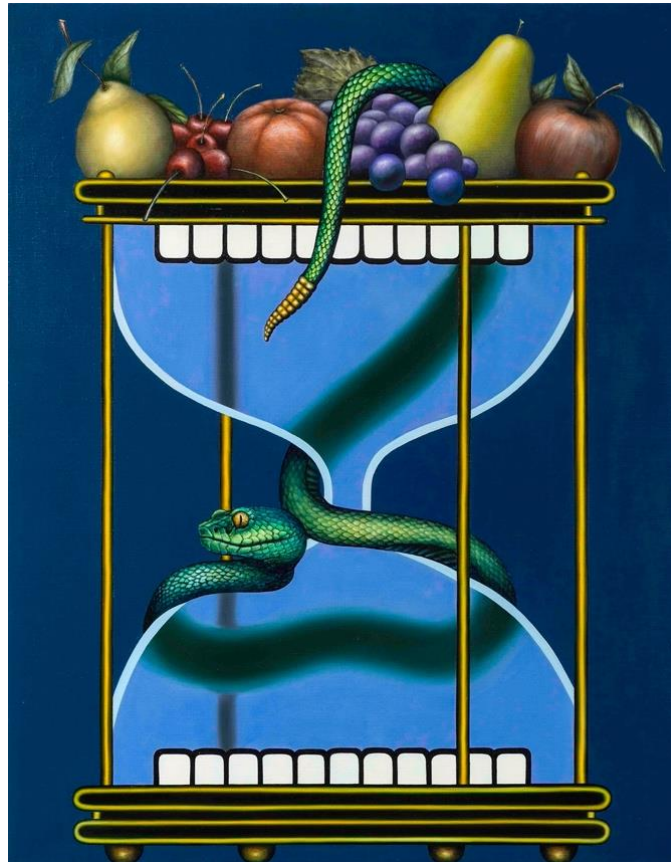


BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART

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Blanton Museum Presents Exhibition Celebrating 100 Years of Surrealism



***Long Live Surrealism! 1924–Today explores the legacy of Surrealism,
a century after its inception***

AUSTIN, TX — August 7, 2024 —The Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas at Austin presents [Long Live Surrealism! 1924–Today](#). Opening during the 100-year anniversary of Surrealism's 1924 inception, the exhibition explores the continued relevance of one of the most enduring ideas of the last century. *Long Live Surrealism!* opens September 7, 2024, and will be on view through January 12, 2025.

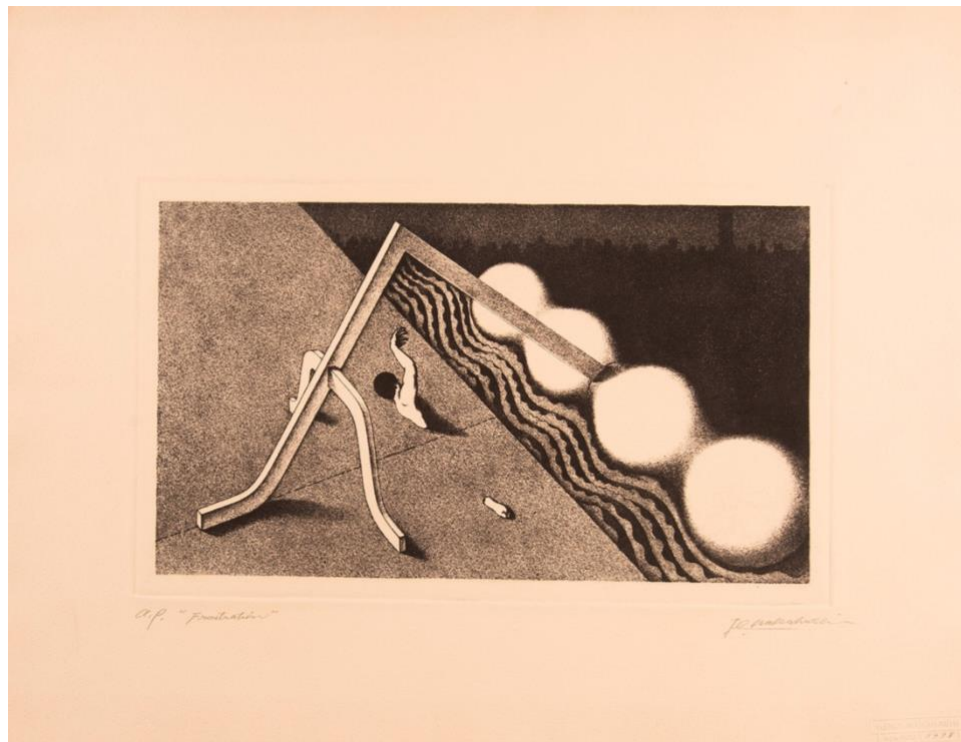
Long Live Surrealism! brings together more than 70 works in diverse mediums by iconic Surrealists like Hans Bellmer, Leonora Carrington, Max Ernst, René Magritte, Wifredo Lam, Man Ray, and Dorothea Tanning, alongside modern and contemporary artists inspired by their innovations.

“This exhibition offers visitors an expanded understanding of Surrealism: not only its breadth and diversity as a historical movement that crossed disciplines, mediums, and geographies, but also as a revolutionary worldview that believes in transforming daily life by challenging a viewer’s sense of reality—a concept that artists continue to respond to today,” said Claire Howard, the Blanton’s Associate Curator of Collections and Exhibitions, and an expert in Surrealism.

[Watch a video with curator Claire Howard speaking about *Long Live Surrealism!*](#)

Published in October 1924 by French poet André Breton, the first “Manifesto of Surrealism” defined Surrealism as “dictation of thought in the absence of all control exercised by reason, outside of all aesthetic and moral preoccupation.” Starting in post-WWI Europe as a literary and philosophical—and later artistic—movement with overt revolutionary aims, Surrealism soon spread internationally. Inspired by the writings of psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, the Surrealist movement emphasized dreams, chance, and the unconscious, aspiring to liberate the rational mind and to seek artistic and personal freedoms.

In addition to asserting the longevity of Surrealism as a movement beyond its traditionally given endpoint of World War II, *Long Live Surrealism!* explores the resonance of its ideas throughout the later 20th century and today.





Long Live Surrealism! is drawn primarily from the Blanton's extensive collection of works on paper, with select loans. It includes 21 works added to the Blanton's collection since 2020, most of which are on view for the first time.

The exhibition is divided in five thematic sections representing significant Surrealist concepts. The first section, **Dream Imagery**, presents the realistically rendered yet disorienting scenes many people associate with Surrealism. Surrealists believed that dreams expressed repressed desires and thoughts. They attempted to represent these ideas or images arising from the unconscious. This section features a symbol-laden, barren landscape by Gertrude Abercrombie and prints by Salvador Dalí, whose melting clocks are among the most well-known Surrealist imagery, along with uncanny still-lives by contemporary artists Emily Mae Smith and Conner O'Leary.

Abstraction: Automatism and Biomorphism addresses two Surrealist strategies for generating abstract imagery: *automatism*, creating art without conscious control; and *biomorphism*, evoking living organisms or organic forms. Included here are biomorphic prints by Joan Miró, who was among the first to pioneer automatic drawing, and Wilfredo Lam, whose abstracted figures are imbued with Afro-Cuban histories.

Driven in part by their interest in Freud's writings as well as a desire to jolt viewers, Surrealists pushed boundaries in both abstract and figurative art. Their depictions of distorted, manipulated, and eroticized human figures are the subject of the third section of the exhibition, **The Body: Metamorphosis and Desire**. Highlights include prints by Hans Bellmer depicting his fetishistic marionette in various poses, and sculptures by Louise Bourgeois and contemporary artist Hannah Levy that exchange elements of the human body for inanimate objects like an asparagus stalk and chair.

Surrealist artists believed that challenging a viewer's sense of reality would also spur them to question societal norms and their daily life. They started combining seemingly unrelated things in artworks that would challenge reason. **Chance Meetings: Poetic Objects and Collage** emphasizes this use of juxtaposition of objects or images, as well as "chance procedures" intended to free the unconscious. A *decalcomania* (transfer technique) by Surrealist Marcel Jean and later collages by Dorothy Hood and Ray Johnson demonstrate the creative potential of chance.

Surrealism challenged the notion of objective reality and instead encouraged looking for "the marvelous in the everyday"—the title of the exhibition's last section. **The Marvelous in the Everyday** points to the power of photography—once considered an objective tool—to expose daily moments of surprise, beauty, or contradiction. Dedicated to the medium, this section spotlights early photographers Manuel Álvarez Bravo and Eugene Atget alongside uncanny scenes by contemporary artists Kenji Nakahashi and Joel Sternfeld.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

September 14, 2024, 10 a.m.–8 p.m.
Second Saturday—Keepin' It Surreal

Featuring "Art with An Expert" talk with Emily Mae Smith at 4 p.m.

Austin native, and UT alum (B.F.A. Studio Art 2002) Emily Mae Smith will speak about her artworks, including those in dialogue with Surrealist René Magritte in an upcoming exhibition at the Magritte Museum, Brussels. More info at blantonmuseum.org/secondsaturdays

Friday, October 25, 2024, 6:30–10:30 p.m.

B Scene: Surrealism Soirée

More info will be made available at blantonmuseum.org/bscene

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PRESS PREVIEW: Friday, September 6, 2024 at 2 p.m.

Image captions:

Emily Mae Smith, *Temptation Island*, 2019, oil on linen, 38 x 30 in., Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Purchase through the generosity of Alana and Adiel Hoch, 2020, © Emily Mae Smith

Kenji Nakahashi, *Frustration*, 1978, photoetching, Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Anonymous gift in memory of Kenji Nakahashi, 2020, © Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regent

(Left) Federico Castellón, *Untitled*, 1935, dry brush and ink on paper, 16 x 11 7/8 in., Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gift of Stephen Robeson-Miller in memory of Anne Clark "Pajarito Matta" Alpert (1914–1997), 2023, © Estate of Federico Castellón (photo: Isabel Asha Penzlien); (Right) Conner O'Leary, *You F*cker*, 2022, acrylic on canvas wrapped on panel, 30 x 24 in., Collection of Evan and Margaret Williams (photo: Andrea Calo, courtesy of Martha's, Austin)

About the Blanton Museum of Art

Founded in 1963, the Blanton Museum of Art holds the largest public collection in Central Texas with more than 21,000 objects. The home of Ellsworth Kelly's *Austin*, its major collecting areas are modern and contemporary American and Latin American art, Italian Renaissance and Baroque paintings, and prints and drawings. The Blanton offers thought-provoking, visually arresting, and personally moving encounters with art.