

19.10.2024
> 16.02.2025

EXPO

SUR REAL ISME

TURNING REALITY

UPSIDE DOWN

PRESS KIT

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The images used in this press kit are available in
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1. PRESSE RELEASE

> EXHIBITION Surrealism: turning reality upside down 19.10.2024 > 16.02.2025

Museum complex CAP presents the exhibition 'Surrealism: turning reality upside down' from 19 October 2024 to 16 February 2025 at the Mons Fine Arts Museum. On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of surrealism, this exhibition offers an original exploration of the movement's history in Belgium through the prism of its relationship with society.

After a hundred years, can we still perceive the fundamental issues of the Surrealist movement, can we understand its deeply subversive nature? It is this question that is asked in the exhibition curated by Marie Godet, doctor in art history. 'Surrealism: turning reality upside down' places the movement in a specific position: in between the artistic sphere and the society.

Surrealism in Belgium was born from the notion of a disruptive ideology that manifested both a rejection of art and a search for impact on reality. From this starting point, the exhibition follows the thread of thought through the decades. It thus offers an innovative take on surrealist ideas, which have never before been highlighted in Belgium in the form of an exhibition.

Paul Nougé explains that to have an effect on the audience, ideas had to be shown in an effective way; to achieve this, he recommends 'turning to con artists, coquettish women, fairgoers and shopkeepers'. The exhibition therefore explores the way the Surrealists of the 1920s and 1930s inspired themselves

by engaging with and subverting advertising images, election posters and other messages aimed at the general public. In the postwar period, the situation changed radically: Surrealism, and the figure of Magritte in particular, were now appropriated by society, while the ideas were at the centre of the new artistic scene. Can Surrealism's subversive charge still be felt in this context, which precedes the one we know today?

Through an extensive panorama of paintings, texts, photographs and objects by more than 30 artists, this exhibition presents surrealism in Belgium in a way never seen before. It draws attention to important issues in the movement's history that have not received the attention they deserved, such as the debates regarding the distribution and marketing of surrealist designs. This approach allows us to look at the movement's best-known periods, the 1920s and 1930s, from a new perspective, but also to discover the creations of the following decades, which were synonymous with questioning, confrontation and extraordinary innovation.

This exhibition is closely in line with the urban and social focus on art promoted by CAP (Culture, Art and Patrimony), the museum complex in Mons that opened in April 2024. This exhibition also matches the institution's major exhibitions devoted to surrealism, such as 'Surrealism in Belgium 1924-2000' (2006), 'De Chirico. To the origins of surrealism' (2019) and 'Joan Miro' (2022).

CAP/Fine Arts Museum
Rue Neuve, 8 – 7000 Mons
"Surrealism: turning reality
upside down"
19.10.2024 > 16.02.2025
www.cap.mons.be

2. STATEMENT OF INTENT BY XAVIER ROLAND, DIRECTOR OF FINE ARTS MUSEUM OF MONS

2024 is the centenary of surrealism, an artistic movement born in Belgium in 1924. Surrealism is deeply rooted in the memory of Mons and its region, which is associated with surrealism through the creation of several artistic groups such as "Rupture" in 1934, the "Hainaut Surrealist Group" in 1939 and the "Revolutionary Surrealists" in 1947.

Iconic figures such as René Magritte, Achille Chavée, Marcel Lefrancq and Armand Simon, all originally from Hainaut, helped to shape this artistic history. The Mons Fine Arts Museum, faithful to this tradition, has been organising exhibitions dedicated to surrealism for many years. These have included "Surrealism in Belgium from 1924 to 2000" and retrospectives devoted to artists such as Fernand Dumont, Giorgio de Chirico and, more recently, Joan Miró.

In January 2024, the first edition of the new festival of lights already paid tribute to surrealism. The Scottish artist Robert Montgomery was invited to present several poetic works, infusing the event with a surrealist atmosphere and spirit.

For several years, our approach has been to try to connect art with the outside world by a variety of means. From Niki de Saint Phalle to Jaume Plensa, via the Auguste Rodin exhibition, each of these projects has provided space for thinking about our relationships with the city, the sacred or the body. This new project takes the same approach.

As the exhibition's curator Marie Godet points out, the true revolution of surrealism lies less in the emergence of an artistic movement with a limited lifespan than in a new way of seeing and interacting with the world. In her words, the goal of surrealism is "to have an impact on reality and to help change society". The idea of using an everyday object as a means of accessing a wider reality, without necessarily seeking to dominate it, quickly took hold as a basic tenet for these revolutionary artists.

An exhibition like this requires the museum to engage with societal issues that go far beyond purely aesthetic or formal considerations and address the activist dimension of the works on show. From this viewpoint, the exhibition's design and the many archive documents reactivate the object-artwork with all its subversive, historical and often disturbing power for the audience.

"THIS LONG NECKLACE OF LOST TIME... WE WILL
PLACE IT AT LEAST ONE DAY TREMBLING WITH
LIBERTY AROUND THE NECK OF THE WANDERING,
SILENT STATUE OF OUR LIFE" *

* This poem written by Robert Montgomery takes its inspiration from a poem by Fernand Dumont.

Xavier Roland

Director of the CAP/
Fine Arts Museum of Mons

3. STATEMENT OF INTENT BY MARIE GODET, EXHIBITION CURATOR

The goal of this exhibition is to use the object as a guiding thread in an attempt to approach surrealism from a new angle. It aims to restore the central place of a dimension that is both essential and difficult to realise in concrete form: its relationship with society.

Museums are in a delicate position when it comes to surrealism – they are responsible for keeping alive and passing on the memory of the movement, and yet, by their very nature, they help to sustain the reductive image of surrealism as just an artistic and literary movement. But this image has nothing to say about the actual engine of surrealism, the foundation for all its actions: the fierce determination not to be confined within the world of art and literature but to have a tangible impact on society.

The centenary of the movement seems an ideal opportunity to think about the surrealist legacy: what impression has it left on us today? And why? The exhibition is not content with retracing the movement's history. It approaches the subject from multiple angles to evoke the many links between surrealism and the society around it: the questions of advertising, commercialism and the relationship with the body are a few of the themes addressed. But the exhibition also observes the gradual spread of surrealism, which has ultimately suffused society as a whole and changed the way we see and relate to images.

In the first part of the exhibition, we look at the method recommended by Paul Nougé for creating effective, striking images. In the second, we examine the consequences of the dazzling success of Nougé's method and surrealism in general.

The exhibition is more concerned with opening doors than drawing conclusions. Above all, it shows that we are a long way from having said, seen and heard everything there is to say, see and hear about surrealism. And that's another reason why the movement remains so relevant, a hundred years after its birth.

Marie Godet

Doctor in art history

4. ABOUT THE CURATOR

Marie Godet has a PhD in art history (ULB, 2017) and specialises in surrealism and the Cobra movement. After posts as the contemporary art assistant and then the assistant responsible for teaching for the Bernheim chair in surrealism at the Université Libre de Bruxelles, she was director of the Centre Daily-Bul & Co. She has been working as a freelance researcher since 2023. She is currently completing the scientific coordination of a book on the surrealism collections belonging to the Wallonia-Brussels Federation (*Une partie reste à jouer ! Le surréalisme en Belgique dans les collections de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles*, published in October 2024) and co-editing an anthology of Pol Bury's writings published by CFC-éditions.

She has curated several exhibitions since 2010, mostly abroad, including "*Ici ma terre d'élection*": Christian Dotremont et le Nord, a French Community of Belgium project, at the Lönnström Art Museum in Rauma, Finland (2010–2011), *Dotremont – Salute to Denmark* at the Carl-Henning Pedersen & Else Alfelt Museum in Herning, Denmark (2011–2012), *Dotremont et les surréalistes : une jeunesse en guerre (1940–1948)*, at the Musée BELvue in Brussels (2019–2020), and *Voix surréalistes. Le corps des mots* at the Centre Daily-Bul & Co. in La Louvière (2022–2023), and was assistant curator for the exhibition *The Avant-Garde Won't Give Up. Cobra & Its Legacy*, at the Blum & Poe Gallery in New York in 2015.

Alongside Benoît Goffin (Mill – Musée lanchelevici La Louvière), she also coordinated the major collective event organised for Pol Bury's centenary in 2022.

Her latest publications are:

- > "La coïncidence des images. Folon et le surréalisme en Belgique", in the Magritte – Folon. *La fabrique poétique exhibition catalogue*, Musée Magritte, 2024.
- > "Dépasser le cadre. Les femmes et le surréalisme en Belgique", in the *Si le cœur vous en dit. Artistes femmes au XX^e siècle en Belgique exhibition catalogue*, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Charleroi, 2024.
- > "Introduction", "Armand Simon, la plume aux noirs dessins" and "Marcel G. Lefrancq, fixer la poésie sur pellicule", in *Une partie reste à jouer ! Le surréalisme en Belgique dans les collections de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles*, 2024.

Her thesis on the object in surrealism in Belgium during the 1940s was the starting point for the exhibition presented here. The main focus of her research is the relationship between art and society.

5. THE OBJECT IN BELGIAN SURREALISM

1924 Publication of imitation advertising brochures by Paul Nougé and the first *Correspondance* pamphlets by Nougé, Camille Goemans and Marcel Lecomte. Surrealism in Belgium is born with these first "disturbing objects".

1926 The Dadaists ELT Mesens and René Magritte join Nougé, and the surrealist group in Brussels begins

1933 Magritte exhibits his first objects at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels. Though this is the first time he has shown major works such as *La Trahison des images* to the public, Nougé devotes his preface to Magritte's objects.

1937 Marcel Mariën joins the surrealists and creates the eyeglass that will later be known as *L'Introuvable*.

1942 First surviving film made by and featuring Magritte and Nougé at the height of the Occupation. The object plays a central role, with Magritte recreating several of his paintings with real objects.

1945 Magritte organises a major group exhibition for the surrealists at the Galerie des Éditions La Boétie in Brussels. The exhibition aims to show that the movement is still alive and well following the war, and expresses the group's commitment to communism. Objects and installations (as they would come to be known) are central to the show.

1949 The Revolutionary Surrealists, a movement founded by Christian Dotremont to ally surrealism with communism, stages an exhibition of objects at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, *L'Objet à travers les âges*.

1962 Mariën publishes the pamphlet *Grande baisse* to criticise the growth of Magritte's output and the commercialisation of his work.

1964 The poet Marcel Broodthaers presents his first gallery exhibition.

1967 First solo gallery exhibition of Mariën's objects. Deaths of Magritte and Nougé.

1987 Auction of everyday objects belonging to Magritte.



Marcel-Louis Baugniet, René Magritte, 1967.
Huile et collage sur papier marouflé sur panneau, 48,5 x 58,5 cm.
Collection Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles © Sabam Belgique 2024

6. EXHIBITION TOUR

1st FLOOR: 1920s – 1940s

> Introduction: the disturbing object

Surrealism has become so famous that it is now part of our country's identity. The celebrations to mark the movement's centenary are an opportunity to question this surrealist heritage of ours.

This exhibition aims to re-examine surrealism in its relationship to society. Because this is the essence of the movement, the aspect that makes it so profoundly original. Surrealism is *not* an artistic or literary movement. What is it then? A factory of *disturbing objects*. This was the term that crystallised the work of several artists in Brussels from late 1924, before the word *surrealism* took hold. The phrase accurately reflects the core of their activity: the word "object" demonstrates that their goal was not to make art or literature, even though they borrowed their methods from these fields. Meanwhile, the word "disturbing" makes it clear that their purpose was to reach out to people, to open their eyes and to change the way they saw, thought and behaved.

In this first part of the exhibition, the writings of poet Paul Nougé act as a guiding thread, illuminating what lies behind these *disturbing objects*.

> The street: Passer-by! Stop!

De dichter Paul Nougé (1895-1967) The poet Paul Nougé (1895–1967) quickly emerged as the leader of what would become surrealism in Belgium. After publishing his first pamphlets, he continued his exploration of techniques for *stopping the passer-by* – surprising people and making an impression on them. He wrote "slogans" for a performance in 1926. Several are juxtaposed here with election posters from the same period.

Election posters are the supreme examples of placing the written word in a public space to create an impact on the people who see it. Collected together, they respond to each other, forming unexpected and meaningful dialogues. We can see how far Nougé took inspiration from this type of message, but the poet borrowed the form in order to derail the message. A few years before, he had signed up with the communists, but now it was his surrealist activity that channelled his subversion.

> Coquettes

When Nougé said that surrealist productions should take inspiration from "coquettes" or flirtatious women to be more effective, he was talking about how people present themselves – through clothing, make-up etc. – to produce an effect on others. Surrealists were well aware of the importance of appearance. When ELT Mesens (1903–1971) and René Magritte (1898–1967) joined Nougé in 1926

to form the Brussels group, it was against a backdrop of intense activity in the worlds of fashion and advertising. Through Mesens, Magritte met Honorine Deschryver, a designer at the Norine fashion house. He proved his ability as a prolific commercial artist – for Magritte and his colleagues, advertising work and surrealist creation fed into each other.

Jane Graverol (1905–1984), who also began to paint, experienced fashion from a different angle, as a model.

> **Travelling showmen**

Travelling showmen and the world of performance were a major source of inspiration for the surrealists. In 1926, Nougé and his associates made their uproarious entrance into the world of the theatre by causing elaborate disruptions at avant-garde plays. They even staged their own performance at the Mercelis theatre in Ixelles. The most important aspect of the songs and the show they presented was the audience reaction. Their goal was clear – rather than entertaining the onlookers, they wanted to shake them up.

The fairgrounds he had visited since childhood played a vital role in the emergence of Magritte's work. They were also a theme in the writing of Irène Hamoir (1906–1994), who came from a circus background.

To earn a living, Magritte himself contributed to the world of entertainment by illustrating sheet music for songs typical of the Roaring Twenties. They included music by his brother Paul, working under the name of Bill Buddie.

> **Traders**

The last category of professionals presented by Nougé as models of effectiveness was "traders". In his notes from the 1930s, the poet sketched out a method for increasing an object's impact. These principles correspond to advertising practices of the time, which are still applied today. Nougé explained the importance of isolating an object "with the frame or the knife", or making a slight but significant alteration: changing its shape, material, scale or setting. These rules shaped surrealism in Brussels, and are particularly associated with Magritte's work.

His experience in advertising sharpened the painter's sense of the impact of an image, the secret of his success. From this time on, his painting even inspired the creation of objects produced for sale.

> The power of the everyday object

The surrealist groups in Brussels and Paris had the same ambition: to *change life* (in the words of Arthur Rimbaud) and to *change the world* (in the words of Karl Marx). In the early 1930s, the *surrealist object* emerged as the ideal way of achieving this goal. It offered two advantages. Unlike a painting or a poem, it was three-dimensional, so that its presence contributed directly to altering reality. And yet, even when exhibited, it could not be confused with a work of art, embodying the distance that the surrealists wanted to maintain from the art world.

Objects also illustrated a significant difference between the two groups, however. Nougé prioritised everyday objects, while André Breton, the leader of the surrealists in Paris, favoured strange, inexplicable objects, found at flea markets or in scientific institutes.



Max Ernst,
sans titre, 1925.
Huile sur toile.
Collection
Nahmad
© Sabam
Belgique 2024

> Plaster bodies and flesh objects



René Magritte,
La Mémoire,
1948. Huile
sur toile,
59 x 49 cm.
Collection
Fédération
Wallonie-
Bruxelles
© Sabam
Belgique 2024

Magritte showed objects at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels in 1933, before the Paris group's first exhibition centred on surrealist objects. Though this was the first time the artist had exhibited major paintings such as *La Trahison des images*, Nougé devoted his preface to Magritte's objects, which have remained little known and little studied. The first were plaster moulds: death masks (Napoleon, Pascal) or reproductions of the Venus de Milo, with paint added by Magritte. When we look more closely at this theme, we see that plaster moulds were frequent in surrealist and "post-surrealist" production in Belgium. The way they were used was very different from what was happening in Paris or in England.

The same is true of mannequins, which became an emblem of surrealism in Paris, while in Belgium simplicity was the paramount concern.

Living statues

Magritte's small-scale reproductions of the Venus de Milo were painted, with the torso coloured like flesh. Though influences cannot always be pinned down, several surrealists shared his interest in playing with intermediate states between a statue and a woman, an inanimate object and a living person. The painter Roger Van de Wouwer took this idea further by depicting a statue wearing a sanitary towel stained with blood. Following a complaint, the police demanded that the work be removed from his first exhibition in 1963. In a painting by Rachel Baes, a woman seems transfixed by her portrait in stone, as if trying to see whether her heart beats within.

The dancing mannequin

The series of mannequins presented alongside street signs at the *Exposition internationale du surréalisme* in Paris in 1938 was a key moment in the movement's history. Each mannequin was dressed elaborately by a member of the group. Above all, the surrealists sought to make the mannequins spectacular. In Belgium, however, rather than the dummies' outfits, the central concern was the spark that brings inanimate objects to life – the gaze of Marcel Lefrancq's doll or the dance of Rachel Baes's mannequin.

> Surrealism in wartime

The 1940s were a very difficult period for surrealism, partly because of the war and partly because of the movement's longevity. The war nullified its central premise. Creating disturbing objects was no longer enough: some, like Magritte, no longer wanted to overthrow art at a time when the Nazis were trampling it underfoot. For the surrealists in Hainaut and the younger members who had gradually joined the movement, surrealism had to involve direction action under the banner of the Resistance. Living under occupation had one advantage – art could once again have a tangible impact on the world. The poem *Liberté* by Paul Éluard was an example, published by the young surrealists of the Main à Plume group.

Despite the darkness of this period, exceptional creations emerged, including the first film made by and featuring Magritte and Nougé in 1942, and a poem in the form of a poster by Christian Dotremont. Opposition to oppression was expressed in any way possible.

> Surrealism in crisis

After the war, relaunching the movement proved difficult. It was seen as having come to an end, even as its reputation steadily grew. Its scandalous side was remembered, while the ethics that drove it forward were forgotten. The poet Marcel Mariën (1920–1993) was furious to discover that surrealism had become a theme for fashionable parties.

Change was essential, and the surrealists knew it. They tried to engage in politics through the Communist party, but their efforts quickly came to nothing. How should they position themselves; what should they do?

The object embodied the movement's essential values. So it is hardly surprising that its decline was expressed through



Marcel Mariën, *La Marque déposée*, 1991.
Objet, 30 x 35 x 21 cm
Collection privée. © Sabam Belgique 2024

objects. Several surrealists compared the movement to a flea market, a jumble sale – surrealism seemed anachronistic in post-war society.



Marcel Mariën, *Vivre sa vie*, 1970. Objet, 57,5 x 87,5 cm.
Collection privée. © Sabam Belgique 2024

2nd FLOOR: the 1960s, a new start

> The disturbed object

A new art for a new society. The growth of the consumer society was reflected in the art of the 1960s. Everyday objects, so characteristic of surrealism in Belgium, played a central role in the movements that now emerged: Pop Art and Nouveau Réalisme (new realism).



Jane Graverol,
Le Regard, 1973.
Huile sur toile,
100 x 80 cm.
Collection privée
© Sabam
Belgique 2024.

Surrealism found itself in a paradoxical situation, associated with both the past and the present. Its historical importance was recognised even as its activities continued. New collective initiatives emerged from the 1950s onwards, and several members began the most productive period in their careers. Mariën held his first solo gallery exhibition in 1967; Magritte and Nougé both died a few months later. Mariën was now the most energetic advocate for surrealism, both as the movement's archivist and through his own output.

In this second section of the exhibition, surrealist works are confronted with creations from Belgian representatives of today's artistic currents: has the surrealist disturbing object retained its relevance?

> The wonderful modern housewife

In 1966, Mariën produced an object entitled *La Vicieuse*, a whisk imprisoning an egg, blending the registers of everyday life and eroticism. This object is a perfect encapsulation of the two stereotypical roles reserved for women by advertising imagery: the housewife and the object of desire. What if, in this story, the woman was not the whisk, but the egg?

From Pol Mara's egg-woman to Jane Graverol's, which closes the series, the works presented evoke this association, sometimes unintentionally. During the 1960s, the status of women was riven with tensions. As a counterpoint to these representations, other works question the focus on women's bodies or highlight the freedom they have acquired: the "woman as object" comes out of her shell.



Evelyne Axell,
Erotomobile,
1966, huile et
caoutchouc
sur toile.
Musée d'Ixelles
© Sabam
Belgique 2024

> **The action continues**

In 1934, the surrealists encapsulated their position in the text *L'action immédiate*: since political action had no effect, they would have to use other means. To achieve a revolution in consciousness, they would concentrate on "disturbing poetry" and anticlerical action. The passage of time conserved these principles intact. From one age to another, *the experience continues*, in Nougé's words. Creating objects appeared more than ever to be a direct, effective way of communicating these convictions.

Meanwhile, the focus on the relationship between an object, its name and its image that had been a central theme of surrealism between the wars resulted in a variety of experiments combining poetry with painting and objects.

> **The art of the everyday**

From vegetables to furniture, you can find anything in the market... the art market. Artists in the 1960s transformed objects into artworks in their own right. While the Palais des Beaux-Arts had banned the surrealists in the inter-war period, it now flung its doors wide open to this new art.

The surrealists appreciated the everyday object, because its familiarity increased its ability to stir us. But when it invades the artistic scene, can the everyday hold on to its subversive force? The newer artists were less firm in their positions, and the lines became blurred. How could an advertising object be distinguished from a work of art? A surrealist cabbage from non-surrealist peas?

> **When surrealism is absorbed into its surroundings**

The world was now filled with artwork-objects – or object-artworks. Mariën and Dotremont did not hold back from expressing their disgust with Pop Art, which they associated with capitalism. The former surrealist Pol Bury took a more humorous approach, pretending to confuse shops selling household appliances or clothes with art exhibitions.

This period was also marked by a more profound phenomenon. Although surrealism was accused of being past-it, it was still very much present. The techniques used by the surrealists, such as collage and photograms, were spreading. And above all, the way artists saw everyday objects was imbued with surrealism. The method advocated by Nougé, changing some aspect of an object to give it maximum effect, expanded outside the movement. Had surrealism won, by changing the way we saw, or had it lost its radical edge, its ability to push the boundaries?

> **After-effects**

The movement was so long-lived that the surrealists themselves were able to cast a retrospective eye on their predecessors, combining the past with the present in their creation. Mesens made a "cult" object in tribute to de Chirico, while Mariën paid homage to Man Ray. But it was Magritte whose influence stretched furthest. Marcel Broodthaers (1924–1976) continued his investigations into words, images and objects. The painter's works were cited by many artists, surrealist or not. Other artists even depicted Magritte himself, as a figure adorned with his famous bowler hat.

Although their first objects have often been lost, the surrealists' inventions are more admired and sought-after by collectors than ever. Not only preserved, they are reissued as editions in precious materials such as bronze, like sculptures or design objects in their own right. The surrealist object has also become a work of art.

Marcel Broodthaers,
Pipe bleue, 1973.
Objet, 8 x 12 x 4 cm.
Collection privée
© Succession Marcel
Broodthaers - Sabam
Belgique 2024



> When surrealism leaves its mark

The global fame of surrealism has had surprising consequences. Society has appropriated the word, stripping it of its subversive connotations: the word "surreal" is now used to describe something unexpected or senseless, something that may exasperate or raise a smile.

The object has also undergone a complete reversal. Surrealism took inspiration from the use of objects in advertising to strengthen its message. Now it is advertisers who take inspiration from surrealism to sell their products, or even surrealists themselves who indulge in advertising – but not from economic necessity.

While Magritte's images are known all over the world, everyday objects belonging to the artist have been sold at auction

as if they were artworks themselves. The surrealists wanted to create objects in order to change the world. Did they actually alter it in an unforeseen way, by transforming reality into a work of art?

> Conclusion: Common spaces

A wind of change was blowing in the 1960s. May 68 left its mark on the period: several of the artists, such as Broodthaers, took part in the collective enthusiasm. A Louis Scutenaire slogan, "Vous dormez pour un patron" (you're sleeping for a boss), was posted on the walls of Paris. Some dreamed of a futuristic city, others of a life of freedom, but these dreams have fizzled out. Surrealist freedom seems far away and the utopias have been put back in the cupboard. The city fluctuates between boredom and prison.

But all that is ever needed to create a disturbing object is one small change – an iron bar can be turned into a file, and suddenly escape is possible. Concluding the exhibition, a small work by Jane Graverol that belonged to Magritte, *La Prise de la Bastille*, accompanies a pamphlet by the "last surrealist group", led by Tom Gutt, which refers to a famous prisoner: *Votez Sade* (vote for Sade). They remind us that, in both the past and the present, there is still a poetic revolution to be invented.

7. CATALOGUE

The richly-illustrated catalogue for the exhibition "Surrealism: turning reality upside down" is for sale in the Fine Arts Museum shop priced €39. It is available in French and Dutch.

Publisher Snoeck

> **Contents**

> **Editorial**

> **Preface** by Xavier Roland:

"Turning the museum's reality upside down".

> **Introduction** by Marie Godet:

"The disturbing objects of surrealism in Belgium".

> **Part 1:** "Swindlers, coquettes, showmen and traders"

- **Article by Amélie Van Liefferinge:**

"The skittle and the sheath. The living dummy and surrealism in the 1920s in Belgium"

- **Article by Patricia Allmer:**

"René Magritte's fairground attractions"

- **Article by Damarice Amao:**

"The object mirror"

- **Article by Marie Godet:**

"Plaster bodies, flesh statues and paintings of objects"



William Copley, *sans titre*, (à René et Georgette Magritte), 1959.
Huile sur bouteille Marie Brizard,
20,3 x 7,6 cm.
Collection Marie-Puck Broodthaers
© Sabam Belgique 2024

> **Part 2:** "The disturbed object"

- **Article by Margaux Van Uytvanck:**

"The object in the Belgian artistic scene of the 1960s"

- **Article by An Paenhuysen:**

"Danger zone. Five objects of surrealist interest"

8. ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Free on the opening weekend*:

> 19 and 20.10

Mediators in attendance on Sundays:

> 2.30 > 5.30 pm

Free on Sundays:

> 03.11, 01.12, 05.01, 02.02

Guided tours for individuals*:

> 17.11, 15.12, 19.01 | 3 > 4.30 pm | €11/€8

Sensory experience:

> 08.12 and 16.02 | 3 pm | Included in the ticket price
Performing body, a portrait from nature
– Performance by Amélie Van Liefferinghe

Writing workshops “Ancrer l’empreinte” with Fleur Sizaïre

(ages 16 and above)*:

> 16.11 and 14.12 | 1.30 > 5.30 pm |
€20 (entry to the exhibition and the workshop)

* Advance booking required via visitMons:
+32 (0)65 33 55 80

Lectures by the Amis des Musées:

> 21.11 at 6.30 pm:
lecture by Marie Godet, “Surrealism in Belgium, a factory of disturbing objects”
> 12.12 at 7 pm:
lecture by Anne Hustache, “The fascination of the object”
> 16.01 at 6.30 pm:
lecture by Arnaud Godart, “Rachel Baes, surrealist works”.
€6/lecture – Free for Amis des Musées members

Booking advisable: **+32 (0)65 40 53 38**



Rachel Baes, *Le Retable*, 1960. Huile sur toile, 100 x 81 cm.
Collection Retelet.

In collaboration with Dynamusée:

“Surrealist nature” course

for ages 7 to 10:

> 21.10 > 25.10 | €85 for the week

Dynabébé:

> 20.01 | 2 > 4 pm | €6/parent, baby free (up to age 1).

“100 socks” evening:

> 07.02 | 7 > 9.30 pm | €6/child.
Come in your pyjamas, and bring your security blanket!

Bookings: **+32 (0)65 40 53 38**

9. IN THE « SALLE AUX PILIERS »

- > **BENTO x Corentin Mahieu**
“Restoring things”
(included in the museum entry ticket)

“Restoring things” is a laboratory for restoring works of art, where we take care of objects with attentiveness and curiosity. The aim is not to restore their original glory, but to let them become themselves, repair them or adorn them anew, in a new way, with the help of other living entities.



© Bento x Corentin Mahieu



© Bento x Corentin Mahieu

Installed among the remains of an exhibition dedicated to Rodin, this work explores the dualisms between nature and culture, subject and object, allowing artefacts to evolve between intervention from humans and from other living organisms.

Presentation of the artists:

BENTO Architecture

Bento is an architectural practice that places experimentation with materials at the centre of its thinking. Living materials challenge the sustainability of our current production methods and their impact on our way of life. Starting from this observation and/or obligation, Bento's architects make a point of elevating it, going beyond it, to build bridges between architecture, art and design.

The architects alternate between phases of experimentation with living materials and phases of design, with both phases feeding on each other, one questioning reality and the other giving it concrete form. This enables Bento to work on furnishings, artistic installations or set designs as well as architectural projects, questioning other ways of occupying space, with changes of scale as a central focus.

Bento won the European 16 award and, with Vinciane Despret, curated the Belgian pavilion at the 18th Venice Biennale of Architecture, built with resources from the Brussels region – pisé (raw earth) from Brussels excavation sites, timber from the Soignes forest and mycelium panels grown in the cellars of the Tour & Taxis site.

The firm is currently working on public and private projects with the dual goals of concrete experimentation and decarbonisation.

Corentin Mahieu (CoMa), designer

Mahieu's approach is simple: explore, experiment and let the materials tell their own story. His work explores a space where the organic cohabits with the mechanical, where the two dimensions sustain each other without competition, and where movement, though fixed, seems constantly on the verge of coming to life. Each project is an invitation to observe discreet tensions, subtle contrasts, as if capturing an instant suspended in time.

His regular collaborations with Bento have enabled him to take part in a variety of projects, including designing the Belgian pavilion for the 2023 Architecture Biennale. This type of work builds bridges between design, art and interior architecture while fulfilling the contemporary priorities of sustainability and innovation through conscious choices.

The Accalmie table, presented at the Collectible design fair in Brussels in 2024, resulted from thinking about the subtle balance between stability and movement, strength and lightness. Produced in partnership with Sonian Wood Coop and Bento, the project reflects a circular approach in which every material tells a story, where the object becomes a silent witness to this fragile moment of balance.

10. COMING SOON AT THE CAP/FINE ARTS MUSEUM OF MONS

> **“The Sensitive Face of
a City” exhibition:**
12.04 > 17.08.2025

The CAP Collections House presents the history of Mons, illuminating the city through objects and works from museum collections in Mons, together with displays tracing its development, contextual explanations and a sometimes emotional, sensitive approach to the city's heritage. This emotional dimension represents an openness to a view of heritage that goes beyond visual and rational aspects alone. Here at the Fine Arts Museum, we want to continue exploring this path, already traced out at the Collections House. The exhibition “The Sensitive Face of a City” is an invitation to go deeper into a more intimate, hidden aspect of Mons, beyond appearances. A single subject, the city, is approached in two different ways.

As well as photographs, paintings and poems, installations by visual artists punctuate the exhibition. Works such as “Un autre jour, une autre heure” by Pierre Libaert, the floor painting “Memento” by Charley Case, drawings suffused with memory by Remy Hans and “Le Grand Registre du Grand Hornu” by Christian Boltanski all convey emotions and sensations profoundly inspired by the city.

Two complementary aspects of the history of Mons will thus be explored in parallel at CAP in spring 2025.

11. PRACTICAL INFO

The "Surrealism: turning reality upside down" exhibition is open from **19.10.2024** to **16.02.2025**

CAP/Fine Arts Museum

Rue Neuve, 8 - 7000 Mons

- > **Prices:** €9 full price/€6 concession
- > **Opening times:**
open Tuesday to Sunday, 10 am to 6 pm.
Closing at 4 pm on 24 and 31.12,
closed on 22.11, 25.12 and 01.01.
- > **Info:**
www.cap.mons.be / www.visitmons.co.uk
- > **Bookings and tickets:**
www.visitmons.co.uk or +32 (0)65 33 55 80

Group visits without a guided tour

- > **Bookings** on +32 (0)65 40 53 46 or
by emailing groupes@ville.mons.be

Group visits with guided tour

- > **Bookings** on +32 (0)65 40 53 46 or
by emailing groupes@ville.mons.be
- > **Duration:** 90 minutes / €65 weekdays and Saturdays –
€80 Sundays and public holidays

Keep up with all the latest news from our museums and exhibition venues on our social media : musees.expos.mons

  musees.expos.mons

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