

Alba, **Ferrero Foundation**

from 27 October 2018 to 25 February 2019

From Nothingness to Dreams

Dada and Surrealism from the Collection of the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen

Curated by Marco Vallora

The *From Nothingness to Dreams: Dada and Surrealism from the Collection of the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen* exhibition will take place at the Ferrero Foundation in Alba from 27 October 2018 to 25 February 2019. It is curated by Professor Marco Vallora and follows an exhibition logic that is reflective of Surrealist suggestions in the way works are showcased. In nine sections, works of high quality and impact follow one another. These works communicate with one another, in harmony or counterpoint, and follow a progression that is mostly thematic, paying particular attention to the chronology of events. The masterpieces on show reflects some problems and themes that help distinguish Dada's nihilistic poetics from the more propositional ones typical of Surrealism: chance, aesthetic ugliness, dreams, the unconscious, the relation with ancient art, the connection between art and ideology.

For this exhibition, many of the Surrealism masterpieces from the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen are travelling to the Ferrero Foundation this autumn. Many of them will be exhibited in Italy for the first time. As curator Marco Vallora explains: "In a thought-out and articulate display, the Foundation presents a new international exhibition for its biennial show of great art. This original show is different from the previous ones, because it will include books, poems and magazines, all connected to the two movements, alongside canvases and sculptures that are innovative and often ground-breaking, highly evocative, and highly historically relevant."

Thanks to loans from Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, three different versions of Marcel Duchamp's Boîtes (*La boîte verte*, *La boîte-en-valise*, *À l'infinif*) will be displayed. Since the 1930s Duchamp had stopped being an artist, and had apparently become only a chess player, and in these boxes he put away all of his scandalous oeuvre, with the polemic and sarcastic intent of destroying the idea of the artist-genius, replacing the pompous museum display with a simple briefcase, ready to follow his constitutional nomadism and his caustic, corrosive irony.

The title of the exhibition, employing the shock-word "Nothingness", intends not only to surprise and enthrall, but also follow one of Dada's most radical beliefs. Not solely relying on chance and on the rejection of the omnipotent artist and master of his work, Dadaism is rather subject to the rules of hazard and play, and particularly intends to champion the negation of art, the rejection of museum beauty, and with its ready-mades, the rejection of decorative and reassuring art. The work of art, which is almost no longer a work nor art, must raise unsettling feelings, malaise and especially doubts. The exhibition also includes Man Ray, Hans Arp and a quirky and provocative canvas by the Spanish-turned-Parisian dandy, Francis Picabia.

Moving towards Surrealism and their dreams, on display are the preparatory drawings and an amazing canvas by Salvador Dalí, inspired by Raymond Rousell's book *New Impressions of Africa*. Another very significant work is Comte de Lautréamont's *Chants de Maldoror*,

illustrated by both Dalí and Magritte. In the work *L'Enigme d'Isidore Ducasse*, Man Ray hid a Singer sewing machine under an ironing board cover, perhaps a homage to Winnaretta Singer, a great patron of the movement and of the films on display, but certainly paying tribute to a now famous dictum of Lautréamont: "Beautiful as the chance meeting of a sewing-machine and an umbrella on a dissecting table."

The exhibition section about Dreams exemplifies a sort of new beginning, after the Dadaists' annihilation and radical rejection of art. For this reason, the word Dream stands for freedom, lightheartedness, but also introspection and penetration of the unconscious. All this is reflected in Yves Tanguy's underwater paintings, in Victor Brauner's visionary creations, in Hans Bellmer's sadomasochistic dolls, in Claude Cahun's photographs, and in the shadow boxes of a poet-craftsman like Joseph Cornell.

MUSEUM BOIJMANS VAN BEUNINGEN

At the heart of Rotterdam for no fewer than 170 years, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen has always been distinguished by its eclectic character. It is named after two important collectors, Frans Boijmans and Daniël George van Beuningen, who helped to enhance the collection with many masterpieces.

Bosch, Rembrandt, Van Gogh, Dalí and Dutch design: visiting Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen means journeying into art history. Whether from The Netherlands or abroad, the collection offers a comprehensive overview of art from the Early Medieval Period to the present day. Masterpieces by Monet, Mondrian, Magritte and many others offer a cross section of the development of Impressionism and Modernism. The museum boasts one of the vastest collections of Surrealist art in the world and a superb collection of British and American Pop Art, which includes works by David Hockney, Andy Warhol and Claes Oldenburg. The museum also houses a section dedicated to the decorative arts and design: from medieval ceramics to Renaissance glassware, from Gerrit Rietveld's furniture to contemporary Dutch design.

The museum is currently expanding its display area by building a high-profile depot: Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen. 2021 will see the inauguration of the new home for the museum's collection – currently comprising 151,000 works – which will stand alongside the main museum. The depot has been designed by Dutch architectural firm MVRDV and will be the first in the world to be entirely open to the public.

Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen – Surrealism in the Netherlands

Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen can boast a vast collection of Surrealist art, with the first paintings – *Au seuil de la liberté* (On the Threshold of Liberty) by Magritte and *Le couple* by Max Ernst – bought in 1966. While the other Dutch museums concentrated on the cold Modernism of Northern Europe, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen turned its attention to developments taking place in the cities of the south, like Brussels, Paris and Madrid. The museum organised exhibitions of works by Man Ray and René Magritte and the first European retrospective dedicated to Salvador Dalí was held in Rotterdam in 1970.

The Surrealist collection now includes more than 125 paintings and sculptures and a collection of rare books and publications, and it attracts art lovers the world over. Many of the iconic works in this collection were originally owned by British collector Edward James, who was the patron of Dalí and Magritte for several years. He is to be found in the celebrate painting *Not to be Reproduced*, which will be on show as part of the exhibition.

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Ferrero Foundation
Strada di mezzo, 44
12051 Alba (Cuneo) Italy

from 27 October 2018 to 25 February 2019

Free entry

Opening times:

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 15.00 - 19.00

Saturday and Sunday: 10.00 – 19.00

Closed Tuesdays

And December 24-25-31 2018, January 1 2019

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