

# Dada to Surrealism

The exhibition 'Dada Vorfrühling' (Dada Early Spring) at the Winter Brasserie in Cologne, 1920, disrupted the lines between fine art and applied art.

The works, placed close to each other, produced the effect of chaos, an echo of contemporary urban reality. Visitors had to step over a urinal to enter the room.

In opposing capitalism and denouncing art made for the bourgeoisie, Raul Hausmann, one of the artists, imagined the destruction of all the assemblages presented, at the closing of the exhibition.



"The Dada movement must lead to the explosion of the art market."

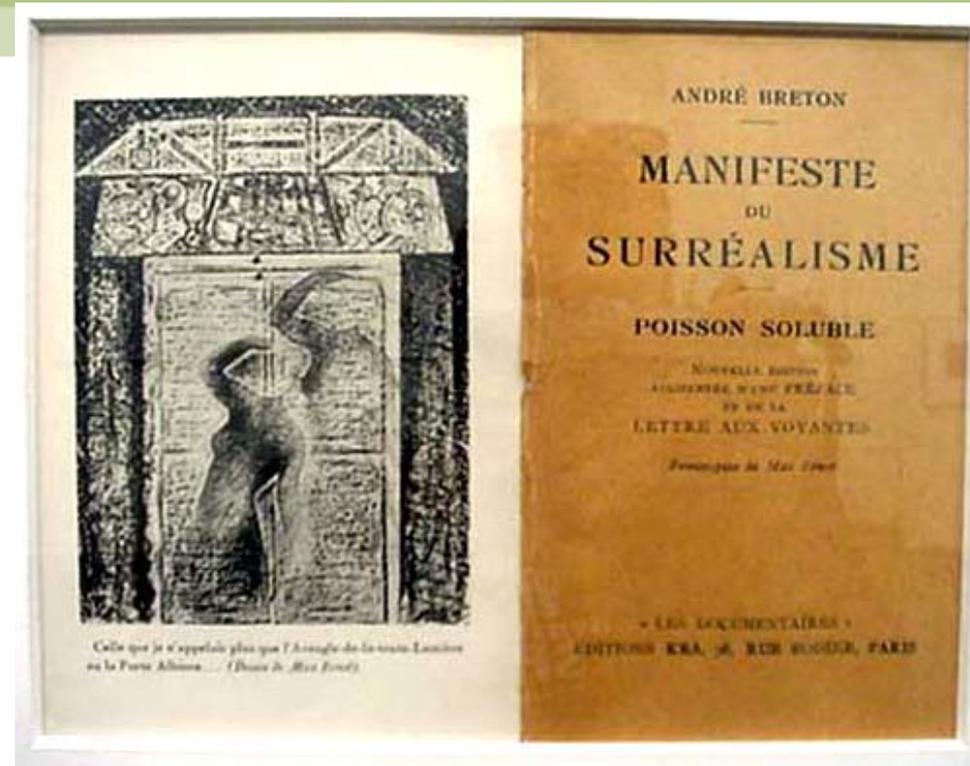
# Dada to Surrealism

Dada dissolved in Paris around 1922.

In 1924, Andre Breton published the *First Surrealist Manifesto*.

The document defines Surrealism as:

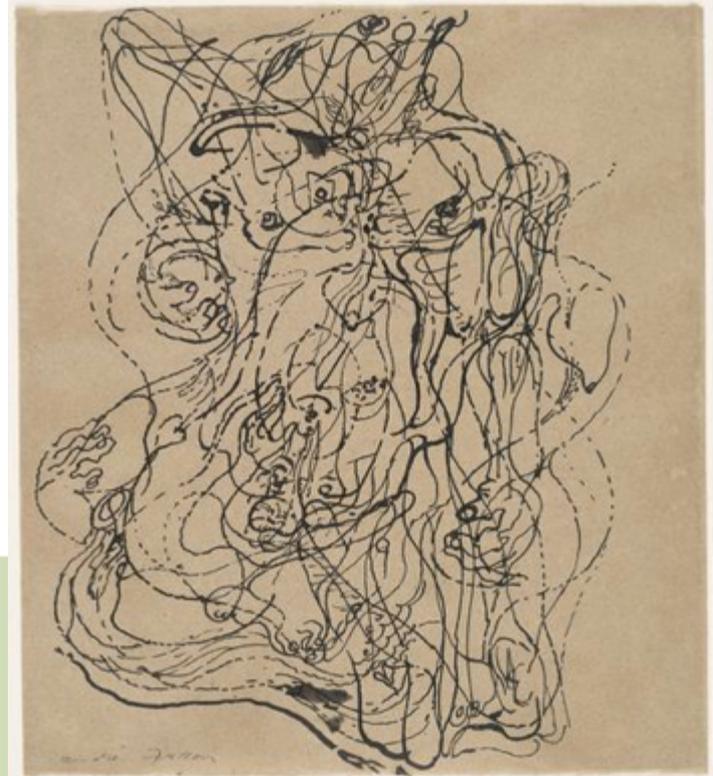
*"Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express — verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner — the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by the thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern."*



# Surrealism and Fantasy

Surrealism originated in the late 1910s and early '20s as a literary movement that experimented with a new mode of expression called automatic writing, or automatism, which sought to release the unbridled imagination of the subconscious.

**Surrealist who were interested in Sigmund Freud and his ideas concerning the subconscious, believed that through dreams and automatic process of drawing and free association, the subconscious could be made conscious.**



Andre Masson, Automatic Drawing, 1924.

# Andre Breton

Breton found Freud's theories of the unconscious a guideline for the liberation of the imagination.

The main idea was that of the vast untapped reservoir of experience, thought and desire, hidden away from conscious, everyday living.

Breton believed that through dreams (from Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams*) and automatic processes (Freud's free association), we could access the unconscious.

*"I believe in the future resolution of the two states, apparently so contradictory, of dream and reality, in a sort of absolute reality, of surreality."*



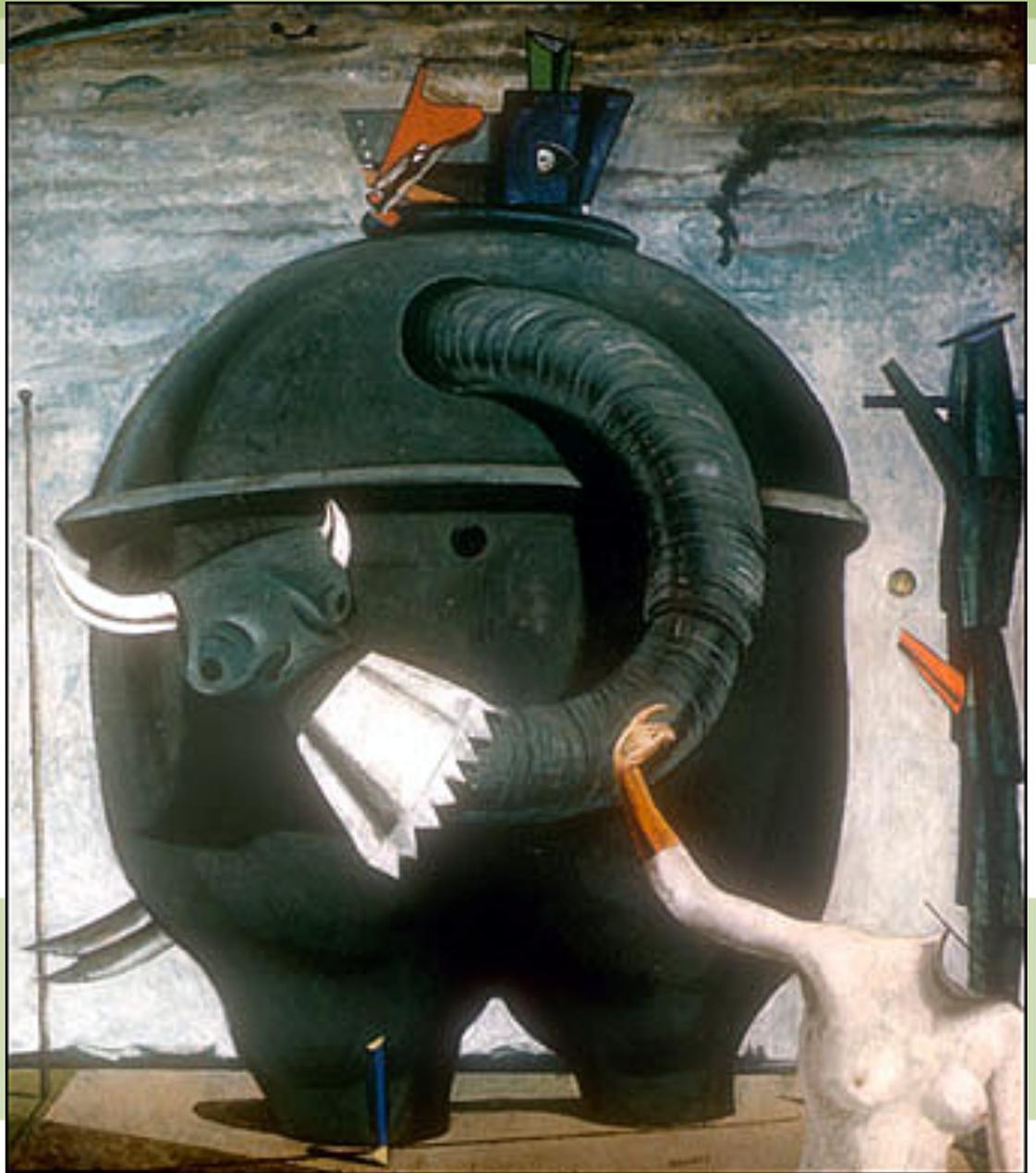
# Within Surrealism there were two distinct directions taken.

**One was the Automatic processes:**

Max Ernst, a former Dadaist, created paintings, drawing and collage that combined seemingly unrelated elements to create irrational, dream like images.

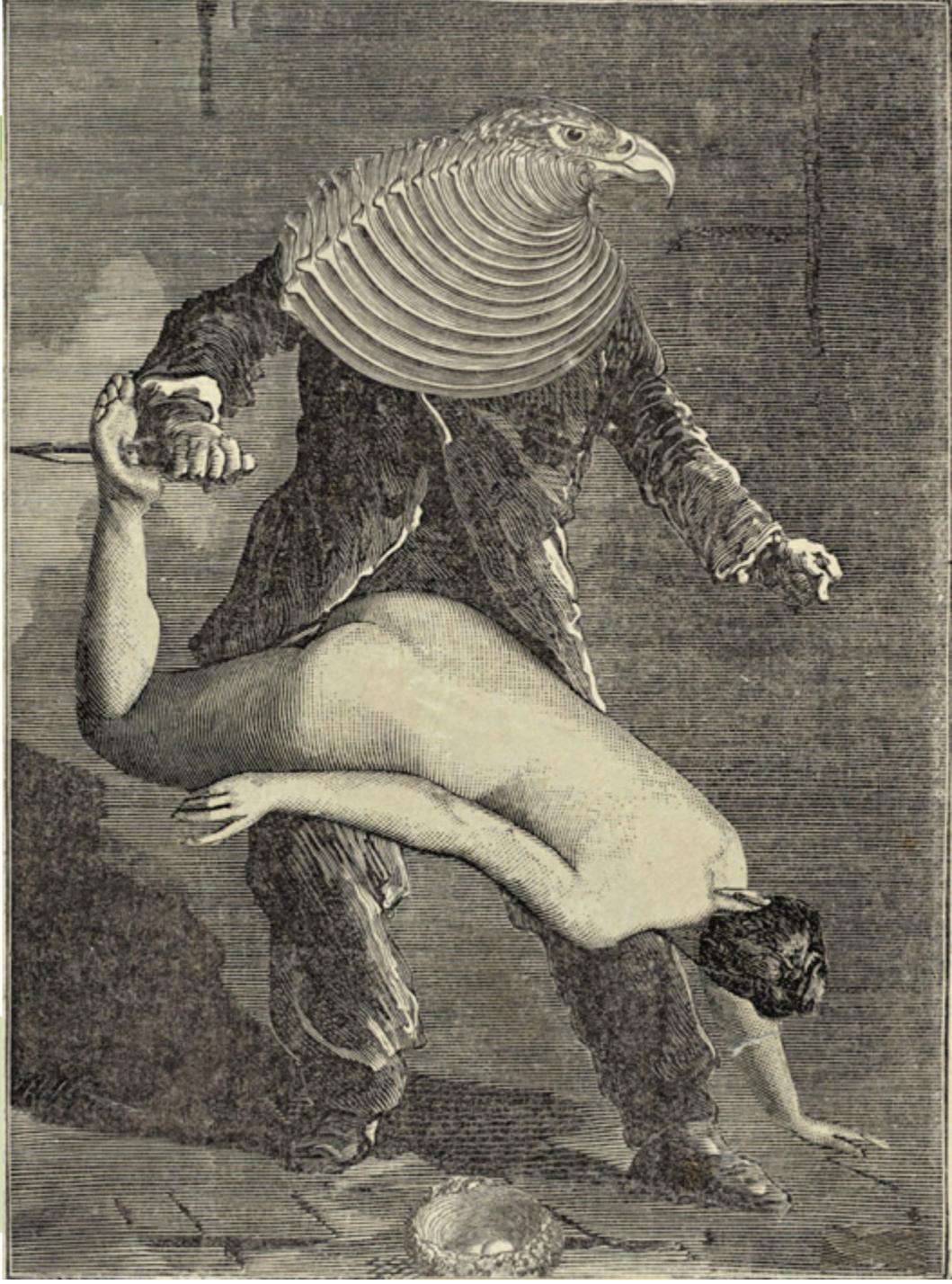
Can you see relations to Dada poetry?

*The Elephant of Celebes, 1921*





**Ernst** was one of the first visual artists brought into the Surrealist group by Breton. He said of his collage, "*It is the systematic exploitation of the coincidental or artificially provoked encounter of two or more unrelated realities on an apparently inappropriate plane and the spark of poetry created by the proximity of these realities.*"





In 1937 Ernst began to experiment with two unpredictable processes called *decalcomania* and *grattage*.

To create these rotting, mineral surfaces, Ernst applied painted glass to the canvas and slowly pulling it off, let the diverse forms suggest figures that might be touched up or outlined with sky.

Max Ernst, *After the Rain*, 1940-42

Joan Miro used automatic drawing techniques.

This painting, done after 1924, reflects Miro's interest in Surrealist poetry.

He uses organic forms and twisted lines to create an imaginative world of fantastic figures.



JOAN MIRÓ, Painting, 1933. 5' 8" x 6' 5". Museum of Modern Art, New York (Loula D. Lasker Bequest by exchange).



Masson's free-association drawings of 1924 are curving, continuous lines out of which emerge strange and symbolic figures that are products of an uninhibited mind. Breton considered Masson's drawings akin to his automatism in poetry.

Andre Masson, Battle of the Fishes, 1926, Sand, gesso, oil, pencil, and charcoal on canvas



Andre Masson, Oedipus, 1939



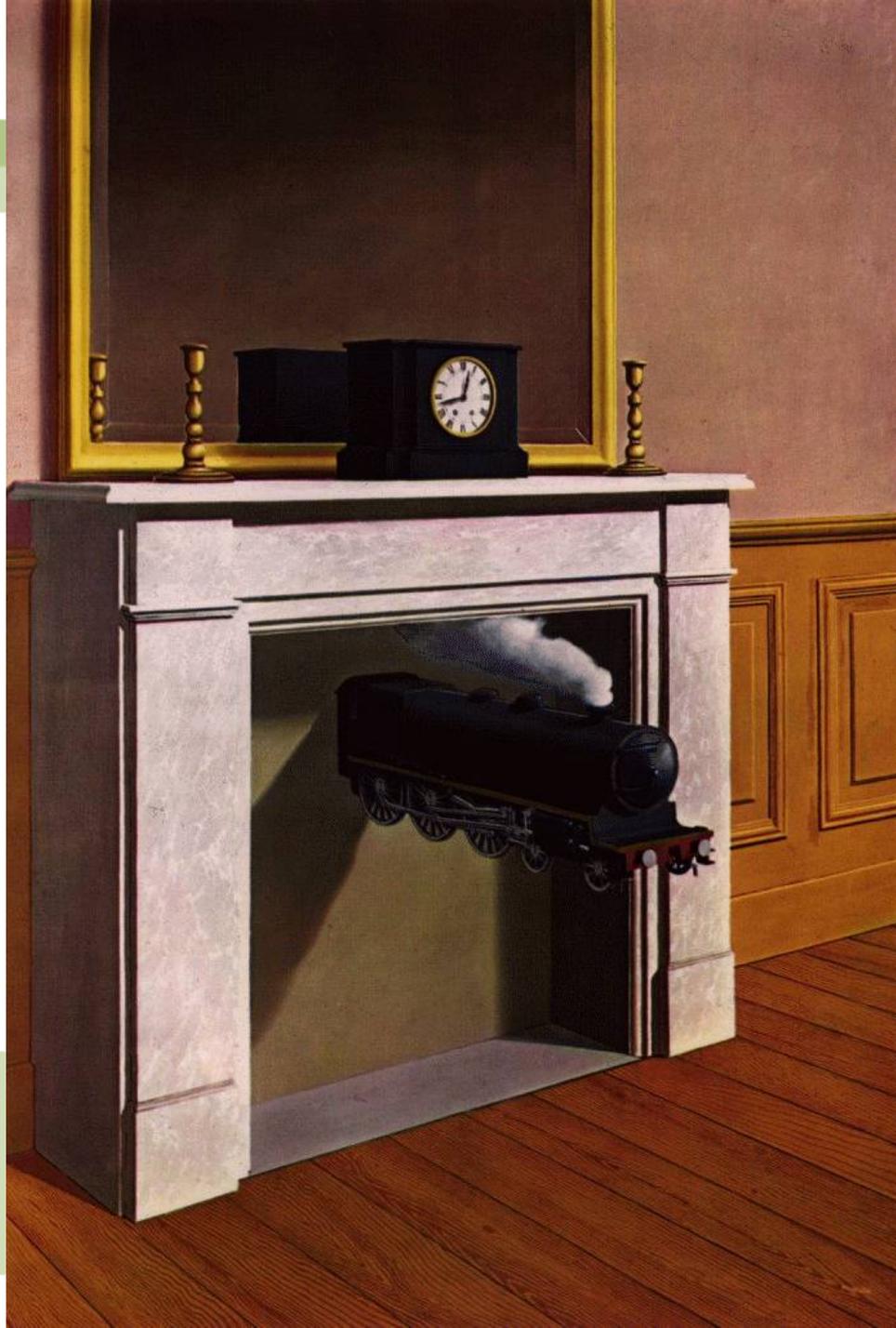
Andre Masson, Pasiphae, 1945

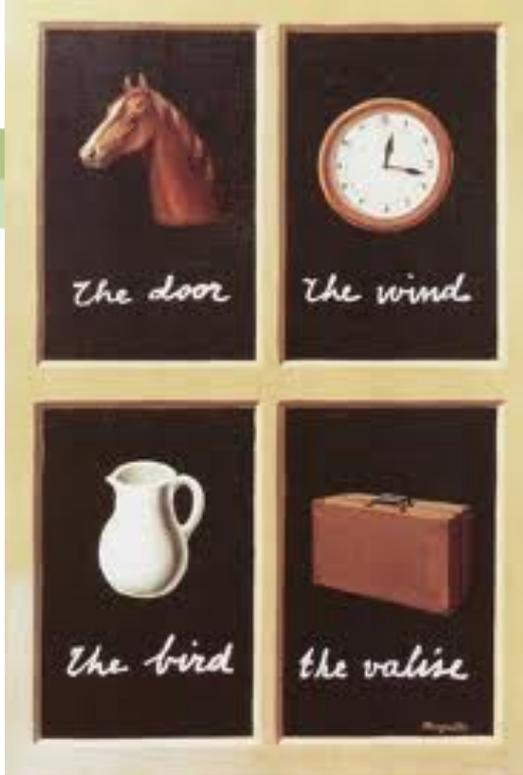
# Rene Magritte

**The other direction is disruption of meaning using images in an unfamiliar way—in a kind of dream-like way.**

He described the act of painting as "the art of putting colors side by side in such a way that their real aspect is effaced, so that familiar objects—the sky, people, trees, mountains, furniture, the stars, solid structures, graffiti—become united in a single poetically disciplined image.

Rene Magritte, *Time Transfixed*, 1939

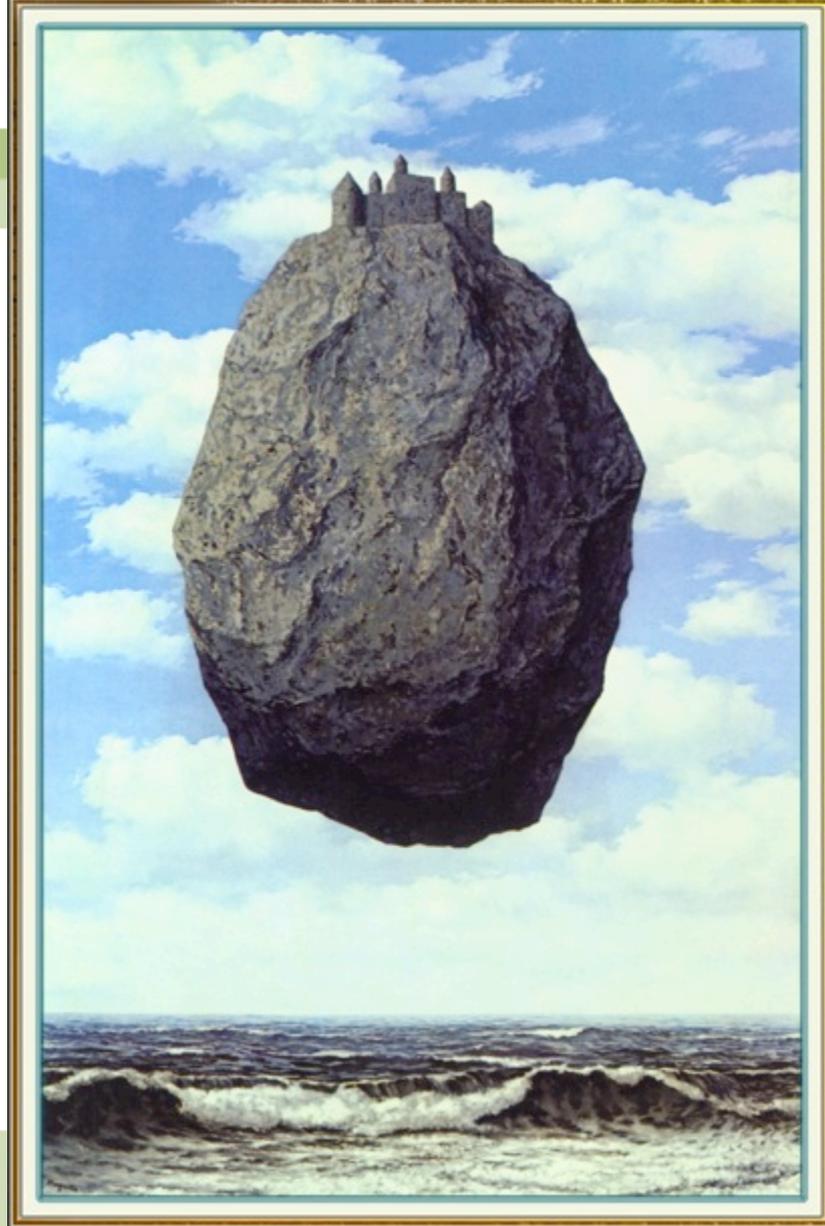




Much of the work created by Rene Magritte, takes everyday, normal objects, that he would simply rearrange forcing the viewer to take a deeper look at what was in front of them, and at what the image truly represented.

Rene Magritte, *The Human Condition*, 1933 & (Top) *The Key to Dreams*





Magritte's work received acclaim as it influenced Pop artists after WWII and has since been used in numerous Advertisements.

Rene Magritte, (Top) *The False Mirror & The Listening Room*. (Right) *The Castle of the Pyrenees*

# Salvador Dalí

Another artist who defined a split between the visual automatism fostered by Masson and Miró and a new form of illusionistic Surrealism was the Spaniard Salvador Dalí.



He expanded on Magritte's dream imagery with his own erotically charged, hallucinatory visions. In *The Accommodations of Desire*, 1929, Dalí employs Freudian symbols, such as ants, egg shapes, hair, and flaccid human forms to symbolize his overwhelming sexual desires.



Time is the theme here, from the melting watches to the decay implied by the swarming ants. The monstrous fleshy creature draped across the paintings center is an approximation of Dalí face in profile.

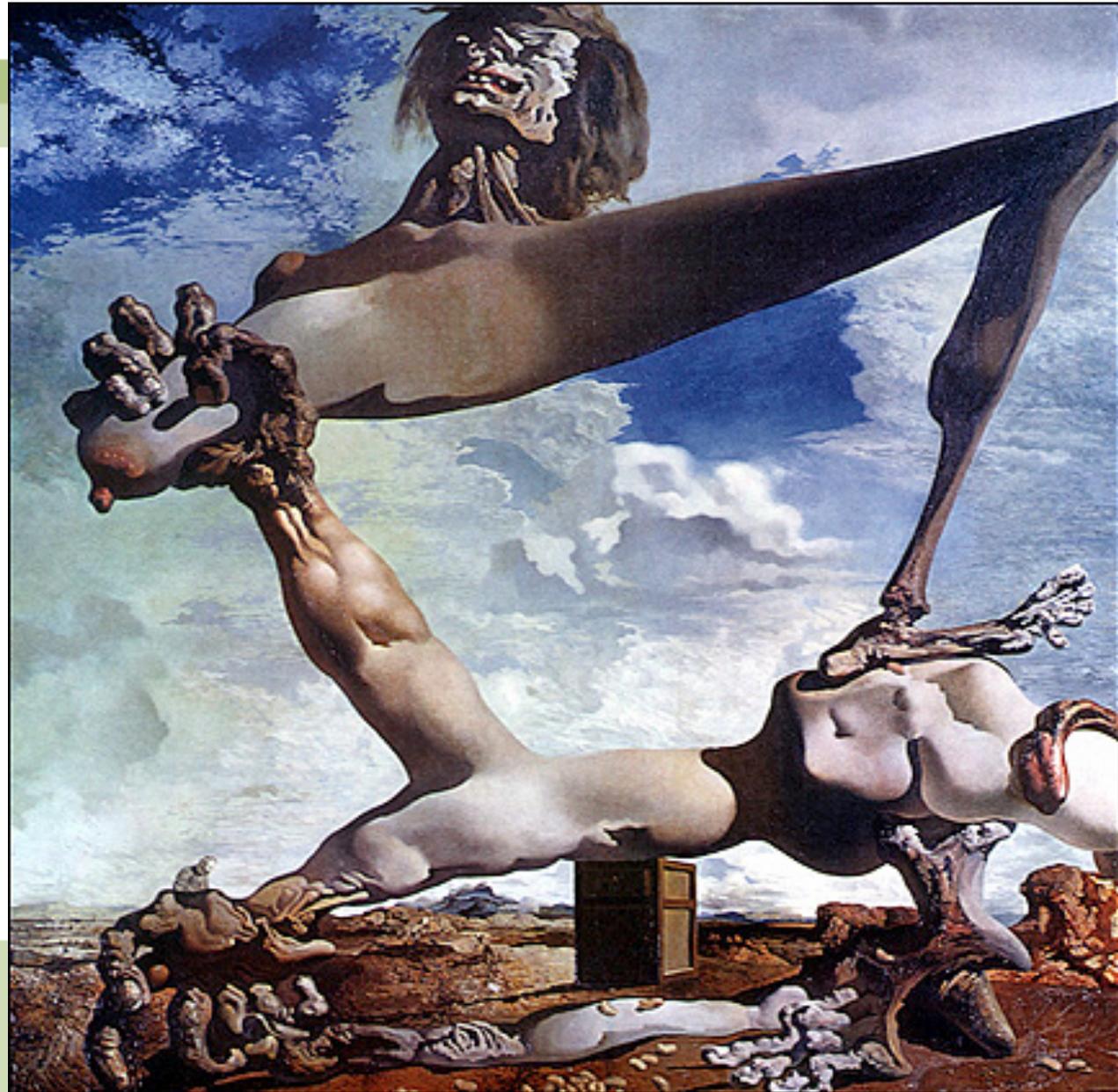
SALVADOR DALÍ, *The Persistence of Memory*, 1931. Oil on canvas, 9 1/2" x 1' 1". Museum of Modern Art, New York (given anonymously).

# Salvador Dali

In one of the only overtly political paintings made by Dali, an aggressive monster destroys itself, tearing violently at its own limbs, its face twisted in a grimace of both triumph and torture.

Dalí employs his ‘paranoic-critical method’ in the painting by contorting the massive limbs into an outline of a map of Spain.

Symbolic objects are used to express sexual obsession and political outrage.



Salvador Dalí, *Soft Construction with Boiled Beans (Premonition of Civil War)*, 1936, Spanish, Oil on canvas, 39 5/16 x 39 3/8 inches (99.9 x 100 cm)

Un Chien Andalou, 1929, a film by Salvador Dali and Luis Bunuel, has no plot in the conventional sense of the word. It is disjointed, shifting in time without any change in characters. It uses dream logic as the narrative flows like Freudian ‘free association’.

Un Chien Andalou

[http://www.openculture.com/2012/06/two\\_vintage\\_films\\_by\\_salvador\\_dali\\_and\\_luis\\_bunuel.html](http://www.openculture.com/2012/06/two_vintage_films_by_salvador_dali_and_luis_bunuel.html)

