

Behind the Surrealist Curtain

SEX, SENSUALITY AND SILENCE





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IN ASSOCIATION WITH TIMOTHY BAUM

In the case of most 20th Century art there is no curtain (“what you see is what you get,” et cetera). It is all a question of intent. The goal of most artists is to present an image—often the reflection of a point of view or a state of mind—but not the examination of a point of view or state of mind. The Surrealists, for the most part, were delvers and explorers. Their works of art conveyed specific imagery; their minds sought additional possibilities to and extensions of much of the imagery that their art (and lives) conveyed. This is what separates Surrealism from all the other schools and movements of the modern era: it thinks and explores on every available plane and level. The conscious is considered a bit ho-hum; the subconscious a tad more challenging and intriguing. Beyond the subconscious: ah, there the surrealist mind makes its greatest effort to awaken—behind and beyond the surrealist curtain itself.

Am I speaking with too much vagueness or ambiguity? The Surrealist (as practitioner of a way of life, as well as the creator of art or poetry as a mirror of that life) was always seeking. No realm of subject matter was meant to be excluded, censored or ignored. The intention of exploring or journeying into the remoter nether realms—metaphysics, the subconscious mind, the libido, the dream state, et cetera—was not intended as an invasion of privacy: in the surrealist quest and journey there was no distinction between private and public domains (voilà!).

This exhibition can give you only a cursory introduction to the world “behind the surrealist curtain.” It is meant just as a sampler: to open your eyes (and minds) to some of the journeys and tools of travel embarked upon and utilized by a selection of Surrealists (the boundaries of space and time—in this case, an intimate gallery chamber and a mere handful of weeks allocated for the selection of the show’s varied ingredients—limited our horizons). Present, nevertheless, is a wide array of exploratory techniques conceived and/or elevated by the Surrealists: a tiny, but beautiful, *frottage* by Max Ernst; a *flottage* by Marcel Jean; a *brûlage* by David Hare (acquired too late to be included in the catalogue); a decalcomania by Georges Hugnet; collages and mise-en-scène photographs by such dexterous innovators as Jindřich Štyrský and Hans Bellmer. Then come the draftsmen—adept with the pen or engraver’s burin—Picasso, the early André Masson and Roberto Matta, Kurt Seligmann and others. Add to this some special objects and oil paintings... Suddenly, the production tumbles neatly into place and the curtain can be ceremoniously drawn.

We subtitle this exhibition, *Sex, Sensuality and Silence*, in deference to that which principally lurks behind the curtain’s protective skirts and folds. The renowned tome, *Dictionnaire général du Surréalisme et de ses environs*, begins its entry on *Sexualité* with the words “The liberation of desire.” I would concur with this, adding “and its truthfulness, as well.”

TIMOTHY BAUM

N.Y.C., 12/31/01



1 PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN

L'écriture automatique (Automatic Writing), ca. 1925

Vintage gelatin silver print, $5\frac{3}{8} \times 3\frac{7}{16}$ inches (13.7 × 8.7 cm)

Reproduced on the cover of *La Revolution surréaliste*, No. 9/10, October 1927.



2 ANDRÉ MASSON

*Le Con d'Irene, I (Irene's ****), 1928*

Etching (proof copy), 9¹/₁₆ × 7 inches (24.3 × 17.8 cm) sheet size
First of five plates from the series illustrating the book of the same title
by an anonymous author, subsequently identified as Louis Aragon.



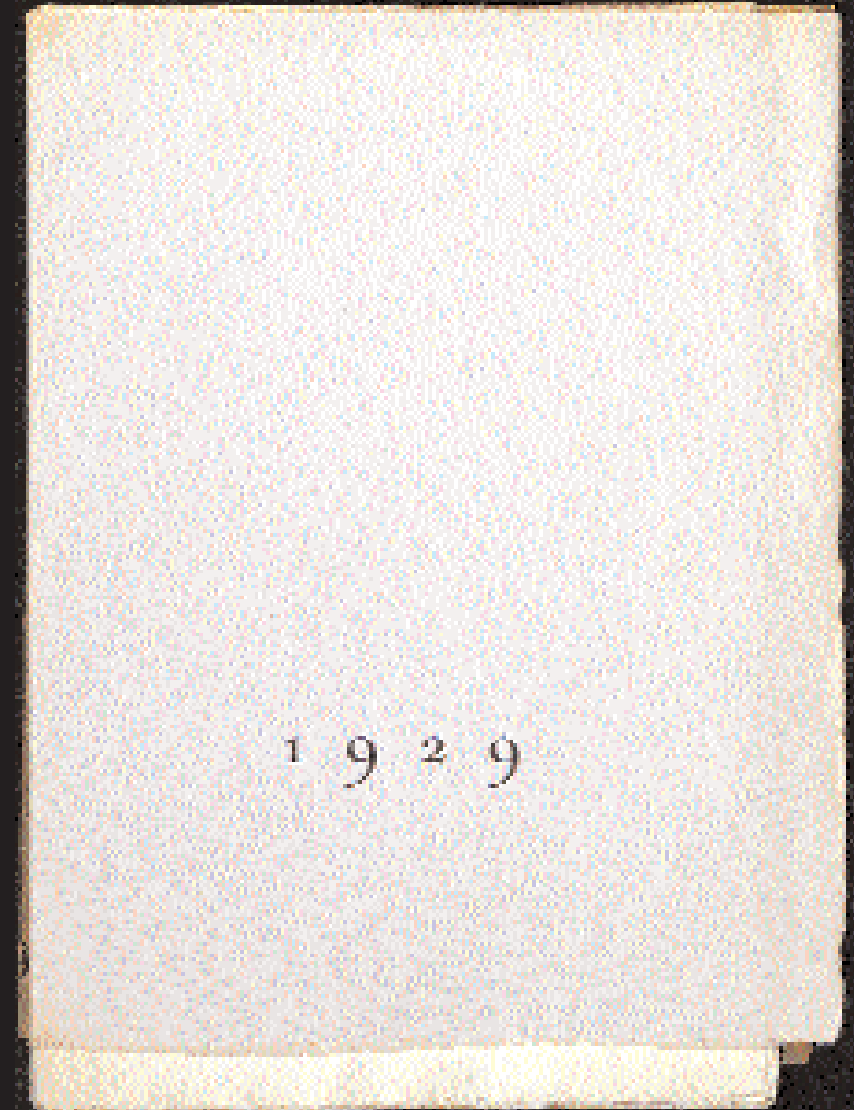
3 ANDRÉ MASSON

*Le Con d'Irene, III (Irene's ****), 1928*

Etching (proof copy), 9¹/₁₆ × 7 inches (24.4 × 17.8 cm) sheet size
Third of five plates from the series illustrating the book of the same title
by an anonymous author, subsequently identified as Louis Aragon.



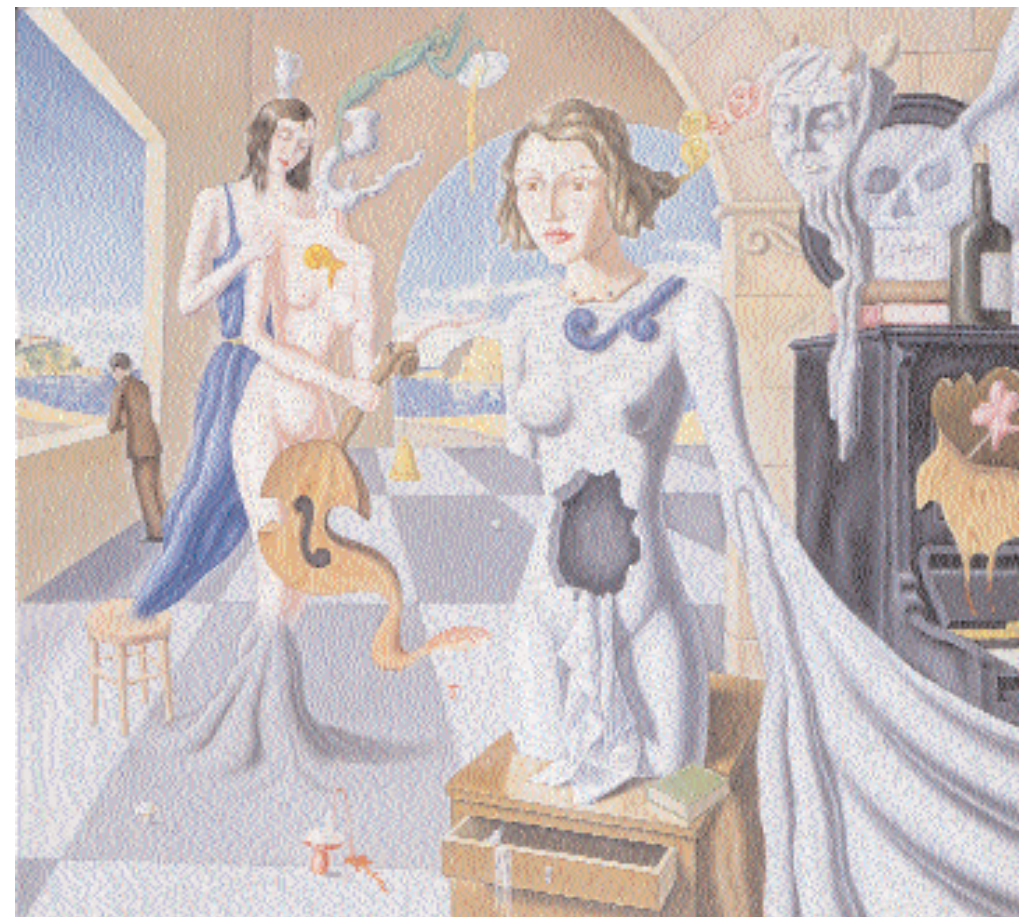
4 MAN RAY
 Untitled (still from *Étoile de mer*), 1928
 Vintage gelatin silver print, 6⅝ × 8½ inches (16.8 × 21.5 cm)



5 MAN RAY
 1929, 1929
 Limited edition book with poems by Benjamin Péret and Louis Aragon,
 illustrated with four photographs by Man Ray.



6 JINDŘICH ŠTYRSKÝ
 Untitled (maquette for *Erotická revue*), 1931
 Collage, 9¼ × 3⅞ inches (23.5 × 7.9 cm)



7 ANGEL PLANELLS
Les Fantômes familiers (Family Phantoms), ca. 1932
 Oil on board, 18 × 19¾ inches (45.7 × 50.2 cm)



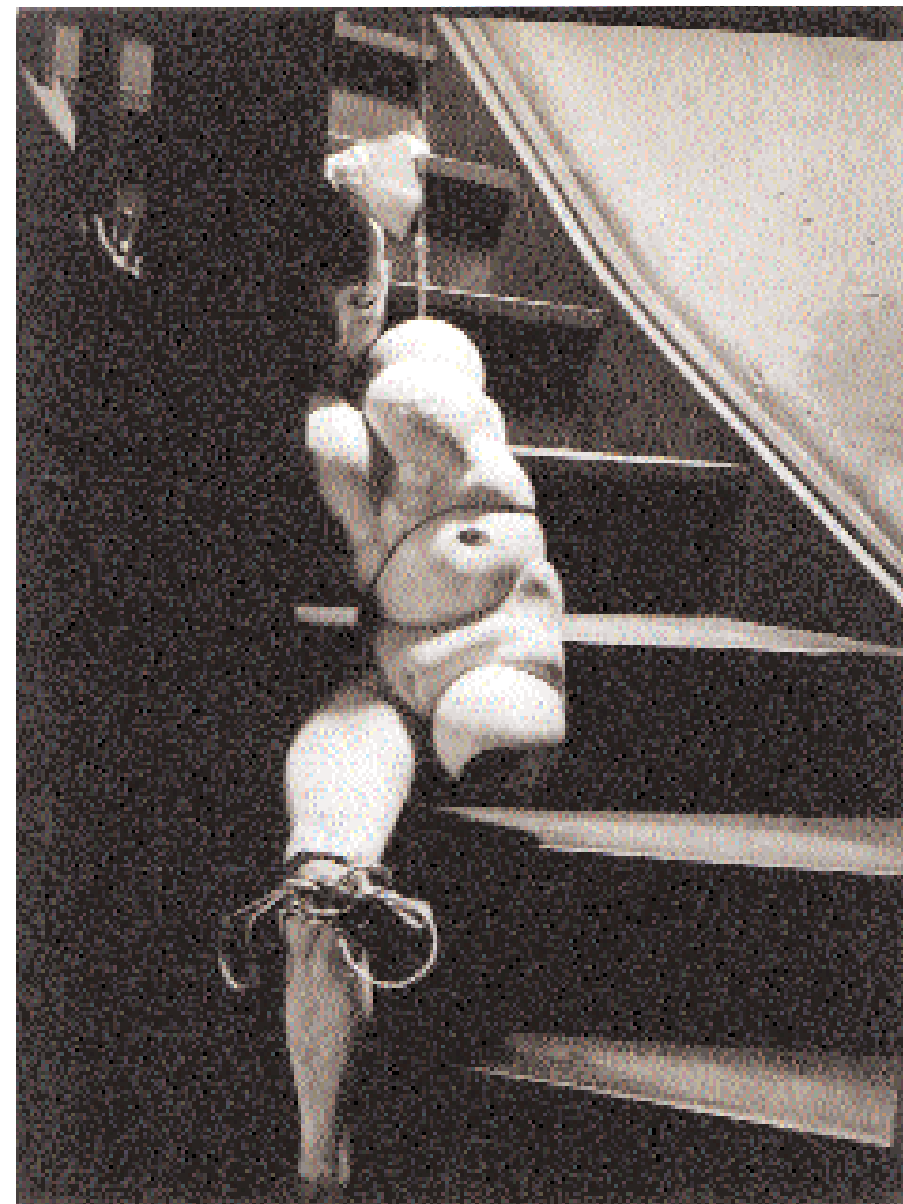
8 PABLO PICASSO
Modèle et sculpture surréaliste, 1933
 Etching, 10½ × 7½ inches (26.7 × 19 cm) plate size



9 JINDŘICH ŠTYRSKÝ
 Untitled (maquette for *Emilie Comes to Me in a Dream*), 1933
 Collage, 12 × 9½ inches (30.5 × 24.1 cm)



10 HANS BELLMER
La Poupée, 1935
 Vintage gelatin silver print, 1 5/8 × 5 5/8 inches (39.4 × 14.3 cm)



11 HANS BELLMER
La Poupée, 1935
 Vintage gelatin silver print, 18 1/2 × 14 1/2 inches (47 × 36.8 cm)



12 GEORGES HUGNET
 Untitled, 1935
 Gouache decalcomania and collage, 9³/₁₆ × 15¹¹/₁₆ inches (23.4 × 39.9 cm)

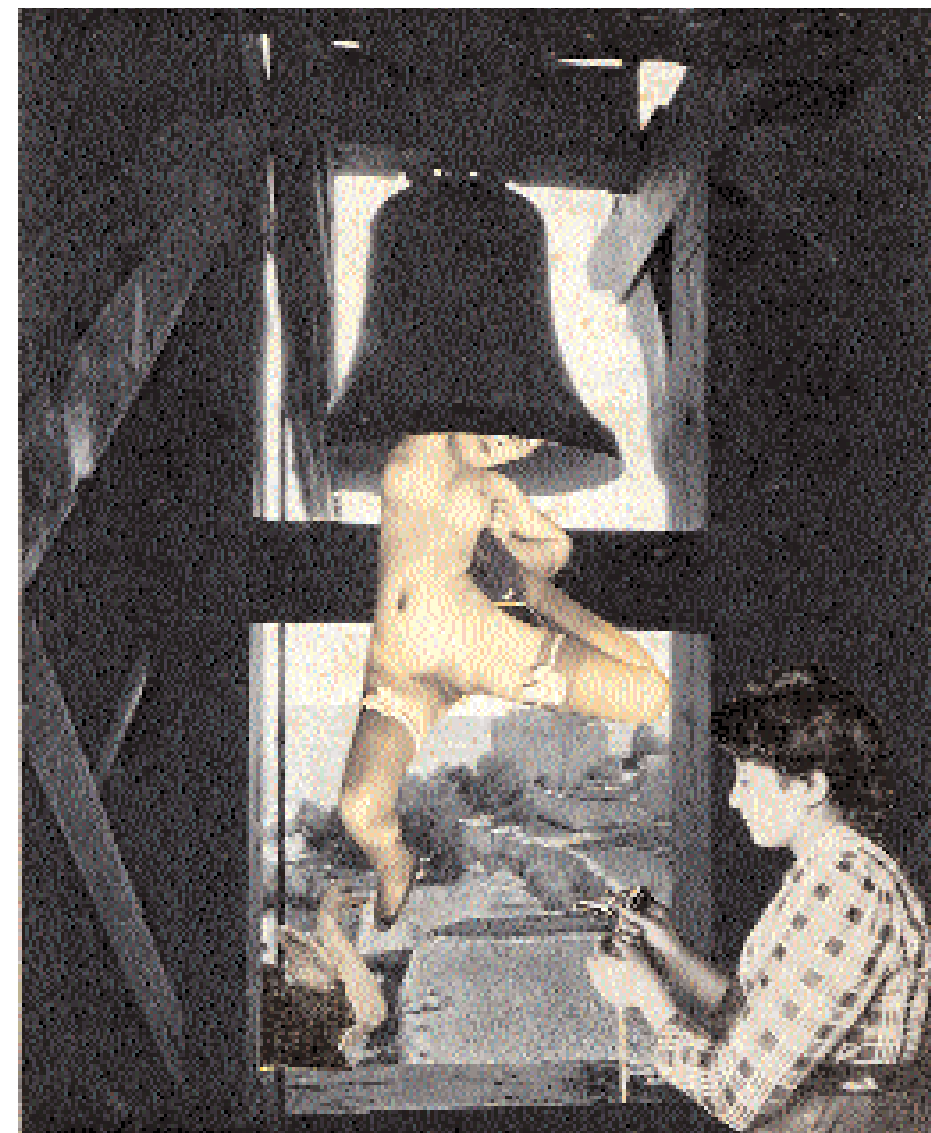


13 GEORGES HUGNET
Dans le Bois (In the Woods), 1935
 Collage, 9⁵/₁₆ × 7⁵/₁₆ inches (23.7 × 18.6 cm)



14 MAN RAY

Still Life with Sleeping Woman (Jacqueline Breton), 1935
 Vintage gelatin silver print, 9 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 7 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches (23.3 × 18.1 cm)
 Uncut version of an image from the photo-essay, *Essai de simulation du délire cinématographique*; *Cahiers d'art*, 1935, No. 5/6, page 107.



15 GEORGES HUGNET

Le Clocher (*The Bell Tower*), 1935/36
 Collage, 10 × 8 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches (25.4 × 20.8 cm)



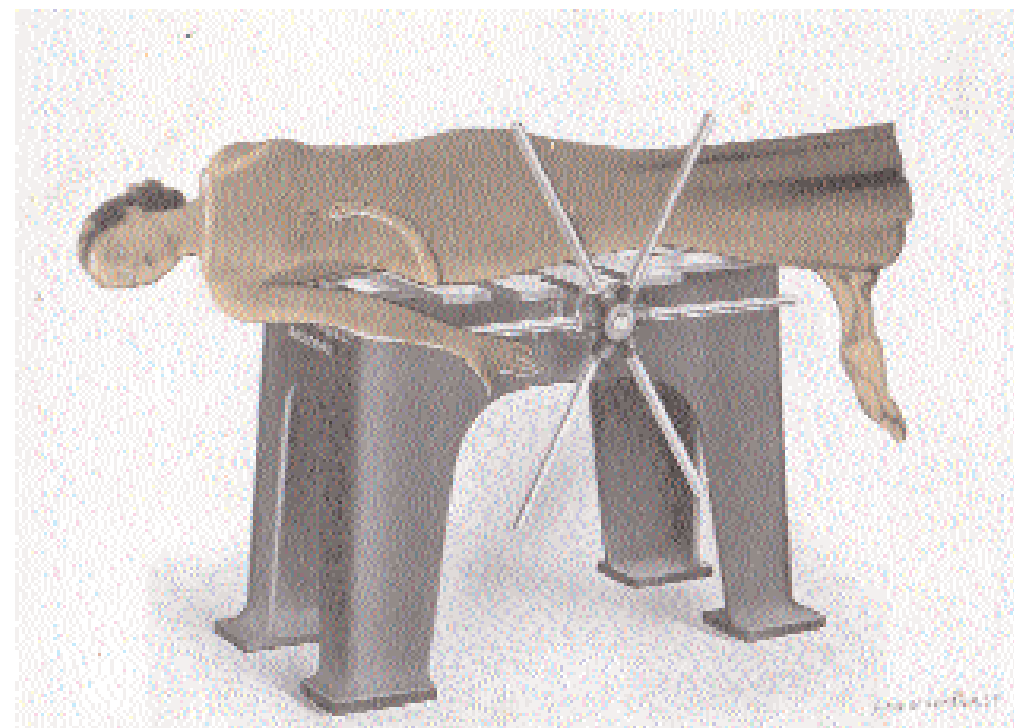
16 GEORGES HUGNET
Cache-cache (Hide and Seek), 1935/36
 Collage, 8¹⁵/₁₆ × 6¹⁵/₁₆ inches (22.7 × 17.6 cm)



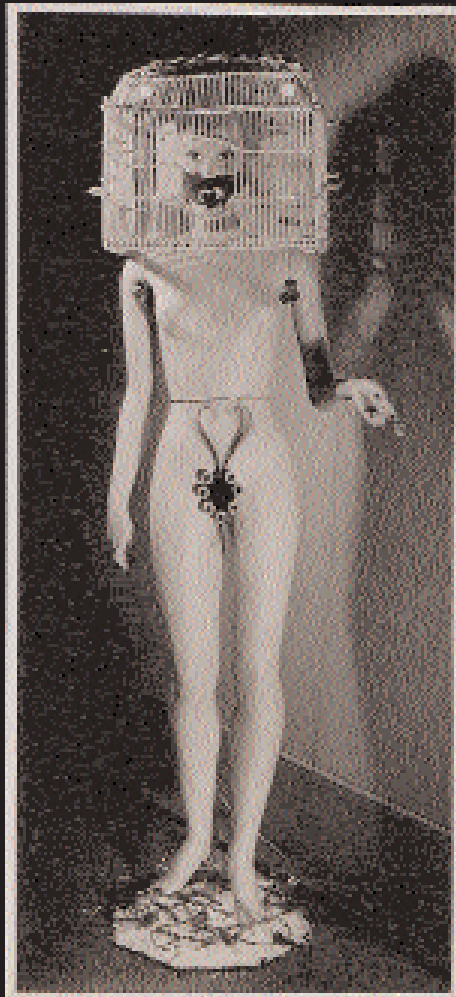
17 MAX ERNST
Je sublime (I Exalt), 1936
 Frottage drawing, 5⁷/₈ × 3¹³/₁₆ inches (14.3 × 9.2 cm) sheet size
 Proof version separate from the unsigned edition of 41 copies
 contained in the book of the same title by Benjamin Péret.



18 MARCEL JEAN
La Porte et la ballon (The Door and the Balloon), 1936
 India ink and watercolor, 12^{15/16} × 9^{15/16} inches (32.8 × 25.2 cm)



19 VICTOR BRAUNER
Auxerre, 1937
 Collage, 5^{15/16} × 8^{1/16} inches (15 × 20.5 cm)



20 RAOUL UBAC
Mannequin surréaliste
 (mannequin dressed by André Masson), 1938
 Vintage gelatin silver print, $9\frac{3}{16} \times 4\frac{3}{16}$ inches
 (23.4 × 10.6 cm)



21 RAOUL UBAC
Mannequin surréaliste
 (mannequin dressed by Espinoza), 1938
 Vintage gelatin silver print, $9\frac{1}{8} \times 3\frac{15}{16}$ inches
 (23.2 × 10 cm)



22 RAOUL UBAC
Mannequin surréaliste (mannequin dressed by Maurice Henry), 1938
 Vintage gelatin silver print, $9\frac{1}{16} \times 6\frac{3}{16}$ inches (23 × 15.7 cm)



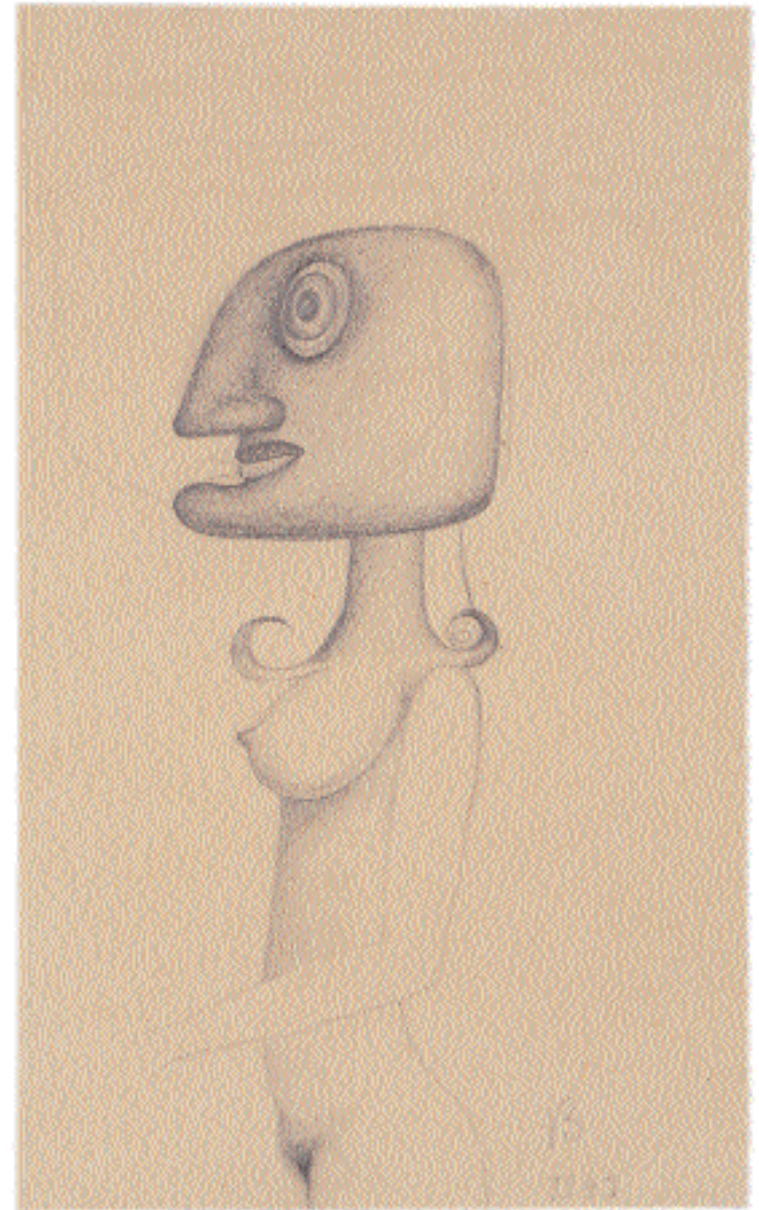
23 HANS BELLMER
La Poupée (maquette for *Les Jeux de la poupée*), ca. 1938
 Vintage gelatin silver print, 2 1/8 x 2 1/8 inches (5.4 x 5.4 cm) image size



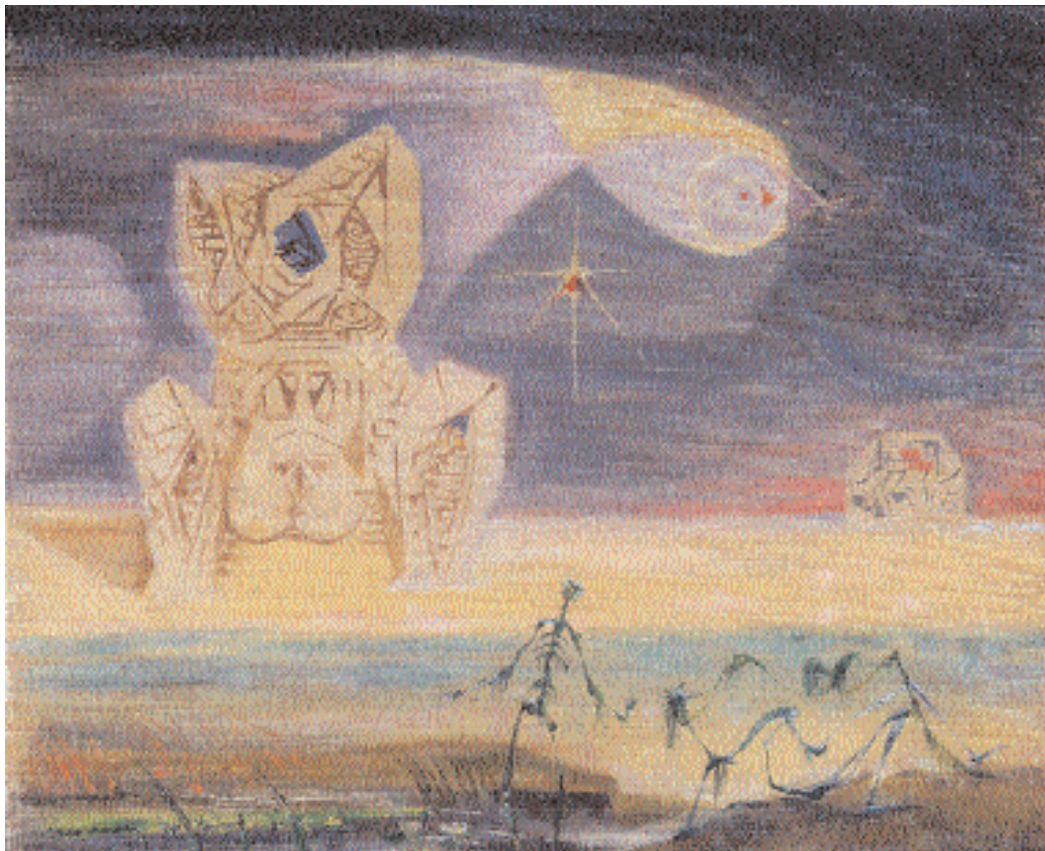
24 HANS BELLMER
La Toupie (*The Top*), 1938
 Edition of eight cast 1968, bronze, 13 3/8 inches high (34 cm)



25 HANS BELLMER
Lizica, 1939
 Pencil on paper, 10⁵/₈ × 8¹/₄ inches (27 × 20.9 cm)



26 VICTOR BRAUNER
Auto-portrait comme jeune femme nubile (Self-portrait as Nubile Young Woman), 1941
 Pencil on paper, 7⁵/₁₆ × 4⁷/₁₆ inches (18.6 × 11.4 cm)



27 ANDRÉ MASSON
Paysage matriarcal (Matriarchal Landscape), 1941
 Oil on canvas, 20 × 24 inches (50.8 × 61 cm)



28 OSCAR DOMINGUEZ
Le Feu au cul (Hot Pants), 1942/43
 One of 10 deluxe copies. Text by Georges Hugnet and containing two etchings in four different color states and an original ink drawing, all by Dominguez.

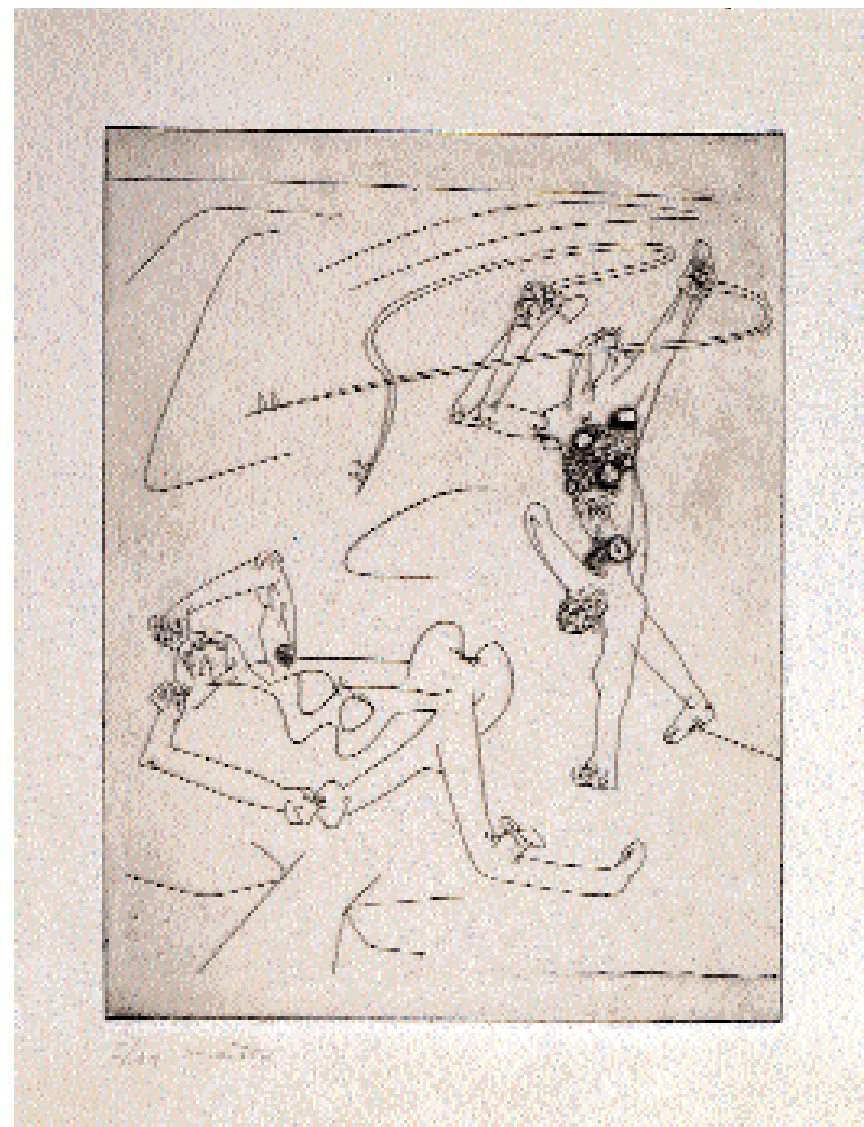


29 ROBERTO MATTA

Untitled (from *The New School*), ca. 1942

Drypoint etching, 6 × 8 inches (15.2 × 20.3 cm) plate size

From an edition of 11, not all of which were realized.



30 ROBERTO MATTA

Untitled (from *The New School*), ca. 1942

Drypoint etching, 7⁷/₈ × 6 inches (19.7 × 15.2 cm) plate size

From an edition of 11, not all of which were realized.



31 LAURENCE VAIL
Perfect Lady, 1942
 Mixed media collaged bottle, 14 inches high (35.6 cm)



32 JOSEPH CORNELL
Souvenir Case (Lucile Grahn as "La Sylphide"), ca. 1944
 Mixed media photo/box/object, 4 × 4 × 1 inches (10.2 × 10.2 × 2.5 cm)



33 GEORGES HUGNET

La Vie amoureuse des Spumifères, ca. 1947

Gouache on vintage gelatin silver print postcard, 5½ × 3½ inches (14 × 8.9 cm)

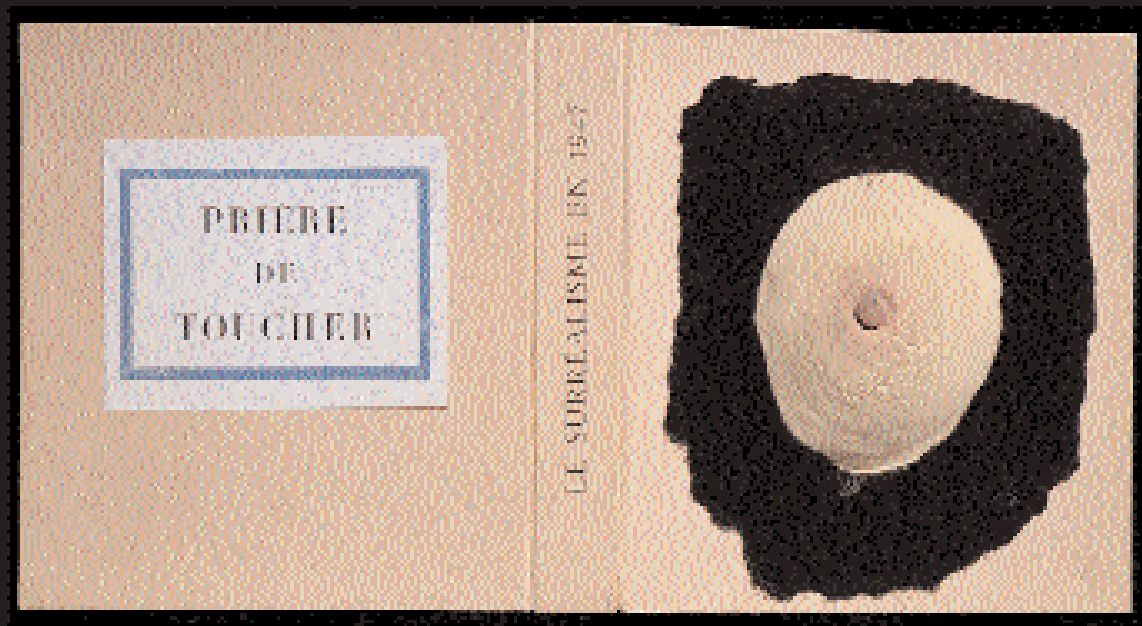


34 VALENTINE HUGO

La Séduction d'Eugénie, ca. 1947

Drypoint etching (proof copy), 7 × 4¹³/₁₆ inches (17.8 × 12.2 cm) plate size

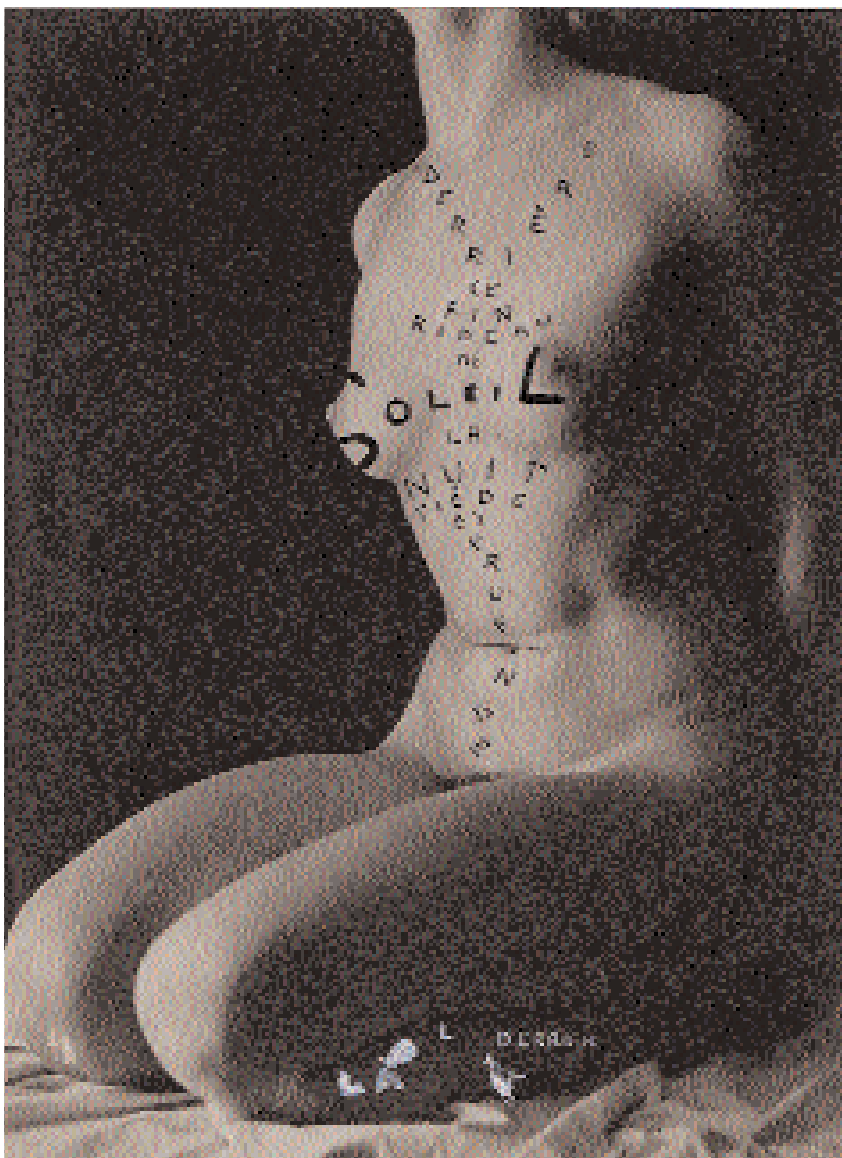
Illustration for *Eugénie de Franval* by the Marquis de Sade.



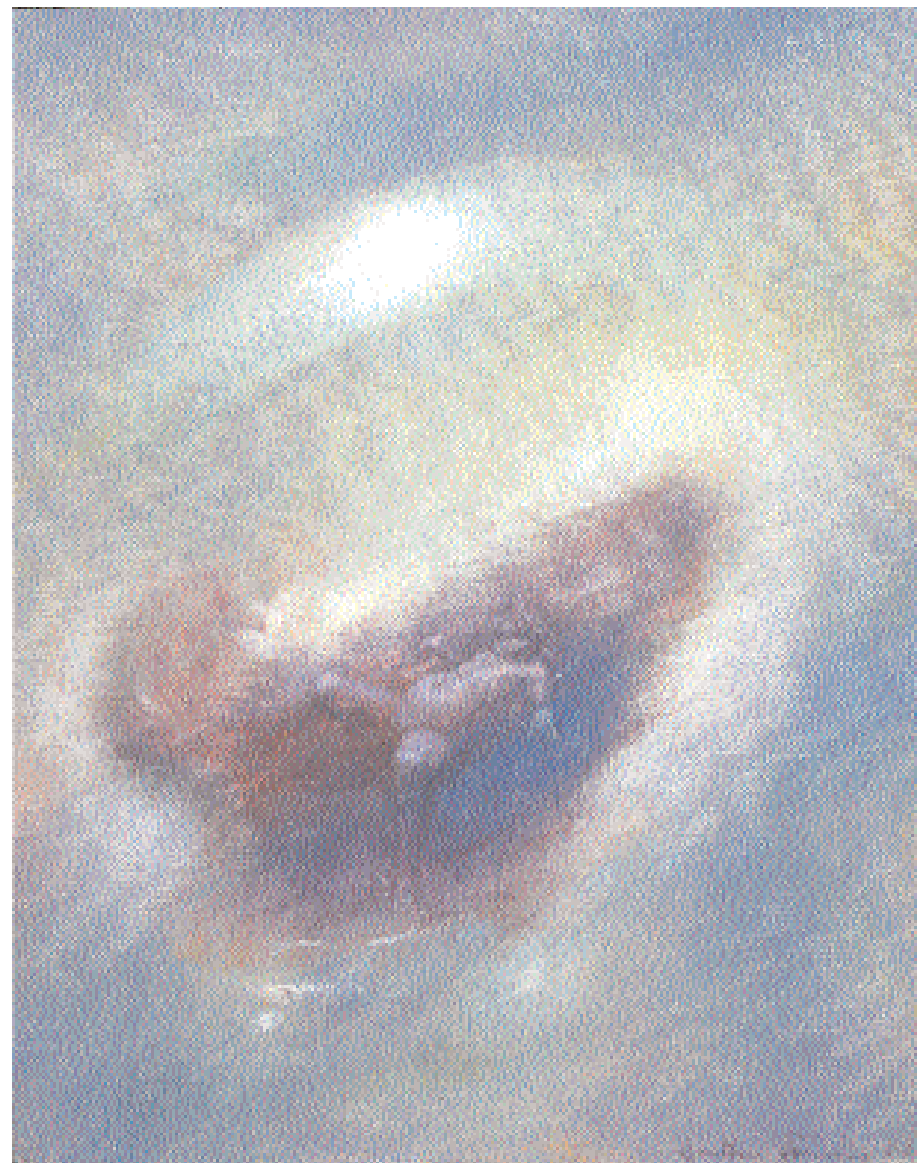
35 MARCEL DUCHAMP
Prière de toucher (*Please Touch*), 1947
 Mixed media
 Deluxe catalogue for *Le Surréalisme en 1947* exhibition.
 Cover object by Duchamp (in collaboration with Enrico Donati).



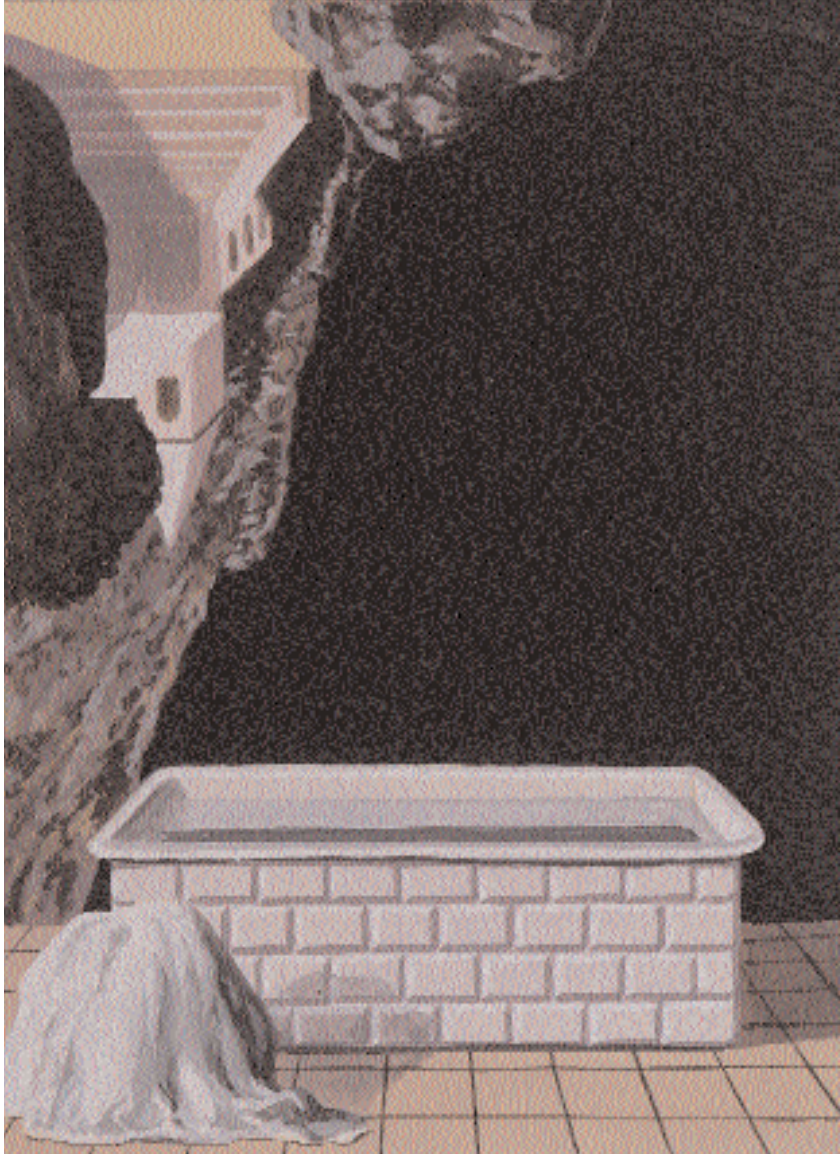
36 KURT SELIGMANN
Iphigénia, ca. 1948
 India ink, watercolor and gouache, 20 × 24 inches (50.8 × 61 cm)



37 MARCEL MARIËN
Derrière le rideau fin de soleil (Behind the Curtain, Sunset), 1955
 Ink and gouache on gravure, 8 1/8 x 6 inches (20.7 x 15.4 cm)



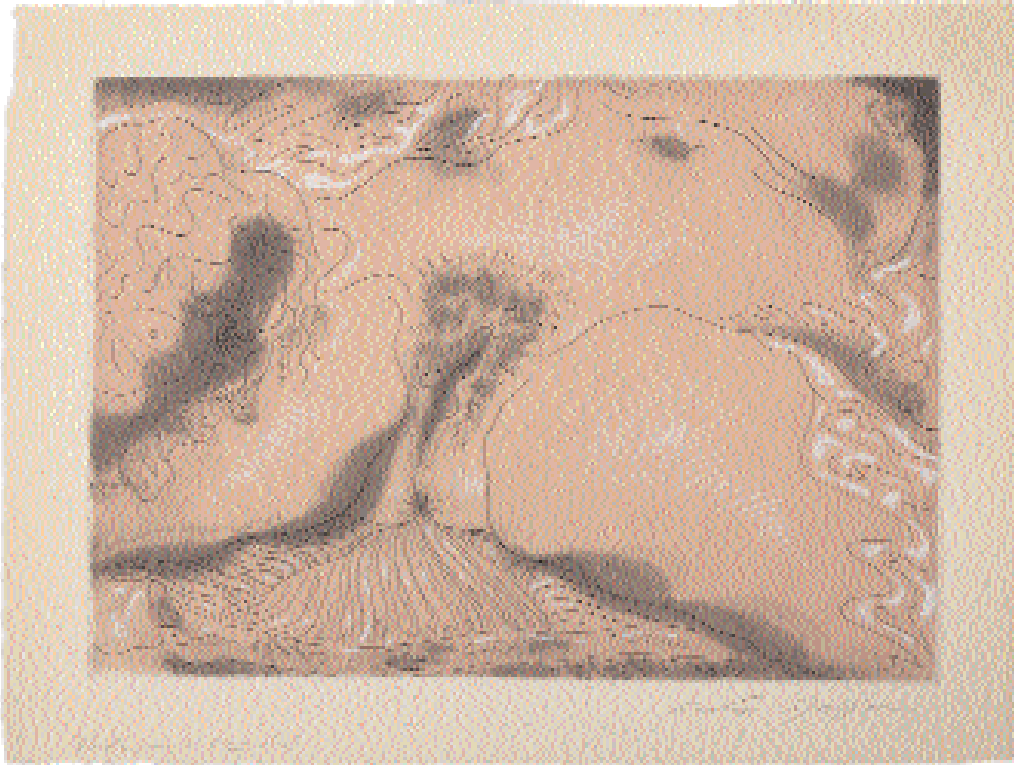
38 DOROTHEA TANNING
Bébé-lune (Moon Child), 1957
 Oil on canvas, 7 x 5 1/2 inches (17.8 x 14 cm)



39 RENÉ MAGRITTE
L'Atlantide (Atlantis), 1957
 Gouache, 9⁵/₁₆ × 6³/₄ inches (23.7 × 17.2 cm) image size



40 RENÉ MAGRITTE
Les Bijoux indiscrets (The Indiscreet Jewels), 1963
 Lithograph, 9¹/₄ × 11⁷/₈ inches (23.5 × 30.2 cm) image size
 One of 20 *hors commerce* copies separate from the edition of 75.



41 ANDRÉ MASSON

Untitled, 1964

Etching highlighted with watercolor and gouache (unique proof copy)

9 1/8 x 12 7/8 inches (23.2 x 32.7 cm) plate size

Illustration for *Le Mort* by Georges Bataille.



42 MARCEL JEAN

La Tempête (The Tempest), 1973

Gouache and oil *flottage* on board, 8 5/8 x 11 inches (22 x 28 cm)

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Frontispiece: Detail from Angel Planells, *Les Fantômes familiers (Family Phantoms)*, plate 7