

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

Number 28
FOR RELEASE
FEBRUARY 20, 1971

SELECTIONS FROM THE MUSEUM COLLECTION: SURREALIST ILLUSION

Twenty paintings representing the illusionist style of surrealism are on view through April 18 at The Museum of Modern Art. Drawn from the Museum's own collection and including promised gifts from James Thrall Soby, scholar and Museum Trustee, the exhibition consists of works by Giorgio de Chirico, Paul Delvaux, Rene Magritte, Matta, and Yves Tanguy.

According to William S. Rubin, who selected the show, "the Surrealist painters divide stylistically into two major groups - the 'abstract' Surrealists, such as Miro and Masson, and the 'illusionists', who are the subject of this show. The latter used traditional technical means (perspective and modeling in the round) to create an illusion of a world -- which was very different, however, from the ordered external reality portrayed by Old Masters who used these same techniques. Such painters as de Chirico (who, though not a member of the Surrealist movement, nevertheless anticipated many of its basic ideas), Magritte, and Delvaux triggered unconscious and poetic associations through unexpected juxtapositions of real objects represented within a framework of recognizable space and concreteness. Yves Tanguy invented a kind of interior landscape, alternately resembling a desert wasteland and an undersea expanse. In his paintings, the real objects of de Chirico and Magritte have given way to more abstract forms, which, nevertheless, retain the associational relationship of figures and objects within a landscape setting. Matta's 'inscapes' carry this pictorial idea further, into a fluid world of amorphous and contradictory spaces occupied by enigmatic forms. We understand this spatial illusion as the counterpart of the 'space' of the psyche, just as we understand his shapes as alluding to a level of experience that pre-exists their incorporation into recognizable dream symbols."

Two other painters whose works would normally be exhibited in this context, Dali and Ernst, are not included because several important works of theirs are on loan to other institutions.

William S. Rubin, Chief Curator of the Painting and Sculpture Collection, is the author of Dada, Surrealism and Their Heritage published by The Museum of Modern Art in 1968 and Dada and Surrealist Art published by Abrams in 1970.

Additional information and photographs available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 w. 53rd St., New York, NY 10019.
Telephone (212) 956-7501