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N E W S R E L E A S E

**The List Visual Arts Center to Open Major Survey
MIRROR IMAGES: WOMEN, SURREALISM
AND SELF-REPRESENTATION in April '98**



Cambridge, MA, January 1998--*Mirror Images: Women, Surrealism and Self-Representation*, organized by the MIT List Visual Arts Center, will be the first exhibition to present the self-portraits or self-representations of three generations of women Surrealist or Surrealist-influenced artists. *Mirror Images* will include almost 100 paintings, drawings, photographs and sculptures dating from 1928 to 1996 by twenty-two artists from North and Central America, Europe and Japan. The exhibition will open to the public on Thursday, April 9 with a reception from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. and continue through June 28, 1998.

Mirror Images: Women, Surrealism and Self-Representation will critically examine the remarkable contribution of Surrealist women of the 1930s and 40s in creating unique, specifically female modes of self-representation, and will explore the continued resonance of Surrealism in the work of contemporary women artists up to the present time, providing the historical context and antecedents for their Surrealist-engaged work.

During the 1930s and 40s, women artists associated with the Surrealist movement produced a body of self-portraits that are unique in twentieth century modernism, and have no equivalent among the works of their male colleagues. These artists explore the female body as a site of conflicting desires, and femininity as a taut web of social expectations, historical assumptions and ideological constructions. Significant painted and photographic self-portraits were produced during this period by Claude Cahun, Leonora Carrington, Leonor Fini, Frida Kahlo, Meret Oppenheim, Kay Sage, Dorothea Tanning and Remedios Varo, among others.

Not only did these self-portraits radically challenge existing conventions for representing the female body and female experience, they have become important models for later generations of women artists seeking to explore constructions of gender, sexuality, nature and culture through self-representation. Working in a broad range of media, contemporary artists including Louise Bourgeois, Yayoi Kusama, Dorothy Cross, Kiki Smith, Cindy Sherman, Paula Santiago and Rona Pondick, among others, have employed the strategies of Surrealism as a relevant means of exploring and asserting a

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feminine and feminist identity. Striking parallels may be observed, for example, between Claude Cahun's photographic self-portraits of the 30s and 40s and the work of Cindy Sherman; between the visceral body language of Frida Kahlo and Dorothea Tanning; and the expressions of Louise Bourgeois and Kiki Smith. *Mirror Images* will be accompanied by a 258-page, fully illustrated MIT Press publication with essays by curators Whitney Chadwick, Katy Kline and Helaine Posner, art historians Dawn Ades and Dickran Tashjian, Kahlo expert Salomon Grimberg and cultural critic Susan Suleiman. The book explores specific aspects of the relationship between historic and contemporary work in the context of Surrealism. The contributors re-examine art historical assumptions about gender, identity, and intergenerational legacies within modernist and postmodernist frameworks. Questions raised include: how did women in both groups draw from their experiences of gender and sexuality? What do contemporary artistic practices involving the use of body images owe to earlier examples of both female and male Surrealists? What is the relationship between self-image and self-knowledge?

Mirror Images will travel to the Miami Art Museum from September 18 through November 29, 1998 and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art from January 8 through April 20, 1999 after its initial presentation at the MIT List Visual Arts Center. The project is funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, D.C., a federal agency; the Massachusetts Cultural Council; the Dorsky Foundation; and Kitty and Herb Glantz.

Mirror Images: Women, Surrealism, and Self-Representation was jointly curated by Whitney Chadwick, art historian and author of the seminal text, *Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement*; Katy Kline, director, MIT List Visual Arts Center; and Helaine Posner, curator, MIT List Visual Arts Center.

Public Programs (dates to be announced)

Tours: Four Saturday afternoon tours led by MIT List Visual Arts Center curatorial staff will be offered during the course of the exhibition.

Symposium: A day-long Symposium led by exhibition curator Whitney Chadwick featuring the participation of several exhibition artists and scholars prominent in the field of Surrealist art will be presented at the MIT List Visual Arts Center.

Film Series: A curated film series, presented on each Friday over the course of May, will explore historic and contemporary Surrealist shorts and feature-length films.

How to Get to the MIT List Visual Arts Center

The List Visual Arts Center is located in the Wiesner Building, 20 Ames St., at the eastern edge of the MIT campus. It is in close proximity to Kendall Square, Memorial Drive, and the Longfellow Bridge.

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By T, take the red line to the Kendall/MIT stop, follow Main St. west to Ames St., turn left, walk the distance of about one block to the cross walk and the List Visual Arts Center, housed in a building identifiable by its white gridded exterior, will be on your left. Signage is on the building.

By car, coming across the Longfellow Bridge or from Memorial Drive, follow signs for Kendall Square. Limited metered parking is available on Ames Street. A parking garage is located at the Cambridge Center complex (entrance on Ames between Main and Broadway) during business hours and on campus after business hours and on weekends.

Gallery Hours

Tues. - Thurs., Sat., Sun. 12 - 6 p.m.
Friday 12 - 8 p.m.
closed Monday

Information

617.253.4680 or
<http://web.mit.edu/lvac/www>

All exhibitions at the List Visual Arts Center are free and open to the public.
Wheelchair accessible.

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