aphrodisiac Telephone), with a drawing which is like his later design for the Lobster Telephone.

Vitra Design Museum

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Surrealist review *Les Lèvres Nues*  
(The Naked Lips), Belgium, 1989

**Marcel Mariën**

Vitra Design Museum

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► On wall to the right of the vitrine

*Quadriga*, 1935

**Eileen Agar**

This painting was exhibited at the 1936 International Surrealist Exhibition in London. Artist Eileen Agar was one of the few British women included in the show. *Quadriga* was inspired by a photograph of an ancient Greek horse's head, which Agar repeated and transformed four times. Her approach questions the traditional presentation of classical motifs as static and perfect. A similarly subversive treatment of classical sculpture is found in works by Agar's contemporaries, Dalí and de Chirico, then later in the Pop Art and Radical Design movements of the 1950s and '60s.

Mixed media

The Penrose Collection

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# THE INTERIOR FROM SURREALISM TO DESIGN

Surrealism began shaping the designed world through architecture and interiors. In contrast to the rational and minimalist aesthetics of 1920s modernism, Surrealism inspired designers to focus on human emotions, experiment with organic forms and engage with irrational thought.

Monkton House, home of British poet Edward James, is one of the most complete examples of a Surrealist interior. James collaborated with artist Salvador Dalí on the design of iconic and wildly imaginative pieces, including the Lobster Telephones and Mae West Lips sofas.

There was also an active exchange between Surrealism and modern design. Swiss architect Le Corbusier was commissioned by eccentric millionaire Carlos de Beistegui to design his Parisian apartment in a style that blended fantastical surrealist elements with clean-cut modern lines. Le Corbusier's work also featured in Dalí's house in Portlligat, Spain, which was furnished in 1931 with modern tubular-steel furniture. Aristocrats Marie-Laure and Charles de Noailles commissioned artist and photographer Man Ray to make a Surrealist film in their modernist home, the Villa Noailles. ■■■■■

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► On central plinths

Cat's Cradle Hands Chair, about 1936

**Salvador Dalí**

**Edward James**

*Surrealism is based on the belief in the superior reality...of previously neglected associations, in the omnipotence of dream.*

**André Breton**

This dream-like chair is named after the child's game of Cat's Cradle, played with looped string between the fingers. Salvador Dalí developed the design with Edward James, collector of Surrealist art. James was fascinated by an expressive 'Dance of the Hands' performed by Tilly Losch and Hedy Pfundmayer. Losch was married to James from 1931-34.

Manufactured and hand-carved by John English  
Oak, leather  
West Dean College of Arts and Conservation

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Footprint carpet design (sample), early 1930s

**Edward James**

**Norris Wakefield** for D.S. Mann

Surrealist patron Edward James commissioned this carpet woven with the footprints of his wife, the dancer Tilly Losch. It was inspired by a trail of wet footprints she left after stepping from her bath and captures her fleeting, erotic presence. After the couple divorced, James commissioned a new carpet with another woven with his dog's paw prints, which, he said, 'represented a more faithful friend.'

Manufactured by Royal Wilton Carpet Company

Wool

West Dean College of Arts and Conservation

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Champagne lamp, 1938

**Salvador Dalí**

**Edward James**

This design takes the profile of a Victorian standard lamp and subverts it with a column made from whimsically oversized 'champagne glasses' made in brass. Manufacturers Green & Abbot inserted thin glass discs into each brass glass to prevent guests from using them as ashtrays. The new surreal style of interior design, known as Fantasy Modern, was becoming very fashionable by the late 1930s.

Lacquered metal, plastic, textile

West Dean College of Arts and Conservation

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► In central case

Mae West Lips sofa, 1938

**Salvador Dalí**

**Edward James**

Dalí's startlingly bold and erotic concept came from a suggestion by Edward James, his friend and patron. James commissioned a sofa inspired by Dalí's painting, *Mae West's Face which May Be Used as a Surrealist Apartment*. The now-iconic sofa, shown here, is one of only five manufactured. James positioned two next to the Champagne lamps in his home, Monkton House. This display case evokes his surrealist interior design scheme.

Manufactured by Green & Abbott

Felt, wood

Brighton & Hove Museums

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Lobster Telephone, 1938

**Salvador Dalí**

**Edward James**

Dalí considered both lobsters and telephones to be intensely erotic. His design is an iconic Surrealist object, an unlikely configuration created by a quirk of the artist's mind. The lobster's tail, where the animal's sexual organs are located, is provocatively positioned over the mouthpiece of the telephone. Edward James commissioned eleven Lobster Telephones for use in his London townhouse. The piece represents an influential marriage of art and interior design, fantasy and functionality.

Bakelite, plaster, resin

West Dean College of Arts and Conservation

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► **To the left of *'The Interior: From Surrealism to Design'* panel**

*Surrealist Architecture*,  
facsimile of 1937 original

**Salvador Dalí**

2019, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, Figueres

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*Projects for a Lamp*, facsimile of 1930s original  
**Salvador Dalí**

Dalí saw furniture, interior and fashion design as a continuation of his artistic practice. Like his paintings, his designs were generated by what he called a ‘paranoiac-critical’ method. He would pay attention to images that came spontaneously and irrationally into his mind, and then try to capture them on paper. In the process of sketching and painting, he would critically analyse and examine these images in detail.

2019, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, Figueres

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Drawing for Beistegui apartment, 1929

**Le Corbusier**

Photograph of Beistegui apartment rooftop terrace,  
1929-31

**Marius Gravot**

*The outside is always an inside.*

**Le Corbusier**

Le Corbusier was among the first designers to engage with surrealist ideas and aesthetics. The design of this Parisian apartment shows Le Corbusier combining his signature minimalist architectural lines with a decorative scheme that is opulent and theatrical. The rooftop terrace featured a fantastical open-air fireplace and an empty mirror frame, drawing attention to monuments in the cityscape beyond.

Black ink on paper

Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris

2019, Vitra Design Museum

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Sketch of Mae West Lips sofa with dimensions  
on an envelope, 1937

**Edward Carrick**

This literal 'back of an envelope' sketch is for an early version of the iconic Mae West Lips sofa in pink satin. It is thought to be by the designer Edward Carrick, from Associated Artist Technicians. Carrick was working with surrealist patron, Edward James, at the time. James also consulted Elsa Schiaparelli to develop this idea. Although Dalí provided the original inspiration for the sofa, several others, including James, were closely involved in realising this iconic design.

Ink and graphite on paper  
West Dean College of Arts and Conservation

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*The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, 1942

**Salvador Dalí**

Translated by Haakon M. Chevalier

*At the age of six I wanted to be a cook.  
At seven I wanted to be Napoleon. And my  
ambition has been growing steadily since.*

**Salvador Dalí**

In typically flamboyant style, Dalí's autobiography tells the story of his life and explains the genesis of his most iconic works. These pages document the origins of his design for the Mae West Lips sofa. Sources of inspiration included undulating architectural forms by Dalí's fellow Catalanian, Antoni Gaudí.

Bakelite, plaster, resin

West Dean College of Arts and Conservation

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*Don Carlos de Beistegui*  
(excerpt from documentary), 1989

**Patrick Mimouni**

2 minutes

Salvador Dalí can be seen here as a guest of Carlos de Beistegui, art collector and flamboyant multi-millionaire. At the top of the white spiral staircase in this clip, a glass wall rolls back at the press of a button to reveal a roof terrace designed by Le Corbusier to Beistegui's specifications. The whole apartment was intended as a private venue for lavish entertainment.

© Patrick Mimouni

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Carlos de Beistegui's apartment, designed by  
Le Corbusier, as featured in *Plaisir de France*, 1936

Vitra Design Museum

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*Les Mystères du Château de Dé*

(The Mysteries of the Castle of Dice) (excerpt), 1929

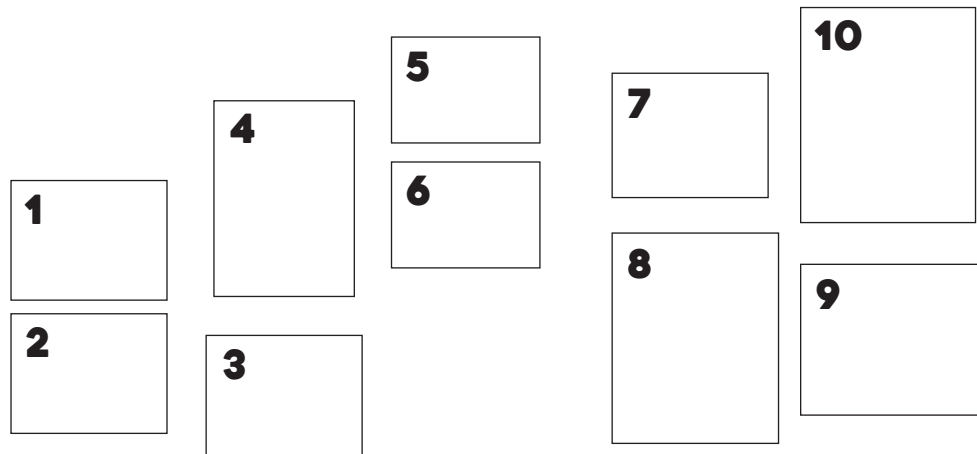
**Man Ray**

2 minutes

The early modernist Villa Noailles forms a striking backdrop for this film by Man Ray. The villa was designed by Robert Mallet-Stevens for aristocrats Charles and Marie-Laure de Noailles. Severe architectural lines frame and enhance the fluid movement of people playing sports and games of chance. Charles Noailles commissioned the film for his wife, Marie-Laure, who appears alongside other guests at the villa.

Cinédoc Paris Films Coop

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- 1\_3** Views of the rooftop garden of Carlos de Beistegui's apartment, Paris, about 1929-31  
Design **Le Corbusier**  
Photographs **Marius Gravot**

2019, Fondation Le Corbusier  
Vitra Design Museum

- 4** Salvador Dalí painting while seated on a tubular-steel chair, about 1931  
Photograph **Gala Dalí**

2019, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, Figueres

- 5\_6** Salvador and Gala Dalí in their house at Portlligat, Spain, about 1931

2019, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, Figueres

**7\_9** Photographs of the interior of Monkton House,  
1987

2019, Historic England Archive

**10** The Soare Bedroom, Monkton House, 1980s  
Photograph **Lucinda Lambton**

2019, Historic England Archive

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Carlo Mollino's designs for Casa Miller,  
Domus, no. 129, September 1938

**Carlo Levi**

Vitra Design Museum

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Photographs of interior designs by Carlo Mollino,  
1936-49

2019, Museo Casa Mollino, Turin

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Interior designs by Carlo Mollino, about 1936-49

4 minutes

Italian designer and architect Carlo Mollino began to design interiors that reflected the visual language of Surrealism in the late 1930s. He followed designs by Dalí published in the Surrealist magazine *Minotaure*. His work featured trompe l'oeil effects, bizarre object fragments, padded walls and even a lips-shaped sofa for the Casa Devalle in Turin that referenced Dalí's Mae West Lips sofa for Monkton House.

Vitra Design Museum

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► **On central plinths**

Bracelli standing lamp, 2019 edition of 1937 design  
**Salvador Dalí**

Interior designer Jean-Michel Frank commissioned this lamp design from Dalí in 1937. Its elegant lines and luxurious finish were in keeping with Frank's aesthetic but he considered it too unusual for the market at that time. The lamp was first manufactured in 2009.

Manufactured by BD Barcelona Design  
Gold-plated wood, fabric shade  
Vitra Design Museum

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Armchair for Casa Calvet, Barcelona, 1975  
edition of 1900 design

**Antoni Gaudí**

Gaudí's experiments with innovative, fluid forms in the late 1800s were ahead of their time. His work influenced the early Surrealists. After 1960, the aesthetics which Gaudí and the Surrealists had pioneered became more popular. Several re-editions of their designs were made at this time, including this armchair.

Manufactured by BD Barcelona Design  
Carved oak  
Vitra Design Museum

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Plywood low table, 1950

**Carlo Mollino**

Mollino designed this low table for the living room of Casa Orengo in Turin, one of his first interior commissions. Its shape is strongly suggestive of a table in Dalí's 1935 painting *Femme à tête de roses*.

Manufactured by Apelli & Varesio

Varnished moulded maple plywood, safety glass, brass

Vitra Design Museum

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Ozon III, 1962

**Le Corbusier**

Natural wood, mahogany, white paint

© FLC/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2019

Fondation Le Corbusier

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Taureau VI (Bull), 1954

**Le Corbusier**

Le Corbusier shared the Surrealists' fascination with the Minotaur - the half-man, half-bull monster that haunted the centre of the labyrinth in Greek mythology. Le Corbusier trained as a painter before turning to architecture and deliberately fused artistic and design practice throughout his career.

Oil on canvas

© FLC/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2019

Fondation Le Corbusier

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Surrealist magazine *Minotaure*, 1937, 1939

Cover design for no. 10, 1937

**René Magritte**

Cover design for no. 12/13, 1939

**André Masson**

The Greek myth of the Minotaur, a half-man, half-bull monster trapped in a maze, resonated with the Surrealists' efforts to connect the outer world with inner desires. Contradictions existing within the Minotaur's character – being strong yet vulnerable, menacing yet entrapped – also seemed to them to capture the conflicted spirit of 1920s and '30s European culture.

Vitra Design Museum

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# AMERICAN DREAMS

The influence of Surrealism on everyday visual culture gained momentum in late-1930s America. Several Surrealists emigrated from Europe to the United States at this time, seeking refuge from Nazism and the Second World War (1939-45). These artists and designers formed influential relationships with American creatives and patrons.

Salvador Dalí designed shop windows for the Bonwit Teller department store and collaborated on films with animation pioneer Walt Disney and filmmaker Alfred Hitchcock. In New York, Frederick Kiesler designed a new gallery for wealthy art collector Peggy Guggenheim in surrealist style, with curved walls.

Emerging designers including Ray Eames and Isamu Noguchi were inspired by Surrealism's biomorphic design language, based on patterns found in nature. Together with the aerodynamic curves of 1930s American streamline style, this crucially influenced the organic forms of 1950s design in America. ██████████



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Material study (relief), 1970s reconstruction  
of 1933 original

**Alvar Aalto**

‘As soon as the feel of an assignment and the innumerable demands it involves have sunk into my subconscious... I simply draw by instinct... the main idea gradually takes shape, a kind of universal substance that helps me bring the numerous contradictory components into harmony.’ Alvar Aalto’s description of his creative process suggests parallels with Surrealist strategies to embrace chance and the instinctive or irrational. His use of organic forms was influenced by the work of his fellow sculptor, Hans Arp.

Wood, plywood

Alvar Aalto Foundation

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*Three Forms on Pink and Brown*, 1936

**Paule Vézelay**

Paule Vézelay was a pioneering abstract artist whose multidisciplinary practice encompassed painting, sculpture, collage, compositions with stretched strings, drawing and engraving. Her relationships and connections with surrealist artists, including André Masson and Hans and Sophie-Taeuber Arp, inspired her to experiment with organic forms – an important step in the development of her own visual language.

Oil on canvas

Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, University of East Anglia

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Radio Nurse, 1937

**Isamu Noguchi**

The elegant and organic lines of this innovative baby monitor reflect Noguchi's belief that 'everything is sculpture'. He drew no distinction between design and artistic practice in his career. A visual language drawing on organic, natural forms created common ground between Surrealism and contemporary American design from the 1930s to '50s.

Manufactured by Zenith Radio Corp, about 1937-45

Bakelite

Vitra Design Museum

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► **On central plinths**

Chess Table, model no. IN-61, 1947-49 edition  
of 1944 original

**Isamu Noguchi**

Noguchi's signature organic forms soften the grid of a conventional chess board. His design reworks a familiar object in a strange and surprising way. Noguchi created the first edition of this table as a young designer for the 1944 exhibition *The Imagery of Chess*, staged by the artists Max Ernst and Marcel Duchamp in New York.

Manufactured by Herman Miller Furniture Company, 1947-49  
Ebonised plywood, tabletop inlaid with acrylic-based plastic,  
cast aluminium, lacquered black steel

Vitra Design Museum

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► **On right-hand wall**

*Lunettes et lorgnon* (Spectacles and eyeglass)

*Le squelette et son entourage* (The skeleton and its entourage), 1959

**Hans (Jean) Arp**

One-colour serigraph

Artek Collection

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Kopf und Blätter (Head and Leaf), 1960

**Hans (Jean) Arp**

Arp saw human art activity as a natural process, akin to a plant producing fruit. He experimented freely with organic forms that expressed life cycles and growth processes. These works are neither figurative nor abstract but explore a visual world in which human and natural forms coexist. Arp has been described as a 'one man laboratory for the discovery of new forms'.

Paint on cardboard

Hans Arp and Sophie Taeuber-Arp Foundation

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Outre-Vase, 1997 edition of 1965 original

**Hans (Jean) Arp**

Arp described his work as an ‘attempt to teach man what he had forgotten – to dream with his eyes open.’ His interest in uniting dream and reality dated from his early involvement in both Dadaism and Surrealism. He championed Dada as an art movement that radically democratised art and insisted that a sculpture by Michelangelo and an ‘inspired snowman’ were both equally admirable.

Bronze

Stiftung Arp e.V. Berlin/Rolandswerth

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Untitled (To Hofmann with Love from Buddha),  
about 1941

**Ray Eames**

Ray Eames trained as an artist before launching her career in design. The organic, flowing lines and balanced structure of this lithograph are also evident in her later plywood sculptures. Eames dedicated this piece to her former tutor Hans Hofmann, an abstract expressionist artist with links to Surrealism. His nickname for Ray Eames was ‘Buddha’.

Ink and pigment on paper

Eames Collection LLC. All Rights Reserved.

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Moulded Plywood Splint Sculpture, about 1942-43  
**Ray Eames**

Moulded plywood  
Eames Collection LLC. All Rights Reserved.

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► **On central plinths**

Moulded Plywood Sculpture, 1943  
**Ray & Charles Eames**

This biomorphic sculpture is a groundbreaking work of fine art and industrial design. In this work, the husband-and-wife design team of Ray and Charles Eames perfected their process for moulding plywood; their great innovation and contribution to design history. A feat of technical design and craftsmanship was required to produce these apparently effortless organic curves.

Manufactured by Evans Products Company, Molded Plywood Division  
Eucalyptus plywood, walnut veneer  
Vitra Design Museum

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Correalist Rocker, 1942

**Frederick Jakob Kiesler**

This 'Rocker' functions as a seat or table in almost any position. Kiesler designed the piece as furniture for Peggy Guggenheim's contemporary art gallery. He invented the term 'Correalism' to describe his own visionary design language, based on organic forms that were open to transformation. In line with Surrealist thinking, Kiesler believed that designed forms should reflect psychological and spiritual aspects of reality.

Manufactured by Gustave Dickwisch  
Oak, linoleum over fir plywood  
Vitra Design Museum

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► **In vitrine**

- 1** Diagram of Correalist furniture in 18 different positions, 1943  
**Frederick Jakob Kiesler**

2021, Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private Foundation

- 2** Review of Peggy Guggenheim's 'Art of This Century' gallery, designed by Frederick Kiesler, 1942

2021, Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private Foundation

- 3** *Contemporary Art Applied to the Store and its Display*, 1930  
**Frederick Jakob Kiesler**

In this groundbreaking publication, Kiesler recommends the paintings of de Chirico as inspiration for contemporary commercial window displays. Surrealism continues to be a pervasive influence in the visual language of advertising today.

Vitra Design Museum



- 4** *Les Épiphanies* (The Epiphanies), 1948  
**Henri Pichette**

Vitra Design Museum

- 5** *The Drama of Display: Visual Merchandising and its Techniques*, 1953  
**James David Buckley**

Vitra Design Museum

- 6** *Une saison en enfer* (A season in hell), 1945  
**Arthur Rimbaud**

Aged 16, the poet Rimbaud wrote, 'The Poet makes himself a seer by a long, vast and reasoned derangement of the senses.' The early Surrealists idolised Rimbaud and the disjointed flow of vivid imagery in his poetry. As an adopted part of the Surrealist canon, his work had a lasting impact on post-war American pop culture from the Beat poets to songwriters including Patti Smith and Jim Morrison.

Vitra Design Museum

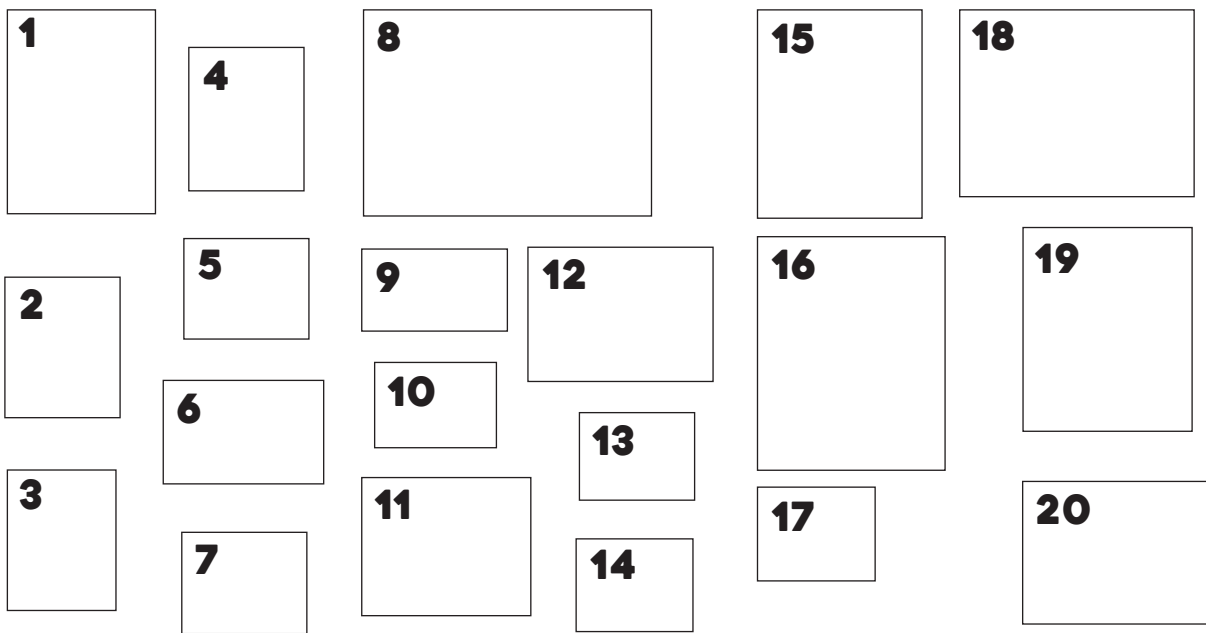
**7** *Mathématique sensible – Architecture du temps* (Sensitive mathematics – Architecture of time), 1938

**Roberto Sebastian Matta**

Natural and organic forms spread into the rigid lines in this sketch. In Matta's words, they create a 'new architectural, habitable space' sensitive to human emotions and psychological needs. This illustration accompanied his article on architecture in the Surrealist magazine *Minotaure*. Matta, a Chilean painter, designer and architect, worked with the architect Le Corbusier in the 1930s.

Vitra Design Museum

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- 1** 'The American City Night-and-Day by Dalí',  
facsimile of 1935 article  
**Salvador Dalí**  
2019, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, Figueres
- 2** Advertisement for 'Schiffer Prints', featuring  
Salvador Dalí, *Look* magazine,  
16 August 1949  
Vitra Design Museum
- 3** Nesting Table with unknown model, 1933-36  
Design **Frederick Jakob Kiesler**  
Photograph **Ben Schall**  
2019, Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private  
Foundation, Vienna

- 4\_5** Window displays for Bonwit Teller, New York, 1939

**Salvador Dalí**

2019, Worsinger Photo/Museum of the City of New York

- 6** Opera set design, *In the Pasha's Garden*, Metropolitan Opera, New York, 1935

**Frederick Jakob Kiesler**

2019, Victoria and Albert Museum, London

- 7** Nesting Tables, 1933-36

**Frederick Jakob Kiesler**

2019, Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private Foundation, Vienna

- 8** Study for Endless House (Paris Endless), facsimile of 1947 drawing

**Frederick Jakob Kiesler**

2019, Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private Foundation, Vienna

- 9** Photograph of Endless House model, 1950  
Design **Frederick Jakob Kiesler**  
Photograph **Percy Rainford**  
  
2019, Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private  
Foundation, Vienna
- 10** Study for Endless House, facsimile of  
1959 drawing  
**Frederick Jakob Kiesler**  
  
2019, Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private  
Foundation, Vienna
- 11** Exterior of Endless House model, 1959-60  
**Frederick Jakob Kiesler**  
  
2019, Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private  
Foundation, Vienna
- 11** The Unity of Architecture, the Plastic Arts and  
the Spectator, facsimile of 1947 drawing  
**Frederick Jakob Kiesler**  
  
2019, Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private  
Foundation, Vienna

- 13** Study for Endless House, facsimile of  
1950 drawing  
**Frederick Jakob Kiesler**  
  
2019, Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private  
Foundation, Vienna
- 14** Interior of Endless House model, 1959-60  
Design **Frederick Jakob Kiesler**  
Photograph **George Barrows**  
  
2019, Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private  
Foundation, Vienna
- 15\_17** 'Art of This Century' gallery, 1942  
Design **Frederick Jakob Kiesler**  
Photographs **Tom Fitzsimmon,**  
**Berenice Abbott, K. W. Herrmann**
- 15** Peggy Guggenheim in the gallery by Tom Fitzsimmon  
2019 © picture alliance/ASSOCIATED PRESS
- 16** Correalist furniture in the gallery by K. W. Herrmann  
2019, Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private  
Foundation, Vienna
- 17** Frederick Kiesler in the gallery by Berenice Abbott  
2019, Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private  
Foundation, Vienna

- 18** Film design for *Destino*, facsimile of 1946 original  
**Salvador Dalí**

2019, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, Figueres

- 19** Surrealist artists play chess in The Imagery  
of Chess exhibition, Julien Levy Gallery,  
New York, 1945

2019, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 125th Anniversary  
Acquisition. The Lynne and Harold Honickman  
Gift of the Julien Levy Collection, 2001-62-1504

- 20** Marcel Duchamp's *Mile of String* installation,  
First Papers of Surrealism exhibition,  
New York, 1942  
Photograph **John D. Schiff**

2019, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Library & Archives

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*Destino*, 2003

Original designs by

**Salvador Dalí** and **John Hench** for Walt Disney Studios

7 minutes

Dalí storyboarded this animated short film in 1945-46, working alongside Disney studio artist John Hench. At the time, the film was not completed. In 2003, Disney animators worked with Hench to realise Dalí's vision and synchronise it to the 1946 soundtrack. Many motifs, such as the figure of a woman in the desert, are recognisable from Dalí's paintings.

2003 Disney Enterprises, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

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**ROOM 2**

**FORM  
FOLLOWS  
FANTASY**

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**FOLLOWS**  
**FANTASY**


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**&**  
**THE**  
**READYMADE**

# FORM FOLLOWS FANTASY

Surrealism challenges the modern design principle of 'form follows function'. It is alive to the emotional and psychological impact of even the most ordinary objects. This leads to a subversive view of daily life. What memories, stories and obsessions are represented by everyday objects? Does appearance always reflect reality? Such questions undermine the established meanings of things and make way for the absurd, ambiguous and coincidental.

From the 1950s onwards, the radical, questioning approach of Surrealism gained currency. The early 1960s saw designers increasingly test the boundaries between reality and imagination, between art and everyday life. The expressive and sculptural possibilities of design were extended at this time by the commercial development of new materials, such as polyurethane foam. After the success of postmodernism in the 1980s, concept-led designs that told stories became widespread.

The objects here are all defined by playful, provocative or poetic concepts. Many emerged from the Radical Design movement originating in Italy during the 1960s and '70s, which combined the spirit of Pop Art with techniques of mass production. 

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Ceci est un morceau de fromage (This is a piece of cheese), 1963-64 re-edition of 1936 original

**René Magritte**

Magritte and his fellow Surrealists fundamentally changed the role of the artist. Their art did not record reality but instead questioned its nature. After making his name in 1929 with a painting of a pipe subtitled 'Ceci n'est pas une pipe' ('This is not a pipe'), Magritte cheekily reversed the philosophical joke in this later work.

Oil on Masonite, gold plated wooden frame, miniature canvas stand, glass bell jar, marble platter

Private collection

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► **Projected on central pillar**

*Entr'acte* (Interval) (excerpt), 1924

**René Clair**

4 minutes

A classic of avant-garde cinema, this silent film was described by its director as 'visual babblings'. This montage of nonsensical scenes includes a chess match between artists Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray, interrupted by a jet of water, and mourners running in slow-motion behind a camel-drawn hearse. The film is intentionally comic but, once viewed through this wildly distorted and satirical lens, the world would never look the same again.

© 1924 – René Clair – Fondation Jérôme Seydoux-Pathé

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► **Projected on reverse of central pillar**

*Emak Bakia* (Leave Me Alone) (excerpt), 1926

**Man Ray**

*L'Étoile de mer* (The Starfish) (excerpt), 1928

**Man Ray**

**Robert Desnos**

3 minutes

Playing with speed, focus and distortion, these experimental 1920s films reveal the surprising beauty of everyday things, from starfish to starched collars. Reality appears as a series of dislocated and poetic images. Artist Man Ray and Surrealist poet Robert Desnos subtitled the films 'cinépoèmes

Cinédoc Paris Films Coop

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Cartoon Chair, about 2007

**Fernando & Humberto Campana**

The Campana Brothers often reconfigure found materials in their work. They first created a seat from soft toys after spotting a street seller carrying a bizarre armful of ‘teddy bears, lions and crocodiles’. This mass of Disney cartoon characters is both humorous and disconcerting. The Campanas identify ‘contamination’, or hybridisation, as a key principle of their creative practice.

Stuffed Disney toys, aluminium  
Design Museum Collection

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*Porte-bouteilles* (Bottle rack), 1964 replica of  
lost 1914 original

**Marcel Duchamp**

Duchamp’s readymade sculptures, such as this bottle rack, emphasise concept over craft. In a single swoop, Duchamp fundamentally changed the role of artists and designers by elevating everyday and mass-produced objects to the status of art.

Galvanised iron  
Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London·Paris·Salzburg·Seoul

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# COLLECTING & THE READYMADE

Many Surrealists built up extensive collections that recalled the dream worlds of their paintings and texts. In these hoards, chance finds from flea markets met with artworks, and curiosities with industrial objects. The poet André Breton believed that a found object would be mystically drawn to the person who most needed it, like lightning to a conductor.

Seeing the potential in chance juxtapositions of found objects became a creative strategy. To describe their ideal of beauty, many Surrealists turned to these lines by French poet Lautréamont: 'Beautiful ... as the chance meeting on a dissecting table of a sewing machine and an umbrella.' Today, contemporary designers continue to find inspiration, productive confusion and fresh ideas in eclectic collections of things.

Conceptual artist Marcel Duchamp turned found objects into readymade sculptures, revealing the unexpected beauty of mass-produced items, from bottle racks and bicycle wheels to, famously, urinals. His readymades, as they became known, encouraged Surrealist artists –



including Meret Oppenheim, Salvador Dalí and Man Ray – to transform found materials into objects that disrupted expectations and turned familiar things on their heads. ■■■■■

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P.O. Coathangerbrush, 1992

**Konstantin Grcic**

*Everyday laws need to be turned upside down for us to finally become aware of them.*

**Konstantin Grcic**

Transforming everyday objects by placing them in new and surprising combinations is a Surrealist strategy. Fantasy and functionality co-exist in Grcic's design, where a coat hanger can also be used as a clothes brush. Grcic is inspired by Magritte, who, he says, 'looks at the world and unhinges it... [his] Surrealist images are actually about reality.'

Manufactured by Cappellini Design

Beech, natural bristles, steel

Gift of the Conran Foundation

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*Faretto a Ventosa* (Spotlight with a Suction Cup),  
2018 edition of 1962 original

**Achille Castiglioni**

**Pier Giacomo Castiglioni**

Manufactured by Flos, 2019

Plastic, rubber

Fondazione Achille Castiglioni, Milan

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*Bundt Hat* prototype, with Bundt tins collected  
by Achille Castiglioni, 1980

### **Achille Castiglioni**

Castiglioni gives the traditional man's hat a comical – but still elegant – twist by incorporating the fluting from Bundt cake tins. These tins were part of his eclectic collection of inspirational objects. He put his design into production in collaboration with Borsalino, the oldest Italian manufacturer of luxury hats.

Manufactured by Borsalino

Felt (hat); aluminium, copper, enamel (tins)

Fondazione Achille Castiglioni, Milan

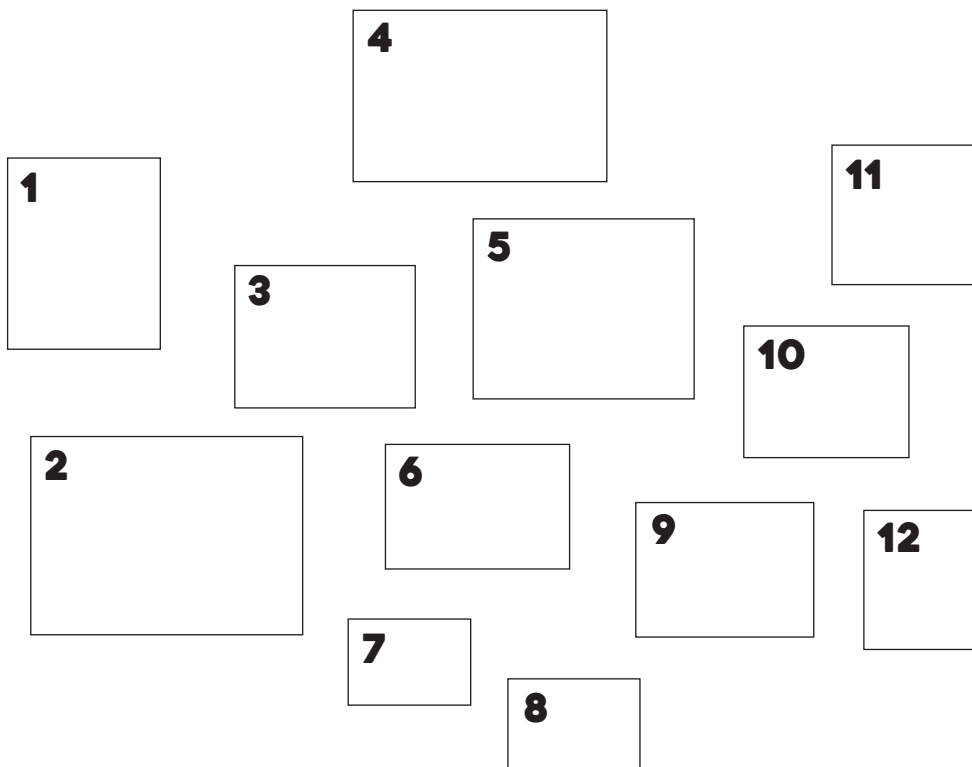
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Sunglasses collected by Achille Castiglioni,  
various dates

Castiglioni's collection of inspirational objects includes several pairs of glasses. Their fascination lies in the specificity and quirkiness of their design. Several are in fact safety goggles, including one pair with a nose guard for a welder. Others offer an alternative way of looking at the world, such as the 'prismatic glasses with horizontal view'.

Fondazione Achille Castiglioni, Milan

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- 1** Konstantin Grcic's studio, 2010  
Photograph **James Harris**  
2019, Konstantin Grcic Design
  
- 2** *Bundt Hats* for Borsalino, 1980  
**Achille Castiglioni**  
Fondazione Achille Castiglioni, Milan
  
- 3** Gaetano Pesce's studio, New York, 2018  
Photograph **Kyle Knodell**  
2019 © Kyle Knodell

- 4** Le Corbusier in his studio, 1961  
Photograph **Gisèle Freund**  
2019 © bpk/IMEC, Fonds MCC
- 5\_6** André Breton and Simone Breton at  
home at 42 rue Fontaine, Paris, 1920s-50s  
  
Photograph of Simone Breton  
**Man Ray**, 1921  
  
2019, Private collection  
  
Photograph of André Breton  
**Sabine Weiss**, 1955  
  
2019 © Sabine Weiss
- 7\_8** The Achille Castiglioni Studio Museum,  
Milan, 2000s  
Photographs **Annette Cheung**  
  
2019, Fondazione Achille Castiglioni, Milan
- 9** Self-portrait in Paris studio apartment,  
rue Daguerre, 1933  
Photograph **Wolfgang Paalen**  
  
2019, Succession Wolfgang Paalen et Eva Sulzer

- 10** André Breton's studio at 42 rue Fontaine,  
Paris, 1994  
Photograph **Jacques Faujour**  
2019 © bpk/Centre Pompidou-MNAM, Paris
- 11** The Surrealists in Peggy Guggenheim's  
townhouse, 1942  
Photograph **Hermann Landshoff**  
2019 © bpk/Münchener Stadtmuseum, Sammlung  
Fotografie/Archiv Landshoff
- 12** Leonor Fini in her Paris apartment,  
rue de la Vrillière, 1963  
2019, Estate of Leonor Fini
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Slipper spoon and gas mask visor from  
André Breton's collection of found objects, 1934  
Photographs **Man Ray**

Breton's apartment was filled with eclectic finds from Parisian flea markets. He bought this mask and spoon while with the artist Giacometti, who, at the time, was struggling to finish a sculpture. Breton believed that the discovery of the gas mask visor, a symbol of war and death, enabled Giacometti to overcome his creative block.

2019 © bpk/Centre Pompidou-MNAM, Paris

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Wall plates no. 17, 82, 116, 184, 197, 199 and 279 from  
the series *Tema e Variazioni* (Theme and Variations),  
after 1950

**Piero Fornasetti**

Fornasetti began in the 1950s to create designs featuring the beautiful face of Lina Cavalieri, a 19th-century opera singer, and never stopped. Nearly 400 variations now exist, ranging from the bizarre to the humorous. Fornasetti once described the works as 'tickets to travel through the realm of the imagination'.

Produced 2019  
Silk print on porcelain  
Fornasetti Archive

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*La pipa* (The pipe) cocktail table, about 1960

**Aldo Tura**

The exceptional craftsmanship and irreverent form of this novelty cocktail bar is typical of Tura's work. The design may seem a superficial reference to Magritte's famous 1929 painting of a pipe with the caption '*Ceci n'est pas une pipe*' (This is not a pipe). Yet it is consistent with Tura's other exaggerated and Pop-inspired designs, which include a sumptuous drinks cabinet in the shape of a bar of peanut brittle.

Manufactured by Tura

Wood structure, lacquered goatskin vellum covering,  
brass, rubber

Vitra Design Museum

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► **On central plinths**

Handlebar table, 1983

**Jasper Morrison**

Jasper Morrison described his design approach to this graduate piece as ‘poetic, anti-establishment, business-like!’ He says, ‘I had read somewhere that Marcel Breuer had the idea for a chair in bended tubular steel after seeing some racing handlebars and in the spirit of the ready made it seemed appropriate to use the handlebars themselves.’

Chromium-plated steel, beech wood, rubber, glass

Made possible with Art Fund and Conran Foundation support

**Art Fund\_**

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*Sella* stool, 1957

**Achille Castiglioni**

**Pier Giacomo Castiglioni**

This imaginative design transforms a bicycle saddle into a stool. It was originally designed to accompany a landline telephone. The heavy cast-iron base prevents it from toppling over.

Manufactured by Zanotta

Leather bicycle saddle, chrome-plated or lacquered steel,  
lacquered cast-iron

Vitra Design Museum

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Horse Lamp, 2006

**Front Design**

This work is part of the three-piece 'Unexpected' Collection of furniture in animal shapes, which also includes a Rabbit Lamp and Pig Table. Creating unusual juxtapositions is a surrealist strategy to challenge expectations and provoke both laughter and dismay.

Manufactured by Moooi BV, Breda/Niederlande

Plastic, metal

Vitra Design Museum

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*MAGriTTA* chair, 1970

**Roberto Sebastian Matta**

for Simon International

Sit on this chair and the foam apple is squashed into the centre of the fibreglass hat. Matta designed the chair in playful tribute to fellow Surrealist René Magritte, and named it after them both. The apple and bowler hat are repeated motifs in Magritte's work, including his 1946 self-portrait *The Son of Man*. The piece was part of Simon International's 'Ultramobile' Collection, to which artists Man Ray and Meret Oppenheim also contributed.

Manufactured by Gavina S.p.A, 1971-80

Methacrylate, polyurethane foam, acrylic fabric, rubber

Vitra Design Museum

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*Hand Chair*, 1965 edition of 1962 design

**Pedro Friedeberg**

*I told him to make a hand... then I said,  
“Why don’t you make it big enough to sit on?”  
I thought that would be funny.*

**Pedro Friedeberg**

What started as an experimental, throwaway collaboration between Friedeberg and a carpenter in Mexico City has now become a design icon. The chair has been widely reproduced in a huge variety of finishes, from natural wood to red plastic and gold leaf.

Carved mahogany  
Vitra Design Museum

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*Tour*, 1993

**Gae Aulenti**

This table glides across the living room floor on bicycle wheels, referring to Marcel Duchamp's 1913 readymade sculpture *Roue de bicyclette* (Bicycle wheel). It featured in the 1993 Duchamp retrospective in Venice, an exhibition also designed by Gae Aulenti.

Manufactured by FontanaArte

Glass, bicycle wheels

Vitra Design Museum

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*Capitello* (Capital) chair, 1971

**Studio65**

This piece looks like a marble Grecian Ionic column and capital, an emblem of high culture and the establishment. Instead, it is made from squashy, cheap polyurethane foam. By playing with scale and materials, Studio65 subvert a classical form and produce an irreverent and satirical, Pop-inspired, casual seat.

Manufactured by Gufram, 2019

Differentiated-density polyurethane foam coated with latex rubber (Guflac)

Vitra Design Museum

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*UP 7: Il Piede* (The Foot), about 1970

**Gaetano Pesce**

The Surrealists defamiliarised everyday items by exaggerating and altering their proportions.

Pop artists and designers of the 1960s and '70s pushed this approach further, aided by the commercial development of plastics. Pesce's *Il Piede* is created by pouring the liquid ingredients of polyurethane into a mould where they react and expand as foam.

Manufactured by C&B Italia

Black-coated polyurethane foam

Collection Volker Albus

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*Le Témoin* (The Witness), 1972

**Man Ray** for Simon International

*The large eye, the witness, insistently observes you in your home. When your conscience cannot withstand it, then you turn it over and it immediately turns into a sofa.*

**Man Ray**

Radically conceptual, the 1971 'Ultramobile' furniture collection was made in collaboration with Surrealist artists including Meret Oppenheim, Roberto Sebastian Matta and Man Ray. Dino Gavina, founder of Simon International, described the collection as a 'presence that pulsates and breathes in your home'.

Manufactured by Simon International, 1971-73

Wood, vinyl, silk-screened acrylic, glass

Vitra Design Museum

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► **On right hand central wall**

*Arrivo del trasloco* (Arrival of the moving van), about 1965 (signed 1951)

**Giorgio de Chirico**

De Chirico's metaphysical paintings present everyday things with a sharp graphic clarity that enhances their sense of mystery. 'The moving van turns a corner' is a line from one of his poems, written in 1925.

De Chirico's experiments with form and scale were a major influence on early Surrealism and resonate with 1960s Radical Design aesthetics as well.

He gave false dates on many of his works after 1940, for subversive reasons best known to himself.

Oil paint on canvas

Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico

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*Besen! Besen! Seids gewesen!*, 2012

**Alicja Kwade**

The title of this piece loosely translates as ‘Broom! Broom! As you once were!’. It is a line from ‘The Sorcerer’s Apprentice’ by Goethe, the poem that inspired the first Disney *Fantasia* film in 1940. Kwade’s imaginative tweak to the form of an ordinary broom conjures up a world of myth and fairy tale, in which this domestic object takes on magical and transformative powers.

Wooden broom

Boros Collection

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‘A Matter of Perspective’ photo shoot, 2004

**Dan Tobin Smith**

Photographer Tobin Smith’s distinctive photography makes innovative use of perspective, lighting and materials to create arresting images. This shoot, commissioned by *Wallpaper\** magazine, plays with unexpected contrasts in scale throughout a series of hallucinatory, dream-like interiors. The theatrical sets were developed in collaboration with set designer Lyndsay Milne McLeod.

Commissioned for *Wallpaper\**, no. 69; set design by Lyndsay Milne McLeod

2019 © Dan Tobin Smith

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**ROOM 3**

**SURREALISM  
&  
THE  
BODY**

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<b>SEX &amp; DEATH</b>	<b>99</b>
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<b>FASHION</b>	<b>111</b>
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# SURREALISM & THE BODY

Bodies are found everywhere in Surrealism – mysteriously veiled, disturbingly exposed, strikingly dressed, modified and even upholstered.

No other art and design movement from the last hundred years has focused so intensively on the body, love, sexuality and desire. Erotically charged surrealist designs range from Salvador Dalí's seductive Mae West Lips sofa in the 1930s to Ruth Francken's provocative *Homme* (Man) chair and Gaetano Pesce's feminist work, *La Mamma* (The Mother) from the 1960s and '70s. Surrealism has shaped the body through fashion design from the pioneering work of Elsa Schiaparelli to today.

Surrealism kicks against accepted wisdom and mainstream experience. It encourages creative expression of views that may not otherwise be heard. This has made it an increasingly powerful mode of expression for feminist and queer art and design since the 1930s. ■■■■■

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*Meshes of the Afternoon* (excerpt), 1943

**Maya Deren**

**Alexander Hammid**

*A Study in Choreography for Camera*, 1945

**Maya Deren**

Dancer **Talley Beatty**

4 minutes

Deren's pioneering films play with the movement of bodies in space and time, to create sequences in which reality is impossible to distinguish from dream and hallucination.

*(Meshes of the Afternoon)* Music by Teiji Ito

© Tavia Ito/Re:Voir Video

*(A Study in Choreography for Camera)* Black & white, silent, 3', 16mm transferred into HD. Courtesy: Light Cone (Paris) and rights holder

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► **On central plinth**

UP5\_6: 'La Mamma' (The Mother), 1973-88  
edition of 1969 original

**Gaetano Pesce**

This iconic foam chair, sometimes called 'La Mamma', might look curvy and comforting, yet Pesce had a darker, feminist vision. 'It's an image of a prisoner,' he said, referring to the soft ball and chain. 'Women suffer because of the prejudice of men. The chair was supposed to talk about this problem.' As with earlier surrealist furniture, the act of sitting on this chair makes a statement.

Manufactured by C&B Italia

Polyurethane foam, stretch rayon jersey covering

Vitra Design Museum

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*Due più* (Two more), 1971

**Nanda Vigo**

Vigo's pioneering practice is characterised by bold and sensual combinations of material and form that ask to be touched and experienced. She often combined hard and soft textures, such as glass or metal and fake fur. These unusual stools were created for a coffee shop in Milan. For another interior-design commission, Vigo covered an entire spiral staircase with fake fur, leaving only the upper treads bare.

Manufactured by Conconi

Chrome-plated stainless steel, fake fur

Private collection, Milan

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*Traccia* (Table with Bird's Feet), 1983 no. I/II  
authorised edition of 1939 original

**Meret Oppenheim**

*Nobody will give you freedom –  
you have to take it.*

**Meret Oppenheim**

Are the sharp-clawed feet trapped underneath this table, or poised to carry it away? Designed in 1939, this fantastical work marked Oppenheim's return to design after a break following the sudden notoriety in 1936 of her sculpture *Object/Luncheon in Fur*, consisting of a fur-covered cup and saucer.

Plywood, gold-plated brass, polished (top),  
painted in ochre (bottom)  
Private collection, Switzerland

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‘Conquest’, from *The Whirlwind is in the Thorn Bush*,  
2017

**Nina Saunders**

Saunders’ furniture-based sculptures have an uncanny presence. Their melting, bulging forms seem like evidence of unknown and unpredictable forces at work. She is drawn to second-hand domestic furniture because of its place in family and social history. Her work disrupts these patterns of association and introduces new narratives that are both comical and challenging.

Sofa, fur, wood, fibreglass, imitation gold-leaf,  
upholstery fabrics

Courtesy of the artist, Nina Saunders

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► **Hanging from ceiling**

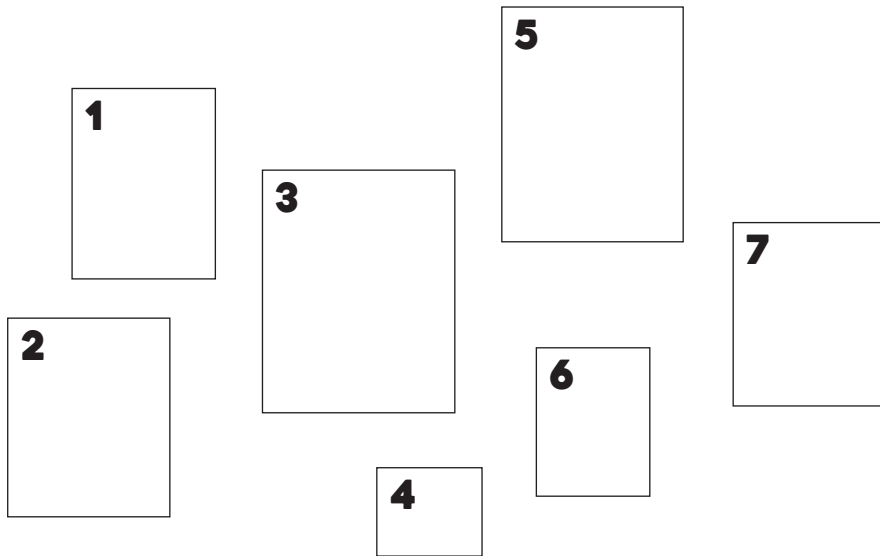
Untitled (Anagram Leather #8 T.O.T.), 2018  
edition of 2003 original

**Lee Bul**

Bul's 'Anagram' sculpture and drawing series recombine interchangeable parts into new forms, just as anagrams are made by rearranging the letters of another word. These jointed, overlapping leather constructions are reminiscent of plant or insect bodies, perhaps from a futuristic universe of mutating forms. Bul's work questions existing physical norms and expectations, often with reference to literature and science fiction.

Cast fiberglass covered with leather, stainless steel;  
stainless steel wire  
Studio Lee Bul and Lehmann Maupin, New York,  
Hong Kong and Seoul

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## EROTICISM

*Convulsive beauty will be veiled-erotic,  
fixed-explosive, magic-circumstantial or not at all.*

**André Breton**

The poet André Breton defined a new surrealist concept of beauty in this suggestive and deliberately contradictory statement. Photography proved an ideal medium for an aesthetic founded in fragmentation, illusion and metamorphosis. Lee Miller, Dora Maar and Man Ray pushed the capacities of the technology forward, working in both artistic and commercial spheres. Breton published Man Ray's photograph of artist Meret Oppenheim, an ink-stained nude, to illustrate the concept of 'veiled-erotic'.

- 1** Untitled (Nude Torso), 1933  
**Man Ray**

2019, Man Ray Photo Library/Telimage, Paris

- 2** Erotique-voilée (Meret Oppenheim at the Copper Press), about 1933  
**Man Ray**  
2019 © bpk/Centre Pompidou-MNAM, Paris
  - 3** Le Violon d'Ingres (The Violin of Ingres), 1924  
**Man Ray**  
2019, Man Ray Photo Library/Telimage, Paris
  - 4** Floating Head, Mary Taylor, New York Studio, 1933  
**Lee Miller**  
2019, Lee Miller Archives, East Sussex, England
  - 5** Untitled (Hand with Shell), 1934  
**Dora Maar**  
2019, © bpk/Centre Pompidou-MNAM, Paris
  - 6** Les Larmes (The Tears), 1932  
**Man Ray**  
2019 © bpk/Centre Pompidou-MNAM, Paris
  - 7** Kiki de Montparnasse, 1923  
**Man Ray**  
2019, Man Ray Photo Library/Telimage, Paris
-

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► **In vitrine**

- 1**     *Jenseits des Lustprinzips* (Beyond the  
Pleasure Principle), 1923

**Sigmund Freud**

Freud first defined the pleasure principle as the drive to seek pleasure and avoid pain. In 1920 he revised his theory. Survivors of trauma, he observed, would obsessively recount painful experiences. This led Freud to speculate that a ‘death instinct’ existed, equal or superior in force to the pleasure principle. Both instincts, for pleasure and erasure, were at play within sexual desire. This duality intrigued and inspired the early Surrealists.

Vitra Design Museum

- 2**     *Nadja*, 1928  
**André Breton**

Vitra Design Museum

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► In vitrine

**3** *L'Amour fou* (Mad Love), 1937

**André Breton**

André Breton, author of the 1924 *Manifesto of Surrealism*, recognised that our sense of self depends upon our surroundings and our social interactions. Though written a decade apart, these two publications speak to each other. They are inspired by Breton's experience of intense romantic relationships with a girl he called Nadja (Léona Delcourt) and the artist Jacqueline Lamba, whom Breton later married.

Vitra Design Museum

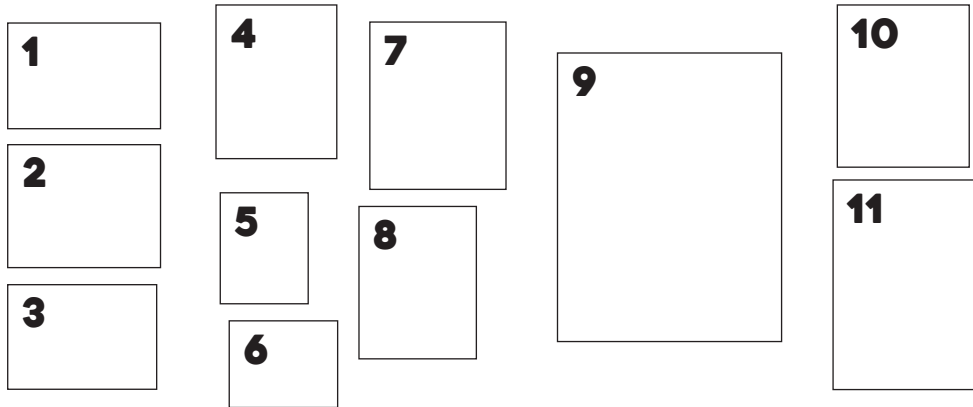
**4** *Qu'est-ce que le surréalisme?*  
(What is Surrealism?), 1934

**André Breton**

Cover illustration by **René Magritte**

Vitra Design Museum

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## PERFORMING GENDER

Theatricality is integral to Surrealist art and design. Often the work is completed by the presence and imagination of an observer. In the photographic works here, the camera may stand in for that observer. Artists exploit the apparent objectivity of the camera to give staged performances the texture of reality. Photographer and writer Claude Cahun troubles gender boundaries in a striking series of self-portraits. Marcel Duchamp poses as his feminine alter-ego 'Rose Sélavy'. Man Ray captures the muscles and make-up of 'Barbette', a renowned female impersonator. Lee Miller and Meret Oppenheim test ethical and aesthetic limits by staging the 'consumption' of the female body. Meanwhile, one of Francesca Woodman's rarely seen self-portraits poignantly explores a fragile sense of self which might be lost, rather than found, through performance.

- 1** *A Woman; A Mirror; A Woman is a Mirror for a Man*,  
about 1975-78

**Francesca Woodman**

2019 © Woodman Family Foundation /  
Artists Rights Society  
(ARS), New York

- 2** *Untitled (Severed Breast from Radical Surgery  
in a Place Setting)*, about 1929

**Lee Miller**

2019, Lee Miller Archives, East Sussex, England

- 3** *Festin cannibal*, re-enacted at E.R.O.S.  
Surrealist exhibition, about 1959-60

**Meret Oppenheim**

Photograph **Denise Bellon**

2019 © Denise Bellon/akg-images

- 4\_9** *Self-portraits*, 1920-32

**Claude Cahun**

**4. 6.** 2019, Jersey Heritage

**5. 7.** 2019 © RMN-Grand Palais/Musée d'arts de Nantes

**8. 9.** 2019 © akg-images



- 10** Marcel Duchamp as 'Rose Sélavy',  
about 1920-21

**Man Ray**

2019, Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Samuel S.  
White 3rd and Vera White Collection

- 11** *Barbette Dressing*, about 1926

**Man Ray**

2019, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

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Installation shot of Dorothea Tanning's 'Chambre 202, Hôtel du Pavot, 1970–73', Tate Modern, 2019

*'In room two hundred and two / The walls keep talkin' to you'* are lines from a folk song about a gangster's wife who poisons herself in a hotel room. These sinister lyrics formed part of the inspiration for this work. Tanning's eerie, room-sized installation features soft padded limbs which appear to grow out of the walls. This 1970s work was restaged for a retrospective exhibition at Tate Modern in 2019.

2019, Tate

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*Marte #02*, from the series 'UMBRA', 2014

### **Viviane Sassen**

Sassen presents female bodies obliquely, with dignity and integrity. Her work can be read as a critique of Hans Bellmer's photography of female mannequins and other early surrealist works, with which Sassen is deeply engaged. She rejects conventional representations of women as 'docile, neat or pretty'. This unusual composition is created with a mirror held against the model's legs. It blurs the lines between figurative and abstract photography.

2019, Viviane Sassen Studio, Amsterdam

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# SEX & DEATH

Surrealism emerged in the 1920s, or Roaring Twenties, a cultural era defined by more relaxed attitudes towards sex, youthfulness and hedonism. Death became a preoccupation in the aftermath of the First World War and 1918 influenza pandemic. Psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud's theory that human behaviour was governed by an erotic life force, *Eros*, and a powerful death drive, *Thanatos*, resonated with the early Surrealists.

Sex and death have always been closely linked themes in Surrealist thinking. Fetishistic assemblages, such as a bone and fur teapot by Studio Wieki Somers, give everyday objects a new and savage life. Sadomasochistic fantasies are projected onto female mannequins in Hans Bellmer's 1930s photographs.

These works are intentionally disturbing. The shock and discomfort they provoke makes us reassess the world, our bodies and our desires. ■■■■■

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► On central plinth

*Cigarette Tits (Idealized Smokers Chest II)*, 1999

**Sarah Lucas**

*There is this obsessive activity of me sticking all these cigarettes on the sculptures... It is a form of sex, it does come from the same sort of drive, and there's so much satisfaction in it.*

**Sarah Lucas**

This work critiques gender stereotypes perpetuated by 1990s tabloid culture. It is comical and absurd, with an undertow of pathos. The form of a chair stands in for a female body and invites interaction from the viewer, who may or may not sit on it.

Chair, balls, cigarettes, bra

Tate: Presented by Tate Members 2014

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*Homme* (Man), 1985 edition of 1971 original

**Ruth Francken**

This work celebrates and objectifies masculine beauty. Does its disturbing quality arise simply from the presentation of a human body as a chair? Or does the construction of a man's body as an erotic object prompt us to ask why the objectification of female nudes is more accepted?

Manufactured by Galerie X Plus

Lacquered black polyurethane, chrome-plated tubular steel

Vitra Design Museum

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Smoke Thonet Chair No. 209, 2019

**Maarten Baas**

*In nature, everything is in flux, which creates a certain beauty. Yet, it's a very human tendency to keep things as they are supposed to be and keep them beautiful as they originally were.*

**Maarten Baas**

The Thonet chair is a design classic. Baas burnt the wood to charcoal and then preserved it in clear epoxy resin. His work redefines beauty by embracing death and decay. He shows that design can encompass processes of destruction at the same time as creating new objects.

Beech wood, burnt plywood

Vitra Design Museum

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'Miss Blanche' chair, 1988

**Shiro Kuramata**

Roses floating in transparent resin give this chair a dream-like, insubstantial appearance. It is named after the fragile character of Blanche DuBois, from Tennessee Williams' play *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Shiro Kuramata's design expresses Blanche's increasingly unstable sense of reality in a tragic story shot through with beauty and delusion, seduction and violence.

Manufactured by Ishimaru Co., Ltd

Acrylic resin, plastic roses, anodized tubular aluminium

Vitra Design Museum

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► **To the right of 'Performing Gender' group**

*Espace psychologique* (Psychological space), 1939

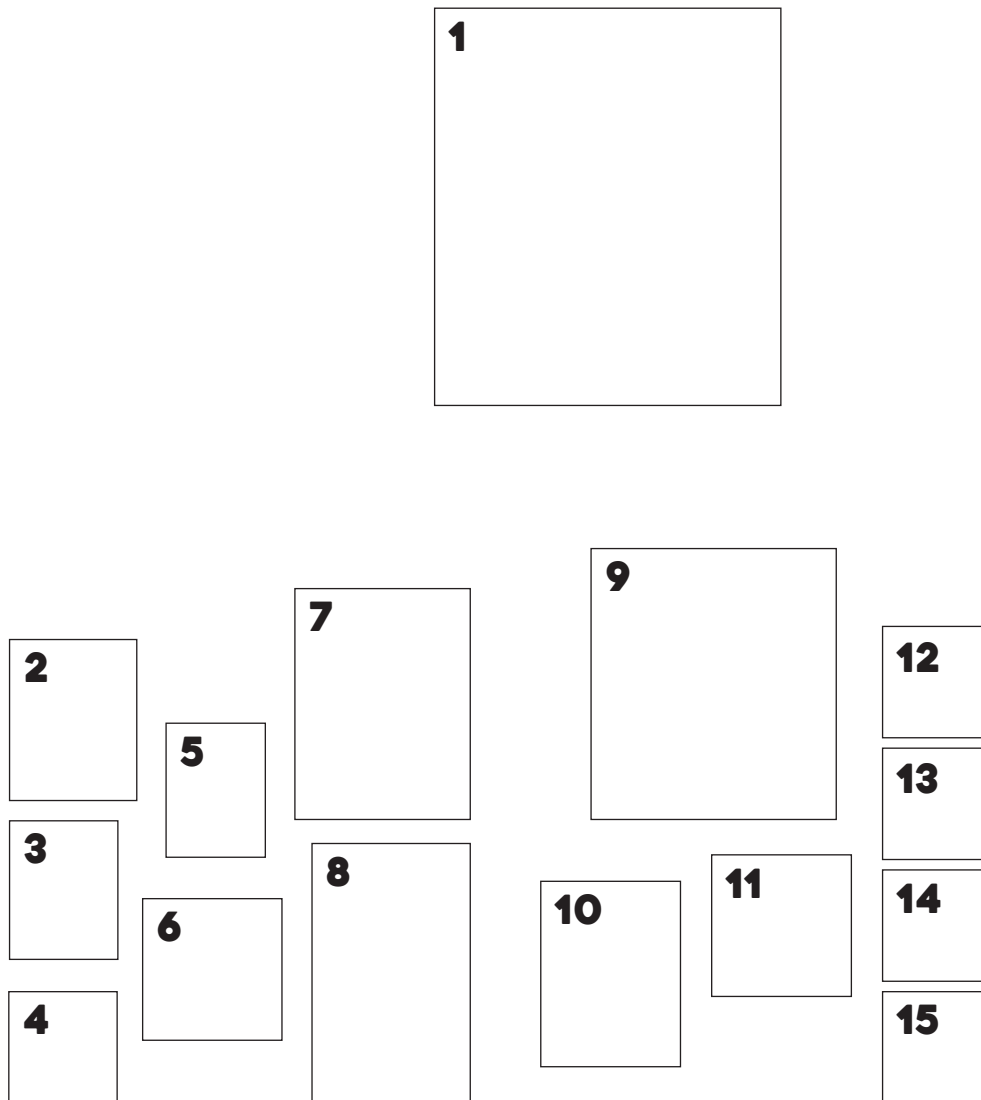
**Victor Brauner**

Brauner joined the Surrealists in Paris after being expelled from art school in Bucharest for works deemed scandalous. The hybrid wolf-table in this painting is a domestic object rendered savage and uncanny. The 'psychological space' represented is full of dislocation and threat, coloured by the impending outbreak of war. In 1947, Brauner created the table as a physical object for a Surrealist exhibition.

Oil on canvas

Private collection

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## **MANNEQUINS & MERMAIDS**

Surrealists including Hans Bellmer and Kurt Seligmann used customised mannequin parts to graphically explore taboo sexual fantasies. The degree of lifelike detail in these female mannequins, dismembered and in bondage, makes for disturbing viewing. When Salvador Dalí designed the ‘Dream of Venus’

pavilion for the 1939 New York World's Fair, he envisioned a dark, womb-like environment. He rejected the bright, light, modernist aesthetic that dominated the fair. The entrance was set between two giant plaster legs. Inside, semi-clad female performers posed as mermaids among the trappings of Dalí's erotic fantasies, including lobsters and telephones.

**1\_8** *Photographs of the Rue des Mannequins*  
(Street of Mannequins) installation, *Exposition internationale du surréalisme*, Paris, 1938

- 1** Mannequin by Maurice Henry,  
photograph by Raoul Ubac  
2019, Association Atelier André Breton
- 2** Mannequin by Kurt Seligmann,  
photograph by Man Ray  
2019, Man Ray Photo Library/Telimage, Paris
- 3** Mannequin by André Masson,  
photograph by Man Ray  
2019, Man Ray Photo Library/Telimage, Paris
- 4** Mannequin by Sonia Mossé,  
photograph by Paris Gaston  
2019 © Gaston Paris/Roger-Viollet
- 5** Mannequin by Óscar Dominguez,  
photograph by Man Ray  
2019, Man Ray Photo Library/Telimage, Paris
- 6** Mannequin by Salvador Dalí,  
photograph by Denise Bellon  
2019 © Denise Bellon/akg-images



7 Mannequin by Agustín Espinosa,  
photograph by Denise Bellon  
2019, RMN-Grand Palais/Centre Pompidou-MNAM, Paris

8 Mannequins by Max Ernst and Joan Miró,  
photograph by Raoul Ubac  
2019 © Raoul Ubac/Musée d'Art Moderne/Roger-Viollet

9 Distortion no. 135, 1933  
**André Kertész**

2019 © bpk/Charenton-le-Pont, Médiathèque de  
l'Architecture et du Patrimoine / © The Estate of André  
Kertész, courtesy of Stephen Bulger Gallery

10 Coat stand, 1920  
**Man Ray**

2019, Man Ray Photo Library/Telimage, Paris

11 Photograph of Kurt Seligmann's Ultra-meuble,  
Exposition internationale du surréalisme, Paris,  
1938

**Denise Bellon**

2019 © Denise Bellon/akg-images

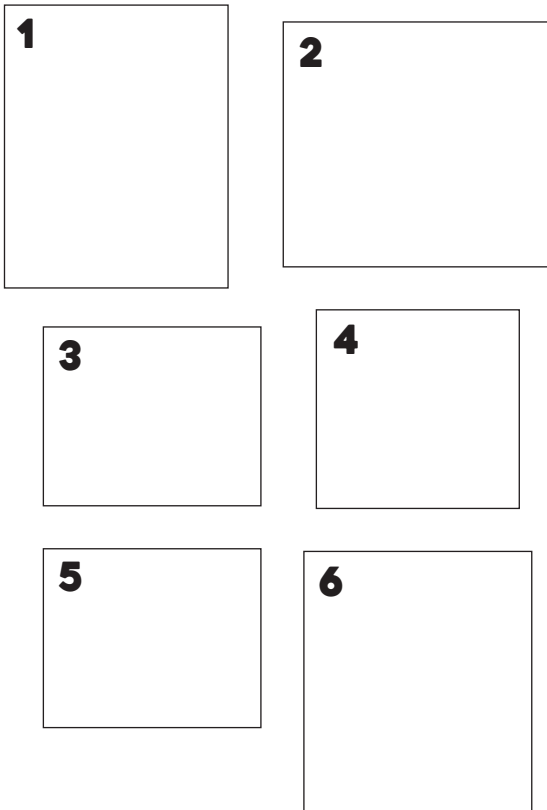
12\_15 *Les Jeux de la Poupée* (Doll Games) and  
*La Poupée* (The Doll), about 1935-49

**Hans Bellmer**

2019, Centre Pompidou-MNAM, Paris

2019 © bpk/Nationalgalerie, SMB, Sammlung  
Scharf-Gerstenberg

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- 1** The Dream of Venus, 1939  
**Salvador Dalí**  
Photograph **Horst P. Horst**

2019 © Condé Nast

- 2\_6** Views of Dalí's 'Dream of Venus' pavilion,  
New York World's Fair, 1939  
Photographs **Eric Schaal**

2019, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, Figueres

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*La Coquille et le Clergyman*

(The Seashell and the Clergyman) (excerpt), 1928

Director **Germaine Dulac**

Screenplay **Antonin Artaud**

2 minutes

Innovative camerawork and editing capture the psychology of frustrated sexual desire in this film. A clergyman unsuccessfully pursues another man's wife. He grabs at her breasts, and seashells appear in their place. He chases her, but the film cuts away. Dulac's approach provoked other Surrealists, including Artaud, to walk out of the first screening. Her film is now recognised as a pioneering, proto-feminist masterpiece.

Music: Iris ter Schiphorst

Courtesy of Light Cone, Paris

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*Le Génie de l'espèce* (The Genius of the Species),  
2017 edition of 1938 original

**Wolfgang Paalen**

This arrangement of animal bones in the shape of a revolver is an ominous symbol of past and future death. The title is a quote from philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche and his argument that human consciousness is inseparable from our need to communicate and find safety within social structures. Paalen's work, created just before the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, highlights the tragic irony that society can also be humanity's biggest threat.

Assemblage of various small animal bones, casts of porpoise vertebrae, brass mounts on black velvet  
Andreas Neufert, Berlin

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High Tea Pot, 2003

**Studio Wieki Somers**

*A porcelain pig's skull is a teapot, the tea cosy is made of rat's fur. Where tasty and unsavoury, harm and delight aren't discerned any longer, you get curious how the tea actually taste [sic].*

**Wieki Somers**

This uncanny object is domestic yet savage. It exploits the fetishistic qualities of animal fur; its erotic texture and its associations with death. There is an unspoken acknowledgment of Meret Oppenheim's fur-covered cup and saucer, *Object/Luncheon in Fur*, sometimes considered the ultimate Surrealist object.

Porcelain, muskrat fur, stainless steel, leather  
Vitra Design Museum

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*Pincushion to Serve as Fetish*, 1965

**Dorothea Tanning**

The fleshy velvet folds of this sculpture are weighted with gun pellets and bristle with pins. Its title gives the everyday pincushion the mysticism and power of a fetish. Tanning, who began to experiment with sculpture after decades as a painter, described the work's 'equivocal psychic suggestion' as 'something I believe form cannot exist without'.

Velvet, plastic funnel, metal pins, sawdust, wool

Tate: Purchased 2003

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# FASHION

Surrealism and fashion are natural partners, allowing for an exploration of conventions, clichés and hidden messages linked to the human body.

This convergence is rooted in professional collaboration. Salvador Dalí collaborated with couture designers Elsa Schiaparelli and Christian Dior. Schiaparelli's collaborators also included the artist-designers Jean Cocteau and Meret Oppenheim. Oppenheim's fur-covered cup and saucer *Object/Luncheon in Fur* – often seen as the ultimate Surrealist object – evolved from a fur-covered bracelet she designed for Schiaparelli. Surrealist artists including Man Ray and Dora Maar worked as fashion photographers.

There are many examples of Surrealism's enduring influence on fashion design. Maison Schiaparelli and Dior continue to transform Surrealist concepts into bold new looks. Other designers, such as Rei Kawakubo, Mary Katrantzou and Iris van Herpen, create poetic and playful looks that express the mind as well as the body. ██████████

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Evening dress and jacket, about 1937-38

**Elsa Schiaparelli**

The heavy embroidery on this jacket is designed to be seen while sitting at a table for cocktails or dinner. Schiaparelli exaggerated the size of the shoulders with padding, initially to make the waist appear narrower. This change in silhouette, from soft to hard, paved the way for even wider shoulders post-1945. The jacket could be removed later in the evening, revealing a sleeveless sheath dress underneath.

Silk velvet; metal thread embroidery

Lent by Bath Fashion Museum

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► **On central plinth**

Pink minidress, Haute Couture Spring/Summer 2021  
Schiaparelli by **Daniel Roseberry**

Elsa Schiaparelli described her signature pink as ‘a shocking colour, pure and undiluted’. The muscular shape of this shocking-pink minidress is Daniel Roseberry’s contemporary take on Schiaparelli’s design language. Bold textures are similarly created by the heavy metal embroidery and large buttons on the 1930s Schiaparelli jacket, displayed nearby.

Satin silk, sequins (dress), gilded brass (jewellery), natural calfskin, brass (boots)

Paris, Maison Schiaparelli

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White bone dress, Ready-to-Wear  
Spring/Summer 2022  
Schiaparelli by **Daniel Roseberry**

Elsa Schiaparelli designed the original, black Skeleton Dress in collaboration with Salvador Dalí in 1938. Its chunky quilted ‘bone’ structure deliberately challenged conventional standards of beauty. Beyond its shock value, which both Dalí and Schiaparelli enjoyed, the dress continued the surrealist project of making hidden realities visible. Skeleton detailing is now a signature feature of Maison Schiaparelli.

Viscose  
Paris, Maison Schiaparelli

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‘Typewriter’ printed silk dress, Ready-to-Wear  
Autumn/Winter 2012  
**Mary Katrantzou**

This dress transforms the body into a wearable typewriter. It recalls *trompe l’oeil* effects in Surrealist artworks, which ‘trick the eye’ into seeing a three-dimensional image. It also brings to mind readymade sculptures such as Conroy Maddox’s *Onanistic Typewriter I*. The digitally painted print was inspired by a vintage typewriter photographed by collector Adwoa Bagalini.

Silk, acetate, elastane  
MARY KATRANTZOU

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‘Salvador Dalí’ ensemble, Haute Couture  
Spring/Summer 2018

Christian Dior by **Maria Grazia Chiuri**

The design of this skirt references costumes created by Dalí and Christian Dior for a spectacular Venetian costume ball. This extravagant event was organised in 1951, at Palazzo Labia, by the fabulously wealthy and eccentric art patron Carlos de Beistegui. The jacket, meanwhile, nods to the American ‘cowboy’ jackets that Dalí chose to wear after his return to Europe from the USA in the 1950s and ‘60s.

Wool (shirt jacket); organza (shirt); silk (skirt); fishnet (stockings); leather (sandals); brass, glass strass (jewellery)  
© Dior Heritage Collection, Paris

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Look 4 SENSORY SEAS, Haute Couture  
Spring/Summer 2020

**Iris van Herpen**

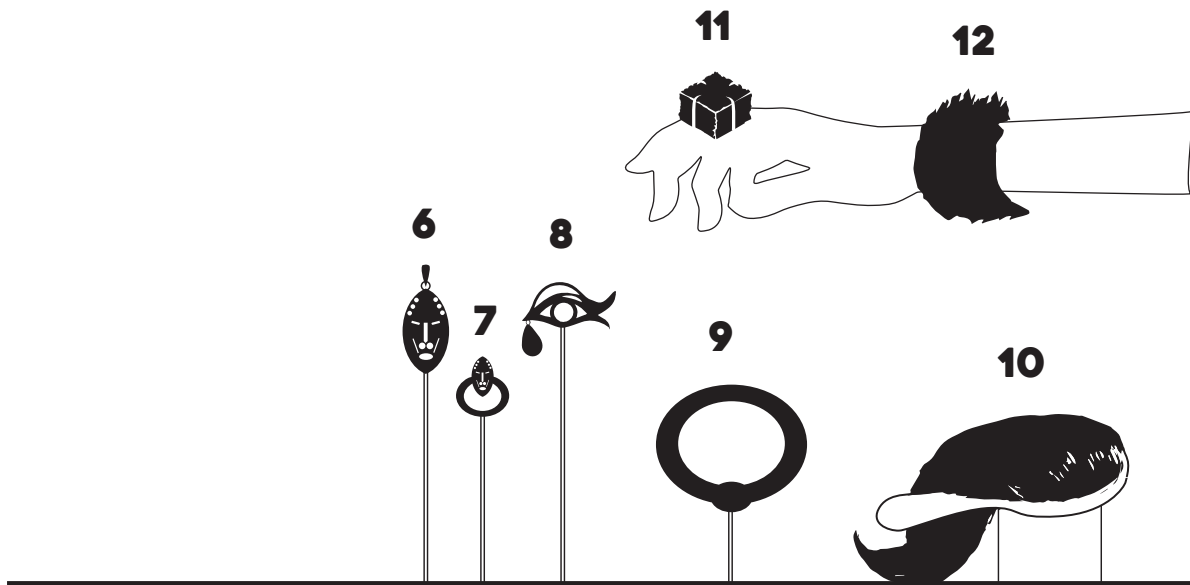
*Hunched over his microscope, [Ramón y Cajal] merged science with art and brought to life the threads of our enchanted biology to the human eye.*

**Iris van Herpen studio**

Iris van Herpen pushes the capacities of haute couture fashion design forward through innovative collaborations with scientists, engineers and artists. The first inspiration for this collection came from pioneering drawings of cells by neuroanatomist Santiago Ramón y Cajal. Her work speaks to Surrealist ideas as it makes visible aspects of the body that are normally unseen and mysterious.

Semi-sheer organza, silicone  
Iris van Herpen, Netherlands

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**6\_7** *Oshun Omi* ring and pendant, 2022  
**Vince Fraser & EROTIKK**

This jewellery collection is inspired by Fraser's Afrosurrealist digital art. The intricate design celebrates Oshun and Ase, mythological deities of the West African Yoruba people. Fraser's work amplifies and uplifts black culture while delving into spirituality, identity and ancestral history.

Sterling silver, 18 carat vermeil gold plating, black rhodium, precious stones

Courtesy of VINCE FRASER and EROTIKK

**8** Untitled (Brooch with Eye and Tear), 1952  
 edition of 1937 design  
**Jean Cocteau** for Elsa Schiaparelli

Glass, metal, faux pearl

Loan of Design Museum Den Bosch, The Netherlands

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- 9 *Gold Macht Blind* (Gold Makes You Blind),  
1980

**Otto Künzli**

This black rubber bracelet contains a hidden bead of 18 carat gold. It tells a story that can only be completed in the wearer's imagination. Künzli's work also recalls surrealist fashion in its iconoclastic combination of precious and cheap, everyday materials.

Black synthetic rubber, gold Gift of the  
Conran Foundation

- 10 BLESSbeauty Hairbrush, 2019 edition  
of 1999 design

**Bless**

Contemporary feminist artists and designers continue to take cues from Surrealism to question conventional ideas of femininity. Surrealist strategies can make ordinary domestic objects strange and dysfunctional, turning the home into an uncanny and subversive environment. The hair on this brush means that it can longer be used for its original purpose. Instead, it becomes a biting yet comical commentary on ideals of beauty.

Beech, human hair  
Vitra Design Museum

- 11** *Untitled* (Sugar Cube ring), 2003 edition by ORTRUN HEINRICH of 1936-37 original by **Meret Oppenheim**

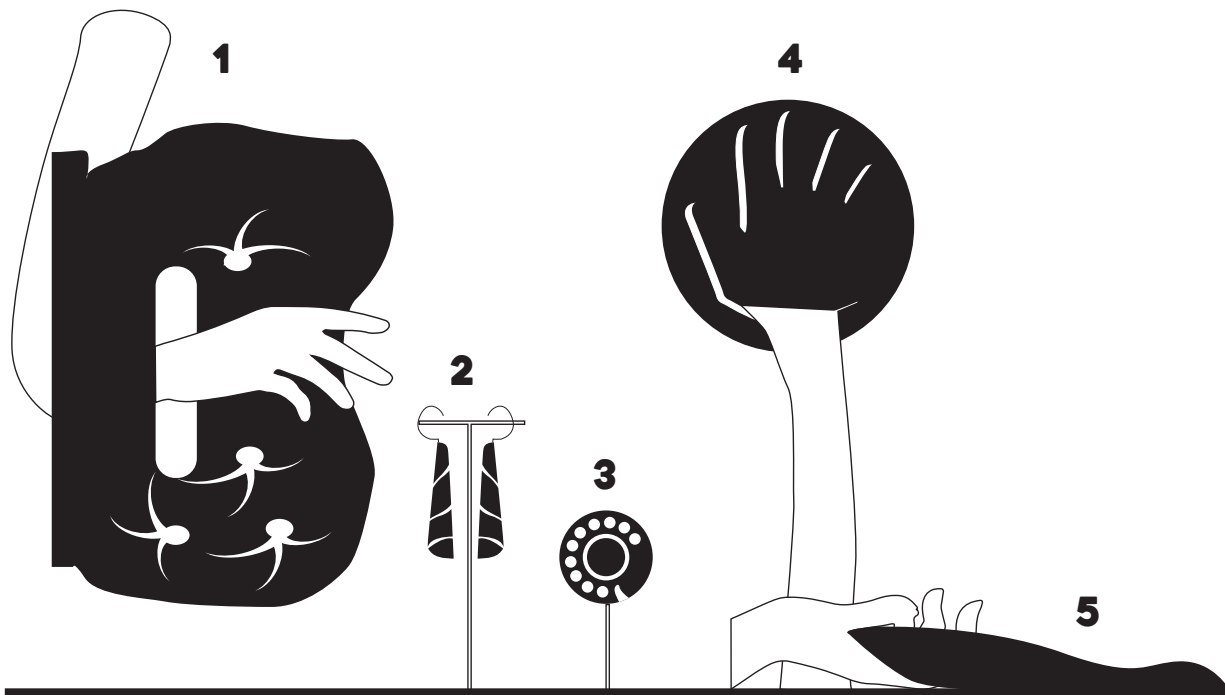
Gold-plated silver, sugar cube, synthetic corundum  
Loan of Design Museum Den Bosch, The Netherlands

- 12** *Bracelet en fourrure* (Fur Bracelet), 2014 edition of 1935 original **Meret Oppenheim**

Oppenheim is believed to have worn this bracelet to meet Picasso and Dora Maar in a Parisian café. Her companions observed that anything might be covered in fur – inspiring Oppenheim to create her more famous fur-covered cup and saucer, *Object/ Luncheon in Fur*. Oppenheim's 'Sugar Cube' ring also disrupts expectations by elevating a sugar cube to the place of a precious stone.

Burnished brass, fur  
Courtesy GEMS AND LADDERS

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- 1** *The Glam Slam bag, AVP Collection Autumn/Winter 2019*  
**John Galliano** for Maison Margiela

This genderless bag was inspired by the sight of travellers in transit holding pillows under their arms. Its design recalls a surrealist ready-made - as if a found object has been spontaneously transformed into a glamorous accessory, expressing Maison Margiela's key idea of 'dressing in haste'. Its quilted, cloud-like shape is comforting and sensual. The design debuted on the runway for Spring/Summer 2018.

Leather  
 Maison Margiela



**2** *Pendants pending* earrings, 1970  
**Man Ray** for Gem Montebello

These extravagant gold earrings are based on a series of spiral-form lampshade sculptures by Man Ray. The Montebello workshop in Milan, which opened in 1967, sought to erase the boundaries between art and craft. Their pieces blend Milan's longstanding goldsmithing tradition with designs by leading artists.

18 carat gold

Loan of Design Museum Den Bosch, The Netherlands

**3** Telephone Dial powder compact, 1935  
**Salvador Dalí** for Elsa Schiaparelli

This accessory was Dalí and Schiaparelli's first collaboration. Customers had the option of adding a personalised engraving to the lid. The design was so popular that it was widely replicated and faked. Dalí considered telephones to be highly erotic objects. The transformation of an industrial product into a decorative item was characteristic of Schiaparelli's avant-garde and visionary approach to fashion.

Metal, enamel

Private collection

**4** Guanto-borsa schiaffo (Slap-glove bag), 1983  
**Cinzia Ruggeri**

*There already are enough useful objects designed to perfectly fulfil their function; what I am looking for is to communicate and interact with the objects.*

**Cinzia Ruggeri**

Ruggeri's groundbreaking practice spanned art, architecture, fashion and design. She started to create one-off clothing designs and accessories in the 1970s. The 'Slap-glove' bag invites the wearer not just to carry an accessory but to participate and perform.

Leather; Courtesy of I Santi historical collection – Milan

**5** Gloves, for Parkett magazine, issue no.4, 1985  
**Meret Oppenheim**

Oppenheim collaborated with the luxury magazine Parkett to create a limited edition of 150 pairs of signed and numbered gloves based on her designs from the 1930s and early '40s. In the surrealist tradition of inverting convention and making hidden realities visible, these gloves reveal rather than hide the physicality of the flesh-and-blood hand inside.

Goat leather with silkscreen print  
 Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna

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*L'Ombrelle No. 1* (The Umbrella), 1948

**Leonor Fini**

This painting is watching you. The small eye looking intently back from the folds of the broken umbrella is not immediately obvious but, once seen, is unforgettable. The fine detail and bold originality are characteristic of Fini's multidisciplinary work, which spans fine art, fashion and furniture design.

Oil on canvas

West Dean College of Arts and Conservation

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*The Old Maids*, 1947

**Leonora Carrington**

*I don't really think in terms of explanations.*

**Leonora Carrington**

Domestic spaces and female figures become sites of powerful magic and mystery in Carrington's paintings. She described herself working in Mexico City, where she lived from the 1940s until her death in 2011, with 'a baby in one hand, and a paintbrush in the other'. Carrington cultivated a direct but deeply personal relationship between her art and lived experience that defies explanation. Her works are richly layered landscapes of the imagination.

Oil on canvas

Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, University of East Anglia

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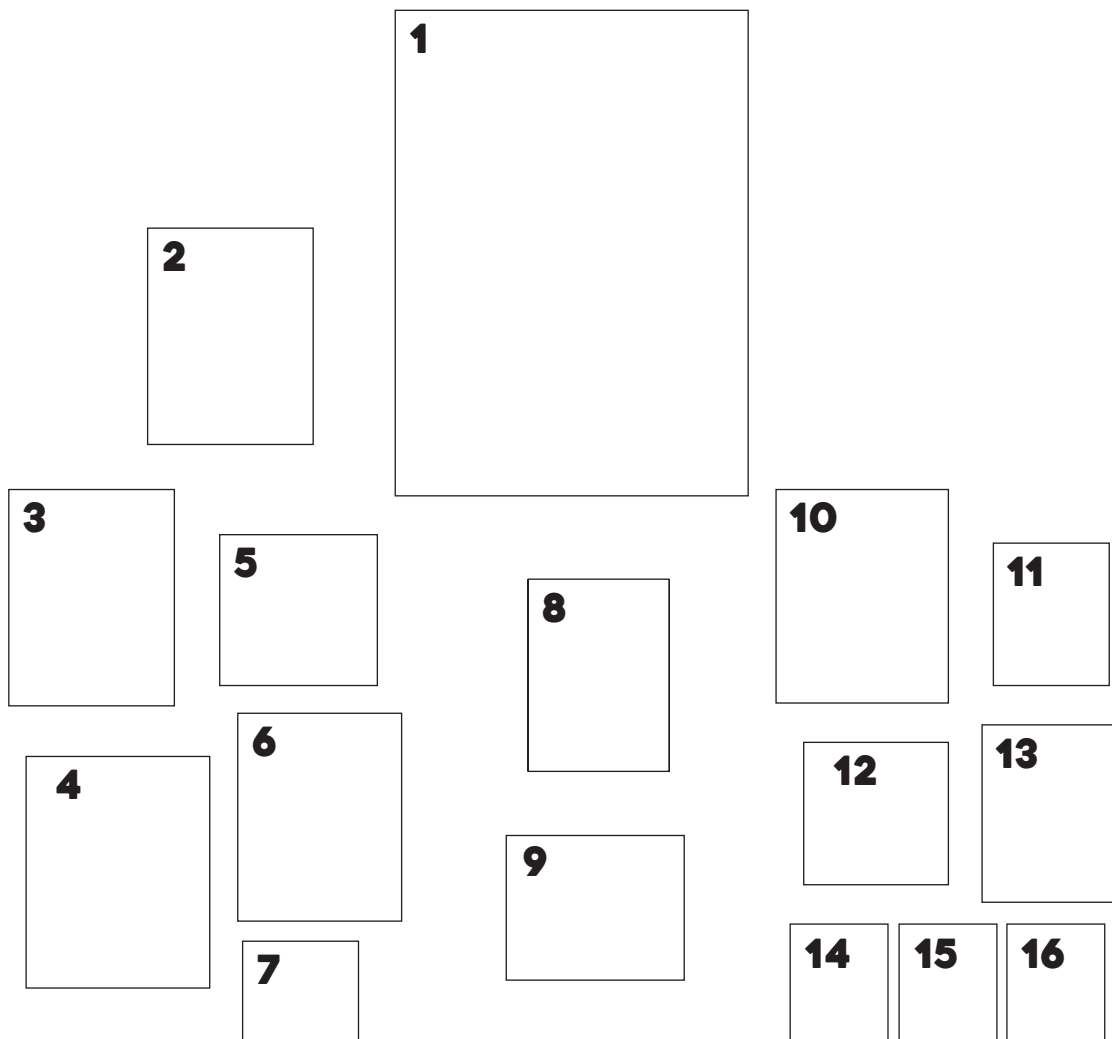
Photographs from 'Stranger Than Paradise' for  
*W* magazine, 2013

**Tim Walker**

This fashion shoot referenced surrealist artworks and took place at Las Pozas, the Mexican estate of Surrealist patron Edward James. Actress Tilda Swinton's pose on the staircase is inspired by a mysterious figure in Leonora Carrington's painting *The House Opposite*. The metallic lips and fingertips by Vicki Beamon recall surrealist accessories, including Dalí's jewel-encrusted 'Ruby Lips' brooch.

Courtesy of Tim Walker

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## ART & FASHION

Surrealist imagery and ideas were swiftly assimilated by the fashion industry in the 1930s. This interchange was aided by the number of surrealist artists and photographers who worked across advertising and design industries, including Lee Miller, Dora Maar and Man Ray. Elsa Schiaparelli collaborated with Salvador Dalí on groundbreaking designs, including the ‘Lobster’ and ‘Skeleton’ dresses. Dalí went on to create several jewellery designs that seem like hybrids between jewellery and artificial body parts or 21st-century body optimisation.

- 1** Leonor Fini in a costume for the Surrealist Ball at the Château de Ferrières, 1972  
Photograph Jack Nisberg  
  
2019, © Jack Nisberg/Roger-Viollet
- 2** Wallis Simpson wearing a Schiaparelli Lobster Dress, early 20th century  
Design **Elsa Schiaparelli, Salvador Dalí**  
Photograph **Cecil Beaton**  
  
© Cecil Beaton / Victoria and Albert Museum, London
- 3** Cover photo, *La Révolution surréaliste*, no. 4, 15 July 1925  
**Man Ray**  
  
2019, Man Ray Photo Library/Telimag, Paris
- 4** *Mannequin en maillot de bain* (Model in Swimsuit), 1936  
**Dora Maar**  
  
2019, Galerie 1900–2000, Paris
- 5** Fashion model with painting *A l'heure de l'observatoire, les Amoureux* (Observatory Time, The Lovers), 1936  
**Man Ray**  
  
2019, Man Ray Photo Library/Telimag, Paris

- 6** Bathing feature, Vogue studio, London, 1941  
**Lee Miller**  
2019, Lee Miller Archives, East Sussex, England
- 7** Model wearing a Madeleine Vionnet gown in the Brouette by Óscar Domínguez, 1937  
**Man Ray**  
2019, Man Ray Photo Library/Telimag, Paris
- 8** Half and Half necklace and Modern Cuff designed by **Art Smith**  
Courtesy of the Estate of Art Smith
- 9** Gala Dalí wearing Elsa Schiaparelli's Shoe Hat, 1938  
**André Caillet**  
2019, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, Figueres
- 10** Peggy Guggenheim wearing earrings designed by **Alexander Calder**, 1950s  
2019, Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation.  
Photo Archivio  
Cameraphoto Epoche. Gift, Cassa di Risparmio di Venezia, 2005

- 11** Peggy Guggenheim wearing miniature painting earrings by **Yves Tanguy**, 1950s  
2019, Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation.  
Photo Archivio  
Cameraphoto Epoche. Gift, Cassa di Risparmio di Venezia, 2005
- 12** Madelle Hegeler wearing jewellery designed by **Salvador Dalí**, 1959  
2019 © Bettmann Collection/Getty Images
- 13** Salvador Dalí wearing The Eye of Time, about 1956.  
Photograph **Philippe Halsman**
- 14\_16** Royal Whitaker modelling The Eye of Time, Telephone Ear Clips and Ruby Lips, designed by **Salvador Dalí**, about 1941-50  
2019, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, Figueres
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► In vitrine

- 1** *Vogue* (French edition), December 1935  
Cover design **Giorgio de Chirico**  
The Julien Baulu collection
- 2\_3** *Vogue*, June 1939 and December 1971/  
January 1972  
Cover design **Salvador Dalí**  
Vitra Design Museum
- 4\_5** *Harper's Bazaar*, October 1938 and July 1939  
Cover design **A. M. Cassandre,**  
**Alexey Brodovitch**  
Vitra Design Museum
- 6** *Six* magazine, no. 1, 1988  
**Comme des Garçons**  
Gift of Comme des Garçons
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Eileen Agar wearing her Ceremonial Hat for Eating Bouillabaisse, 1948

2 minutes

This sculptural and playful hat was made from found objects. Agar recalled in 1988: 'It consisted of a cork basket picked up in St Tropez and painted blue, which I covered with fishnet, a lobster's tail, starfish and other marine objects. It was a sort of Arcimboldo headgear for the fashion-conscious and received a lot of rather startled publicity.'

Footage supplied by British Pathé

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**ROOM 4**

**THE  
MIND  
UNCAGED**

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# THE MIND UNCAGED

Surrealism's legacy for contemporary design is both an aesthetic and an attitude. Above all, it is an effort to free the creative imagination from conventional and rational thought.

The 1924 *Manifesto of Surrealism* described a problem: 'experience is increasingly circumscribed. It paces back and forth in a cage from which it is more and more difficult to make it emerge.' Surrealism was born from a desire to unlock that cage.

This goal required creative strategies that are still alive today. Games of chance and automatism are used as methods to channel the subconscious. Alternative wisdom is found in ancient folklore and the study of nature. New technologies change human perception and create new aesthetics. The revolutionary impact of artificial intelligence today is comparable to that of the film camera in the 1930s. Contemporary Afrosurrealism fuses modern technology with myth and psychology.

Surrealism is still evolving. The torch has now been passed to contemporary artists and designers who dare to shake up the creative process, discover new tools and think differently. ██████████

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► **On central plinths**

*Cabana, 2003*

**Fernando & Humberto Campana**

What is this monumental and mysterious piece?

It could be described as a cabinet: behind the raffia curtain are five circular shelves. Yet it has an imposing aura, and its title – meaning a hut or a cabin – hints at something more. To reach into its dark, veiled interior is to venture into the unknown.

Manufactured by Edra, 2010

Raffia, metal

Vitra Design Museum

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*Lily Pad Tree, 2018*

**Nacho Carbonell**

*I like to see objects as living organisms,  
imagining them coming alive and being  
able to surprise you with their behaviour.*

**Nacho Carbonell**

These fantastical objects spark the imagination. Like many Surrealists, Carbonell transforms everyday materials into strange, animated new forms. His projects often start with leftover scraps of material in the studio, reconfigured and assembled in surprising ways.

Metal, metal mesh, plaster, concrete

Carpenters Workshop Gallery in Paris/London

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*Guise* low table, 2019

**Odd Matter**

Designers Els Woldhek and Georgi Manassiev form the Amsterdam-based studio Odd Matter. Their work reimagines the conventional processes and materials of furniture design. The 'Guise' Collection is carved from polystyrene foam and spray painted with car lacquer. The iridescent, glossy paint surface of these amorphous forms is a decorative guise, or mask, concealing the substance beneath.

EPS foam, spray

Courtesy of Odd Matter and Nilufar Gallery, Milan

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TP-TS-112.mocap carafe, 2018

**Audrey Large**

*Instead of accepting objects as reality, why not think of them as visual effects of reality?*

**Audrey Large**

Large challenges our perception of what is real with works that sit at the boundary of digital design and handicrafts. She translates digital images into improbable physical forms using techniques including modelling and 3D printing.

3D printed in polylactic acid


Courtesy of Audrey Large and Nilufar Gallery, Milan

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# LIBERATED FORM

Melting, fragmented and sprawling forms are central to surrealist design aesthetics. These ungoverned shapes are an expression of creative and psychological freedom. They look to natural forms and capitalise on the inherent qualities of materials or chance accidents in the creative process.

Contemporary designers Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec use an intuitive, automatic drawing process to discover new imagery and forms. This represents a 21st-century continuation of the strategies by which the early Surrealists hoped to express the subconscious in art.

Digital technologies, including 3D printing and motion capture offer new ways to bring chance into the design process. Computer programmes can determine certain features in ways that human designers cannot fully predict or control. 



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► **Opposite 'Liberated Form' panel**

*An Uncomfortable Place*, 1992

**Alberto de Braud**

Bronze

Vitra Design Museum

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Side 1, Curved Chest of Drawers, 2013-14 edition  
of 1970 original

**Shiro Kuramata**

*Enchantment should also be considered  
a function.*

**Shiro Kuramata**

Kuramata playfully skews the rigid form of a traditional chest of drawers, giving it graceful fluidity and weightlessness. He felt constrained by modernist definitions of functionality and sought to provoke surprise and joy with his designs.

Manufactured by Cappellini

Lacquered plywood, metal

Vitra Design Museum

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Etruscan Chair, 1984

**Danny Lane**

Alongside Ron Arad and other designers, Danny Lane broke new ground by creating furniture from overlooked industrial materials. His anarchic process of ‘bricolage’ often uses broken glass to make dynamic, irregular forms. Lane’s punk sensibility is underpinned by engineering expertise.

Manufactured by Glassworks

Glass, steel

Vitra Design Museum

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► **On wall to the right of ‘*Liberated Form*’ panel**

*Les Champs magnétiques*

(Magnetic Fields), 1920

**André Breton**

**Philippe Soupault**

Breton and Soupault – poets and founding Surrealists – created this text through a shared process of automatic writing. They began a new chapter each day, with no attempt to edit the images and words that sprung spontaneously to mind or attribute them to an individual author. The text was published as the first literary expression of Surrealism.

Vitra Design Museum

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*Vie de l'objet* (Life of the Object),  
*Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution* 6, 1933

**Yves Tanguy**

Vitra Design Museum

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Pablo Picasso drawing with light, 1949

**Gjon Mili**

2019, Gjon Mili/Time Life Pictures/Getty Images

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Film of Sketch Furniture design and production,  
about 2005

**Front**

3 minutes

Music by Hess Is More, Biarritz

Front

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Sketch Furniture, AP 2, 2013

**Front**

Sketch Furniture is traced by the designer's hand and body in mid-air using motion-capture technology. The forms are translated into a digital file and 3D printed to create functional pieces. Design studio Front innovated this method in 2005 to introduce instinct and physicality into the design process. Their gestures recall Picasso's much earlier experiments in 'drawing' with light as well as Surrealist processes such as automatic writing.

Manufactured by Acron Formservice AB

Polyamide

Vitra Design Museum

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Untitled, about 1935

**Yves Tanguy**

Tanguy developed his signature visionary landscapes in the 1930s. His travels in North Africa in 1930 provided crucial inspiration for this style, although the final pieces are not specific to any particular place. The seamless blend of horizon into sky contrasts disconcertingly with precisely drawn shadows and abstract forms. These images give the impression of a world where the normal laws of physics do not apply.

Oil on canvas

The San Diego Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. Jacquelyn M. Littlefield 1985.88

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Pools & Pouf!, 2004

**Robert Stadler**

Stadler's playful work looks as if a traditional Chesterfield sofa has melted – or perhaps been set free. Buttoned upholstery is reimagined into a fragmented, free-form furniture piece. The amorphous, organic shapes recall those in Yves Tanguy's imagined landscape, displayed nearby.

Manufactured by Siegear  
Leather, plywood, synthetic fabric  
Vitra Design Museum

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Automatic drawings, 2006-19

**Ronan Bouroullec**

To create these drawings, Bouroullec let his body take over from his conscious mind. He made marks without considering how he got from point A to point B. Like the Surrealist technique of automatic writing, this activity prompted creative breakthroughs by allowing him to temporarily abandon rational thought.

Felt-tip pen on paper; graphite pencil on paper  
© Ronan Bouroullec, 2006-19

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Vegetal Chair, about 2004-08

**Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec**

Nature has inspired Surrealists to break away from more conventional design approaches. The Bouroullec brothers, Ronan and Erwan, set out to create a chair that would 'sprout up like a plant'. It took them four years to develop a design that was both poetic and robust, with the aid of advanced plastic injection moulding techniques and virtual-modelling software.

Polyamide 6 GF 30

Vitra Design Museum

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► **Chandelier hanging from ceiling**

*Porca Miseria!* chandelier, 2019 edition of  
1994 design

**Ingo Maurer**

*Chance rules our life, much more than intention.*

**Ingo Maurer**

Broken with a hammer or dropped on the floor, ceramics have been shattered into hundreds of pieces to create this chandelier. Maurer painstakingly reassembled the shards to capture the moment of fragmentation and the form created by chance. The title of this work is an Italian exclamation of dismay or wonder.

Steel, porcelain

Vitra Design Museum

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# MYTHICAL THINKING

Surrealism challenges the primacy of rational thought in European culture. The early Surrealists searched for alternative sources of poetic wisdom in non-Western art and design. Many saw ethnographic artefacts as the epitome of the Surrealist impulse because they seemed to refer to a mythical world beyond visible reality.

Painter Max Ernst developed mystical landscapes of the imagination with a similarly suggestive, liberating impact. In these, he blended personal motifs with images inspired by the Americas. Ernst and other Surrealists also collected and exhibited pieces made by indigenous peoples of Africa, Oceania and the Americas. Sadly, the origin of these works went largely unacknowledged and now this imagined affinity often seems misplaced.

Yet the desire to look beyond inherited cultural ideas fuelled the global evolution of Surrealism. Over 100 years later, Surrealism has spread far beyond its European origins. In the process, oppressed and colonised peoples have adopted Surrealist strategies as a mode of resistance towards dominant cultures. Afrosurrealism has emerged as a distinct and powerful new movement spanning literature, film and design. ■■■■■

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*Noire et Blanche* (Black and White), 1926

**Man Ray**

2019, Man Ray Photo Library/Telimage, Paris

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Max Ernst with his ethnographic collection, 1942

**Hermann Landshoff**

Artist and painter Max Ernst is seated here in front of his extensive collection of ethnographic sculptures from around the world. Like many Surrealists, he was inspired by their bold forms. His stance in front of these displaced works now seems uncomfortably imperialist.

2019 © bpk/Münchener Stadtmuseum, Sammlung  
Fotografie/Archiv  
Landshoff

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*Documents: Doctrines, Archéologie, Beaux-Arts, Ethnographie*, no. 1, 1929

**Georges Bataille**

André Breton, self-styled mastermind of Surrealism, attempted to keep Surrealist ideas ordered and consistent. Other Surrealists emphasised the movement's anarchic side. In 1929, Georges Bataille founded the magazine *Documents* to publish contributions from diverse fields including ethnography and archaeology. Texts such as the ethnographic studies of Michel Leiris, as well as Sigmund Freud's investigations into fetishism, inspired many Surrealists to study non-Western art and designed objects.

Vitra Design Museum

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*La Part Maudite* (The Accursed Share), 1949  
**Georges Bataille**

Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris

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*Wald, Vögel und Sonne* (Forest, Bird and Sun),  
1927

**Max Ernst**

Forests, small birds and suns often figure in paintings by Ernst. This mystical landscape represents a psychological space, coloured by his childhood memories of dark, awe-inspiring German forests. To bring unconscious impulses directly into his paintings, Ernst placed small objects beneath the canvas and scraped paint across it to reveal their textures. He called this technique 'grattage'.

Oil on canvas

Private collection

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*Jeu d'Artifice* (Firework), 1966

**Jean Lurçat**

French artist Jean Lurçat creates tapestries that draw on Surrealist influences. Often featuring verses from Surrealist poets Paul Éluard and Robert Desnos, the tapestries also suggest fantastical worlds where mystical creatures roam through nature and the cosmos. Lurçat exhibited alongside Surrealist artists from 1925, but never considered himself a member of the movement.

Manufactured by Atelier de Portalegre

Cotton, wool

Vitra Design Museum

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*Hay*, 2014

**Najla El Zein**

This is one of several 'sensorial brushes' or miniature sculptures designed to create physical sensations: the tickle of a feather; the prickle of a gold-plated nail. With skilful craftsmanship, El Zein gives the illusion that hay grows from stone. Playing with perception and reality is characteristic of her work. She often makes hard things appear soft, carving marble or layering metal spoons in fluid forms.

Pentelic marble, hay

Courtesy of Carpenters Workshop Gallery

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*Kosmos in Blue* look, 2020

**Yasmina Atta**

Atta creates her own richly layered mythology through this Afrosurrealist-inspired fashion collection. References to Nigerian Hausa architecture and mythological figures such as Mami Wata are blended with pop culture and technological futures. Atta finds harmony in unexpected juxtapositions. She draws inspiration from diverse sources, including the films of Ousmane Sembène and Djibril Diop Mambéty and the body armour worn by the ‘Gundam girls’ of Japanese animé.

Leather, metal, Arduino, wires, wool  
Yasmina Atta

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*Touki Bouki* (The Hyena's Journey) (excerpt), 1973  
**Djibril Diop Mambéty**

3 minutes

*Mambéty brought poetry, dream and fantasy to African cinema.*

**Thierno Ibrahima Dia**

This visionary film centres on a young couple who dream of leaving Senegal for Paris. It sensitively captures the surreal juxtapositions of tradition, fantasy, dream and harsh reality that have come to define contemporary African film.

Restored by The Film Foundation's World Cinema Project and Cineteca di Bologna at L'Immagine Ritrovata laboratory, in association with the family of director Djibril Diop Mambéty. Restoration funded by Armani, Cartier, Qatar Airways, and Qatar Museum Authority. / ©Teemour Diop Mambéty

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# NEW REALITIES

Grasping the impact of new technologies on our minds and the planet has become an urgent task. Early Surrealists worked with the objects around them. Now, those everyday objects include technological items and systems that govern our lives in ways beyond our individual understanding.

We are only just beginning to feel the power of artificial intelligence – itself a form of altered mind – to change our perception and experience of the world. Artists and designers are jointly engaged in calibrating its influence and potential.

Surrealism was born in an era of geopolitical conflict, economic instability and fear of the future. With panache and courage, it asserted that, in such times, we must still dare to dream. Today, Surrealism continues to inspire many designers who use experimental approaches to tackle social and psychological challenges specific to the 21st century. ■■■■■



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Photographs and objects from 'Designs for an overpopulated planet: The Foragers', 2009

**Dunne & Raby**

Photographs **Jason Evans**

*Beneath the glossy surface of official design lurks a dark and strange world driven by real human needs.*

**Dunne & Raby**

This work of speculative design is situated in a possible future of food shortages. Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby imagine 'urban foragers' who invent DIY devices to extract nourishment from city environments. Speculative design makes alternative values and worldviews concrete through the design of everyday things. Like the Surrealists, Dunne & Raby try to explore alternative ways of being

Fibreglass, larch, powder-coated steel, wood  
Dunne & Raby, London/New York

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► Next to the '*The Uncaged Mind*' panel

Music videos for *Utopia*, *Mutual Core* and *Hidden Place*, 2001-17

**Björk Guðmundsdóttir**

4 minutes each

The early Surrealists used film to create new visions of the world. Music videos have the same experimental power today. Björk imagines a universe in which relationships between humans, nature and technology are reconfigured. Some visual motifs in these videos, such as glittering tears, are directly inspired by Surrealist art.

*Utopia* directed by Warren Du Preez

Nick Thornton Jones, 2017

*Mutual Core* directed by Andrew Thomas Huang, 2011

*Hidden Place* directed by Inez van Lamsweerde;

Vinoodh Matadin; M/M Paris, 2001

One Little Indian Records

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*deepdream.c* NFT, 2015/2021

**Alexander Mordvintsev**

*Mordvintsev's great idea was to let [artificial neural networks] off the leash, see what happened when they were given a little freedom, allowed to dream a little.*

**Professor Arthur I. Miller**

DeepDream created a breakthrough in artificial intelligence (AI). Mordvintsev's programme could study visual patterns and generate new images of what it 'saw'. Humans use a comparable mental process to draw, create and design. DeepDream helped to establish that AI could also be creative. Mordvintsev rewrote the programme in 2021 as *deepdream.c* and used it to generate an artwork modelled on the first DeepDream image he shared with colleagues at Google in 2015.

Courtesy of Alexander Mordvintsev and Kanon

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