

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Upon request, glossy prints will be sent you of the amusing and startling illustrations from the Ernst book mentioned in the last paragraph on page two.

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, announces that it has received from Walter P. Chrysler, Jr., a gift of two important collections of Surrealist books, material and memorabilia: the Paul Eluard Collection and the Dr. Camille Dausse Collection. These two collections will be consolidated and will be known as the Walter P. Chrysler, Jr. Surrealist Collection which, with the Museum's Dada collection purchased last spring, will constitute perhaps the most complete collection of Surrealist literature, documents and memorabilia in the world. Mr. Chrysler is Chairman of the Museum's Library Committee and has been active in building up its collection of books on modern art.

A selection of material and illustrated books from the Chrysler Collection will be shown as part of the Exhibition of Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism which will open at the Museum Wednesday, December 9. The Museum plans to publish an illustrated catalog of the Chrysler Surrealist Collection which will be of value not only to students but of interest to the public as a reference book for the study of the origin and development of Surrealism, a movement embracing not only art and literature but a revolutionary philosophy of life.

Paul Eluard, one of the most eminent French poets of today, has played an important role in the Surrealist movement ever since its emergence from Dada in the years just after the War. The Eluard Collection includes 129 Surrealist books and magazines, some of them illustrated by Surrealist artists and most of them autographed and inscribed to Eluard. The illustrated books have the artists' as well as the authors' autographs. In addition to books and magazines, the Eluard Collection comprises 214 documents of all kinds relating to Surrealism--subscription blanks, catalogs, postcards, programs for Surrealist meetings, original manuscripts, broadsides, a complete bound file of the illustrated magazine La Révolution Surréaliste from 1925 to 1929, and of its continuation Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution from 1930 to 1933, and much other material.

Among the books in the Eluard Collection are Mr. Knife Miss Fork by René Crevel, translated by Kay Boyle and illustrated by Max Ernst; Sleep, Sleep Among the Stones by Benjamin Péret, illustrated by Yves Tanguy; The Night of Loveless Nights by Robert Desnos, illustrated by Malkine; the first and second editions of the First Manifesto of Surrealism, Soluble Fish, by André Breton and the Second Manifesto by Breton with a frontispiece by Dali; an essay by René Crevel on Anti-Obscurantisme illustrated by reproductions of Dali paintings; There was a little Magpie by Lise Hirtz, illustrated in color by John Miró.

The Eluard Collection contains many picture-books by Max Ernst, the German artist who with Baargeld and Arp became a leader of the Cologne Dadaists in 1918. When the Dada movement expired in 1922 he went to Paris and became one of the most important Surrealist painters. Ernst invented several unusual techniques, one of them being "frottage" or rubbing, in which the outlines of strange shapes are filled in by rubbing a pencil or brush over a sheet of paper laid upon the rough surfaces of planks, brick walls, leaves, stones, etc., so that the grain of the wood, the veins of the leaves, the markings of stones are transferred to the paper in the same manner that the markings of a coin are reproduced on paper laid over the coin and rubbed by a pencil. Natural History, a portfolio of curious creatures drawn in this manner by Ernst, is included in the Collection.

Another of Ernst's techniques is a form of collage or paper-pasting in which he has used a vast quantity of Victorian wood engravings from popular magazines of fifty years ago. These he has cut up and pasted together again in a startling manner, endowing human beings with animal heads and claws, the wings and beaks of birds, and reptilian tails. Each picture seems homogeneous, an effect Ernst obtains by merging disparate elements with pencil strokes so closely imitating the original technique of the engravings that they blend indiscernibly. The Eluard Collection contains a series of five collage novels or pasted picture-books by Max Ernst called Kindness Week or the Seven Capital Elements. Each of the first four books represents a day: Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday; the fifth book includes Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Each day has its element--mud, water, fire, blood, darkness, vision, and the unknown;

in several instances each day is also represented by an animal: the lion, the dragon, the cock, the bat, and so on. The part-human, part-animal creatures in the pictures are represented in many kinds of human activity, all of them made fantastic by the consolidation of animal with human characteristics of appearance.

The Dausse Collection is largely literary in character and contains many original manuscripts. It includes four books by Aragon, one of them illustrated by Picasso and one by Yves Tanguy; two books by Apollinaire and a biography of him by Soupault; a poem by Benjamin Péret illustrated by Man Ray; Revolving Doors, a folio of stencil plates in color by Man Ray, originally designed by the artist in New York in 1916; a book by Picabia illustrated with a self-portrait; Souvenirs by the famous French artist's model, Kiki; one of William Blake's "Prophetic Books" translated into French; the manuscript of a poem by Rimbaud; a book by Sherwood Anderson; six books by André Breton, one of them illustrated by Picasso, one by Picabia and one by Ernst; nine books by Paul Eluard, one illustrated by de Chirico and three by Ernst; the holograph manuscript, the typescript, and an electroplate of an illustration in the first edition of Night of Loveless Nights by Desnos; several numbers of Der Sturm, 1921, the German Expressionist magazine, and many other items.