

ubu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bound: Hans Bellmer & Unica Zürn

Through May 19, 2012

Ubu Gallery is pleased to announce *Bound: Hans Bellmer & Unica Zürn*, an exhibition of over fifty works created over two decades—spanning the German artists' relationship—from their meeting at Bellmer's opening at Galerie Rudolph Springer in 1953 until Zürn's suicide in 1970. Including anagrammatic drawings, erotic portraits, illustrated manuscripts, photographic collaborations and archival photographs of the artists at their shared flat at rue Mouffetard, the exhibition will continue through May 19, 2012.

Although both artists have been (to varying degrees) obscured from the canons of Surrealism, Hans Bellmer (1902-1975) has received acclaim in the decades since his death in 1975 with major retrospectives at the Centre Pompidou, Paris, International Center of Photography & Ubu Gallery, both in New York, and more recently, *Double Sexus: Hans Bellmer and Louise Bourgeois*. Bellmer is best known for a series of photographs of two life-sized adolescent female dolls captured in a sexually-laden atmosphere. Constructed and photographed between 1934 and 1938, the lighting and staging of the dolls—with their nods to German expressionist cinema, Renaissance religious painting and illumination, and explicit fetishism—allowed Bellmer to realize a personal language of desire. Deeply influenced by the Northern European tradition, Bellmer's post-war artistic activity was predominantly drawings and prints. Meticulously rendered and with draftsman-like precision, Bellmer's works in these mediums display a persistence in his exploration to recreate "the dizzying heights of passion and to do so to the extent of creating new desires."

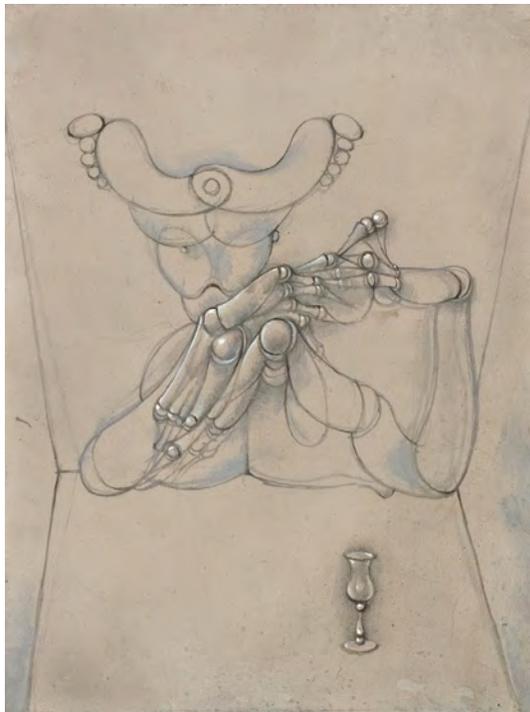
Although Unica Zürn (1916-1970) exhibited alongside Bellmer, Arp, Breton & Duchamp at the 1959 *Exposition Surréaliste Internationale*, her serpentine and chimerical works have only been seriously examined over the past decade. Already an accomplished author, Zürn fully explored her artistic potential and produced most of her oeuvre during the 1950s and 60s while intimately involved with Bellmer. With his encouragement, as well as her introduction to the Surrealist circle of André Breton, Man Ray and Henri Michaux, Zürn began to experiment with automatic drawings and anagrams, natural extensions of her established interest in hidden meanings and coincidences. The multiplicity of "self" so evident in her writings & drawings was not restricted to Zürn's artistic endeavors; generally categorized as schizophrenic, she would spend the final decade of her life in and out of psychiatric institutions.

Both artists explored permutations and transformations of the body, eroticism and ritual—paralleled in artistic practice and everyday life. Their tumultuous relationship was l'amour fou from the start, as discussed in Bellmer's book *Petite anatomie de l'inconscient physique ou l'anatomie de l'image* in 1957. A year later, Zürn, often posing as Bellmer's model, allowed her flesh to be tied tight with rope and thereby re-articulated, "creating multiple breasts in unspeakable settings" to exemplify Bellmer's writings in *Anatomie de l'image*. He described the photographs documenting this project as "altered landscapes of flesh."

The 1960s—an intensely productive period for Zürn—were marked by her deteriorating mental health and the unraveling of her relationship with Bellmer, whose physical health was disintegrating. On October 19, 1970, Zürn leapt to her death from the balcony of the Paris apartment she had shared with Bellmer. Her own death bore an uncanny resemblance to the death of the autobiographical character of her novel, *Dark Spring*. Upon his death in 1975, Bellmer was buried, at his request, next to Zürn in Paris's Père-Lachaise Cemetery. Their grave is marked with the words Bellmer wrote for Zürn's funeral wreath nearly five years before: "My love will follow you into Eternity."

Gallery hours are 11:00 AM—6:00 PM, Tuesday through Saturday. Ubu Gallery is located at 416 East 59th Street between First Avenue and Sutton Place. For further information or for visuals, please contact Caitlin Suarez or Kasia Nagorska at (212) 753 4444 or info@ubugallery.com.

Please visit our partner, Galerie Berinson, Berlin at www.berinson.de



Top: **Hans Bellmer**, *Untitled (Variant of the drawing for Les Marionnettes [1969])*, 1958, Oil, gouache & pencil on canvas, 6 1/4 x 4 3/4 inches (15.9 x 12.1 cm)

Unica Zürn, *Untitled*, 1965, Ink & white gouache on paper, 25 5/8 x 19 3/4 inches (65 x 50 cm)

UBU GALLERY

416 EAST 59 STREET NEW YORK NY 10022

T: 212 753 4444 F: 212 753 4470 INFO@UBUGALLERY.COM WWW.UBUGALLERY.COM