

HANDHELD CINEMA: THE EPHEMERAL AVANT-GARDE, C. 1917-44

by

ERIN MCCLENATHAN

(Under the Direction of Nell Andrew)

ABSTRACT

This study considers dadaist and surrealist periodicals to show how they form a displaced, durational medium: handheld cinema. Handheld cinema doubly enhances our understanding of avant-garde efforts to democratize modernism as certain periodicals equalize art-making materials on the printed page and depend upon the mass media of print and film for their reception. This text thus traces a Euro-American network that speaks to the prevalence of radical re-mediation in an era that art historians most often associate with endeavors toward aesthetic purification. The project's three thematic chapters progress chronologically, from international dadaist periodicals printed during the waning years of World War I and its aftermath to the surrealist journals of interwar Paris and exiled artists during World War II. Whether the journals present mélanges of typographic experimentation and photomechanical reproduction as in Tristan Tzara's *Dada*, subjects magnified to the point of obscurity as discussed in *La Révolution Surréaliste* and *Documents*, or pages that prescribe their own physical maneuvering through movable graphics as in *VVV*, all attest to handheld cinema's crucial role in avant-garde attempts to apply aesthetic programs to broader mediated environments.

INDEX WORDS: Dada, Documents, La Révolution Surréaliste, VVV,
Visual Studies, Periodical Studies, Media Studies

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CHAPTER ONE

HANDHELD CINEMA: UNPACKING A NEW MEDIUM

“Some people become attached to leaflets and prospectuses, others to handwriting facsimiles or typewritten copies of unobtainable books; and certainly periodicals can form the prismatic fringes of a library.” – Walter Benjamin¹

You may have encountered some aspect of the image that I have in mind (fig. 1.1). You might have come across the photograph, the object pictured therein, or an alternate reproduction. Perhaps you can recall seeing the image on the page of a textbook or projected onto a classroom wall, its grey masked surface at once familiar and strange. Anyone who has come upon such an accumulation of dust in a forgotten corner knows that the tufts of the stuff spring into action once discovered. Dust breeds through a lack of human intervention. But here the camera intervenes as a mechanical interloper in an organic decomposition. The photograph encases an ephemeral coalescence of debris within an artificial, hermetic frame. No matter how long you stare, the surface’s opaque grit endures, unchanged. The image’s chemistry resists any attempt to wipe away the dust to reveal what is hidden beneath.

Man Ray and Marcel Duchamp collaborated to make the image *Élevage de poussière* or *Dust Breeding*. The two were friends during their lifetimes. They reportedly dined together during the negative’s extended exposure.² Their names are probably also

¹ To name one source for this quotation: Walter Benjamin, “Unpacking My Library: A Talk about Book Collecting (1931),” in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), 66.

² The dinner in question is mentioned in David Hopkins, “Duchamp’s Metaphysics: Dust Breeding,” in *Virgin Microbe: New Studies on Dada*, ed. David Hopkins and Michael White

familiar to you. You might be aware of these tensions in the photograph between the coincidental and the strategic, the biological and the mechanical, and the artist and the viewer because the very same set of issues are at stake in the image's nominal subject: dust breeding on the surface of Duchamp's now legendary art work the *Large Glass*. Duchamp indeed addresses many of the same concerns in his own writing on the *Large Glass* or *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*.³ Still, though it is tempting to continue a discussion of the towering, transparent slice of a sculpture-in-the-round in relation to filmic media and viewership,⁴ *Dust Breeding* is equally relevant to another material history yet to be told: the story of handheld cinema.

In this text, I am defining a new medium that I call handheld cinema to uncover a forgotten era in filmmaking—when experimental cinema was printed as well as projected. My conception of the period during and between World Wars I and II when cinema was not monolithic but mutable originates in part from current technological possibilities that allow motion pictures to exist virtually anywhere. The pages of periodicals that functioned as handheld cinema between 1917 and 1944 could also be

(Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2014), 119. See also Joyce Suechun Cheng, "Paris Dada and the Transfiguration of Boredom," *Modernism/modernity* 24, no. 3 (September 2017): 620-1, in which Cheng describes *Élevage de poussière* as being authored by "temporal duration."

³ The text often referred to as Duchamp's *Green Box Notes* (1934) is in fact entitled identically to the undercover object in *Dust Breeding*. Though I am not concentrating of this particular area of confusion in the study, Duchamp's visual-verbal gamesmanship has been the subject of research by, to cite a prominent example, Dalia Judovitz, *Unpacking Duchamp: Art in Transit* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) and *Drawing on Art: Duchamp and Company* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press: 2010), among others.

⁴ Among her regular returns to Duchamp, Rosalind Krauss discusses *Large Glass* in conversations with the mediums of photography and film. In an earlier essay from 1976, "Notes on the Index: Part 1" in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 202-06, *Large Glass* is a photographic "shifter." Then, in *The Optical Unconscious* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993), 119, Krauss follows a lengthy quotation from Jean-François Lyotard with, in her own words, "The *Large Glass*, being the film, makes visible the conditions of impression that reign at the interior of the optical chamber."

transported virtually anywhere. But unlike today's digital devices, handheld cinema requires sustained mental and physical participation on the observer's behalf. Due to the commitment that handheld cinema demands from readers, editors of more general audience publications were almost never permitted to implement design techniques or include contents that would have allowed mass market magazines to fully participate in the medium. The genesis of handheld cinema instead depended upon the specialist readers and insular communities that dadaists and surrealists had in mind as they edited and printed their ephemeral publications. Accordingly, the periodicals under consideration here are at once representative of more general developments in modern media and of a particular manifestation of handheld cinema among those who were prepared to criticize the burgeoning motion picture industry (among other facets of modernity).

To write the history of handheld cinema thus obliges me to leave the *Large Glass* in the storeroom for now—to instead unpack the library of the avant-garde. As dusty as Duchamp's work-in-progress was on the night when he and Man Ray awaited *Dust Breeding's* exposure, most of the resulting photographic prints have only accumulated more layers of sediment after a century of cultural production. The image appeared with regularity for decades in print without its given title, *Dust Breeding*, the one listed in most museum collections and scholarship. This severance of title and image in part explains the tendency to forget the photograph's circuitous passage amongst publications that adapted it to suit, including landmark productions of dadaist and surrealist handheld cinema.

The title *Dust Breeding* is, for example, completely absent from the version of the image that occupies a full page of the October 1922 issue of the Parisian revue *Littérature* (fig. 2).⁵ Here, the accompanying text is one-half poem and one-half alternate title, divided into two sections to the left and right of the lower border of the photograph. At left, the first of three lines of French text immediately names one of Duchamp's alter egos, Rose Sélavy. The poem then suggests that we are viewing her "domain" before listing two sets of conflicting characteristics to describe the terrain (arid/fertile, happy/sad). At right, the line "view taken by airplane" might be the final line of a poem written by Man Ray in 1921 as the text underneath reads. Or the right-hand text might label the image above it much as a standard caption. Regardless of whether we read the text as a whole or two parts, the juxtaposition of the ambiguously attributed text with the photograph that occupies the majority of the page prompts a fluctuation of attention over a period of sustained looking so that Duchamp's reproduced artwork morphs into an abstracted landscape in time.⁶

By 1935, *Minotaure*'s sixth issue mentions neither *Dust Breeding*'s title nor Man Ray's name in conjunction with its cover image (fig. 3). The cover bears Duchamp's signature and the designation "spécialement composée" in the table of contents. As Man Ray's byline appeared on other occasions in Albert Skira's surrealist-adjacent magazine—including the contents page of *Minotaure*'s subsequent seventh issue—the

⁵ See *Littérature NS* no. 5 (October 1922):

<http://sdr.lib.uiowa.edu/dada/litterature/5ns/index.htm>

⁶ For a discussion of *Dust Breeding* with reference to the popularity of aerial photography in contemporaneous popular magazines, Clément Chéroux, "*Littérature*, ou la Photographie hors le texte," in *Picabia, Man Ray et la revue Littérature*, ed. Christian Briend and Clément Chéroux (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 2014), 29-31. Also, Hopkins, "Duchamp's Metaphysics," 126 links *Dust Breeding* to WWI-era reconnaissance photography.

photographer's absence from the sixth issue credits was likely intentional. The photograph stretches from corner to corner so that it is no longer a play on the landscape genre so much as a background in support of a figure. This figure, the incised circular form of a facsimile of one of Duchamp's rotoreliefs, is the undisputed focal point of the composition.⁷ The nested crescents that expand from a central circle extend outward past the margin of the cover so that the round figure seems on the verge of bursting or swallowing the entire picture plane. The vermillion pigment that soaks between every inch of the surface's black ink contributes an airless compositional tension that flattens the details of the photographic background image that *Dust Breeding* has become. In effect, the rotorelief's hypnotic dynamism almost disappears the photograph through distraction.

These two incognito appearances by *Dust Breeding* in *Littérature* and *Minotaure* at once attest to the journals' differing editorial programs and the photograph's multiple reinventions in interwar-era handheld cinema. The now-singularly-titled photograph, *Dust Breeding*, is an oversimplification in the service of a history of modern art that values unique objects above all else. To begin to write another kind of history, I insist upon the recurring, contradictory roles of visual imagery in handheld cinema, not because these examples are typical but because the properties of the medium are most evident in atypical scenarios. One way to describe this dissertation is as an analysis of atypical objects masquerading as mundane objects. Our neglect of handheld cinema until now has everything to do with the enormity of the archive of periodicals printed during the mass market boom of the first half of the twentieth century. The enormity of this archive also

⁷ The facsimile appears to be a version of *Rotorelief No. 1 – Corolles – Modèle Déposé*. Duchamp's rotoreliefs were also the focal point of his 1926 film *Anémic Cinéma*.

has everything to do with why I identify handheld cinema as a medium that deserves scholarly attention.

Like projected cinema, handheld cinema is a medium that comes into being through ephemeral interactions between makers and observers. The periodicals that exemplify handheld cinema in this study borrow extensively from concurrent techniques in filmmaking by depending upon reader reception to gain temporary coherence – whether their pages present unabashed assemblages, magnified abstractions, or tactile apparatuses. I am able to read dada and surrealist periodicals as paracinematic events, distinct from their individual material components.

Not all twentieth-century print culture is a part of handheld cinema. Nor do all handheld cinemas function precisely as my chosen examples. Still, because I identify handheld cinema as a subset of modern print culture, it is also technically displaced from the medium of film even as it contributes to the history of cinema. Handheld cinema's displacement on a material level from now recognizable forms of cultural entertainment like the magazine and the narrative film has resulted its being overlooked even with influx of scholarship dedicated to popular modernism.⁸ In a contrarian view, this study takes handheld cinema's material displacement as its central binding theme. The handheld cinemas under consideration here do not merely displace entrenched definitions of modernist media; they redefine distinctions between high and low modernism by challenging assumptions of the singularity of radical genius, the passivity of observers, and the exclusivity of modern art spaces.

⁸ Among the most expansive of these is Sascha Bru, ed. *Regarding the Popular: Modernism, the Avant-Garde, and High and Low Culture* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2012). For an early example of a turn to the popular in modernist studies, see Jeffrey Weiss, *The Popular Culture of Modern Art: Picasso, Duchamp and Avant-Gardism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

If, in the art historical tradition, we were tempted to categorize the archive of modern print culture and its relationship to the avant-garde through individual artists, Man Ray would certainly be an ideal candidate. His images appear in the majority of the dada and surrealist publications printed during and between the two world wars that are the focus of this study. In addition to the renaming and re-presenting of *Dust Breeding* in *Littérature* and *Minotaure*, his photo-documentation of his surrealist object *The Enigma of Isidore Ducasse* (1920) creates an ambiguous obstacle framed in the center of the preface to the first issue of André Breton's *La Révolution Surréaliste* (1924).⁹ Reproductions of Man Ray's aerographs in *391* (1920) and *Mécano* (1922) also connect his work to the dadaism of Francis Picabia and Theo van Doesburg, respectively.¹⁰ The photomechanical images that Man Ray contributed to these dadaist and surrealist periodicals do not only reference his paintings and sculptural assemblages. Stilled versions of imagery from his 1923 film *Retour à la Raison* reproduced in *La Révolution Surréaliste* and references to the cinematograph in *391* are among his contributions.¹¹ The version of Man Ray that emerges from these and numerous other examples would thus allow for an alternate reading of the multimedia artist's career through his print contributions.

One could also write a comparable list of appearances for Man Ray's occasional collaborator Duchamp—to ponder why he *chose* to insert *Dust Breeding* into his

⁹ "Preface," *La Révolution Surréaliste*, no. 1 (December 1924): 1.

¹⁰ See back cover of *391* no. 13 (July 1920) and *Mécano*, Yellow Issue (1922).

¹¹ "Rêves," *La Révolution Surréaliste*, no. 1 (December 1924): 4; and *391* no. 14 (November 1920): <http://sdrclib.uiowa.edu/dada/391/14/pages/06.htm>

Links to digitized versions of archival materials discussed throughout this text will be included whenever possible.

specially composed *Minotaure* cover just as ‘R. Mutt’ chose to turn a urinal into *Fountain* (1917).¹² But the project would present more challenges from the outset due to Duchamp’s use of pseudonyms. Not just the infamous R. Mutt but the persona of Rose Sélavy, the female alter ego who contributed text to the issue of *Littérature* in which *Dust Breeding* was re-captioned to include her name alongside Man Ray’s and not Duchamp’s. The case of Duchamp’s identity-shifting antics is, again, atypical in its extremity, but in one episode illustrates how quickly handheld cinema resists the standard art historical method of biographical contextualization.¹³

Art historians have generally ignored the aesthetics of modernist periodicals despite invitations from influential voices in the discipline, like Hal Foster’s nod to magazines in the roundtable transcribed in the survey text *Art Since 1900* and Rosalind Krauss’s admission that a “parade of surrealist magazines” are the movement’s “true objects.”¹⁴ Modern art history instead favors closed, linear chronologies that align with the objects most readily accessible in museum collections. The ephemeral material

¹² Here, I reference a quotation from *Blind Man*, no. 2 (May 1917): 5, which evinces an earlier example of Duchamp’s shapeshifting. The second and final issue of the little magazine published in New York covers the notorious Richard Mutt Case and in doing so outlines the conceptual terms of Duchamp’s readymades as follows: “Whether Mr. Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view—created a new thought for that object.”

¹³ Duchamp’s manipulation of his persona has been a major topic in scholarship devoted to his work. For one book-length example, see David Joselit, *Infinite Regress: Marcel Duchamp, 1910-1941* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998). For a discussion of Duchamp that expands his practice to a conversation about the death of the author and modernist painting, also see Isabelle Wallace “From Painting’s Death To The Death In Painting: Or, What Jasper Johns Found In Marcel Duchamp’s *Tu m’/Tomb*,” *Angelaki* 7, no. 1 (April 2002): 133-156.

¹⁴ See Yve-Alain Bois, Benjamin Buchloh, Hal Foster, David Joselit, Rosalind Krauss, “Roundtable,” in *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Anti-Modernism, Postmodernism* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 325-27. Also, see Rosalind Krauss, “The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism,” in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 101.

presence of handheld cinema has been forgotten in the archive, and the formal properties of periodicals have therefore been minimized in favor of attending to their sociopolitical effects.

To take handheld cinema's multilayered displacement seriously, I must discard the common modernist art historical assumption of singular artistic authorship. Magazines, journals, and other printed materials are collaboratively produced objects even when labeled with a single byline. Picabia, for example, enlisted the help of publishers in every city where issues of his supposed solo journal *391* debuted, from Barcelona to New York to Zurich to Paris.¹⁵ Handheld cinema's fabrication cannot be aligned with singular craftsmanship, no matter how specific an individual's conceptual contributions might be. There are multiple divisions of labor—among collaborators as well as between conception and manufacture and a melding of personal and public affairs. The collaborations sometimes result in multiple bylines that complicate attribution. But in all these art historical losses of attribution, we gain access to the process of handheld cinema's becoming. There are pages that include printed correspondence between editors, and we are given references to external events and related publications—some of which also appear in advertisements that blend seamlessly with surrounding content. It is therefore possible to track alliances between dadaists and surrealists from issue to issue. Moreover, the frequency with which loyalties realign further calls into question the stability of viewpoint that we tend to assign to an author.

Thus, while the chapters that follow will provide glimpses into the biographies of major dada and surrealist players, my analysis of handheld cinema embraces the

¹⁵ *391* printers include Oliva de Vilanova in Barcelona, Jul. Heuberger in Zurich, and Au Sans-Pareil in Paris.

contradictory versions of individuals that emerge between issues and across titles. The exchanges we can track between contributors and via letters published in direct response to the contents of magazines and journals are partial precursors to our current digital publications in which simultaneous global rebuttals are commonplace. But in the years during and between the world wars, the dadaists and surrealists made such exchanges in periodicals an integral part of artistic practice despite pauses and mistranslations that placed the burden on readers to fill in conversational gaps. During the thirty-year span, circa 1917 to 1944 when handheld cinema thrived, cooperation (no matter how contingent) provided at least a semblance of community in the midst of mass geopolitical displacement. Consequently, each chapter in this dissertation addresses a displaced community, from dada's incessant relocation after its genesis in exile in Zurich to the expat-dominated circle in interwar Paris that spawned surrealism to that movement's response to its refugee status in WWII-era America.

Handheld cinema displaces the possibility of singular visionary artists captaining the avant-garde. The dadaist and surrealist pages that constitute the medium, like the periodicals that Walter Benjamin described in 1931 as the "prismatic fringes of the library," beg to be interpreted with respect to their flickering, peripheral nature.¹⁶ Therefore, to demonstrate how handheld cinema's ephemerality can persist in the history of modern art is to recognize the medium's origins within a prismatic fringe of materials and makers.

¹⁶ Benjamin, "Unpacking My Library," 66.

I should, however, continue by acknowledging the complexities of tracing the medium's origins to a prismatic fringe of entangled materials and makers. I am not merely speaking about the inclusion of the periodical in modernist studies. Scholarship devoted to the analysis of print culture almost exclusively from the perspective of literary studies has matured to the point of meriting introspection in the form of articles and books devoted to the field's genesis and catalogs of relevant projects.¹⁷ Although my research has benefited tremendously from the encyclopedic tendency in periodical studies, in particular from the multi-volume *Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, the time has come to delve into the material details that are often trimmed from survey texts.¹⁸ Lushly illustrated books by Stephen Bury and Steven Heller are similarly rich documentary sources but can only gloss over discussions of visual techniques.¹⁹

¹⁷ Examples that consider periodicals in particular are Sean Latham and Robert Scholes. "The Rise of Periodical Studies." *PMLA* 121, no. 2 (March 2006): 517-31; Patrick Collier, "What is Modern Periodical Studies," *The Journal of Modern Periodical Studies* 6, no. 2 (2015): 92-111; and Faye Hammill and Mark Hussey, *Modernism's Print Cultures* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016). For examples that look to connections between image and text in modernist print culture more broadly, see Natasha Grigorian, Thomas Baldwin, and Margaret Rigaud-Drayton, *Text and Image in Modern European Culture* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2012); Patrizia Di Bello, Colette E. Wilson, and Shamooin Zamir, *The Photobook: from Talbot to Ruscha and Beyond* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012); and Martin Parr and Gerry Badger, *The Photobook: A History Volume 1* (London and New York: Phaidon, 2004).

¹⁸ Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker, eds. *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, vol. 1-3 (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009-2013). The Oxford compendium is the most inclusive taxonomic publication devoted to modernist periodicals to date. The more narrowly defined set of essays collected in *Revue modernistes, revues engagées (1900-1939)*, ed. Hélène Aji, Céline Mansanti, and Benoît Tadié (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2011) tend to focus on the political milieus of the reviews under consideration. Eric Bulson, *Little Magazine, World Form* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017) is an even more recent book-length study of the modernist periodical that emphasizes the reach of the little magazine as a globally recognizable phenomenon.

¹⁹ Stephen Bury, *Breaking the Rules: the Printed Face of the European Avant Garde 1900-1937*, exh. cat. (London: British Library, 2007); and Steven Heller, *Merz to Emigre and Beyond: Avant-Garde Magazine Design of the Twentieth Century* (London: Phaidon Press, 2003).

Among established art historians, Dawn Ades' consistent return to periodicals remains anomalous within the field. Her collaboration with Simon Baker to convey the “active force” of a singular journal through close reading in *Undercover Surrealism: Georges Bataille and Documents* provides a rare model for my own close looking.²⁰ Still, the majority of twenty-first century studies continue to repeat the listing of collaborators and key contributions that Ades began in her groundbreaking exhibition catalogue *Dada and Surrealism Reviewed*, which was published forty years ago.²¹

Thankfully, a handful of projects have emerged in art historical venues in recent years that aim as I do to reposition the making and reading of modernist magazines as a category of artistic production worthy of visual analysis. For example, Clément Chéroux's essay on “photographie hors le texte” was a welcome contribution to the 2014 exhibition catalogue for *Picabia, Man Ray et Littérature*.²² Also in 2014, as part of a hybrid print and digital media project, *Object:Photo*, a team of MoMA curators and scholars linked photographs from the Thomas Walther Collection to a constellation of makers and publications to highlight the material heterogeneity of modern photographic production.²³ MoMA also later installed the small vitrine-sized display, “The Electro-

²⁰ Dawn Ades and Simon Baker, *Undercover Surrealism: Georges Bataille and Documents*, exh. cat. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006). Ades is also on the editorial board of an online journal that devoted a special issue to “The Use-Value of *Documents*,” *Papers of Surrealism*, no. 7 (2007): <http://www.surrealismcentre.ac.uk/papersofsurrealism/journal7/index.htm>

²¹ Dawn Ades, *Dada and Surrealism Reviewed* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1978).

²² Clément Chéroux, “*Littérature, ou la Photographie hors le texte*,” in *Man Ray, Picabia et la revue Littérature*, exh. cat., ed. Christian Briend and Clément Chéroux (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 2014), 27-38. The exhibition was on view July 2-September 15, 2014. An even more recent exhibition and catalogue, Adrian Sudhalter, *Dadaglobe Reconstructed*, exh. cat. (Zurich: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2016), discusses some technical details of dadaist periodicals in the course of bringing to life Tzara's failed anthology project.

²³ Mitra Abbaspour, Lee Ann Daffner, and Maria Morris Hambourg, eds. *Object:Photo. Modern Photographs: The Thomas Walther Collection 1909–1949* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2014) and <https://www.moma.org/interactives/objectphoto/#home>

Library.²⁴ Additionally, the convening of the Print Matters workshop at the New York Public Library in April 2016 demonstrated interest in the ontological specificity of illustrated periodicals.²⁵ Less than a year later, Lori Cole's organization of a 2017 College Art Association Annual Conference panel on "Art/Magazines" suggests that interest in print studies is growing among art-minded academics in North America.²⁶ Nevertheless, much work still remains to expand upon these scholarly meetings and displays to insure avant-garde print culture's continued visibility in art history.

Going beyond the work begun in the aforementioned scholarship, my project will not only delineate a new set of material standards for assessing periodicals from the perspective of the observer but will also address the problems that accompany the production of periodicals by the equally prismatic fringe of the avant-garde. Framing these periodicals as handheld cinema, as a medium that comes into being through an interaction between makers and observers, allows me to describe the ephemeral process of experiencing dada and surrealist periodicals as a series of distinct events. The interactive event where I locate handheld cinema—while overlaid with displacements of maker, viewer, and medium—can be compressed through an observer's perspective. Handheld cinema analogously displaces the fixed roles we've come to assign in

²⁴ For more information on *The Electro-Library: European Avant-Garde Magazines from the 1920s* (March 7-June 13, 2016) via MoMA's exhibition calendar, see <http://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/1632?locale=en>

²⁵ For participant information and abstracts for the workshop (April 8-9, 2016), see <http://developingroom.com/event/print-matters-histories-photography-illustrated-magazines>

²⁶ The panel included four papers on publications ranging chronologically from early-twentieth-century to present day. Of particular interest to me, in addition to articles published in *The Journal of Modern Periodical Studies*, is a recent example of panel participant Emily Hage's work on dada periodicals and exhibition practice in "A 'Living Magazine': Hugo Ball's *Cabaret Voltaire*," *The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory* 91, no. 4 (2016): 395-414. Another participant was Gwen Allen, author of *Artists' Magazines: An Alternative Space for Art* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011).

discussions of film production as observers are allowed to become *auteurs* and direct their own filmic experiences.

As I do not know of a way to time travel a century into the past—nor of a way to fully inhabit a person other than my own here and now—the observer who I discuss throughout this study is imaginary. In other words, the perspective that I adopt is displaced. Rather than an apology, I point to this additional layer of displacement to begin to ground my analysis of handheld cinema in a set of related multisensory subjective experiences. I admit that the observers that my accounts employ are imperfect from the outset, but this should not impede us from focusing the information that is available to us.

My insistence upon the deliberate fabrication of the descriptions that you will find throughout this study results not only from the practical concerns of writing in the present but also from the particular material characteristics of handheld cinema. As the name of the medium connotes, these objects activate only when held in the hands of an observer. They are objects that require the participation of a person who may or may not know who was responsible for their printing and distribution. Handheld cinema is thus newly materialized through every individual interaction—a medium with the potential for indefinite renewal in the hands of observers. To conceive of the medium of handheld cinema therefore requires us to displace conventional notions of the modern art audience on multiple fronts: the observer can no longer be the passive, ahistorical, or disembodied viewer that high modernist art criticism invented.

My constructions of active, period-specific, embodied observations of dada and surrealist handheld cinema in this study build upon a foundation of recent scholarship

that expands the sensory field of modernism. Janine Mileaf, too, considers dada and surrealist objects in her book, *Please Touch*. To introduce her text, the art historian returns to the distinction between optic and haptic that Alois Riegl developed as part of his writing on the *Kunstwollen* in the late nineteenth century.²⁷ Mileaf cites the legacy of Riegl's association of the optical with conceptual ideas and the haptic with perceptual immediacy as a division that has continued to exclude the sensation of touch from art criticism and history. While Mileaf and media scholar Jennifer M. Barker each admit the ripple effects of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological theories in post-war cultural studies, visual impressions still maintain a privileged position in scholarly analyses of art objects.²⁸ Like Mileaf's case studies, Barker's thematic chapters devoted to *The Tactile Eye*, and Tami Williams' work on filmmaker Germaine Dulac's *Cinema of Sensations*, this study of handheld cinema concentrates first and foremost on bringing embodied observation to the fore through close reading.²⁹

I do not want to suggest that a mid-century phenomenological approach and its contemporary descendants should overwrite optical formalism as a new universal standard for interpreting all modern art. (Museums and galleries still rarely allow touching, after all.) But to bring overlooked objects into the conversation only to forget them due to stale analysis would be a waste of our time. My framing of handheld cinema

²⁷ Janine Mileaf, introduction to *Please Touch: Dada & Surrealist Objects After the Readymade*. (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2010), 7-8.

²⁸ Per Jennifer M. Barker, introduction to *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 20: "I take very seriously the tactile model with which Merleau-Ponty's career began and ended, and that model informs my description of the relation between the spectator's lived-body and that of the film. They are in a relation of reversibility and sensual connection that exists somewhere between that of hand-touching-table and right-hand-touching-left-hand." See also, Mileaf, *Please Touch*, 9.

²⁹ Tami Williams, *Germaine Dulac: A Cinema of Sensations* (Champagne: University of Illinois Press, 2014).

through the perspective of the active observer/director is one way to reinvigorate the familiar visual analysis that distinguishes art history from other disciplines. I aim to reframe the picture of the historical avant-garde that has come to us from a century's worth of scholarship—not to smash it.

While the sociopolitical associations of my method reflect my own viewpoint in the present, I cannot claim that this study provides a complete account of associations possible in Europe and North America in the first half of the twentieth century. The marketing parodies, gender troubling, and critiques of technology that I point to in hundred-year-old dada and surrealist objects are features of handheld cinema that are equally relevant to discussions of current digital media. My perspective is thus as reflective of my surroundings as any other. Therefore, in the place of a historically detached, objective voice, what you will find below is a voice that embraces handheld cinema's reemergence with the assistance of digital archives.³⁰ It is my hope that the readings that I share will encourage further interactions with avant-garde magazines through these more widely accessible facsimiles even as opportunities to handle physical copies become more restricted. It is up to us to determine the ways in which digital versions of rare and fragile ephemera shape future scholarship.

The stakes of this project as I have explained them so far follow the course of research that allowed me to define handheld cinema in the first place. I have responded to scholarship devoted to the modernized sensorium writ large rather than on specific forms

³⁰ Along with long-term digitization projects undertaken by institutions such as the Bibliothèque nationale de France, this project has been expedited by materials from the International Dada Archive at the University of Iowa Libraries accessible online via <http://sdrc.lib.uiowa.edu/dada/index.html>

that move within the system. In addition to the studies previously mentioned, books by Jonathan Crary, Mary Ann Doane, as well as, more recently, Robin Veder, have brought to life for me the dynamics and kinaesthetics of modern observation.³¹ The idea of handheld cinema would not have coalesced in my mind if not for the breadth of contemporaneous examples made accessible through these scholarly narratives that trace epistemic shifts in perception. But my ultimate commitment here is to the handheld cinema as a medium. Let's return, then, to the pages of the prismatic fringe to discuss handheld cinema's displacement at the material level.

On one hand, to speak about medium specificity at the material level summons the specter of a prescriptive Anglo-American strain of modernist art criticism that shuns the ephemeral objects of this study.³² On the other hand, each modernist medium has emerged through sustained comparison, from Walter Pater's dictum, "All art aspires to the condition of music," to the variations on the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk* that have appeared since the nineteenth century.³³ Painting, sculpture, drawing, printmaking, and photography are defined as much by the materials that do not belong as the ones that do. Dance, theater, and music hold dear to their temporal nature to make up for their lack of

³¹ Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999); Mary Ann Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, The Archive* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Robin Veder, *The Living Line: Modern Art and the Economy of Energy* (Hanover, New Hampshire: Dartmouth College Press, 2015).

³² This proclivity for painting was already in place by the mid-twentieth century when Anglo-American critics began to defend pre- and interwar work through arguments that emphasized the historical transcendence of the medium. The most iconic argument in this vein can be traced to Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," *Art & Literature*, no. 4 (Spring 1965): 193-201.

³³ For a book-length study of the proliferation of the modernist *Gesamtkunstwerk*, see Juliet Koss, *Modernism After Wagner* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

material stability. Every medium exists by virtue of the fact that it is removed—or displaced—from all the others.

Handheld cinema fits the description of a displaced modernist medium on a material level like all the others, but its lack is so profound as to require more participation on the level of observation than the others. So great is the burden on the observer to recognize handheld cinema as a medium that she must first be familiar with historical conceptions of the medium of film, with a multiplicity of *motion pictures*. The lack of standardization in cinematic viewing conditions during and between the world wars that allowed handheld cinema to proliferate in avant-garde periodicals has returned in the contemporary moment through an abundance of available screens. Indeed, if the studies of the modernization of perception sketch the environment that made handheld cinema possible, language borrowed from film and media studies provides the basis for my interpretive vocabulary.

The function of an ever-expanding list of ‘new’ visual media is by a no means a new topic in visual studies and criticism. To be sure, the dadaists and surrealists were themselves part of the conversation in ways that will be discussed in later chapters. And it is far from coincidental that the scholarly historicizing of both movements came about amidst the post-structuralist milieu that began to theorize new media in the late 1960s and 1970s.³⁴ Studies of dadaists and surrealists have been published across a range of

³⁴ For the first edition of a book that remains an irreplaceable text in dada scholarship for the rich detail its author was able to gather in the waning years of the lives of the movement’s major supporters, see Michel Sanouillet, *Dada à Paris* (Paris: Jean-Jacques Pauvert, 1965). By the mid-1970s, Rosalind Krauss was combining art criticism and history with post-structuralism to cover new media and performance work by her contemporaries, such as Vito Acconci and Joan Jonas, in “Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism,” *October* 1 (Spring 1976): 50-64; as well as members of the supposedly historical avant-garde like Duchamp in “Notes on the Index: Part 1,” *October* 3 (Spring 1977): 68-81.

academic journals, monographs, and exhibition catalogues in the ensuing decades; however, the more specific conversation about this avant-garde's relation to filmic media was begun and has been largely sustained by art historians associated with the journal *October*.³⁵ In the twenty-first century, contributions to the journal that propose innovative interpretive frameworks for modern and postmodern visual culture have admittedly tended to emphasize the photographic rather than the cinematic. For example, George Baker's "Photography's Expanded Field" adapts Rosalind Krauss's semiotic diagramming for sculpture to explain the intricacies of the "post-medium condition" that he claims photography reached by the 1970s, just as the history of photography was first accepted as part of the history of art.³⁶ Even more recently, in an essay published in *October*'s Fall 2016 issue, Matthew Witkovsky also proposed that the "productive disunity that constitutes photography as a field of inquiry" could model the future of art history.³⁷

Even though these and other theorizations of photography disassemble the medium, stilled photographic images nevertheless align with the methods of visual analysis that art historians and critics have applied to painting and drawing for centuries. Meanwhile, films move. Cinemas measure the minutes for viewers and usually provide

³⁵ In addition to the Krauss texts from *October* cited previously, her co-founder Annette Michelson's continued contributions to cinema studies set a precedent which the journal has sustained. From an entire Spring 2014 issue (*October* 148, ed. Malcolm Turvey) dedicated to an assessment of Classical Film Theory to essays that consider specific filmic projects, such as George Baker's article on "Entr'acte," and Malcolm Turvey's text on "Dada Between Heaven and Hell: Abstraction and Universal Language in the *Rhythm* Films of Hans Richter," in the special issue *October* 105 (Summer 2003) dedicated to dada and edited by Leah Dickerman.

³⁶ George Baker, "Photography's Expanded Field," *October* 114 (Autumn 2005): 120-40.

³⁷ Matthew S. Witkovsky, "Photography as Model," *October* 158 (Fall 2016): 18. Like Baker's update of Krauss, Witkovsky builds upon another *October* veteran's scholarship, Yve-Alain Bois, *Painting as Model* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990).

seats in which to pass the time. Films require a display context that defies the sterility and quietude of the modernist white cube. Films have prompted the genesis of a distinct discipline devoted to the study of cinema and media, a discipline that provides a space for the moving images that befuddle art history. Notwithstanding the similarities between the prominence of auteur theory that accompanied the codification of film studies by the 1970s and the concurrent supremacy of a version of modern art history that championed individual artistic genius, the two disciplines did not often interact. Perhaps as a means of self-preservation, scholars of art and film have likewise written medium-specific texts.

Overtures have occurred in the intervening decades, especially involving the relationship between photography and film. Cinema-centric critics Raymond Bellour and Christian Metz, for example, meditated on the appearances of photographs on screen in the mid-1980s.³⁸ And more recently, anthologies and single authored volumes from media historians have more extensively paired photography and cinema through thematic and biographical lenses.³⁹ But almost all historians of modern *art* continue to push cinema to the side, to leave the medium in the hands of film scholars just as text-heavy modernist periodicals have remained largely undisturbed in the domain of comparative literature.⁴⁰

³⁸ See Raymond Bellour, "The Pensive Spectator [1984]," in *The Cinematic*, ed. David Company (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 120-23; and Christian Metz, "Photography and Fetish," *October* 34 (Fall 1985): 81-90.

³⁹ For example, Eivind Røssaak, ed., *Between Stillness and Motion: Film, Photography, Algorithms* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011); David Company, *Photography and Cinema* (London: Reaktion Books, 2008); and Jan-Christopher Horak, *Making Images Move. Photographers and Avant-Garde Cinema* (Washington, D.C., London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997).

⁴⁰ An exception to the trend is *October*-editor Malcolm Turvey's work, especially for the purposes of this study, *The Filming of Modern Life: European Avant-Garde Film of the 1920s* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011).

Unlike their art historical counterparts, film scholars have begun to reach across the superficial divide in recent years. And so I take my lead from the discipline of film studies both in method and in spirit. In particular, Pavle Levi's consideration in *Cinema by Other Means* and related articles introduced me to the bipartite definition of medium that has helped me to conceive of handheld cinema's interrelated displacement and interactivity. According to Levi, "The objective/material and the subjective/conceptual components of the 'medium' supplement each other in such a way that it functions as a total, perfect version of itself, while at the same time it directly depends on (and is, moreover, repeatedly re-defined by) whatever subjectivity it engages at any given point in time."⁴¹ In a description borrowed in part from Alexandre Koyré, Levi locates the paracinematic production that is the primary focus of his research in the disjunction between the knowledge of filmic perception (or "*logos*") and the equipment required to produce and project the medium on screen (or "*techné*").⁴² While Levi applies this split definition of cinematic technology to paracinematic objects that originate mostly from central Europe, I contend that related dynamics are at play in the handheld cinema of displaced dadaist and surrealists.⁴³ What's more, according to Levi, it is "only by repeatedly evoking, by enacting, the discrepancy between the idea and its technological implementation that the essential qualities and the radical, non-instrumentalist creative

⁴¹ Pavle Levi, "On Re-materialization of the Cinematographic Apparatus," *Cinema by Other Means* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), 40. For a condensed version of the theory that informs the book-length study, see Pavle Levi, "Cinema by Other Means," *October* 131 (Winter 2010): 51-68. A related consideration of cinema's remediation in poetry published contemporaneously with Levi's book is Christophe Wall-Romana, *Cinepoetry: Imaginary Cinemas in French Poetry* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013).

⁴² Levi, "Cinema by Other Means," 60.

⁴³ Levi does briefly consider the paracinematic work of Franco-Serbian poet Monny de Bouilly in *La Révolution Surréaliste*, no. 5 (October 1925) in "Doctor Hypnison and the Case of Written Cinema," *October* 116 (Spring 2006): 106-108.

potential contained in any new medium are maintained.”⁴⁴ In short, the more cinematographers the merrier.

The entanglement of voices from the histories of art and technology in Levi’s research on the paracinematic speaks to another strand of writing on the medium in popular culture that is most famously encapsulated in Marshall McLuhan’s phrase “the medium is the message.”⁴⁵ Amid the digital technology boom of the mid-1990s, media theorists Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin coined the term *remediation* in an attempt to describe the interplay and mimicry between media that make new interfaces intelligible. While I have generally found citations of Bolter and Grusin’s definition of remediation in scholarship that deals explicitly with new media and technology, their 1996 text does demonstrate art historical underpinnings. For example, the authors adapt Greenberg’s phrase from “Towards a New Laocöon” at a pivotal point to explain that, like high modernist painting and sculpture, “digital hypermedia also looks what it does.”⁴⁶ Then, just a few sentences later, a musing about the potential truth that all mediation might be remediation opens on to a discussion of the retrospective application of redmediation at play in this study. Bolter and Grusin write that “all current media function as remediators and that remediation offers us a means of interpreting the work of earlier media as well, ” and continue with a statement later expanded into a multi-point definition: “Our culture conceives of each medium or constellation of media as it

⁴⁴ Levi, “Cinema by Other Means,” 67.

⁴⁵ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: the Extensions of Man* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 1.

⁴⁶ Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, “Remediation,” *Configurations* 4, no. 3 (1996): 311-358. Bolter and Grusin also discuss the mathematically derived transparency of linear perspective as a form of (re)mediation dating back to the Renaissance.

responds to, redeploys, competes with, and reforms other media.”⁴⁷ Their concept of remediation thus adds a new temporal dimension to art historical conversations about medium specificity dating back to the nineteenth century. In line with Bolter and Grusin, I accept that embracing not just new media but *all* media in relation to the present will change this study in the future. Still, I am thankful that newer digital ephemera have made it possible to remediate the displaced medium of handheld cinema even though the relevance of this study will shift with time.

If my most direct and consistent source for the theoretical vocabulary of handheld cinema has been Levi’s work, the film studies text that has surprised me the most often by providing answers in unexpected places is Jennifer Wild’s *The Parisian Avant-Garde in the Age of Cinema, 1900-23*. Because the Age of Cinema, as Wild defines it, largely precedes the proliferation of handheld cinema as I’ve defined it, I had not revisited her thick description of the Parisian milieu since the early stages of my research. When I finally made my belated return, Wild’s text came to the rescue not once but twice. First, on a more historically specific level, the later chapters of the book pinpoint an almost instantaneous shift in cinematic viewing during World War I as a result of the import of American movies to France.⁴⁸ This “cinema of ballistics,” as Wild defines the type of more medium-specific, less theatrical cinema that finally infiltrated Europe due to the war, helps me to reinforce the beginning date of my study of handheld cinema. For Wild

⁴⁷ Bolter and Grusin, “Remediation,” 345-46.

⁴⁸ Jennifer Wild, “The Radical Time of Reception: The Cinema of Ballistics,” and “The Distribution of Subversive Systems: Dada, Chaplin, and the End of an Age,” in *The Parisian Avant-Garde in the Age of Cinema, 1900-23* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), 188-274.

details the explosive moment of impact that caught the attention of the dadaists and proto-surrealists who fueled the creation of handheld cinema and then enlivened the Franco-American network of makers whose movements in the interwar period continued the medium's evolution.

Second, on a more general methodological level, Wild tells a story in which it is impossible to distinguish art and film history. Levi does this, too. But his book does not take on monolithic modernists—Picasso, Duchamp, Breton—whom Wild chips apart and reassembles into a horizontal mosaic that mirrors the way in which she also reconstructs the cinematic viewing experience. Through meticulous archival research, she provides a counterpoint to Michael Fried's statements about cinema in his landmark 1967 essay on modernism in the face of post-war minimalism, "Art and Objecthood." Fried insists upon film's "automatic, guaranteed character of the refuge," its absorption without conviction, and is emphatic that "the cinema, even at its most experimental, is not a modernist art."⁴⁹ In defiance of Fried and the litany of modernist art history that has reified his rigid demarcations, Wild demonstrates that early twentieth-century cinema was not a unified, automatized, conflict-absorbing cocoon but a space that was subjected to constant redefinition through embodied encounters with audiences and critics both inside and outside the theater. Just as the presence of modern art was never fully sequestered in gallery spaces, cinema, too, infiltrated the urban landscape in the form of visual advertisements, the text of reviews printed in newspapers, and snippets of overheard conversation.

⁴⁹ Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," in *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 164. I was reminded of Fried's point about cinema in this essay while reading another essay by Noam Elcott, "In Search of Lost Space: Stan Douglas's Archaeology of Cinematic Darkness," *October* 139 (Winter 2012): 151-82.

To integrate the modernist histories of art and film is therefore not a matter of overlapping two extant stories and making their narrators interact. The intersection of the two stories is much more densely populated. The perspectives of the participant observers that I employ to mobilize handheld cinema in this study represent one method of moving through this space. I sometimes envision these participant observers as displaced *flâneurs*—or perhaps *flâneuses*—in the Baudelarian tradition, their kaleidoscopic eyes wandering along page gutters rather than sidewalk gutters.⁵⁰ Surely, this analogy has particular potency as the city of Paris serves as the location and dissemination for most of the publications central to handheld cinema.

Paris also seems to be the place that can never quite contain dada or surrealism, whether due to the diffusion of causes to other cities or forced relocation in response to geopolitical threats. The ebb and flow of dadaists and surrealists through Paris in particular is, of course, one of many similarities between the two movements. This constant flux of the Parisian avant-garde population during and between the two wars likewise manifests in the Franco-American handheld cinema that I concentrate upon in this project. In contrast, especially to the arresting photomontage of German dada, the interplay of image and text in the case studies that follow are as dependent upon rhythm and repetition as they are stark visual juxtaposition. The view from Paris is subtler, melding politics and aesthetics in ways that displaces overt propaganda into the realm of absurdist poetry with the flip of a page.

⁵⁰ I credit Jaleh Mansoor for sparking my thoughts on the possibility of the *flâneuse*'s existence during her lecture for the "Spectacle of Fascism" conference held at Simon Fraser University's Djavad Mowafaghian World Art Center, April 9, 2017.

The three chapters that follow progress chronologically. But the analyses that I present within each are also, like magazine pages or filmstrips, thin slices that gloss a history of handheld cinema through two movements that are often studied hand-in-hand. I hope in the future to have the occasion to say more about how the displaced medium functioned among other dada and surrealist factions as well as additional interwar avant-gardes. For now though, here is a glimpse into the prismatic fringe:

Chapter One aligns the engaged audiences for avant-garde films of the mid-1920s with the participant observers who encountered formative dadaist ephemera. Along with Tzara's collaborations (friendly or not) with Picabia on his journal *391* (1917-24) in the months immediately following the First World War, I contend that assemblages and montages printed in his title-shifting *Dada* publication foreshadow the juxtapositions of photography with typography that appear in less overtly dadaist ventures in the early 1920s. For example, the visual assemblages of the second series of the literary revue *Littérature* (1922-24) under André Breton's editorship and conceptual montages in Theo van Doesberg/I.K. Bonset's secretive pamphlet *Mécano* (1922-23) represent the reframing of dadaist tactics. Further repurposing emerges in the comparison of the self-directed puzzling that the pages of dada-adjacent periodicals required in order to be deciphered with the mental gymnastics that *Entr'acte* and *Ballet Mécanique* instigated when theater audiences first attempted to make sense of the two films in 1924. My tracing of spectatorship as production in this chapter both challenges conventional descriptions of dada as anti-materialist and introduces one way in which film interacts with printed media to illuminate a recurring and international dadaist practice.

In Chapter Two, I more pointedly analyze a singular framing technique prevalent in photography and filmmaking: the close-up. The oscillation between the disorienting and illuminating effects of magnification underlies the appeal of tightly-cropped images among the two core surrealist factions headquartered in Paris in the late 1920s. Overlapping implementations of the close-up in the André-Breton-allegiant *La Révolution Surréaliste* (1924-29) and Georges Bataille's *Documents* (1929-30/1) demonstrate that these two supposedly opposed surrealist camps in fact placed their audiences in similar positions. Evocations of empirical research like the visible mimicry of the scientific journal *La Nature*'s format in *La Révolution Surréaliste* and the extensive attempts at archeological and ethnographic cataloguing evident in *Documents* are indicative of the gravitas that Breton and Bataille wished to convey through their publications. The satirical function of the subversions of didacticism in both journals and implementation of zoological documentation as also found in Jean Painlevé's educational films suggest the potential for surrealism to repurpose unrelated materials as a form of social engagement. Yet, the contrast between the apparent straightforwardness of the cleanly printed texts in *La Révolution Surréaliste* and *Documents* and photomechanical images that often disorient the eye and mind in their extreme framing or lack of context finally keep the reader at a distance. Unlike dadaist assemblages and montages, the surrealist close-up beckons us nearer but ultimately keeps the inner workings of the movement in the dark—in Bataille's mucky *informe* or the ultra-exclusive nether regions of Breton's subconscious.

Chapter Three explores surrealism during World War II and in the years preceding the global conflict that would force major players to relocate abroad, in turn

fostering the fabrication of more portable, graspable objects that could travel with members of the movement. Interactive features such as the manipulable, amorphous shapes included in New York-based journal *VVV*, which was compiled by David Hare along with a cohort of European émigrés including Breton, Duchamp, and Max Ernst, are some of the most literal manifestations of a desire for tangibility that became a major component of surrealist practice in exile. The overtly tactile interactions that *VVV* encouraged, on one hand, refashion the sumptuous materiality of the magazine *Minotaure* (1933-39) that mirrored the allure of the surrealist object in Paris prior to the war. On the other hand, the journal's unmoored components are also evocative of the baffling and immersive installations that were on view as part of the *First Papers of Surrealism* exhibition in 1942 and staged subsequently at Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century Gallery. The fluctuation between controllability and mutability that plays across the pages of *VVV*, extending wartime surrealist exhibition practice into viewers' hands, is further visible in contemporaneous avant-garde filmmaking. My direct comparisons between the opportunities for manual manipulation, or tactility, that readers encounter in the journal *VVV* and the kinesthetic viewership that Maya Deren conjures through her mid-1940s filmmaking redraw a network of transatlantic Surrealism through the embodied participation of makers and viewers alike.

I now invite you to participate while this text introduces you to an archive that I hope you'll investigate further. Because the handheld cinema discussed in each case study does evolve with reference to earlier techniques and examples, it is advisable to read the chapters in order as they appear. But I have also organized each chapter so that it may stand alone for those who wish to choose their own adventure.

CHAPTER TWO

*DADA'S DISPLACED MEDIA:
ASSEMBLAGE AND MONTAGE FROM PAGE TO SCREEN*

“Dada mort ou Dada vivant? Mais Dada? Mot sans définition, à la garde robe plus luxueuse que celle de Frégoli, à la peau de caméléon, qui répond aussi bien au nom de détecteur qu’à celui de chou-de-Bruxelles ou de Balthazar; en tout cas sa vertu est d’exister, et on ne peut faire que ce mot n’existe.”

→ G. Ribemont-Dessaignes, “Dadaïsme et Isthme de Dada”⁵¹

The first in-person encounter between Tristan Tzara and Francis Picabia in Zurich during the first month of 1919 has been enshrined in dada lore from the moment it occurred. True to a dadaist tendency toward the antithetical, the most enduring outcome of this meeting of the minds was not a soirée or demonstration enacted on the Zurich streets but the production of a pair of journals that would launch dada away from its founding locale. The eighth issue of Picabia’s *391* and the double issue no. 4-5 of Tzara’s *Dada*, respectively published in February and May 1919, do not merely bear out the collaborative relationship between Picabia and Tzara that would end fitfully just two years later; they set the trajectory for what would become of dada in the 1920s.⁵²

I contend that dadaists made the pages of journals and pamphlets into spaces of undefined potential through transgressions that move beyond simple negation, taking my

⁵¹ G. Ribemont-Dessaignes, “Dadaïsme et Isthme de Dada,” *Mécano*, no. 3 (1922): unpaginated. In translation: “Dada dead or Dada alive? But Dada? Word without definition, with a wardrobe more luxurious than that of Frégoli, with chameleon skin, which responds as well to the name of detector as that of Brussels Sprouts or Balthazar; in any case, its virtue is to exist, and we cannot make that word exist.” Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

⁵² The analysis in this section refers to digital versions that, like their print counterparts, are unpaginated; see *391*, no. 8 (1919): <http://sdr.lib.uiowa.edu/dada/391/8/index.htm> and *Dada* 4-5 (1919): http://sdr.lib.uiowa.edu/dada/dada/4_5/index.htm

cue from the generative historicizing of dada that George Baker has modeled.⁵³ I would argue that the handheld cinema of wartime dada of which these journals are a part presaged avant-garde filmmaking in the mid-1920s. This text then tells the story of the notoriously ephemeral movement through materials that deserve more attention than they have received in art history. Movable inserts, an overall distaste for page numbers, and the frequent invention of pseudonyms make dadaist publications difficult to tame through formal analysis. But their changeability is also what allows these journals to propel dada beyond Zurich and into the 1920s through the displacement of media-based conventions and, eventually, the movement itself.

I am not suggesting that the dadaist handheld cinema analyzed in this chapter served as undifferentiated surrogates for performances or project films. The shift of dadaist cinema from the page to the screen marked by the premiers of two canonical avant-garde films in 1924, *Entr'acte* and *Ballet Mécanique*, in fact coincided with the movement's public disintegration. Indeed, along with the similarities between the two media, the differences between print and film constitute one of the many tensions that fuel this story. Beyond recording personal tensions amongst collaborators, dadaist handheld cinemas consistently frustrate us as we attempt to distinguish image from text, content from advertisement, and private from public while we navigate their pages. Consequently, as a way to hone such vast and varied material, the publications I discuss in the most detail here are those that foreground yet another tension: the tension between

⁵³ George Baker, "Entr'acte," *October*, no. 105 (Summer 2003): 165. In this issue of *October* dedicated to dada, Baker suggests the transgressive model as an alternative in addition to theorizing dada through the concepts of gift giving and formlessness. Baker, 159-60, also likens art history's approach to dada to that of "the history of photography—a field essentially without identity, without unity, actively working to erode the synthetic tools that art history holds central."

aesthetic media and modern life's everyday disorder—a disorder that also characterized cinematic spectatorship at the time. In acknowledging the existence of this final tension, some dadaists divulged their desires not to eliminate the art world through their transgressions but to displace the aesthetic conventions that prevented art and life from comingling.⁵⁴

Handheld cinema, too, allowed participant observers to transfigure dada and carry it with them far away from the wartime cabaret where it all began.⁵⁵ To highlight the ways in which the transcontinental movement of dadaists interacted with and even provoked formal displacements in their publications, my analysis in this chapter focuses on publications that conceive of the movement on an international scale. A shorthand for this global pivot, as evinced by the examples to come, lies in the standardization of film into narratives popularized by Hollywood studios. While the handheld cinema and projected cinema that concerns me here debuted in Switzerland, France, and Holland, American popular culture served as a vital reference point for the makers and participant observers of dadaist ephemera. Members of the movement, including Picabia and Duchamp, also spent enough time in New York so that a separate dadaist season overtook the city. Reports of these events traveled to Europe alongside news of the latest American entertainment trends by word of mouth, personal letters as well as through print media.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ German publications, most especially *Der Dada* (1919-20) and later *Merz* (1923-32), could be woven into this conversation, as well, but would require a more in-depth discussion of Weimar-era politics and photomontage techniques.

⁵⁵ I refer here, of course, to the Cabaret Voltaire performances that spawned dada in the winter of 1916. Hugo Ball, one of the co-initiators, edited a collection of materials culled from the performances, published under the title *Cabaret Voltaire* in May 1916.

⁵⁶ For more on this transcontinental phenomenon from the other side of the Atlantic, see Emily Hage, "The Magazine as Readymade: *New York Dada* and the Transgression of Genre and Gender Boundaries," *The Journal of Modern Periodical Studies* 3, no. 2 (December 2012): 175-97.

Reading dadaist periodicals as handheld cinema allows their demanding graphic design and content to merge with these tales of cultural and geopolitical displacement. After all, the cohabitation of art and life in dadaist practice was consistently deferred, as performances and collaborative ventures could never be sustained indefinitely. The durational yet contingent status of handheld cinema at least allows me to simulate this ephemerality and recover one episode from the untold history of film.

To return to Picabia and Tzara's storied encounter in Zurich, with five times as many pages as the former's *391*, the latter's *Anthologie Dada* (as issue 4-5 is entitled on its outer cover) is the more ambitious statement, and I will treat it as such here. Still, commonalities between the two publications provide clues to the innovations that the pair discussed during their simultaneous editing processes. Both magazines include diagrammatic imagery by Picabia within the first pages of their early 1919 issues.⁵⁷ The cover of *391* features a gridded *Construction Moléculaire* (fig. 2.1), with boxes containing the names of a transatlantic set of dada initiates (including Tzara and Picabia) and their publications (including *391* and *Dada*). Picabia's handwriting scripts the names and titles, which surround weightier, uneven marks that sketch a set of open wheels and diagonal lines that seem to defy the order of the grid.

Picabia's drawing of a *Mouvement Dada* mechanism (fig. 2.2), which appears on a red page immediately following the verso of *Anthologie Dada*'s inner cover similarly portrays a tenuous constellation of hand lettering and gestural lines. A clock depicted at top right and the fiery color of the page also suggest time sensitivity in the configuration

⁵⁷ See also Matthew S. Witkovsky, "Pen Pals," in *The Dada Seminars*, ed. Leah Dickerman with Matthew S. Witkovsky (National Gallery of Art/CASVA, 2005), 283-84.

that heightens that drama of the *Dada* image, as if on the verge of explosion.⁵⁸ Tzara, too, positions Picabia's *Mouvement Dada* on a page facing "Chronique Zurich," which mentions the artist pair in an account of dadaist activities in Switzerland. Complementing this immediacy and more texts that, in some cases, visually meld the contributions by the two fast friends, as in a page from *391* where two of their texts literally meet in the middle but require a rotation of the page to read (fig. 2.3), both publications also list rundowns of dadaist events from across the globe.

Picabia and Tzara each also make use of dyed papers, among other materials from visibly diverse sources. The entirety of *391* is printed in black on a rose-colored surface while the *Anthologie Dada* contains red, blue, orange, and magenta pages amongst off-white sections as well as text in red ink on its inner cover and in an advertisement for the 1918 dada manifesto. Both issues also alternate between two kinds of image reproductions: either printed in the same flat black ink as the text or on cut rectangles of a semi-gloss coated paper framed with white borders and pasted onto designated spaces to match captions printed on the same matte stock as the rest of the text. Unraveling this cut-and-paste method indeed brings us to the heart of the matter—to how and why *Anthologie Dada* will continue to matter in the half-decade following its publication.

Ever the tireless promoter of dada, Tzara envisioned the startling impact of *Anthologie Dada* while soliciting contributions from the network of far-flung sympathizers that he built by mail in the waning years of the Great War. In one such letter to Paul Dermée, the impresario describes his forthcoming "very thick and vibrant"

⁵⁸ For an in-depth analysis of how *Mouvement Dada* expresses Tzara's plan for the anthology, see Emily Hage, "The Magazine as Strategy: Tristan Tzara's *Dada* and the Seminal Role of Dada Art Journals in the Dada Movement," *The Journal of Modern Periodical Studies* 2, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2011): 41-44.

anthology as follows: “it must create everywhere an atmosphere of windstorm, dizziness, the timeless and the new, and must have the look of a great demonstration of new art in an outdoor circus. Each page must explode, either through deep and heavy seriousness, overwhelming farce, the enthusiasm of its principles, or the way in which it is printed.”⁵⁹ A review published in an April 1919 edition of the *Neue Züricher Zeitung* that describes *Dada*’s design as “irritating” attests to Tzara’s having already achieved a similar kind of desired provocation in *Dada 3*—quite the feat considering that he began his graphic exploits by necessity during the production of the December 1918 issue, when the anarchist who had typeset the first two issues was arrested.⁶⁰

I am no doubt far from the first to identify *Dada*’s third number as a turning point for the publication and, more generally, for the movement.⁶¹ In fact, the cover of *Dada 3* may have led to many first realizations of the “mouvement” dada’s existence (fig. 2.4). Along with initiatives to increase visibility through multilingual versions and raise funds through the sale of deluxe editions, Tzara’s insistence that *Dada*’s contents “must be abstract and have real worth” was already evident in the anthology’s predecessor.⁶² Not

⁵⁹ Tzara to Dermée, dated June 1918, quoted in translation in Witkovsky, 280.

⁶⁰ According to Debbie Lewer, “The Avant-Garde in Swiss Exile 1914-20,” in *Europe 1880-1940*, vol. 3, part 2 of *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, ed. Peter Booker et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1046; Tzara newly supervised the *Dada 3* typesetting due to the arrest of Julius Heuberger, anarchist who would go on to co-found the Communist party of Switzerland. Also see Lewer for the full April 1919 quotation in translation from Dr. K Keller, a likely pseudonym of Walter Serner, who writes of Tzara’s design that it had “the great disadvantage that it is quickly tiring, and through the need to rotate each page several times, it is irritating.”

⁶¹ See, for example, Hage, 39-40 and Lewer, 1047; for interpretations of Tzara’s impact as a graphic designer.

⁶² Tzara, March 1917, to Giuseppe Raimondi quoted in translation in Witkovsky, 277. Also see Lewer, 1049-51 for more *Anthologie Dada* publication details. The German version was printed in Zurich while the French version was printed Paris. The decision to print a limited/deluxe edition to sell for 20 francs was off-putting to Hans Richter. Richter felt that this common fundraising tactic pandered to wealthy collectors and insisted that his work not be included in the luxury version of the anthology.

only does *Dada 3* contain Tzara's "Manifeste Dada 1918," printed in columns occupying its first three pages, but the novice typesetter's lack of inhibition also allowed him to comingle longer texts, poems, aphorisms, advertisements, woodcuts, and other illustrations into a confounding *mélange* that would give the dadaists an aesthetic identity.

Moreover, a particularly arresting example of Tzara's printing-press abstractions combining graphics and fonts in *Dada 3* just so happens to invoke cinema in a manner that foreshadows *Anthologie Dada*'s contents and materials (fig. 2.5).⁶³ Unevenly inked biomorphic woodcuts by Hans Arp appear labeled in isolation in the corners and margins of pages. And in one almost full page of illustrations unique in the issue, bold sans-serif text near the bottom of the page insists that we are viewing "3 gravures sur bois par H. Arp," but repeated characteristics in the three amorphous shapes suggest instead a single metamorphosis of the same plant or creature down the vertical axis along which they are aligned. A second line of smaller text both confuses and rectifies the situation, explaining that Arp's woodcuts are for Tzara's "Cinéma synthétique du coeur abstract" or "Synthetic Cinema of the Abstract Heart." While a small inner circle may have known about the in-progress visual and poetic collaboration between these artists that would be published under a slightly revised title as a limited-edition book two years later, some readers may have even believed the two were collaborating on a film.⁶⁴ Whether or not one is aware that "Cinéma synthétique du coeur abstract" is a component of a work in progress, the

⁶³ For the digitization of the French version of *Dada*, no. 3 (December 1918) that I consulted, see <http://sdrc.lib.uiowa.edu/dada/dada/3/index.htm>

⁶⁴ *Cinéma calendrier du coeur abstrait, Maisons* was released in a limited edition of 150 printed on handmade paper in 1920 and was reviewed by Phillipe Soupault in *Littérature* NS no. 1 (March 1922): 22. The exact nature of the project that the title in *Dada 3* references remains a mystery, however.

durational interaction of word and image across the page engages the observer as a participant in a manner that marks this layout as an early example of dadaist handheld cinema.

To be sure, augmenting his invocation of cinematic motion in *Dada 3*, Tzara saturates *Anthologie Dada* with materials that foreground similar tensions between visual and verbal, content and advertisement, and production and consumption. As all of the handheld cinemas in this study, the journal also occupies a space in the overlap between the private and public spheres. But changes in precisely where these spheres intersect are particularly marked in dada's handheld cinema as conventions for cinematic spectatorship were less defined as they would be for the surrealists later in the 1920s. The dadaist movement occupied this same semi-private, interactive environment through conflicting strategies that ultimately demolished the fragile, liminal space of the page, propelling their efforts into the fully public space of projected cinema. The interactivity of *Anthologie Dada's* handheld cinema, however, allows each participant observer to choose a way of experiencing the journal, to maintain an individualized viewing experience.

The heterogeneity of dadaist handheld cinema invites potentially infinite interpretations. But the remainder of this chapter will focus on two frameworks— assemblage and montage—that would shape dadaist practice through its public unraveling in the mid-1920s. So, before following *Dada's* displacements of media beyond Zurich in 1919, further explanation of how I am defining assemblage and montage in this chapter is in order.

Concentrating upon a singular double-page spread from *Anthologie Dada* will first demonstrate the assemblage at play in Tzara's editing (fig. 2.6). From the outset, the very act of citing the correct portion of the anthology is convoluted due to the lack of page numbers and the existence of multiple versions of this journal, one omitting German entries to avoid censorship in France. Here, I've drawn my examples from the thirteenth and fourteenth pages of the so-called German version. The selection at hand is immediately followed by three pages of Walter Serner's "Letzte Lockerung Manifest" ("Last Relaxation/Loosening Manifesto"), whose reading had caused an uproar at the Kaufleuten Hall in Zurich on April 9, 1919.⁶⁵ The immediate visual impact of the spread is of disjunction between the left page printed on off-white fine-grained paper and the right page printed on orange. The relative amount of printed material included on each side is likewise a study in contrasts. To the right, two biomorphic woodcuts attributed sparsely by the blocky letters "H. Arp" recall the "Cinéma synthétique du coeur abstract" arrangement from *Dada* 3, though the relationship between figure and ground is hazier in the anthology. Not only has Arp included a head- or flower- or mitten-shaped expanse of inkless paper in the upper figure, but the orange hue of the page also peeks through both figures in a succession of vertical and horizontal lines, calling to mind the inking of the woodblock in the printing process. The more crowded left page also betrays aspects of its assemblage, from the varying solidity of the letters in the title of Raymond Radiguet's "À plusieurs voix" ("With Multiple Voices") to the semi-gloss paper upon which

⁶⁵ For one recent account of the evening, see Jed Rasula, "Last Loosening," in *Destruction Was My Beatrice: Dada and the Unmaking of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), 155-7.

Kandinsky's painting *La Tache Rouge* (*The Red Spot*) is reproduced, the unevenly cut image plate affixed to the matte paper upon which the text is printed.

Moreover, these marks—or perhaps mistakes—extend to obvious gaps in and around content so that readers must assemble not only formal but also conceptual connections. We are given access to a mere fragment of the longer text “Tohu” Radiguet’s “À plusieurs voix,” which appears composed for performance rather than reading, anyway.⁶⁶ Also, what good is a grayscale production of a painting by Kandinsky, for whom color was the basis of expression? And why bother asking *Der Sturm* for permission to produce his painting at all? Kandinsky wasn’t even a dadaist, even if his

⁶⁶ The monologue-like text can be translated into English thusly:

Sorry mister

mister it's a lady

all these people gathered along the grand square

they cry

ah I'm unhappy I only have one mouth

can kiss only one at a time

I'm blind why do I not have two eyes

like my father

I have two eyes they only serve me crying

I only have two eyes if I had four maybe

I would be better

one-eyed I would cry two times less

light travels only three hundred thousand kilometers per second

when it arrives in this country I will be long dead alas

I will not see clearly the light will be for my children

maybe if I kill my sister I would have her slice

of sun

S S S I A RRIVE

ph ph suddenly powerful lighthouse lighting

o my lady so ugly I thought she was beautiful she

ran away seeing me

quickly as cannons

that the light hurts the eyes

to

help he comes to assassinate us with what he wants us to believe

to illuminate what he is doing here it is necessary to kill him, he is not of our country;

work did pique the Zurich group's interest.⁶⁷ Maybe the whole spread is a multimedia extrapolation of the "Catastrophe" that Pierre Albert-Birot describes at the top right of the page. The poem's position requires the reader to rotate the page clockwise in order to read a hyperbolic account of what turns out to be a mundane metro train departure.⁶⁸ This turning of the page brings Arp's woodblock prints and their glowing orange support into peripheral view, adding a zip of color to the typographic cacophony of the page and further underscoring what the reproduction of Kandinsky's painting is missing. The apparently mismatched materials in this layout and others ask us to question the function of Tzara's *Anthologie Dada*, which is lacking the organization of a typical journal as well as the unified message of a movement's mouthpiece.

Montage, the second framework by which one might move through the anthology's pages, also requires an abandonment of our expectations as readers. But rather than embracing irreconcilable assemblages as the formal residue of Tzara's and other contributors' competing definitions of dada, we might also skim across the distinct material components of *Anthologie Dada* to concentrate on the montage they form when we activate pages in time. True, varied typographic and photomechanical elements displace the stability of page layouts such that they require assembly with each new encounter. But variance in these elements might also encourage the observer to create

⁶⁷ According to Rasula, 39-40, Hugo Ball did present a lecture on Kandinsky at the Galerie Dada in Zurich on April 7, 1917.

⁶⁸ Translated into English as follows:

The light was artificial the two feelings
 met like two trains
 Then the Indian soldiers passed over
 Then the earth started to roll again
 Then the metro went away

mental montages as a means to make content cohere without recourse to the otherwise overwhelming collection of material.

One way to make a mental montage of *Anthologie Dada* is to dwell not on the specificity of assorted contributions but to scan the surface of the page to find visual rhythms in the cacophony of voices. Consider another poem by Albert-Birot that appears on a red page near the end of the issue (fig. 2.7). The poem concerns *le triangle noir* (the black triangle) from the forthcoming *Poèmes à la Chair* (*Poems to the Flesh*); it is printed so that its lines form the shape of an upside-down pyramid at the top left of the layout, guiding the eye downward.⁶⁹ Below and to the right, an image by Raoul Hausmann is composed of geometric shapes of varying opacity and linear weight, including a triangle amongst ovals and rhombi. The rhythmic lines of Hausmann's image, which could almost be composed of fragments of musical notation, encourage the circulation of the gaze before transforming into an arrow that launches one back to Albert-Birot's poem such that the two elements reinforce one another.

⁶⁹ Translated into English, the poem reads as follows:

THE POET DID NOT PUT OBJECTS INTO HIS POEM WHILE
 ALL WAS DISAPPEARING WHEN THE BLACK TRIANGLE
 APPEARED THE LYRIC TRIANGLE THE CENTRAL
 TRIANGLE SINGING MADLY MAN'S HURRY AND
 THE BLACK TRIANGLE BLIND CENTRIPETAL
 DESIRE WITH FLEXIBLE HANDS BUT THE
 BLACK TRIANGLE IS DESIRE WITHOUT
 HANDS AND MAN HAS SERVED
 THIS FROZEN GOD AND THE
 BLACK TRIANGLE IS IN
 THE HANDS OF MAN
 AND IT'S IN EVERY
 MOMENT THE
 END OF AN
 EXPLOSIVE
 WORLD IN
 SPACE

The verso of the page features two more biomorphic woodcuts by Arp (fig. 2.8). Each is a variation on a theme that the reader has already encountered in the anthology and stands in organic juxtaposition to the angular forms of the previous red page and the facing white page. For instance, in a design decision that repeats the contrast between the previously discussed assemblage of Arp's woodcuts on an orange page opposing the arrangement of Kandinsky's plate and the "Catastrophe" and "A plusieurs voix" poems on a white page, the page across from these new Arp woodcuts on red ground is again white and filled with a busy arrangement. The repetition of this opposition creates a visual rhythm that provides a pattern for navigating the text-saturated page facing Arp's ever-minimally-presented woodcuts. Still, it remains difficult to distinguish between advertisements for *Littérature*, *TNT*, and poetry collections authored by Picabia and Tzara alongside other miscellaneous contributions that include a poem by Tzara, a Hausmann woodcut print, and a single italicized line announcing that Charlie Chaplin had joined the dada movement.⁷⁰ In bold red text at the center of the page, the reader is also instructed to "Lisez le Manifeste DADA 1918." Then, flipping to reveal the final interior page of *Anthologie Dada*, a final typographic assault greets us (fig. 2.9). Fresh from the confusion between content and advertisement on the previous page and considering that Tzara seems to have pulled every typeface available from the letterpress for this final poem (right down to the signature), it is difficult to make "Bilan" cohere or "Balance Sheet" into a single poetic image.⁷¹ The poet's own word "vivisection" printed

⁷⁰ The announcement that "Charlot Chaplin nous a annoncé son adhésion au Mouvement Dada" is completely fabricated.

⁷¹ In fact, an alternate version of "Bilan" appeared in *SIC* no. 49-50 (January 1918), 385. An English translation of the *SIC* "Bilan" appears in *Burning City: Poems of Metropolitan Modernity*, eds. Jed Rasula and Tim Conley (Notre Dame: Action Books, 2012), 510-11. Below is a translation of the *Anthologie Dada* version via Google Translate with my typesetting help:

in the bottom half of the *bilan* certainly underscores the kinesis of his words. Even lower on the page, although Tzara's byline is printed with a typographic flourish, the poem's continuation of the previous page's textual patterning allows it to flow seamlessly into a mental montage that resists such authorial demarcations.

With this lack of cohesion as a defining feature of both assemblage and montage, it is no wonder that the dada movement that Tzara attempted to orchestrate self-destructed within five years of the *Anthologie Dada*'s publication. But embracing the participatory, durational qualities of handheld cinema allows us to see how the dada persisted beyond its nominal lifespan as well as beyond the purview of those who thought of it as something other than absurdist, nihilistic sensationalism. We can also perceive

transfer, long crustacea blue regulation
 heals parody and touches DOWN
 slowly spread the size paradise DOWN
 stallion on the rails through hypocrisy
 on my teeth on your teeth I'm listening
 boring ecstasy drilled hammock hooks drills and vacuum insects (soda)
 numbers one wakes the navel (probe) finished the paragraph and the syringe for phosphorus

catafalque
 similar springs
 felt in the bones
 or tricolor corridor

Neighborhood iron bravery symnastic balustrade
 astronomical figures acclimatized
 ON A COUNTER TO ALL WINDS
 free
 Transcapacity halibut drug sacristy
 ADVANCE COLOR IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGE
 vivisection
 EX-CATAPLASM PLEASED TO LOVERS
 at 3 francs 50 or 3 hours. 20 invincible martyrologist
 your target and your eyelashes remind the birth of the wax scorpion
 syphilis whitening on the glacier benches
 pretty twilight DRUM
 auto gray autopsy cataract
 O prophetic necrologists of the Antarctic regions

assemblages and montage in projects by dadaists who, like Picabia, would come to denounce vehemently the movement and those who would form unofficial connections to one or more of its international manifestations in the years following World War I. Due to the fact that displacement on geopolitical and (anti)aesthetic terms sparked dada's emergence in the first place, it is impossible to pinpoint a single moment when medium-dislocating frameworks like assemblage and montage became more viable by avoiding direct dadaist references. As dada's lack of stable mission never provided a structure or central agent, the only way to remember the movement—or, perhaps more fittingly, moment—is to make a story from pieces of ephemera in a process that repeats the amassing of material that we find in dadaist handheld cinema.

I want to spend the remainder of this chapter doing just that. The sections that follow consider a set of related events and objects that point us toward 1924—the year during which two seminal avant-garde films made use of frameworks from dadaist handheld cinema in a moment when most of the movement's members had moved on. The visual analyses of printed and screened materials that follow together form a thinking through of what happened when the tables turned and dada itself became displaced by the media that made it.

The two versions of the eponymous *Dada* publication that Tzara produced after finally arriving in Paris in January 1920 do not merely differ from *Anthologie Dada* in their titles. The way in which each publication is labeled, one as *Bulletin Dada* and the other as *Dadaphone*, provides an appropriate entrée into determining its function. The need to make such a functional distinction between two issues of a supposedly serial

publication—two issues that were, moreover, released in sequential months in February and March 1920—suggests that Tzara’s relocation to join the Parisian avant-garde *in situ* encouraged him to favor the concerns of his new neighbors. Because the two Parisian numbers of the *Dada* series are enmeshed with the local activities of a more defined circle of contributors, *Bulletin Dada* and *Dadaphone* almost exclusively encourage us to read them as assemblages that parody established forms: the event program and the literary revue.⁷² Each issue depends upon publishing conventions and direct references to performance events that disallow the spatiotemporal escapism and mental plasticity that *Anthologie Dada*’s untethered contents essentially required.

Despite the usual typographic outbursts, *Bulletin Dada* actually seems to commence straightforwardly, its title emblazoned in bold red ink in a font size so large that the letters occupy the full top half of the page—no small feat considering the journal, which was available at three events in February 1920, is double the size of the anthology (fig. 2.10).⁷³ The location, time, and schedule of performances included in the “Programme de la Matinée du Mouvement Dada,” which was held during the Salon des Indépendants in February 1920, are legible alongside the issue’s price and Tzara’s contact information even though a diagonally oriented quotation from Picabia “le loustic” (joker/clown) overlaps much of the bottom half of the page. But the two interior pages, printed solely in black, quickly bring about questions as to the informational value of the

⁷² For digitized versions, see *Dada*, no. 6 *Bulletin Dada* (February 1920): <http://sdr.lib.uiowa.edu/dada/dada/6/index.htm>; and *Dada*, no. 7 *Dadaphone* (March 1920): <http://sdr.lib.uiowa.edu/dada/dada/7/index.htm>

⁷³ According to Michel Sanouillet and Anne Sanouillet, *Dada in Paris*, trans. Sharmila Ganguly (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), 548 n. 1; the three performances where *Bulletin Dada* was for sale took place at the Salon des Indépendants (Thursday, February 5), the Club du faubourg (Saturday, February 7), and the Université populaire du faubourg Saint-Antoine (Thursday, February 19).

bulletin (fig. 2.11). Confrontational and contradictory snippets of manifestos are arranged beside a mechanomorphic drawing by Picabia and across from a list of names that we are told belong to “some” of the presidents of dada. The list partially surrounds the first half of a section of supposed news items, aphorisms, and other brief statements from various voices, most of them part of Tzara’s Parisian circle. These bulletin items are divided into columns, which are further subdivided by various lines, bullet points, and frames that surround advertisements, including one for the to-be-released collaboration between Tzara and Arp, *Calendrier cinéma du coeur abstrait cirque, Maisons*. All is called into question yet again, though, in a phrase tossed off at the bottom of the page: “Les vrais dadas sont contre DADA” or “The true dadas are against DADA.”

By the time we reach the back page of *Bulletin Dada*, we are perhaps expecting some of its demands (fig. 2.12). To assemble a coherent message, however, necessitates a level of participation that surpasses the enthusiasm and concentration of the average reader—even more so for the readers who were also audience members at the Salon des Indépendants live performance on February 5, 1920 or the two subsequent events where the supposed program was available for purchase. Text in red type from Tzara, here identified as “sinistre farceur” (sinister jester), lists yet another definition of what it means to be dadaist, proclaiming that “tout le monde est directeur du mouvement DADA” (“everyone is a director of the dada movement”). The notices on this final page appear in the same columns and with similar graphic dividers as on the previous page, but the return of the red ink ushers in a new usage in the form of a labeled drawing of *La Femelle* by Picabia that requires a rotation of the page to make its text readable. A ninety-degree clockwise turn also allows one access to read bolded text by Tzara nestled in the

sketchy lines of Picabia's drawing, which might easily be mistaken for doodled graffiti. Like Picabia's illustration, Tzara's lines invoke a combination of risqué corporeal imagery and industrial vocabulary all bound together with a larger question about the existence of art. The contradictory messages and falsified notices here and throughout the *Bulletin Dada* can be read as an extension of the live event in their varied understandability. The *Bulletin* also may have distracted from the performance as it took place—all the better to blur the distinction between what was and was not dada.

The predominance of contributions attributed to Tzara and Picabia in *Bulletin Dada* reflects a deepening of their friendship in Paris in 1920, the former even rooming at the latter's lover's apartment for a time.⁷⁴ Picabia indeed released the twelfth issue of *391* just a month after Tzara's *Bulletin Dada* first appeared. Distributed at the Maison de L'Oeuvre Manifestation DADA on March 27, 1920, where Tzara's *Dadaphone* also made its debut, Picabia's twelfth *391* proclaimed its allegiance to dada as never before (fig. 2.13). Far from the visual simplicity of earlier covers featuring mechanical drawings with witty captions, the cover design for the March 1920 issue sequesters the journal's title at top left while placing Picabia's "Manifeste Dada" and a version of Duchamp's assisted readymade *L.H.O.O.Q.*, a "tableau dada," at center, as well as a poem by Éluard set sideways at the top of the page, with commentary by Picabia in an offset box below. Picabia continued to embrace aspects of Tzara's typographic schizophrenia and included more contributions from Parisian dadaists through the next three issues of *391*.

⁷⁴ For one discussion of these lodging arrangements, see Ruth Hemus, "Dada's Paris Season" in *Europe 1880-1940*, vol. 3, part 1 of *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, ed. Peter Booker et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 182.

Then, just a year later in July of 1921, Picabia denounced dada in a one-off journal *Le Pilhaou-Thibaou* as the result of a feud with Tzara, deserting him to join forces with Breton who had also turned against his former collaborator.⁷⁵ The once dynamic duo extended their public spat in print through the next several months, frequently in publications that disappeared after a single issue. Tzara's initial response is considered to be the last manifestation of his *Dada* journal series and continues the trend of differing noticeably from its predecessors. *Dada au grand air (Der Sängerkrieg in Tirol)* or *Dada in the Fresh Air (The Battle of the Singers in Tirol)* does, in one way, document an event of sorts and can thus be connected to both Parisian issues of *Dada*. The four-page, text-heavy pamphlet was conceived during a summer retreat to the Austrian mountains that Tzara took with Arp, Ernst, and Éluard along with their families, and then it was printed in Paris in September 1921.⁷⁶ Picabia then countered with *La Pomme de Pins (The Pine Cone)* in February 1922. And finally, while over a year would separate the release of Tzara's *Le Coeur à Barbe (The Bearded Heart)* in April 1922 and a soirée under the same title that took place in July 1923 at the Théâtre Michel, the overlap in participants suggests that we should see the performance as a continuation of its print predecessor. Tensions undoubtedly built in the intervening months such that the soirée erupted into a brawl.⁷⁷

The improvised self-destruction that took place at *Soirée du coeur à barbe* could have been a fitting last chapter for Parisian dada. Yet, dadaist tendencies in handheld

⁷⁵According to Hemus, 184-85, "This sixteen-side pamphlet [*Le Pilhaou-Thibaou*] was produced in a run of 500, half the number of the previous issue of 391, and offered at 5 francs, more than double the price; presumably a reflection on the cost of printing such a long publication."

⁷⁶ Ibid., 197. The price is listed as either one franc or two marks, reflecting the issue's Franco-German contents.

⁷⁷ For a full account of the eruption, see, Sanouillet, *Dada in Paris*, 278-82.

cinema would continue even after the movement displaced itself in part through the transfer of assemblage and montage from page to screen. Although Picabia continued to denounce dada and had divorced Breton by the time he published the last issue of *391* in October 1924, the “ex-dada” did not actually abandon the assemblage techniques he had developed as a dadaist; he instead continued the renaming game that he and Tzara had been playing for years. For *391*’s nineteenth and final number, Picabia introduced L’Instantanéisme described on the front cover as a “mouvement perpétuel” rather than a singular movement with a distinct goal (fig. 2.14). Beyond splashy lines of text on the issue’s front page (which also features an image of Rrose Sélavey in profile), Picabia mostly leaves the definition of L’Instantanéisme to the reader since an essay eviscerating his newest enemy Breton occupies almost the entire interior of the four-page text.⁷⁸ Still, the biggest clue as to what had become of dada assemblage by the mid-1920s comes in the form of an announcement for *Relâche* (*Performance Suspended/Relax*) that fills the entire bottom half of the back cover, serving as *391*’s parting remarks (fig. 2.15). In contrast to the destructive outcome of the *Soirée du coeur à barbe*, the performance that Picabia advertises as a “ballet instantanéiste” leads us toward a generative interpretation of dada’s demise in conversation with a critique of medium specificity that had been a part of Tzara’s *Dada* from the journal’s inception.

Relâche has been called a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, and the announcement of the performance that was set to take place on November 27 at the Théâtre des Champs Élysées, the month after the last issue of *391* was printed, attests to the multisensory

⁷⁸ For digitized version, see *391*, no. 19 (October 1924): <http://sdrc.lib.uiowa.edu/dada/391/19/index.htm>

spectacle that the audience would experience.⁷⁹ Directions to “Apportez des lunettes noires et de quoi vous boucher les oreilles” (“Bring sunglasses and ear plugs”) even follow a list of performance participants. Listed alongside Picabia in the advertisement are Erik Satie, who composed the score for both the dance and film portions of the production, as well as Jean Börlin, who choreographed the ballet as the director of the Ballet Suédois and appeared on screen. But the director of the filmic *Entr’acte* (*Intermission*), René Clair, is not printed alongside the description of “un entr’acte cinématographique,” although the filmmaker was instrumental in transforming Picabia’s slapdash screenplay into the film that is now known as an avant-garde film separate from its original screening context.⁸⁰

For the sake of clarity, synopses of the intermission film usually divide it into two parts.⁸¹ The first section superimposes shots of the Parisian skyline and streets with a mismatched collection of motifs: balloon-headed dolls; boxing gloves; a burning scalp; a ballet dancer filmed from below; a chess match between Man Ray and Duchamp (upended by a geyser of water); a paper boat floating through the sky; an upside down face; and, finally, an egg suspended in a jet of water before it multiplies. In the transitional scene, a huntsman played by Börlin shoots the egg before he is shot and presumably killed. The bright disc of the sun dilates and contracts on-screen before the funeral procession that structures the remainder of the film begins. The mourners begin to

⁷⁹ *Relâche* actually debuted a week later on December 4 because Jean Börlin felt ill on the scheduled premiere date.

⁸⁰ See Malcolm Turvey, “Dada, *Entr’acte*, and *Paris Qui Dort*,” in *The Filming of Modern Life: European Avant-Garde Film of the 1920s* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), 91; for one discussion of Clair’s creation of the funeral procession with very little guidance from Picabia’s scenario.

⁸¹ To view a digitized version of the film, visit <https://vimeo.com/34808744>

skip in slow motion behind the hearse, mimicking the pace of the camel that pulls the carriage. But after a turn about the Luna Park amusement park grounds, the carriage breaks free from the group and picks speed throughout most of the rest of *Entr'acte*. The speeding wheels are intercut with shots of cyclists and then the undulating track of a rollercoaster, hurtling more and more out of control until finally the coffin is thrown from the hearse only to reveal that its corpse is still alive. Börlin's revived body displays even more magical ability before the concluding "FIN" text appears, only to be ripped through in a trick ending that upsets expectations yet again.

Clair has certainly been given due credit in film criticism and scholarship that point to his technically masterful parody of cinematic tropes already in place in the first decades of the medium's history. The filmmaker drew upon the circumstances of *Entr'acte*'s screening in the middle of a live act to at once rebel against narrative conventions that had come to dominate interwar French impressionist film and to recall a prewar era when cinema screenings were often sideshow acts.⁸² A bearded lady appears onscreen amongst shots that slow, quicken, and reverse time through a simple rewinding trick in use since the Lumière brothers found an ingenious way to stretch the running time of their actuality clips. Clair also replicates the on-screen magic acts of Georges Méliès with the revived corpse who makes a grand entrance near the end of *Entr'acte* and then vanishes his mourners one by one. As well, the film's mad chase scene and/or funeral procession puts Clair's parallel editing in conversation with the popular work of

⁸² Ted Perry, "Entr'acte as Real Illusion," in *Masterpieces of Modernist Cinema*, ed. Ted Perry (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 73-74.

Mack Sennett from a decade earlier and with his Abel Gance's contemporary treatment of a railway sequence in *La Roué* (*The Wheel*, 1922).⁸³

Entr'acte's parody of film form is still more palpable, however, when it rejoins *Relâche* to become part of a total work of art. In a reversal of Wagner's utopian conception of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, diverse media come together in *Relâche* not to uphold one another by masking weaknesses with strengths but to upend categorical distinctions through an assemblage where the parts seem to come together at random. By the time the audience had viewed the bearded dancer in *Entr'acte* amidst an assemblage of images so disparate that Malcolm Turvey insists upon the sequence as a rare example of Walter Benjamin's definition of modernized distraction, they had already witnessed the first act of a ballet equally as defiant.⁸⁴ What's more, before the approximately seventeen-minute *Entr'acte* and the first act of the ballet, *Relâche*'s cinematic prologue surely caught the audience off guard. The minute-or-so-long clip filmed on the roof of the Théâtre des Champs Élysées features Satie and Picabia jumping in acrobatic slow motion before pointing the barrel of a cannon directly outward and firing. From the outset then, the prologue sets the precedent for a film of any temporal duration to interrupt balletic action.

Clair also frames moving bodies on-screen in ways that confuse the distinction between *Relâche*'s two acts and its *Entr'acte*. Parodies of film techniques like parallel editing, point of view shots, and double-exposed transitions also serve to translate on

⁸³ For more on Sennett, see Perry, 74-75; and Noël Carroll, "Entr'acte, Paris, and Dada," in *Interpreting the Moving Image* (Cambridge UP, 1998), 28. Turvey, 91-95, also insists that Clair is trying to one-up Gance by way of a quotation from Richard Abel.

⁸⁴ Turvey, 86. Turvey pulls Benjamin's definition from his essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproducibility": "No sooner has [the viewer's] eye grasped a *scene* than it is already changed."

screen the questions that Ballet Suédois performances began to ask on stage. Does the filming of a dancer from below serve only to dismantle completely the conventions of its art form, tied to the constraints of the proscenium frame? Or does this angle open to a set of possibilities that might generate new balletic forms? And similarly, when seen following an act of dancing that defies sartorial convention, how do the moving figures costumed in tutus in *Entr'acte* differ from those who wear street clothes? To make such a distinction became even more difficult by the end of the production, when Picabia and Satie appeared on stage in the flesh.

Relâche's public assemblage of fragmented elements, pieced together from varied sources, does not require the same participation and insider knowledge as the various incarnations of Tzara's *Dada* or Picabia's *391*. Yet, as an assemblage, *Relâche* does depend upon the cultural context from a range of references to popular entertainment—especially nascent cinematic forms—for its parodic antics to connect with its audience. But without the constraints of the written or spoken word as a barrier to entry, *Relâche* inflates the role of images as interrupters that emerged in dadaist handheld cinema. This shift from multisensory to more forthrightly optical concerns is symptomatic of a wider aesthetic turn as dadaists became surrealists in mid-1920s Paris in the same moment when cinematic conventions solidified in the interwar years.

Keeping *Relâche* in mind as a spectacular derivation of the dadaist assemblage technique, my concept of handheld cinema can reveal more subtle utilizations of the same strategy that aesthetically foretell what became of dada in the interwar period. Founded by Breton, Louis Aragon, and Philippe Soupault, *Littérature*'s first issue was printed in

March 1919, just a month after the *Anthologie Dada* and the Zurich number of 391 made their debuts. Despite the editors' decision to name *Littérature* after a Paul Verlaine quotation in which the poet designates literature as what remains after music—as part of “all the rest”—the journal's founders concentrated almost exclusively on prose and poetry to the exclusion of visual experimentation in the publication's first series.⁸⁵ Even the issue published at the height of Tzara's temporary dadaist takeover of Paris in May 1920 conforms the twenty-three dada manifestos printed therein to an unflustered typographic standard.

In fact, the *Littérature* group did not begin to incorporate visual assemblage in the vein of Tzara's *Anthologie Dada* until after they had denounced the movement in search of something that was to become surrealism. Even before Breton took sole editorship, beginning with the fourth issue of *Littérature's Nouvelle Série* (*New Series* or, here, *NS*), a reproduction of Giorgio de Chirico's *The Child's Brain* signaled the Frenchman's affinity for the metaphysical painter (fig. 2.16). The de Chirico image in the new series' first issue also initiates the convention of including *hors-texte* imagery in *Littérature*, which would cease publication in 1924 just before Breton unveiled the *First Surrealist Manifesto*.⁸⁶ These images are listed in each issue's table of contents and often captioned but are otherwise unexplained by neighboring texts. Moreover, there are never more than

⁸⁵ For a full account of the revue's genesis, see, Raymond Spiteri, “What Can the Surrealists Do?” in *Europe 1880-1940*, vol. 3, part 1 of *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, ed. Peter Booker et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 220-21. Though the idea for journal dates to 1917, Henry Cluquennois initiated the project in practice in February 1919 by offering the editors the helm of a “small literary review, *Les Jeune Lettres*.” After the editors rejected the titles *Le Nouveau Monde* because it was already taken and *Carte Blanche* because it was too boring, Paul Valéry suggested the title *Littérature*.

⁸⁶ For a recent discussion of photography in *Littérature*, see Clément Chéroux, “*Littérature*, ou la Photographie hors le texte,” in *Picabia, Man Ray et la revue Littérature*, ed. Christian Briend and Clément Chéroux (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 2014), 27-37.

two *hors-texte* images per issue so that one is consistently taken aback when, having not encountered such a visual entity since the cover, a full-page picture materializes amongst pages of typed text.

Littérature's most frequent *hors-texte* contributor was Man Ray, whose photographs and rayographs were included in four of the thirteen *NS* issues. Along with Man Ray's photography, *hors-texte* images include drawings by Robert Desnos and Max Ernst and a color-plate geometric configuration by frequent cover artist Picabia entitled *Phosphate* in the November 1922 issue (fig. 2.17). Some images like Picabia's *Phosphate* and the version of Man Ray's *Dust Breeding* in the *Rose Sélavy* issue are oriented in such a way as to encourage an interactive, physical rotation of the page, but even more of the *hors-texte* images are so distinguished from *Littérature*'s written content that they are printed on an entirely different paper stock.⁸⁷ This semi-gloss coated paper allows for a tonal variation in the photomechanical reproductions that would not have been achievable on the uncoated matte paper used for text. The blank versos of these images also further separate them from surrounding content.

While *Littérature*'s overall design is more understated than the multicolored pages of *Anthologie Dada*, the *hors-texte* images in the new series incorporate dadaist assemblage techniques. True, there are no off-kilter cuts framing the full-page illustrations nor did Breton and his collaborators compile multiple versions of their journal to avoid censorship. But the use of unmoored images in a primarily literary publication demonstrates the malleability of the dadaist mode. There is even a double-

⁸⁷ What's more, while *Phosphate* is completely detached from the staple-bound pages in the copy of *Littérature* no. 6 *NS* (1922) archived at the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, the image appears as if part of a sequence of pages as uploaded in the Digital Dada Library: sdr.lib.uiowa.edu/dada/litterature/6ns/index.htm

page typographic constellation mapping the shining stars of the poetic universe in the penultimate double issue of *Littérature* that updates the diagrams that Tzara and Picabia had printed four years prior in Zurich.⁸⁸

Still, returning to an issue of *Dada*'s run that I have neglected to this point, March 1920's *Dadaphone*, it is tempting to say that dada's displacement into the Parisian avant-garde scene was a path that Tzara himself cleared. For *Dadaphone* features not only prose and poetry composed by the *Littérature* founders but also portraits of Breton, Aragon and Soupault. Taken together with the faces of Céline Arnauld, Dermée, Éluard, and Ribemont-Dessignes along with those of Tzara and Picabia, the photographic illustrations placed periodically in narrower secondary columns at the right of each page assemble a group snapshot of Parisian dada before it succumbed. Other than the rose-colored insert advertising the Manifestation Dada to take place on March 27, which incorporates Picabia drawings in a graffiti-like fashion similar to the back page of *Bulletin Dada* (fig. 2.18), *Dadaphone* is a more graphically conservative affair than its predecessors. Its dual columns and neat linear dividers do not cause the confusion between visual and textual as do Tzara's earlier typographic antics. One might mistake *Dadaphone* for a literary revue, perhaps even misidentifying the issue as part of *Littérature*'s first series, which was being published at the same time. The tension between *Dadaphone*'s form and its assembled content becomes apparent through reading rather than through engaged looking. The issue's assemblage thus moves further into the realm of conceptual parody and simultaneously, as *Littérature* would, toward surrealism. Considering that the new series of *Littérature* essentially began with the outbreak of

⁸⁸ See *Littérature*, no. 11/12 NS (1923): 24-25.
<http://sdrc.lib.uiowa.edu/dada/litterature/11ns/pages/24.htm>

Picabia and Tzara's public feud and ended with *Relâche*'s total transformation of dadaist assemblage into spectacle, it is possible to view the revue as an intermediary that allowed for dada to be categorized and subsequently historicized by the cinematic medium and surrealist movement.

While Tzara (un)settled amongst the Parisian intelligentsia, the international scope of the movement to which *Anthologie Dada* attested in 1919 continued to expand as far away as the other side of the globe. In contrast to attempts to stake out official dadaist territory, the widespread dissemination and constant redefinition of the term dada proved its unruliness. Accordingly, the potential for dadaist ephemera to shape-shift to match individual motivations, regardless of whether these expectations aligned with conventional aesthetic categories, eventually extended beyond Tzara's *Anthologie Dada* to become a call to action.

An extreme case of dadaist displacement in the early 1920s involves an artist who was simultaneously a core participant in a major modernist design movement. While the name Theo van Doesburg became synonymous with the title of the journal *De Stijl* that he founded along with a cadre of like-minded Dutchmen in 1917 and edited until his death in 1931, almost no one knew that he developed a pseudonym under which to pursue dada.⁸⁹ I.K. Bonset contributed as the "gérant littéraire" (literary manager) of the short-lived but high-concept publication, *Mécano*, which also named van Doesburg himself amongst its staff as "mécanicien plastique" (plastic mechanic).

⁸⁹ Sascha Bru, "'The Will to Style': The Dutch Contribution to the Avant-Garde," in *Europe 1880-1940*, vol. 3, part 1 of *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, ed. Peter Booker et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 291. Aldo Camini, the anti-philosopher, was another of van Doesburg's alter egos.

While Sascha Bru is not wrong to identify as “Germanic” *Mécano*’s fusions of otherwise disjunctive works under the umbrella of dada, Bonset/van Doesburg’s machine aesthetics lack the politically charged precision, for example, of Hannah Höch’s photomontages coming out of Berlin.⁹⁰ The solicitation by mail that van Doesburg’s secret identity required instead exempted him from national affairs in a way that was never as fully realized by international constructivist idealizations of technological utopias later in the 1920s.⁹¹ Thus, though its circulation only numbered in the hundreds, *Mécano* exemplifies how the dadaist montages of *Anthologie Dada* continued to manifest in avant-garde periodicals in the absence of Tzara’s editorial leadership. This is not to say that Tzara was absent from *Mécano*’s production. He, Picabia, and other members of the Parisian scene all contributed to its five issues along with Hausmann, Schwitters, and Ernst. Moreover, van Doesburg is said to have thought of the idea for the publication when he met Tzara in person.⁹²

The title *Mécano*, like one definition of dada itself, originates from the name of a toy, but for his venture, van Doesburg chose the name of an erector set rather than a hobbyhorse.⁹³ The format of the publication follows suit, most especially in its first three issues, which were all printed in 1922. It is actually difficult to classify these first three

⁹⁰ Bru, 308. According to Bru, *Mécano* also served as an outlet for van Doesburg to critique the “religious ‘Meister’ of the prestigious Bauhaus, which he could not express so explicitly in the columns of *De Stijl*.”

⁹¹ Witkovsky, 275-6. In his chapter about dada “Pen Pals,” Witkovsky emphasizes that van Doesburg’s Bonset persona was both made possible through letter-writing distance and also allowed *Mécano* to be more inclusive through the solicitation of varied contributors by mail.

⁹² See Adrian Sudhalter, “How to Make a Dada Anthology,” in *Dadaglobe Reconstructed*, exh. cat. (Zurich: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2016), 61; for Van Doesburg’s account of the meeting with Tzara that inspired *Mécano*, which included materials from Tzara’s unfinished *Dadaglobe* anthology project.

⁹³ Bru, 308.

issues as journals, magazines or literary revues. Each of the three consists of a single sheet of paper that folds into eight parts, like a pamphlet or, perhaps more perplexingly, a map. Each of the three numbers is also distinguished by a primary color: blue, yellow, or red.⁹⁴ Both the dyed sides and un-dyed off-white sides (32 by 50 cm in total and now betraying the thinness of their coated stock) are printed with some contributions expanding into multiple rectangles; others are relegated to a single one-eighth-sized panels. Occupying a single panel, *Mécano*'s masthead and distribution information for The Hague and Paris always appear on the off-white background, surrounding a logo of either a cog or a rotary saw.

Either way, the logo serves as a helpful hint as to how to read and view *Mécano* once unfolded. While it is possible to see some of the panels when folded, a complete flattening of the sheet provides the readiest access. Images and texts are all printed with the same black ink, the various paper colors filling negative space. Taking the third Rot/Red/Rouge/Rood number as an example, even a cursory interaction with the format conveys the number of subtle rotations and translations required to make a mental montage of *Mécano*. Let us begin with the off-white side (fig. 2.19). The title panel, in this case appended with the number three, contains a loop of letters spelling *Mécano* and identifying text that frames the rectangle. The framing lines are oriented such that one of the four lines becomes legible through ninety-degree rotations of the sheet and is thus the only panel viewable from all four positions. All other panels are most clearly viewed from a single orientation; so, the participant observer turns the sheet, panels come in and

⁹⁴ The versions I examined at the BnF in Paris in June 2016 showed clear signs of decomposition, with faded pigment and separation along the folds, indicating that these were not objects made to last—even in an archive.

out of focus. Moving to Ribemont-Dessaigues's meditation on the chameleon-like nature of dada in his text "Dadaism et Isthme de Dada," which is legible to the far right, and then rotating the page ninety degrees clockwise (after pausing to notice the manicure pointing to the writer's name), *Mécano* fluidly performs the dadaist metamorphosis that the text describes. Ribemont-Dessaigues's French prose exits from view while a single panel comes into focus, containing a short poem entitled "Bed-Bites" by "Rosie Spots" paired with an image by Man Ray incorporating curved forms and text. Another clockwise turn reveals, left of center, a panel with a "Photo-Mechanische Composite" by Ernst along with an explanatory sentence in Dutch; then, at top right, Tzara's text "Dada Pour Tous" ("Dada for All") joined by a small illustration of a bird transporting a letter; and, below to the right, Bonset's poem, "Madapolan," with an accompanying mechanomorphic drawing, "Sousmarin de la Rue Scribe" ("Scribe Street Submarine"), by S. Charchoune. Another clockwise rotation exposes not just a reproduction of George Vantongerloo's *Plastiek* but also that we have neglected a panel during our first rotation. We can quickly rectify the situation with a final spin back to our initial position to read Péret's poem "L'enfant au ventre blond" ("Blond-Bellied Child").

Having only experienced fragments of the dyed side, a flip of the sheet from off-white to red (now faded to a hue closer to coral or salmon) causes an optical shockwave (fig. 2.20). But the red side is accessible if we continue the montage rhythm of the reverse, with the addition of more typographic trickery as to require still more pliable sensitivity on the part of the observer. Poetry from Schwitters, Arp, and Ribemont-Dessaigues is printed alongside reproductions of Hausmann's *Tatlin lebt zu Hause* (*Tatlin Lives at Home*) photomontage and a Man Ray aerograph entitled *Ballet*. The red side also

features not one but two “chronicle” sections. Bonset’s “Chronique Scandaleuse des Pays-Plats” (“Scandalous Chronicle of the Flat-Countries”) is a list of names from the arts and literary scene in Holland—himself/van Doesburg included—accompanied by insults written mostly in French but also in inscrutable characters. The repeated phrase “cottage stile” underlines the list and faces toward the right in juxtaposition with the rest of the text, apparently mocking *De Stijl*, van Doesburg’s more prominent enterprise. When legibly oriented, another typographic element to the left of the “Chronique Scandaleuse” also further complicates the meaning of the list. Two lines of text and letterpress manicules printed at the margin oppose one another in direction and meaning so that, depending upon the observer’s position relative to the page, the names on the list could belong to “hommes célèbres” (famous men) or “imbéciles sentimentales” (sentimental idiots). The unsigned “Chroniek-Mécano” or “Cablogramme” recounts the September 1922 International Congress of Constructivists and Dadaists in Weimar in equally erratic fashion. Amid multiple language changes and frequent mentions of copious imbibing, there are references to events that are reported to have occurred elsewhere, such as Tzara’s famous imagining of dada as a “virgin microbe.” But the short items divided by bold dashes are far from a comprehensive summary of events and read more as a sensory diary.

This single panel that chronicles a perceptual, non-linear journey through the Weimar Congress is a distillation of how *Mécano* performs overall as a publication. The unfamiliar format jumpstarts an unfixing of categories that was a common pursuit of dada and constructivism when the project was printed. Van Doesburg not only toys with his own persona in the creation of Bonset but also invites each person who picks up a copy

of *Mécano* to play with the patchwork that makes up his costume. It is almost as if he shook free the ordered grids and primary colors of *De Stijl* compositions, unleashed them into the wider world of forms, and trusted in the dadaist chance the viewer could serve as this handheld cinema's *auteur*. Certainly, *Mécano*'s flattened, rotatable surface requires us to be more advanced mental *monteurs* than the pages of *Anthologie Dada*.

Following the Red Number, however, Bonset/van Doesburg readopted the booklet format for the final double issue of *Mécano*, no. 4-5 or White/Blanc/Wit/Weiß printed in 1923. But this return to the staple-bound page did not completely eliminate the directional experimentation of the first three issues. For example, just inside the cover with the familiar *Mécano* logo joined by a mecanomorph drawing by Hausmann (fig. 2.21), a poem by Malcolm Cowley perched sideways (beneath a drawing advertising the issue by T. Donas) is unreadable without a counterclockwise rotation of the page (fig. 2.22). Further on in the issue, an entire double-page spread dedicated to a typed version of Schwitters's "Sonate" sound poem while reproduction of one of his *Merz* accumulations is oriented horizontally to the right until we upend it to read a caption with his name (fig. 2.23). As in the blue, yellow, and red numbers, images and texts in the white number all appear on the same surface, creating continuity between media instead of the disruptions that accompanied the differing paper types in *Anthologie Dada*. We therefore more readily experience the connections between pictures and words as a flux rather than an abrupt cut-and-paste affair.

Like the dadaist assemblage that became a media-defying spectacle in *Relâche*, the calls to act as *monteurs* that *Mécano*'s handheld cinema conveyed to individual

participant observers became mass messages to *Ballet Mécanique*'s collective film audience. Descriptions of the 1924 film have remained hazy as scholars struggle to identify the person responsible for its concept. Fernand Léger, Dudley Murphy, and Man Ray frequently emerge in conversations that attempt, often with an early admission of failure, to identify *Ballet Mécanique*'s author. Ezra Pound and George Antheil also appear in production histories, usually recognized as contributors rather than as initiators of a cause that had come to pique their interests.⁹⁵ Unlike *Relâche*, *Ballet Mécanique*'s premiere date has also been the subject of debate due to the parting of ways between Antheil and the rest of the crew before the completion of the project, resulting in a musical component of the production that varies in duration from its filmic counterpart.⁹⁶ These disagreements notwithstanding, records (including a review in *Der Sturm*) do suggest that a version of *Ballet Mécanique* was part of the opening festivities for the Internationale Ausstellung für Theatertechnik on September 24, 1924, an exhibition organized by designer Friedrich Kiesler.⁹⁷

Formal analyses often divide the film into seven sections although almost all acknowledge the fact that these divisions are designed to aid the reader rather than replicate the way in which one perceives *Ballet Mécanique* during a screening. We can

⁹⁵ Even though Antheil broke with the rest of the production team before the completing the film's score, thematic and aesthetic connections remain between the film and the score. See Carol J. Oja, "Ballet Mécanique and International Modernist Networks," in *Making Music Modern: New York in the 1920s* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 71-94.

⁹⁶ Although the technological impossibility of coordinating sixteen player pianos as Antheil desired prevented the joining of the original score with its filmic counterpart until a performance at the University of Massachusetts, Lowell in November of 1999, the first combined production of *Ballet Mécanique*, utilizing a revised score, occurred much earlier on October 18, 1935, at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

⁹⁷ Ingenieur B.F. Dolbin, "Die internationale Ausstellung neuer Theatertechnik in Wien, Nachworte" *Der Sturm* 16, no. 7-8 (July-August 1925): 97-100. See also, the "Chronology" in Dieter Bogner and Frederick Kiesler, *Friedrich Kiesler, 1890-1965: Inside the Endless House*, exh. cat. (Valencia: IVAM Centre Julio Gonzalez, 1997), 177.

trace this system back to Léger, who produced a diagram of *Ballet Mécanique*'s structure in July of 1924 that was then published with revisions later that year in Kiesler's *Internationale Ausstellung neuer Theatertechnik, Katalog, Programm, Almanach* (fig. 2.24).⁹⁸ The painter turned abruptly to film when he envisioned *Ballet Mécanique*, though reproductions of several painted works do appear in cuts of the film (fig. 2.25). As dysfunctional as it may seem to you or me after viewing the film from our own perspectives, Léger's diagram maps a rhythmic montage not unlike the mental montage that I have identified as a framework for dadaist handheld cinema. According to Léger, seven vertical graph bars of increasing height represent the continuity of each section of the film. Each section is unified through "the similarity of clusters of object-images [that] are visually alike or of the same material" and the acceleration of the film's tempo "from slow motion to extreme speed."⁹⁹ Waved lines, which shift between Léger's preliminary sketch and the published diagram, represent "horizontal penetrations" designed to add "variety" to each section through bisections of "visually similar forms" tinted with color.¹⁰⁰ Accepting the discrepancy between Léger's explanation and the prints of the film that contain no tinted film stock nor hand-tinted sections, it is still quite difficult to apply his schematic to the film itself, as the disparity between object groups outlined in the graph is more subtle than the rectangles' unbroken outlines might suggest.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Standish D. Lawder, *The Cubist Cinema* (New York: New York University Press, 1975), 131-33.

⁹⁹ Fernand Léger, July 1924, quoted in Lawder, *Cubist Cinema*, 131.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ For example, the version in the Museum of Modern Art's collection is printed in black and white while the EYE Film Instituut Nederlands' copy is tinted. Also see David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, "An Example of Abstract Form: *Ballet mécanique*," in *Film Art: an Introduction*, 8th ed. (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2008), 359; for a discussion of the subtle repetition of motifs throughout the film.

Still, let us pause for now to consider the film with reference to the graph's trajectory.¹⁰² Léger's assertion that its accelerating formation will lead to "the point where the eye and the mind of the spectator 'can't take it anymore'" will allow us to understand how *Ballet Mécanique* depends upon the viewer's sensation of rhythmic montage as much as *Mécano* does.¹⁰³ After a brief textual introduction in French as well as a greeting from Léger's animated Charlot figure, the film opens in a garden scene in which a woman with softly waved hair wearing a floral dress turns her head gradually from side to side, slowly opening and closing her eyes as she swings back and forth. The woman's swinging movement – her momentum undulating toward and then away from us – is organic and fluid, almost comforting. Then suddenly, a barrage of images interrupts the scene in quick succession: a circular hat; three bottles; and a flat triangle (in white or hand-tinted blue, depending on the cut, and sometimes also a greyscale reproduction of one of Léger's paintings) all pass by in a flash before we return to the hat for a longer second glance. Rouged lips and bright teeth—which likely belong to another woman but could also be the woman on the swing's mouth transformed—appear on the bottom of the screen and alternately smile and pout as the rest of their owner's face remains hidden in shadow. The hat again appears amidst this repetitive change in expression along with a row of circular mechanisms spinning in unison and a reflective circular sphere that moves toward and then away from the camera in a round orbit. Next, the woman on the swing returns, but this time she looks directly at us from a sequence that has been filmed from above and then flipped upside down so that she appears to be

¹⁰² My analysis can be read in reference to a digitized version of the film accompanied by Antheil's score: <https://vimeo.com/120678175>.

¹⁰³ Lawder, *Cubist Cinema*, 131.

moving in a space in which the laws of gravity have been manipulated. Finally, this first section returns us to the mirrored globe, which now replicates the undulation of the woman on the swing from the beginning of the film and allows us to see the filmmaker himself and a companion in its reflection. The cyclical repetition of this initial sequence, overtly intersected by the quick succession of shapes, or “horizontal penetrations,” after the swing, demonstrates the rhythmic motion that connects the biological and manufactured subjects of this section and seems to adhere to Léger’s diagram.¹⁰⁴ But, as we shall see, supposedly distinct sections become more muddled later in the film.

The next section introduces the kaleidoscopic division of the screen that will occur frequently throughout the remainder of *Ballet Mécanique*. This abstraction of our view through fragmentation marks the moment when Léger’s diagram becomes suspect. As *Ballet Mécanique* clips along, we see multiple objects through this lens—animate and inanimate, recognizable and unidentifiable—including human faces, Christmas decorations, a gelatin mold, and a parrot. As household objects and industrial mechanisms appear and reappear at seemingly random intervals, often rearranging themselves through series of staccato cuts, the kaleidoscopic fragmentation first introduced in the second section is interrupted with additional modes of abstraction. For example, a line of either appropriated or simulated newspaper text, “ON A VOLÉ UN COLLIER DE PERLES DE 5 MILLIONS,” visually disintegrates in one sequence. The statement breaks into sections, flips in reverse and is interrupted by characters and objects, rounded 0s and a horse collar, calling one’s attention to language’s dependence upon context to convey meaning. Along with rapid-fire barrages of white (or blue or

¹⁰⁴ Lawder, *Cubist Cinema*, 135; also notes this correspondence between film and diagram.

yellow or red or green) shapes and dancing utensils similar to those of the previously discussed “horizontal penetrations,” the synchronization of human and mechanical bodies continues throughout *Ballet Mécanique*, perhaps most jarringly in the film’s well-known staircase sequence. Here, we see the repeated rotation of a metallic mechanism juxtaposed with footage of a woman climbing a set of stone stairs that loops back to the beginning of her ascent each time she reaches her goal at the top. The same smiling lips that appear in the first section of the film reappear amidst this unnerving repetition; this expression seems to mock us, to acknowledge our shock. The futility of human and industrial production thus appears before us on the screen through the displacement of work itself via cinematic montage.

In light of this unrelenting implementation of rhythmic montage, it is unsurprising that filmmaker and theorist Sergei Eisenstein’s name appears in the French passage that introduces *Ballet Mécanique*. Indeed, we are told that we are set to view “ce film dont S.M. Eisenstein a dit qu’il était un des rare chefs-d’oeuvres du cinéma” (“a film that S.M. Eisenstein said was one of the rare masterpieces of cinema”) before Charlot makes his first appearance. This reference to a filmmaker famous for championing a montage technique of colliding fragments designed to shock the spectator is fitting and perhaps preparatory for viewers in-the-know, providing a prompt for them to become *monteurs*.

Surely, like the unwitting Charlot and Eisenstein, Picabia could not have predicted the displacement of the *Ballet Mécanique* image that he montaged in New York for the *391*’s August 1917 cover (fig. 2.26). And only in retrospect is it possible for us to know that director Henry J. Vernot’s cutting account of the *cinématographe*’s history in the guise of an etymology on the back cover of the same *391* issue would receive a

response to its sarcastic call-to-arms seven years later in the form of a film entitled *Ballet Mécanique*.¹⁰⁵ Though Vernot devotes the majority of his text to outlining why film is not yet a medium that could displace literature or painting as the quintessential conveyor of “drame moderne,” he leaves us with the thought that the cinematograph could “become the drama of tomorrow.” In one sense, the previous pages simply test this prognostication.

¹⁰⁵ For the issue described in this paragraph, see Francis Picabia, ed. 391 no. 7 (August 1917): unpaginated. Digitized version via sdr.lib.uiowa.edu/dada/391/7/index.htm

CHAPTER THREE

DISPLACED FOCI: SURREALIST MAGNIFICATION IN *DOCUMENTS*
AND *LA RÉVOLUTION SURREALISTE*

“Il semble, en effet, impossible au sujet de l’oeil de prononcer un autre mot que séduction, rien n’étant plus attrayant dans les corps des animaux et des hommes. Mais la séduction extrême est probablement à la limite de l’horreur”
- Georges Bataille, *Documents* no. 4 (September 1929)¹⁰⁶

Georges Bataille’s final contribution to the Parisian journal *Documents*, which he edited for its entire run of fifteen issues, was “L’Esprit Moderne et le Jeu des Transpositions” or “The Modern Spirit and the Play of Transpositions.” Though printed a year later than this chapter’s focal point in 1929, no other pages so succinctly frame the surrealist moment that concerns me here. Let’s begin, then, with an ending of sorts, so as to circumscribe what might otherwise prove difficult to encircle in surrealist handheld cinema.

Appearing at the very end of the eighth issue of *Documents* volume two across five separate pages, Bataille’s “L’Esprit Moderne et le Jeu des Transpositions” essay critiques modern art’s inability to incite radical transformation. The text is nested among photographic images from three separate sources: the photographer and frequent *Documents* contributor Jacques-André Boiffard; the Photo Alinari archive, which provides shots of the ossified “Église Sainte-Marie de la Conception a Rome. Chapelle

¹⁰⁶ Georges Bataille, “Oeil,” *Documents* 1, no. 4 (September 1929): 216. The excerpt is among those translated in the “English Supplement,” a section appended to *Documents* issues in the journal’s first year: “Indeed it seems impossible when speaking of the eye to use another word but fascination, for nothing is more attractive in the animal or human body. However extreme fascination is probably on the border line of horror...”

Mortuaire;” and L’Institute de Micrographie, whom Bataille thanks in a note.¹⁰⁷

Boiffard’s magnified image (fig. 3.1), captioned “Papier Collant et Mouches,” occupies its own page preceding the essay, and therefore may initially appear detached from Bataille’s text. Still, either before, during, or after reading, the astute observer might perceive Boiffard’s photograph as an interactive version of the enigma of optical representation that Bataille writes about in his essay. The finely rendered details of the flies—from the articulation of the legs and even finer overlapping of lines that suggest gossamer wings—identify the figures as they arrange themselves in an almost serpentine line of silhouettes across the mottled background. The flatness of the forms against the picture plane suggests an encompassing bird’s-eye view, but the lack of a map key initially prevents the observer from finding the direct passage between Boiffard’s image and Bataille’s text.

Like Boiffard’s full-page photograph, in the subsequent page spread, the image of the crypt interior and microphotographs that follow also visually dominate the columns of text (fig. 3.2). However, Bataille’s text provides a contrasting meta account: “the photographs accompanying this article (brought together more by chance than by a will that might not be entirely blind) probably reveal the extent of current powerlessness.”¹⁰⁸

In these final pages of *Documents*’ final number—as in numerous previous issues—there

¹⁰⁷ Georges Bataille, “L’Esprit Moderne et le Jeu des Transpositions” *Documents* 2, no. 8 (1930/1): 488-92. *Documents* 2, no. 8 does not include a publication year as part of its editorial information page as in previous issues; however, Bataille’s reference to a March 1931 text in his article date it the issue later than 1930. For my analysis, I refer to both volumes of the *Documents* reprint published by Editions Jean-Michel Place in Paris in 1991. Translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

¹⁰⁸ Translated in Krzysztof Fijalkowski and Michael Richardson, “The Modern Spirit and the Play of Transpositions,” in *Undercover Surrealism: Georges Bataille and DOCUMENTS*, eds. Dawn Ades and Simon Baker (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 240-43.

is a confounding contrast between the visual weight of the photographs and Bataille's argument in his article, which ultimately speaks to the impotency of images. Bataille's insistence that "it is possible to encounter what one has always sought only in complete darkness," is sandwiched between two registers of magnified fly anatomy.¹⁰⁹ His description of a scenario in which not merely blindness but headless-ness is deemed the fullest embodiment of human perception is surrounded by imagery that is the product of advanced optics.¹¹⁰

The disparity in verbal argumentation and visual prominence is not the only peculiarity of Bataille's take on *l'esprit moderne*, a phrase whose usage he narrowly attributes to an article by wayward surrealist Roger Vitrac.¹¹¹ Bataille's overt reference to Vitrac is especially notable given that he did not do similarly for the second half of his title, *le jeu de transpositions*, which he could have just as readily sourced to surrealist conceptions of visual imagery's potential to signify. Equally notable for the purposes of this study is Bataille's aforementioned parenthetical insistence upon the "chance" selection of the images that appear alongside his text. For, as we shall see, the close-up images provided by Boiffard and L'Institute de Micrographie are but the final installment of a repeated trend found in the earlier *Révolution Surréaliste* revue published by the group who remained allegiant to Bataille's rival, André Breton.

Bataille's parenthetical admission about the images that appear alongside his essay—that they came together through "a will that *might not be entirely blind* [my

¹⁰⁹ Bataille, "L'Esprit Moderne," 491, trans. in Fijalkowski and Richardson, 242.

¹¹⁰ From 1936 to 1939, Bataille would publish the journal *Acéphale*, whose title is derived from the Greek work for headless.

¹¹¹ The fact that Virtrac's text, as stated in the first line of Bataille's essay, was published in the March 17, 1931, issue of *L'Intransigeant* calls into question the supposed 1930 publication date of *Documents* final number.

emphasis]”—indeed describes a method that he and his eventual surrealist adversaries implemented in their handheld cinema. At the conclusion of *Documents*' final issue, Bataille rejects the notion of a “play of transpositions,” which surrealists in particular and modernists more generally defined as a generative feature of their art. He denies that any artistic image-making could exist outside the rigid framework of culture that precludes desire. Still, from French Romantic retrospectives to an entire issue in honor of Picasso, the pages of *Documents* are filled with reproductions of paintings and sculptures alongside images of slaughterhouses and enlarged toes. And because the journal's innocuous title is matched in its austere graphic design, while reading through *Documents*, one does fumble as if through a dimly lit room.

One way to read “L'Esprit Moderne et le Jeu des Transpositions” is as an instruction manual that Bataille has composed after the fact for how to avoid fixing the contents of *Documents*, or as encouragement for the reader to continue to fumble elsewhere following the journal's demise. But such an abstruse directive to fumble blindly could just as easily lead us back to the mission of the surrealists in the mid-1920s, when the nascent movement opened its doors to the public through the Bureau of Surrealist Research. First printed in 1924, *La Révolution Surréaliste*, like *Documents*, is a deceptively crisp record—or perhaps residue—of amorphous surrealist inquiry. To be sure, reading and looking more closely at the contents of *La Révolution Surréaliste* reveal a similarly unmanageable mélange to that found in *Documents*. The close-up, I argue, serves as a shorthand for invoking the mutable relationship between observation and understanding that occupied surrealist practice during the movement's more nebulous state, in the years prior to the 1930s when surrealism began to discipline itself.

Of course, while Breton famously announced his manifestation of surrealism to the world—or, at least, Paris—in 1924, Bataille did not proclaim ‘official’ ties with the movement. You might then wonder why the two are so often positioned as sworn enemies in accounts of surrealist legend. As will become clear in this chapter’s examination of journal issues released in the fall of 1929, the outsized role of a disagreement between the two in histories of surrealism has much to do with the timing of their projects in print.

La Révolution Surréaliste and *Documents* were in very different, even oppositional, seasons of their lives as periodicals by the end of 1929, a year which also saw the publication in June of a special issue of the Belgian revue *Variétés* dedicated to surrealism. Breton and what remained of his company of adherents managed to produce just one issue of their journal during the entire year, which would be its last. Moreover, the final *La Révolution Surréaliste* opens with the incendiary “Second Manifeste du Surréalisme,” in which Breton airs his grievances with multiple movement members before expelling them—all of this prefaced with seven cheeky red lipstick kisses (fig. 3.3).¹¹² In contrast, the four issues of *Documents* released in autumn 1929 represent a most productive stretch for the periodical. Many of its most frequently cited contents (to be discussed in detail below) were printed during the time when the final issue of *La Révolution Surréaliste* was in production. In fact, in his Second Manifesto, Breton cites

¹¹² André Breton, “Second Manifeste du Surréalisme,” *La Révolution Surréaliste*, no. 12 (December 1929): 1-17.

Bataille's essay on the "Figure Humaine" from the September 1929 issue of *Documents*.¹¹³

The synchronicity in *La Révolution Surréaliste*'s descent and *Documents*' ascent is worthy of the analysis it has received. Scholars typically trace Breton's regrouping through *La Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution* beginning in 1930 or Bataille's estrangement from his collaborators during the same year. But the hyper-focus on this rivalry has blinded us to the intricate construction of a verbal-visual line of inquiry that both journals actually share. To notice this more nuanced conversation, we must return Breton's and Bataille's pointed words to the more fluid spaces of their respective handheld cinema.¹¹⁴

I focus this chapter on a smattering of pages pressed in autumn 1929; nonetheless, I've designed this case study, as all the other in this dissertation, to exemplify a technique emblematic of the medium of handheld cinema. To do this work, I have again enlisted the aid of projected film to simulate the durational observation that these surrealist examples require. However, unlike the dadaist displacements of media in the previous chapter, the surrealist use of the close-up is a more explicitly *optical* project. This shift does not mean that our analysis should neglect the multi-sensing observer. On the contrary, close-up imagery magnifies a tension between visual perception and cognition. The printed close-ups in *La Révolution Surréaliste* and *Documents* do not merely refer to their projected

¹¹³ Breton, "Second Manifeste," 16.

¹¹⁴ The importance of fluidity, and especially marine fluidity, in this analysis struck me—almost too appropriately—as I reread by the shore Rosalind Krauss's discussion of the oceanic in "The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism," in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984), 95. Krauss also certainly discusses surrealism elsewhere, for example in the fourth chapter of *The Optical Unconscious* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 149-96.

filmic counterparts but also require readers to rethink how and why magnified, obscurely cropped imagery appears within a graphic context that initially presents itself as straightforward.

As the surrealist close-up allows me to reintroduce *Documents* and *La Révolution Surréaliste* as handheld cinema, this study is just as concerned with how the journals partake in the medium as with the specific social or political implications of the material under consideration. Certainly, the aesthetic and the epistemological are as entangled in my own writing as in the primary sources I discuss. But the method of close looking that I employ to translate handheld cinema into words requires me to do some writerly cropping. You'll still need to look elsewhere for in depth considerations of surrealist painting, for example, or to follow the ways in which Bataille's conception of the subversive images and Breton's theorization of convulsive beauty are rearticulated in the 1930s.¹¹⁵ Tracing the changing deployment of the close-up in surrealist practice could very well generate an alternative history of the movement. But, for now, I want to embrace magnification's displacement of vision so that we might revive the fluctuating shape of surrealist handheld cinema in Paris in 1929.

Before positioning the particular function of close-up within surrealist practice in Paris in the waning months of the 1920s, the critical legacy and prevalence of the term

¹¹⁵ The inaugural essay in a series by Breton on "Le Surréalisme et la peinture" appeared in *La Révolution Surréaliste* no. 4 (July 1925): 26-30. Also, although Breton had written about the concept at the conclusion of his 1928 book *Nadja*, it would not be until the publication of *Minotaure*, no. 5 (February 1934) that "convulsive beauty" would make a verbal-visual appearance in the press alongside photographs by Man Ray and Brassäi.

deserve consideration.¹¹⁶ By 1927 there was in fact a magazine entitled *Close Up* devoted to discussing film from a literary perspective.¹¹⁷ And a slightly earlier text proves that thinking on the cinematic close-up had been in circulation in French since the beginning of the decade: filmmaker and critic Jean Epstein's "Grossissement [Magnification]," first published in his *Bonjour Cinéma* in 1921.¹¹⁸ Although Epstein's text can be summarized as an attempted description of the function of the close-up in cinema, the details of his discussion reveal subtle effects of the technique that are worth exploring at length, as they include the vocabulary that we will soon apply to surrealist handheld cinema. In *Documents* and *La Révolution Surréaliste*, Epstein's idea of the close-up as an undulation in cinematic temporality comes into contact with the magnified material fragments found in texts by Walter Benjamin, a contemporary of the surrealists in late-1920s Paris.

The first, seemingly superficial lines of Epstein's essay introduce the elusive qualities of the close-up: "I will never find the way to say how much I love American close-ups. Point blank. A head suddenly appears on screen and drama, now face to face, seems to address me personally, swells with an extraordinary intensity. I am

¹¹⁶ For an example of a twenty-first-century exhibition that takes up this task, see Dawn Ades and Simon Baker, *Close-up: Proximity and De-Familiarisation in Art, Film and Photography*, exh. cat (Edinburgh: Fruitmarket Gallery, 2008). For an article that more explicitly focuses on cinema, see Mary Ann Doane, "The Close-Up: Scale and Detail in the Cinema," *A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 14, no. 3 (2003): 89-111.

¹¹⁷ Susan McCabe, "Close Up & Wars They Saw: From Visual Erotics to a Transferential Politics of Film," *The Space Between* 8, no. 1 (2012): 20-23. Amidst a discussion that spotlights Bryher's desire for cinema to "activate the spectator" through comparisons between her film criticism and the approaches of her collaborators H.D. and Macpherson, McCabe suggests that "psychoanalysis itself is filmic: there is ample vocabulary connecting the two fields: close ups, interior monologue, flashbacks, recurrent images." For a thematic overview, also see *Close Up 1927-1933: Cinema and Modernism*, eds. James Donald, Anne Friedberg, Laura Marcus (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

¹¹⁸ Here, I rely upon Jean Epstein, "Magnification," in *French Film Theory and Criticism, A History/Anthology, Volume I, 1907-1929*, ed. Richard Abel (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 235-41; for an English translation of the text.

hypnotized.”¹¹⁹ Here, Epstein admits the inadequacy of his text while still managing to convey the importance of the phenomenon he has set out to explain. He also introduces two ostensibly contradictory qualities that define the cinematic close-up: directness and intangibility.

On the close-up’s relationship to the cinematic medium as a whole, though, Epstein is consistent, succinctly defining this dynamic later in his essay: “The cinematic feeling is therefore particularly intense. More than anything else, the close-up relates it.”¹²⁰ Epstein’s difficulty in describing the process of magnification is thus related to the more complex issue of codifying cinematic affect in general. Nonetheless, a defining feature of the close-up—its fleeting unpredictability—connects magnification to the quality that Epstein argues should shape all of cinema: *photogénie*. “The photogenic is conjugated in the future and in the imperative. It does not allow for stasis,” he writes, defining cinema primarily in terms of time rather than space.¹²¹ Magnification may ameliorate our ability to see surface detail, but the magnified cinematic image, according to Epstein, should ideally register as pure emotional stimulus rather than a material object.

Still, the emotional stimulus of close looking requires us to ignore, or mentally obscure, portions of our immediate surroundings. This means that magnified vision is always incomplete, always a result of a severing of the continuous picture. Epstein describes the optimal way to incorporate the close-up into a filmic sequence: “Just as a stroller leans down to get a better look at a plant, an insect, or a pebble, in a sequence

¹¹⁹ Epstein, “Magnification,” 235.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 240.

¹²¹ Ibid., 236.

describing a field the lens must include close-ups of a flower, a fruit, or an animal: living nature.”¹²² Here, situated within a logical progression from far to near, the magnified image suggests a sort of hyper-presence—altered from the typical “recommended points of view” but still primarily descriptive of an object that we can imagine sharing our space.¹²³

The affective potential of the projected cinematic close-up as described by Epstein certainly speaks to the reciprocity involved in the handheld cinema of interwar Parisian surrealism, but the close-up imagery in *Documents* and *La Révolution Surréaliste* also participates in a more general modern cultural fascination with magnified optics. In 1928, Walter Benjamin’s *Einbahnstrasse* or *One-Way Street* likened the process of magnification to the selective but randomized gaze of the *flâneur*.¹²⁴ For Benjamin, “Enlargement” does not place objects in closer proximity to allow for scrutiny of their material properties, but rather serves to abstract the artifice of the visible surface, allowing us to connect what we see to a grander but more hidden fabric. Benjamin’s text assembles descriptions of a collection of antique objects and snippets of childhood memories that portray a carnival of attractions that no longer exist. But these fragments replicate on the page a visually-saturated milieu in which certain objects and situations seem to self-magnify—an enlargement usually triggered by memory. Benjamin, for example, describes the quest of an unnamed “*Untidy child*,” who is likely a stand-in for

¹²² Epstein, “Magnification,” 237.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ See Walter Benjamin, *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, trans. Edmund Jephcott and Kinsley Shorter (London: NLB, 1979), 45-104; for one English translation. Benjamin wrote other texts that seem to depend upon the logic of magnification, such as his *Berlin Childhood around 1900* and unfinished *Arcades Project*, neither of which was published during his lifetime. Benjamin also wrote his essay “Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia” in 1929, presumably awash in the same milieu that concerns me in this chapter.

the writer, in which the enlargement of his treasured possessions serves as a form of escapism: “He hunts the spirits whose trace he scents in things; between spirits and things years are passed in which his field of vision remains free of people. His life is like a dream: he knows nothing lasting; everything seemingly happens to him by chance. His nomad-years are hours in the forest of dream.”¹²⁵

The printed contexts of photographs in *Documents* and *La Révolution Surréaliste* at times provide the sequencing that Epstein describes, but the reader’s attempt to connect words and images is also like wandering in the forest of dream that Benjamin describes. Or, in other words, the act of reading generates more *fluid* verbal-visual connections. Unlike the regularized progression of a projected film strip that provides equally regularized context for projected close-ups, the printed page is activated through the attention of individual observers. So, the context that surrounds the close-up in surrealist handheld cinema can serve as both a catalyst and a barrier to meaning. The sensual, temporal conception of the cinematic close-up in Epstein’s account and the structural, spatial potential of magnification in Benjamin’s writing overlap in the graphic layouts of word and image in *Documents* and *La Révolution Surréaliste*. Not coincidentally, confusions between sense and structure, space and time were of equal interest within the surrealist milieu that fomented both journals. Examining the close-up therefore provides an avenue toward a more nuanced view of surrealist imagery that incorporates statements more explicitly related to artmaking entangled with those that address historical, symbolic, and biological concerns.

¹²⁵ Benjamin, *One-Way Street*, 73.

Documents remained constant in its cover design; it was text-based and listed its areas of coverage: archaeology, fine arts and ethnography (fig. 3.4).¹²⁶ However neutral the journal's unassuming packaging might seem, its contents reflect the interests of the editorial board, which included researchers at the Trocadéro and Louvre museums, universities, and other European institutions of learning. A survey of the front pages of *Documents*' debut *année*—those issues produced in 1929 which are of primary concern here—also indicates two conflicting qualities in the journal's genesis. First, advertisements for contemporary journals like *Variétés*, *Jazz*, *transition*, and *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (the latter of which most directly spawned *Documents*) point to a policy of inclusivity.¹²⁷ *Documents* was not the organ of a specific movement but a “magazine illustré” along the lines of those advertised, which all claimed to present some condensation of a “modern spirit.” The second quality that emerges contrasts this publicized openness. The frequency with which the bylines of Bataille, Michel Leiris, Carl Einstein, and Robert Desnos appear might be read as a matter of practicality, a consistent dependence upon trusted sources. This repetition of contributors suffuses *Documents* with a consistent perspective that is as potent as that of *La Révolution Surréaliste*.

The particular ways in which images and text interact in *Documents* are symptomatic of the tension between the generalist mission and the esoteric execution of the journal. I am certainly not the first to point to the distinctive verbal-visual conundrum that *Documents* presents. Borrowing Georges Didi-Huberman's term *frottement* or the

¹²⁶ The fourth coverage area does shift from “doctrines” to “variétés” between the first and final issue.

¹²⁷ For a slightly more in-depth discussion of the connections between *Documents* and these periodicals, see Ades and Baker, *Undercover Surrealism*, 12-14.

“rubbing together” of contents in *Documents*, Eric Robertson describes the “friction that unsettles both the aestheticism of artistic forms and the positivism of ethnographic facts” in the journal as an “art of connections.”¹²⁸ Raymond Spiteri, too, mentions Didi-Huberman’s *La Ressemblance informe* as well as Rosalind Krauss’s analysis of Bataille’s writing on the *informe* when he describes how an image can function “as a matrix of the *informe*.” According to Spiteri, “The image stages the movement of contention that describes the *informe*; or, more precisely, it is through the image that the movement of the *informe* manifests itself.”¹²⁹ As these examples attest, whether we describe a tension, transposition, friction, or *frottement* between the material components of *Documents*, our interpretations of the (anti)aesthetics of the journal tend to return to the same root: Bataille’s definition of the *informe* in the final issue of 1929.¹³⁰

I do not want to discount the sustained prominence of the *informe* as a concept associated with Bataille, but to do some soil analysis, so to speak. *Documents* is fertile ground for digging into the environmental conditions that cultivated formlessness. The “Critical Dictionary” in which Bataille’s definition was printed was a regular feature in

¹²⁸ Eric Robertson, “‘A Shameless, Indecent Saintliness’: *Documents* (1929-31) and *Acéphale* (1936-9),” in *Europe 1880-1940*, vol. 3, part 1 of *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, ed. Peter Booker et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 248.

¹²⁹ Raymond Spiteri, “Georges Bataille and the Limits of Modernism,” *emaj*, no. 4 (2009): 3.

¹³⁰ As a reminder, the definition against definition reads as follows per *Georges Bataille. Vision of Excess. Selected Writings, 1927-1939*, trans. Allan Stoekl with Carl R. Lovitt and Donald M. Leslie Jr. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 31: “A dictionary begins when it no longer gives the meaning of words, but their tasks. Thus formless is not only an adjective having a given meaning, but a term that serves to bring things down in the world, generally requiring that each thing have its form. What it designates has no rights in any sense and gets itself squashed everywhere, like a spider or an earthworm. In fact, for academic men to be happy, the universe would have to take shape. All of philosophy has no other goal: it is a matter of giving a frock coat to what is, a mathematical frock coat. On the other hand, affirming that the universe resembles nothing and is only formless amounts to saying that the universe is something like a spider or spit.” The original French is found in Georges Bataille, “Informe,” *Documents* 1, no. 7 (December 1929): 382.

Documents, after all, and had involved the visual-verbal tensions so frequently invoked in discussions of the *informe* prior to the term's appearance in December 1929 (fig. 3.5). It is noteworthy for our purposes that the text of Bataille's definition is printed among a sequence of contributions on cinematic topics that include "Imagerie Moderne," with two full-page reproductions of illustrated magazine covers, and "Cinéma d'Avant-Garde," both by Desnos, along with an announcement of upcoming events featuring soviet filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein in Paris.¹³¹ Two images of "Le Seine pendant l'hiver 1870-71" and "Un des tableaux du film parlant 'Hollywood review'" are printed on the page following the December 1929 *informe* definition, the former more explicitly related to an entry than the latter.¹³² But the *informe* issue's commingling of verbal and visual material is actually no more conspicuous than in previous versions of the *dictionnaire*.

It is the dictionary section of *Documents*, no. 6 (November 1929) that has been a favorite among scholars concerned with the journal's place in Bataille's cultural criticism.¹³³ The dictionary's pages in this issue are simultaneously dominated by Bataille's words and by striking photographic imagery that interrupts the flow of the columned text.¹³⁴ The first page of entries (fig. 3.6) includes a paragraph-long definition of *abattoir* (slaughterhouse) by Bataille along with the first part of his take on the *cheminée d'usine* (factory chimney). A photograph that shows, as captioned, the 60-meter chute of a factory chimney in London, its leftward jutting angle at once suggesting its

¹³¹ Robert Desnos, "Imagerie Moderne" and "Cinéma d'Avant-Garde," *Documents* 1, no. 7 (December 1929): 377-78, 385-87.

¹³² See Michel Leiris, "Débacle," *Documents* 1, no. 7 (December 1929): 382. The fact that Bataille contributes just one definition—of *informe*—to the December 1929 critical dictionary is also of note as he is the primary contributor of entries in previous issues.

¹³³ For example, Robertson, 253-54.

¹³⁴ "Dictionnaire," *Documents* 1, no. 6 (November 1929), 328-34.

toppling and pointing backward and even echoing the angular elements of the full-page photograph on the preceding page. After reading Bataille's blood-and-guilt-soaked definition of *abattoir*, the facing photograph by Eli Lotar captioned "Aux abattoirs de La Villette" indeed accrues new significance. The row of dismembered bovine legs lined along the stone wall in the mid-ground of the image could almost be a part of the ritualized slaughtering of yore that Bataille describes. Hidden from view around the corner of the weaving bricked path that meanders through the image, Lotar's photograph displays, through neat linearity not unlike the factory chimney it opposes, a form of reverence for a practice that Bataille brings to our attention in his text even as the gore of slaughter remains hidden from most moderns. This first page spread of the November 1929 *Documents dictionnaire* thus demonstrates the verbal-visual fluidity found throughout the journal, as Lotar's photograph preceding Bataille's *abattoir* definition carries the textual definition into an optical register that is complementary but not prescriptive.

A turn of the page, however, further liquefies the definition set forth in Bataille's text. The four photographic images arranged in a two by two grid that covers the entirety of the double-page spread (with the exception of the image captions) presents the observer with an optical task that may be the most challenging in all of *Documents* (fig. 3.7). The two photographs to the left present their challenge first in the form of a shock. Moving downward, the eye skims the smears of fresh blood, darkened and preserved as almost painterly strokes in the photographs, until the caption at the bottom confirms the images as two more belonging to Lotar, "Aux abattoirs de La Villette."¹³⁵ The texture and

¹³⁵ Another set of *abattoir* images by Lotar that appear to be from the same shoot were later published in the French mass-market illustrated weekly *VU* 166 (May 20, 1931): 698-700.

pattern of the ground no longer stabilizes the gore in these photographs. As it turns out, the first image was not a comprehensive complement to Bataille's entry but an establishing shot. This second couple of *abattoir* images—one from worm's-eye and the other from a bird's-eye view—remove the possibility of an immediate imaging of a human perspective in their making. Their close-up cropping at once detaches them from the sure-footed composition of the first image and provides unblinking focus on the physical traces of slaughter that, on Bataille's account, cultural conventions have pushed into the unseen shadows for all but an unlucky few. For although *abatteur* figures are visible at bottom right in the lower photograph, their identities are inscrutable as the camera's gaze hovers from above. One can no more identify with them than the cow carcass splayed across the top left corner of the lower image nor the dismembered piece of unassigned anatomy in the foreground in the upper photograph.

Insuring that the eye has no respite, the two images on the right-hand page are also but differently unrelenting and inscrutable in their framing. Again, the caption provides some clues: “1. Tête de crevette; 2. Tête de crabe. (cf. p. 332) – Film Jean Painlevé (1929).” The indication to consult page 332 leads to a dictionary entry not yet encountered, for *crustacés* (shellfish), by Jacques Baron. But as with Bataille's text, Baron makes no direct reference to the illustrations. What's more, the composition and placement of the film stills encourage the observer to consider their murky forms alongside Lotar's *abattoir* photographs even before or perhaps instead of glimpsing the text on the next page. The Painlevé stills, like the Lotar photographs, are at once crowded with information and devoid of fixed points that would allow them to be informational. Having lost subtle gradation in their reproduction in print, both stills appear flattened,

almost patterned, in their two-dimensionality. With the guidance of the caption, it is possible to make out the polka-dotted profile of a *crevette* in the upper image and a frontal portrait of a *crabe* in the lower, but only just. Close-up focus again does not allow us to affix an indexical meaning to these sea creatures; they instead prompt one's attention to flow across the surface of the page, traveling across frames and images, into a fact-finding flux.

Painlevé's inclusion in *Documents* as part of the November 1929 *dictionnaire* is not merely coincidental. Most often remembered as a documentarian, his films, especially in the late 1920s, were also associated with surrealism in the press and through personal contacts with the movement's participants. His strategies as a filmmaker do not simply make prominent use of microscopic technology to capture miniscule aquatic subjects on film. This hyper-focus also required Painlevé to command his filmic sequences through editing and, eventually, through voiceover so that the so-called documentary narratives are a blend of fact and fiction.¹³⁶ In a recent article, James Leo Cahill explores Painlevé's documentary methods as a *gai savoir* or gay science, drawing on Friedrich Nietzsche's 1882 text of the same name.¹³⁷ Cahill's designation of the poetic, felt comprehension that Painlevé distinguished at the heart of his pedagogical mission provides a new lens through which to conceive of how documentary filmmaking can be informational.

¹³⁶ This blending is reflected in the titles of both the scholarly volume *Science is Fiction: the Films of Jean Painlevé*, eds. Andy Masaki Bellows and Marina McDougall with Brigitte Berg, trans. Jeanine Herman (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000); and the 2009 Criterion Collection DVD boxset which I have consulted in my film analysis, *Science Is Fiction: 23 Films by Jean Painlevé*.

¹³⁷ James Leo Cahill, "Forgetting Lessons: Jean Painlevé's Cinematic Gay Science," *Journal Of Visual Culture* 11, no. 3 (December 2012): 259.

Furthermore, this application of the term *gai savoir* to Painlevé's method also recalls the subtitle of Didi-Huberman's book *La Ressemblance informe: ou le gai savoir visuel selon Georges Bataille* (1995). As both Cahill and Didi-Huberman attest, the documentarian Painlevé and the theorist Bataille each sought to oppose the rigidity of objectivist conclusions by showing how the fluidity of gay science more accurately addresses the constant fluctuations of world-defining information systems.

To be sure, looking at an example from Painlevé's vast oeuvre of documentary films provides an alternative model for looking at *Documents* that will help us to further distinguish how the journal's seemingly esoteric contents open to conversations that question the concept of knowledge writ large. Painlevé's *Les Oursins* or *Sea Urchins* was first screened during 1929 and, not coincidentally, is a film that the documentarian described as surreal.¹³⁸ At ten minutes long, the black and white, silent film matches the running time and format of Painlevé's contemporaneous projects, which then as now retain their classification as educational documentaries.¹³⁹ *Sea Urchins*' didactic function may appear at odds with commentary by the critic Émile Vuillermoz, who wrote that "No other spectacle gives a more unsettling sense of the relativity of our sensations."¹⁴⁰ But this unsettling was a crucial step in the process of learning through comprehension that Painlevé hoped his films would incite.

Sea Urchins, for example, opens with a familiar shot of a lone figure digging on the shore before cutting to a close-up of a hand holding an urchin (figs. 3.8-9), the human

¹³⁸ Jean Painlevé, "Les Films Biologiques," *Lumière & Radio* 10 (1929): 15–18; cited in Cahill, "Forgetting Lessons," 277.

¹³⁹ The *Science Is Fiction* DVD labels them as such.

¹⁴⁰ Émile Vuillermoz, "Chronique du Cinéma: Concision," *Le Temps* June 29, 1929: 5–6, cited in Cahill, "Forgetting Lessons," 278.

body dissected and magnified by the camera in a manner that forecasts Painlevé's treatment of the marine creature later in the film. The film continues to shuttle between intertitles that present plainly stated facts about the urchin and shots that frame the anatomy so tightly that it is all but impossible to distinguish due to lack of surrounding context.¹⁴¹ Even the intertitle text that explains cinematic magnification capabilities—"200,000 times on a 9' x 12' screen"—does little to prepare the viewer (fig. 3.10). Sequences that abstract the urchin's pedicellaria into a microscopic landscape compete with shots of the seashore that open and close *Sea Urchins* so that the spatial terrain of the film fluctuates along with its temporal unfolding (fig. 3.11). Painlevé's manipulation of the viewer's senses in order to instigate the unsettling he believed was necessary for effective pedagogy indeed extends to the concluding shot of *Les Oursins*, in which the sphere of the sun repeats the round form of the urchin diagrammed earlier in the film while simultaneously mirroring the viewer's own ocular anatomy (figs. 3.12-13).

Painlevé's reframing of form as a means to help us see the world anew and subsequent contextualization through narrative thus models the doubled, verbal-visual fluidity of Bataille's contributions to *Documents*. Moreover, Painlevé's filmic structures demonstrate how the observer might gain insight from the journal rather than remaining lost in an unconscious void or reverie. The reader of *Documents* meets obstacles in the form of page-sized, close-up photographs that both repel and compel, from the big toes by Boiffard that interrupt Bataille's text "Le Gros Orteil" or the detached, magnified photographs of plant segments by Karl Blossfeldt that accompany "Le Langage des

¹⁴¹ According to Cahill, "Forgetting Lessons," 267, "Painlevé often preferred his films to be screened silently or with his own live commentary" in order to avoid misunderstanding of the visual content.

Fleurs.”¹⁴² These photographs by Boiffard and Blossfeldt are among the most striking examples of images in *Documents* that seem to conform as visual illustrations to texts but, upon further inspection, reveal excess or alternative meaning. One’s interest might be sparked by confusion and prolonged by desire to make sense—if only fleetingly—of the unexpected, unresolvable verbal-visual premise that *Documents* presents. While these encounters with Bataille’s writing and his visual collaborators on the printed page are puzzling, they are not so troubling as to prevent us from reading further. There is a specific pleasure that one finds in working through *Documents*—even when presented with evidence of entrails and other viscera—that is akin to what Cahill describes as an *amour floué* in Painlevé’s cinematic technique. Per Cahill, *amour floué* is “blurred love, an eroticism sparked not only by the frisson of the unexpected encounter but also by the momentary confusion and interpenetration of boundaries and limits.”¹⁴³ This language certainly connects Bataille’s writings on formlessness to Painlevé’s more narrowly defined educational, populist initiative.

But, of course, Cahill derives his phrase *amour floué*, blurred love, from *amour fou*, mad love, a concept that became central to Breton’s theorization of surrealist attraction beginning in the mid-1920s, eventually resulting in a book entitled with the phrase published in 1935. Perhaps, then, we can say that close-up framing produces an optical blur that is conceptually maddening. The blurred signifier creates a purpose for the observer that propels her to search for signification that is ever-dissolving in a pursuit that both Bataille and Breton would have recognized as madness.

¹⁴² Georges Bataille, “Le Gros Orteil,” *Documents* 1, no. 6 (November 1929): 297-302; and “Le Langage des Fleurs,” *Documents* 1, no. 3 (June 1929): 160-68.

¹⁴³ Cahill, “Forgetting Lessons,” 274.

To demonstrate further how the handheld cinema of both *Documents* and *La Révolution Surréaliste* prompts the enactment of the *amours floué* and *fou*, let's turn our attention to perhaps the most infamous surrealist close-up—one that magnifies the eye itself. Even now, from my retrospective twentieth-first-century viewpoint, from which I can anticipate the close-up shot that concludes the opening sequence of *Un Chien Andalou*, I struggle to maintain a steady focus, to *not* avert my gaze. With each sharpening of the blade that will slice through the eyeball in Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí's film, I blink.¹⁴⁴

Un Chien Andalou premiered in June 1929, in Paris, at a point of confluence for the fluid surrealist phase that interests me here. Because the topic of surrealist painting is outside the purview of this study, Dalí has not been a major character thus far. This does not mean that he was silent on matters of artmaking prior to 1929. Yet, his collaboration with fellow-Spanish émigré Buñuel on the script for *Un Chien Andalou* did coincide with Dalí's official adoption of the surrealist cause via Breton and, more importantly, the artist's lucid articulations of his conception of "anti-art" in relation to photomechanical imagery. As Malcolm Turvey has pointed out, Dalí identified *Un Chien Andalou* as a documentary despite the fact that he and Buñuel scripted the illogical, time-bending, dream sequence that constitutes film's 'plot.'¹⁴⁵ Turvey posits that, in contrast to the non-narrative rhythms of films like *Ballet Mécanique*, Buñuel and Dalí's project gains structure from story elements—or, more specifically, from borrowed cinematic tropes,

¹⁴⁴ A digitized version of the film is available via <https://vimeo.com/154546132>

¹⁴⁵ Malcolm Turvey, "Surrealism and *Un Chien Andalou*," in *The Filming of Modern Life: European Avant-Garde Film of the 1920s* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), 114.

the “ready-made language of mainstream filmmaking.”¹⁴⁶ If we can, then, conceive of Painlevé as a storyteller as well as a reporter in the conception of his marine documentaries, can we also say that Buñuel and Dalí played the same dual role? After all, Breton himself had given the directive to surrealists to serve as “modest recording instruments” in the first *Manifeste du Surréalisme*.¹⁴⁷ What more could we ask of a surrealist filmmaker than to record the crashing waves of his optical unconscious, teeming with cinematic reverberations? Or, to utilize the critical terms of close-up viewing as Epstein and Benjamin have defined them, do Buñuel and Dalí intercut horizontal unfolding with discrete, vertical events in a manner that allows the film’s magnification to blur distinctions between cinematic form and individual memory?

Breton’s printing of Buñuel and Dalí’s *Un Chien Andalou* script in the final issue of *La Révolution Surréaliste* represents his endorsement of the project just pages away from the text of the second surrealist manifesto, in which the poet-impresario publically cut ties with many of the surrealist movement’s most prominent members. Yet, rather than reproducing even a single film still from *Un Chien Andalou*, the four pages of double-columned text culminate in a small reproduction of an image by painter Yves Tanguy, *Tes Bougies Bougent* (fig. 3.14). The reader is thereby left in the dark even as she might expect visible references to the film to illustrate the script. The text does read as a list of shots such that one can envision the film, for example: “La lame de rasoir traverse l’oeil de la jeune fille en le sectionnant.”¹⁴⁸ So, we might theoretically draw upon our filmic memories to fabricate a documentary out of an archive of readymade fictions,

¹⁴⁶ Turvey, “*Un Chien Andalou*,” 118-19.

¹⁴⁷ Quoted in Turvey, “*Un Chien Andalou*,” 112-13.

¹⁴⁸ Translated as “The razor blade crosses the girl’s eye, severing it.” Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí, “*Un Chien Andalou*,” *La Révolution Surréaliste*, no. 12 (December 1929): 34-37.

like Dalí claims to have done with Buñuel. Since the final issue of *La Révolution Surréaliste* was published in December 1929, the possibility that even the publication's earliest audience had attended a screening of *Un Chien Andalou* in the summer or autumn also exists. In this case, the printed script might serve as an *aide-mémoire* as it does to those of us who have screened the now widely available silent film. Either way, the script transforms itself into a version of handheld cinema *sans image*. The absence of reproduced film stills does not deter the reader from envisioning individual shots and sequences. Instead, the absent presence of the film as a whole encourages an improvisation of mental images that stream together through the progression of reading. This handheld cinematic version of *Un Chien Andalou* therefore asks one to question the separation between interior and exterior images alongside distinctions between fact and fiction, cinematic time and personal memory that its projected filmic counterpart blurs.

Bataille had also cited *Un Chien Andalou* in the September 1929 issue of *Documents*, where it similarly lacks a photographic reference, though a footnote lists publications where one can find “excellentes photographies” from the film.¹⁴⁹ Bataille's discussion of the film appears in his portion of the multi-authored definition of *oeil* (eye) from the no. 4 installment of the critical dictionary, the first one to divide the text into two columns. Following Desnos's cataloging of idioms that involve optical language and a photo of “Les yeux de Joan Crawford” in a mid-column break, Bataille's second section of the entry is entitled “Friandise cannibale,” or “cannibal sweet” and precedes Marcel Griaule's text concerning the evil eye. As one might expect, unlike in the script printed in *La Révolution Surréaliste*, Bataille's discussion of *Un Chien Andalou* serves as an

¹⁴⁹ Georges Bataille, “Oeil,” *Documents* 1, no. 4 (September 1929): 216. Bataille lists issues of *Cahiers d'Art*, *Bifur*, and *Variétés* in his note.

example in his definition and thus is truncated. There is neither space nor time to envision the scenes unraveling. Before moving on to examples from Victor Hugo as inspired by the imagery of Grandville and the pulp publication *L'Oeil de la Police*, both of which refer to illustrations from later pages, Bataille cuts to the center of what he finds compelling in *Un Chien Andalou* (here as stated in the issue's "English Supplement"): "the young womans [sic] eye cut by a razor in the recent and admirable film by Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí; in the film the eye is seen as attracting the blade, both being equally horrible and fascinating."¹⁵⁰ Bataille's extremely pointed description of the film within his definition of the eye makes this passage function like a textual close-up. The image that we envision seduces us while at the same time pushing us toward "the border line of horror," just as Bataille argues the eye itself does.

As these two references to the same film, *Un Chien Andalou*, in *La Révolution Surréaliste* and *Documents* show, the makers of both journals did not merely share an attraction to similar materials even as the surrealist movement was in danger of being swept away in the tides of disagreement in 1929. The editorial decisions and design layouts also attest to a confluence of formal choices that take their cues from filmic techniques—even in passages that omit photomechanical reproductions. For the remainder of this text, then, let's consider how we might read both *La Révolution Surréaliste* and *Documents* as forms of handheld cinema that dilate the cinematic close-up that had become a trope by the late-1920s so that magnification applies to images and text alike. The removal of detailed visual description from contextual support through cropping in close-up imagery results in an informational absence—even if details appear

¹⁵⁰ "According to the article of Georges Bataille," "Eye," *Documents* 1, no. 4 (September 1929): unpaginated.

to present plainly articulated facts. In the surrealist handheld cinema of *La Révolution Surréaliste* and *Documents*, the observer encounters the absent presence edifying material not only in photomechanical illustrations but also in passages of descriptive text and in page layouts that fuse visual and verbal magnification. As close-ups are nested within close-ups, one experiences surrealism's amorphousness in 1929 and 1930 firsthand in the act of reading this handheld cinema.

How precisely can *La Révolution Surréaliste* and *Documents* present to us textual close-ups as well as optical ones? Just as the displacements discussed elsewhere in this study, this question can be answered in several ways. Because handheld cinema is a medium that takes shape through individual curiosities, sudden bursts of data might catch one's attention and befuddle in the same moment. Consider for example, the passage on *homme* that appears in the same critical dictionary as *oeil*, which cites the "eminent chemist," Dr. Charles Henry Maye,

The bodily fat of a normally constituted man would suffice to make seven cakes of toilet soap. Enough iron is found in the organism to make a medium sized nail. And sugar to sweeten a cup of coffee. The phosphorus would provide 2,200 matches. The magnesium would furnish the light needed to take a photograph. In addition, a little potassium and sulphur, but in an unusable quality ... These different raw materials, costed at current prices, represent an approximate sum of 25 francs.¹⁵¹

Here, a quotation from Dr. Maye is severed from its original publication context in the *Journal des Débats* in a manner that amplifies the disorienting effect of its atomization and commodification. For a not particularly attentive reader who had picked up the September 1929 issue of *Documents* on a whim, the presence of a direct reference to a

¹⁵¹ "Homme," *Documents* 1, no. 4 (September 1929): 215, translated in George Baker, "Human Figures," *Undercover Surrealism*, 186.

chemical objectification of the human body might have been particularly jarring. After all, tailing two articles concerning visual artists Hercules Seghers and Alberto Giacometti with full-page reproductions of select works, the columns of text that begin the fourth issue's *dictionnaire* are misleadingly plain (fig. 3.15).

The disjunction that caused the abrupt informational magnification in *homme* is, in itself, an instance of textual magnification. But, to a more astute reader, Dr. Maye's breakdown of the human body would also recall another article from *Documents*. Earlier, in the same issue, Bataille meditates on the "Figure Humaine," an essay whose title can be translated into English as either "Human Figure," "Human Face," or "Human Countenance" in a slippage that matches the theme of the text.¹⁵² Unlike the text of the *homme* definition, the relations between visual and verbal close-ups in this passage are not so readily inscribed but present a more sophisticated fluidity suggestive of Bataille's more generalized thinking on what images can do for us.

As one attempts to progress through "Figure Humaine," the text begins with a rare direct acknowledgement of the first of the copious photographs reproduced with the text. Bataille's reference to "the *presence* of an acute perturbation in, let us say, the state of the human mind represented by the sort of provincial wedding photographed twenty-five years ago" instills a distrust of the ostensibly innocuous portrait that shares the essay's first page (fig. 3.16).¹⁵³ Bataille refers to the wedding portrait to emphasize points about the simultaneous "seduction" and "contaminating senility" of photographic images; the photographs, for him, are not objectifying instruments but instigators of violence and

¹⁵² Georges Bataille, "Figure Humaine," *Documents* 1, no. 4 (September 1929): 194-20.

¹⁵³ Annette Michelson, "Human Face," *October* 36 "Georges Bataille: Writings on Laughter, Sacrifice, Nietzsche, Un-Knowing" (Spring 1986): 17. Throughout this section, in parenthetical citations from this point forward, I refer to further portions of this translation.

absurdity (17). According to Benjamin Noys, Bataille’s essay addresses photographic subversion via a description of the image’s “splitting” of containment and chaos: “Matter for Bataille is always ‘active’ [...] never settling within a frame or an image but always emerging from an image, a word or things.”¹⁵⁴ In short, like the close-up, all images and texts are cropped in such a way as to require us to make them meaningful in a participatory act of reading.

Bataille does not restrict himself to a discussion of photography in “Figure Humaine,” and the repeated arrangements of nineteenth-century *carte-de-visite* portraits of costumed sitters are not mentioned in writing save for a concluding note and caption for the final full-page layout (fig. 3.17). However, the portraits’ presence serves alternately to amplify and to mock Bataille’s words.¹⁵⁵ The multiplicity of these images coupled with their unflinchingly artificial costuming and props—from butterfly wings to classicized painted landscape backdrops—at once distracts the reader and underscores the series of nested relations that Bataille draws in his essay. The overt artificiality of portraits like those printed in “Figure Humaine” are, according to Bataille, the products of a wholly artificial “attribution of a *real* character to our surroundings” that merely satisfies “vulgar intellectual voracity” (18). The absurdity of photographs thus exaggerates one way in which the definition of personhood has been systematized. Contrary to “Thomist thought and present-day science,” Bataille argues against the notion that human subjects are intact entities—that instead “the *self* has no place in an

¹⁵⁴ Benjamin Noys, “The Subversive Image,” in *Georges Bataille: a Critical Introduction* (London: Pluto Press, 2000), 21, 34-5.

¹⁵⁵ Per Baker, “Human Figures,” 189-90; “These unintentionally hilarious photographs, originally collected as ‘*cartes-album*’, could be ordered directly from the Nadar studio by perusing the large demonstration boards of their back-catalogue.”

intelligible universe” (18). In their false fixing of the self, in their encasement of a fluctuating, unintelligible presence through photography, the portraits in “Figure Humaine” could be possible catalysts to thinking outside of the system of signification that frames them. Bataille envisions such thoughts in the following scenario:

If, indeed, we consider a character chosen at random from the ghosts here presented, then its apparition during the discontinuous series expressed by the notion of the scientific universe (or even, more simply put, at a given point of the infinite space and time of common sense) remains perfectly shocking to the mind; it is as shocking as the appearance of the *self* within the metaphysical whole, or, to return to the concrete, as that of a fly on an orator’s nose (19).

The miniscule, short-lived, unpredictable insect remains Bataille’s rhetorical focal point even as he introduces and swiftly refutes Hegelian and dadaist thought on systems via a quotation from Tristan Tzara in the paragraph following this evocative verbal close-up. Bataille even concludes the passage with a reprise, asserting that to accept “the indemonstrable character of the universe of science” is to “reduce the appearance of the self to that of the fly” (19).

I dwell on this fly not just because of its potency in evoking Bataille’s usage of verbal-visual magnification in *Documents*. The previously discussed inclusion of Boiffard’s flypaper close-up with rounded microphotographs in Bataille’s final article for the journal, “L’Esprit Moderne et le Jeu des Transpositions,” suggests the consistency with which he used the insect as a motif. Perhaps this proclivity explains why Breton chose to focus on the fly in his mocking critique of Bataille in the *Second Manifeste du Surréalisme* of *La Révolution Surréaliste*’s final issue—and why the inclusion of Boiffard’s flypaper in the final *Documents* issue more than a year later could be conceived of as a belated rebuttal. Per Breton, “M. Bataille loves flies. Not we: we love

the miters of old evocators, the miters of pure linen to whose front point was affixed a blade of gold and upon which flies did not settle, because they had been purified to keep them away” (184).¹⁵⁶ This passage speaks to Breton’s strategy in denouncing Bataille’s project as disingenuous as well as useless.

Still, Breton does not simply cite examples from Bataille’s work in *Documents*, though he does mention “Figure Humaine.”¹⁵⁷ Just as *La Révolution Surréaliste* imitated the format of the scientific journal *La Nature*, Yve-Alain Bois has noted that Breton’s Second Manifesto mimics Bataille’s style and incorporates the latter’s references to Hegel and Tzara in such manner as to demonstrate the logic that structures the *informe*.¹⁵⁸ To wit, following the sentences that picture miters with blades of gold, Breton states: “M. Bataille's misfortune is to reason: admittedly, he reasons like someone who ‘has a fly on his nose,’ which allies him more closely with the dead than with the living, but *he does* reason [...] he cannot claim, no matter what he may say, to be opposed to any system, *like an unthinking brute*” (184). In short, by continuing to write, Breton argues that Bataille cannot possibly adhere to his own anti-systemic mission. But Breton’s critique through selective citation and mimicry of what he identifies as an unsuccessful rejection of reason in Bataille’s work actually exemplifies some of the broader points about the relationship between self and self-image in “Figure Humaine.” Breton’s ability to

¹⁵⁶ Translations of the Second Manifesto of Surrealism in this section, including parenthetical notes, from *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969), 123-86.

¹⁵⁷ Breton, “Second Manifeste,” 16.

¹⁵⁸ Yve-Alain Bois, “Figure,” in *Formless: a User’s Guide*, with Rosalind Krauss (Brooklyn, NY: Zone Books, 1997), 83-85. Both Breton and Bataille’s text mention Tzara in relation to structure and systems, and a poem by Tzara is printed immediately following the former’s manifesto, “L’Homme Approximatif (Fragment)” *La Révolution Surréaliste*, no. 12 (December 1929): 18-20.

represent his thoughts in the guise of Bataille shows that written signification can be just vulgarizing and artificial as visual representation in portraiture.

This is not to say that Breton utterly fails to substantiate his thinking in the Second Manifesto of Surrealism. The ease with which he absorbs Bataille's voice before spitting the latter's words back out indicates that the *Documents* editor helped Breton to diagnose surrealism's fitful condition in 1929, too. The manifesto meanders between sections of specific instruction—dismissing movement adherents by name and calling for “THE VERITABLE OCCULTATION OF SURREALISM”—and general motivation for those who've had the stamina to continue on (178). It is in these ostensibly encouraging passages that Breton betrays the kinship between his project and Bataille's, at least in 1929. For example, Breton concludes a paragraph on the topic of the potential for surrealist practices beyond the mediums of painting and poetry by encouraging the reader to seek experiences that may not be representable: “having come so close to seizing *the truth*, most of us have been careful to provide ourselves with an alibi, be it literary or any other, rather than throwing ourselves, without knowing how to swim, into the water” (163). In dictums such as this, Breton suggests that surrealist inquiry can be fluid, unmoored from static ground, as mucky as the *informe* that he dismisses in Bataille's writing. In a manifesto propelled by conflict, a manifesto punctuated by a small de Chirico image full of jagged diagonal juxtapositions entitled *La Guerre* (fig. 3.18), Breton certainly does not provide a practical solution as to how one might balance a miter hat on one's head while swimming. So, what are we to make of his opaque instructions for the future of the surrealist movement, sealed with a kiss-off?

Some clues can be found in the handheld cinema of *La Révolution Surréaliste*'s final issue. As with *Documents*, the close-up acts as a magnifying glass for sussing out the details so that we might understand how the journal's hodge-podge supports Breton's free-flowing conception of surrealism's future. For instance, immediately preceding the previously discussed script for *Un Chien Andalou*, a contribution by René Magritte, "Les Mots et Les Images," directly addresses the relationship between verbal and visual signification in both form and content (fig. 3.19).¹⁵⁹ The layout of Magritte's piece follows the publication's standard two-column format, but rather than reading continuous columns of text, the observer alternates between typed words and line drawings with hand-lettered script.¹⁶⁰ Through these verbal-visual examples, spaced and sequenced, Magritte shows how words and images can translate between sign systems and how these relocations can blur distinctions between representation and reality. In the permutations that he presents—at once itemized and reminiscent of a storyboard—he synthesizes the fluid relation between sight and understanding in a manner that reiterates the logic of the close-up and, moreover, applies it to images in general. For if, as Magritte insists through platitudes accompanying visual diagrams, "une forme quelconque peut remplacer l'image d'un objet" and subsequently, "les figures vagues ont une signification aussi nécessaire aussi parfaite que les précises," all representations must be as fluid as close-ups.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ René Magritte, "Les Mots et Les Images," *La Révolution Surréaliste*, no. 12 (December 1929): 32-33.

¹⁶⁰ A similar format is also used in Marcel de Bouilly, "Le Vampire," *La Révolution Surréaliste*, no. 5 (October 1925): 18-19; as discussed in Pavle Levi, "Doctor Hypnison and the Case of Written Cinema," *October* 116 (Spring 2006): 101-18.

¹⁶¹ Magritte, "Les Mots et Les Images," 32-33. The two phrases translate into English as follows: "any form can replace the image of an object" and later "vague figures have a signification as perfect as the precise ones."

We may interpret Magritte's "Les Mots et Les Images" as a concretization of Breton's directive to leap without looking into the deep end in his manifesto printed earlier in the issue. But the verbal-visual treatise also neatens Bataille's exegesis on photography in "Figure Humaine" and synthesizes the durational effects of handheld cinema in *Documents*. This mutability speaks to the appeal and the ultimate ephemerality of the undisciplined inquiry that those in the equally undisciplined surrealist movement undertook as ideas circulated within the insular sphere of the late 1920s Parisian avant-garde.

To read another portrait, this time a group portrait of surrealists printed late in the last *La Révolution Surréaliste*, as yet another close-up provides a clue to add to our investigation. The full-page arrangement is unceremoniously wedged in amongst numerous replies to the survey on *l'amour*, which comprise the final pages of the journal (fig. 3.20).¹⁶² Sixteen male surrealists, including Breton, Dalí, and Magritte, appear on the page in separate photomaton images. All are bust-length and include an unobstructed facial portrait...save for the fact that each sitter has his eyes closed. The smaller photographic rectangles form a larger frame that encircles an image at the center: a reproduction of a painting by Magritte that can be juxtaposed against its frame in more ways than one. The figure in the painting is female rather than male, the full height of her nude body floating on a depthless, darkened background. She is bracketed above and below by more of Magritte's handwritten text: "je ne vois pas la cachée dans la forêt" or "I do not see the hidden (woman) in the forest."

¹⁶² "Enquête," *La Révolution Surréaliste*, no. 12 (December 1929): 65-76.

It is a disjointed *mélange* that instructs through a mixture of metaphor and medium. The observer's gaze circulates around the frame of photomaton portraits so that it becomes a looping filmstrip and all attempts to lasso a fixed meaning between the photographic frame and the painting it encircles slip away. As one shuttles between center and periphery, between figure and frame, between the mediums photography and painting, the discrete subjects who seem to be in plain view remain inscrutable. In this slippage, Magritte's hand-drawn metaphor about selective vision becomes implicated in a mixed media interrogation of visual representation. The answer might be awaiting us, though, if we follow the surrealists and close our eyes. Or it might not. If we cannot see what is hidden in this rather Benjaminian "forest of dreams," how can we expect to expand our understanding? Like the evocative but undefinable stimulation from Epstein's cinematic close-ups, surrealism does not provide a definitive solution but instead spurs us on. To be sure, it is telling that this group portrait of a surrealist movement in flux at the demise of its first major organ *La Révolution Surréaliste* blinds its members with the medium of photography so often associated with objective vision. The obscurely painted image in the center of the frame—the black fly by another name—is always out of view for both surrealism and photography.

And yet this moment at the end of *La Révolution Surréaliste*, when a socially-oriented critique of the scientism of photographic vision transforms into a critique of surrealism itself, was foreshadowed already in the first issue of the revue. The three overlapping photographic images by Man Ray depicting the participants in the Bureau de Recherches Surréalistes on the persimmon-colored cover of *La Révolution Surréaliste* no.

1 boldly declare the movement's 'scientific' focus in 1924 (fig. 3.21).¹⁶³ But while the front cover of the journal and interior advertisement for the bureau on its bubblegum pink interior (fig. 3.22) colorfully parody the staid format of *La Nature*, the contents of ensuing pages deviate in an even more pronounced fashion. Two tightly cropped images by Man Ray, one a photomechanical version of his *Enigma of Isidore Ducasse* and the other a still of Kiki de Montparnasse's torso from his film *Rétour à la Raison* (1923), are the first photographic illustrations in the journal and set the tone for passages of verbal-visual magnification throughout. Man Ray's photograph of a hidden, undulating form is in fact placed in the very center of the preface written by Boiffard, Eluard, and Vitrac. The *Enigma* interrupts the co-authored text that tasks surrealism with unearthing dreams and mentions blindness along with multiple aqueous turns of phrase, including a whimsical "pieuvre-horloge" or octopus-clock.¹⁶⁴ *La Révolution Surréaliste*'s very first page thus presents a layout in which the play between form and content, word and image encapsulates the fluid mode of thinking that the surrealists seek to propose in contrast to the rigidity they perceived in the academy.

Throughout the issue we encounter photographic images that magnify, crop or dissect. Images like a quarter-page double exposure with disembodied ghostly hands superimposed on a chair are so infrequently labeled that, by the time we reach the assembled full-page group portrait (fig. 3.23) amongst the "Textes Surréalistes," the physical space of the Bureau at 15 rue Grenelle as pictured on the cover is all but

¹⁶³ According to note in from October 22, 1924 reproduced in Paule Thévenin, ed. *Bureau de recherches surréalistes: Cahier de la permanence, octobre 1924-avril 1925* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), 139.

¹⁶⁴ J.-A. Boiffard, P. Eluard, and R. Vitrac, "Preface," *La Révolution Surréaliste*, no. 1 (December 1924): 1-2.

forgotten.¹⁶⁵ If we direct our magnifying glass to the similarities and differences between this group portrait in *La Révolution Surréaliste* no. 1 and the multimedia arrangement in no. 12, knowing what we now know about the handheld cinema of Parisian surrealism, we can piece together a story of the movement's first five years. Both are aggregates of individual portraits, but the collection in issue no. 1 is less standardized: the sitters' faces are all at least partially visible in their square frames but appear in different lighting conditions, at different angles, and in different costumes. There are also more men pictured in the first issue: twenty-eight versus sixteen in the later portrait. The images, including the slightly larger square picturing Germaine Berton at center, are all spaced symmetrically with white margins between them. These portraits surround Berton but do not encase her as the photomaton portraits do Magritte's painting. The singular woman at center in issue no. 1 was, furthermore, an anarchist and alleged assassin whom Aragon praises just pages prior. Still, although her image stands as a more distinct component, if one glances downward from Berton's portrait to the bottom center of the page, one finds a quotation from Charles Baudelaire that utilizes language similar to Magritte's painting: "La femme est l'être qui projette la plus grande ombre ou la plus grand lumière dans nos rêves" or "The woman is the being who projects the greatest shadow or the greatest light in our dreams." Although static on the page, the durational dynamic between the peripheral photographs and the images they encircle magnify the two female figures to the same end, then—to demonstrate the obscure and yet attractive force, which they

¹⁶⁵ Both images appear among "Textes Surréalistes" *La Révolution Surréaliste*, no. 1 (December 1924): 12, 17. A caption for the former photograph in *L'amour fou: Photography & Surrealism*, ed. Rosalind E. Krauss and Jane Livingston, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C. Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1985), 130, attributes the image to Man Ray as *Untitled* (1924) and lists the collection of Aleta Wallach, Beverly Hills, CA.

assume is feminine, that bands the surrealists together and gives the movement a central focus.

Despite claims that Breton may have made to the contrary by 1929, the shift from a photographic portrait of Berton to a painted anonymous nude by Magritte shows that surrealist research had changed direction since the closing of the Bureau or *Surréalisme Centrale* in April 1925.¹⁶⁶ Breton's call to occultation in the Second Manifesto is indeed echoed in the tight framing formation of the surrealist photomaton portraits around Magritte's auratic painting. The spaces of blank page between Berton and the diverse portraits in issue 1 have closed just as the surrealist ranks have. There seems to be no opening for new members let alone the anti-aestheticism of contemporary politics in interwar France. As much as the surrealists envisioned scientific research as the model to adapt for the purpose of social impact, their investigations led them back not to the laboratory but to historical archives of knowledge, to the library and the museum.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ For more information, see Julia Kelly, "The Bureau of Surrealist Research," *The City in Twilight: Surrealism and Paris, 1924-1939*, exh. cat., ed. Therese Lichtenstein (Nashville, TN: Frist Center, 2009), 79-101.

¹⁶⁷ There is an ever-growing scholarly appreciation of surrealism's interaction with academic institutions such as these, especially in the 1930s. For a study that details, for example, the ways in which surrealists interacted with collections of the Trocadéro and Galerie Ratton in Paris, see Julia Kelly, *Art, Ethnography, and the Life of Objects: Paris, c. 1925-35*. (Manchester, UK, New York: Manchester University Press, 2007). Hal Foster also argued for surrealism's place in intellectual history in the introduction to his seminal book *Compulsive Beauty* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), xiv, writing that "surrealism is also the nodal point of three fundamental discourses of modernity—psychoanalysis, cultural Marxism, and ethnology—all of which inform surrealism as it in turn develops them."

CHAPTER FOUR

DISPLACED MANEUVERS: *VVV*'S TACTILE SURRELISM

“A new myth? These beings, must they be convinced that they derive from a mirage, or must they be given an opportunity to reveal themselves?”
 – André Breton in “Prolegomena To A Third Manifesto Of Surrealism Or Else”¹⁶⁸

The inaugural issue of *VVV* credits the American artist David Hare as the journal’s editor.¹⁶⁹ Hare’s name led *VVV*’s masthead ahead of his potentially controversial editorial advisers: André Breton, Max Ernst, and, after the first issue, Marcel Duchamp, who more truthfully steered the genesis of the publication in New York in June 1942.¹⁷⁰ These European exiles were limited in their means to preserve some semblance of their avant-gardism across the Atlantic and amidst wartime protocols.

¹⁶⁸ André Breton, “Prolegomena To A Third Manifesto Of Surrealism Or Else,” *VVV* no. 1 (June 1942): 26. Breton’s text is printed in side-by-side columns with the original French and English translation (the latter translated by “N.G.”) with illustrations by Matta and a “Portrait of Père Duchesne (Courtesy of Natural History Magazine).”

¹⁶⁹ That David Hare primarily worked as a visual artist rather than a writer is also worthy of note. For André Breton in particular, surrealism was chiefly a textual movement and there is indeed a more pronounced emphasis upon the literary in earlier journals such as *La Révolution Surréaliste* (1924-29). The decision to name Hare as editor may be indicative of Breton’s enhanced acceptance of visual practitioners into his inner circle of confidants as the 1930s progressed and the surrealist group continued to splinter and reconfigure.

¹⁷⁰ In Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous: Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dalí, and Surrealist Exhibition Installations* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 173, Hare is quoted as acknowledging that his status was a “front.” The artist Robert Motherwell, who exhibited a very early abstract geometric painting during the *First Papers of Surrealism* exhibition, was also considered for the position of editor but was ultimately not selected, though he did publish his writing in the journal. See Robert Motherwell, “Notes on Mondrian and Chirico,” *VVV* no. 1 (June 1942): 58-61, which includes full-page grid of nine image details reproduced in grayscale and not limited to the two artists named in his article title. For a fuller consideration of Motherwell’s associations with the *VVV* group and the departure that led to beginnings of “plastic automatism” or what we have come to call Abstract Expressionism, see Stamatina Dimakopoulou, “Europe in America: Remapping Broken Cultural Lines: *View* (1940-7) and *VVV* (1942-4),” in *North America 1894-1960*, vol. 2 of *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, ed. Peter Booker et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 749-58.

During the journal's sporadic run, which ended with a fourth and final number in February 1944, Hare's United States citizenship was used to deflect suspicions that could have thwarted *VVV*'s very existence. The fact that such notorious surrealist egos were willing to cede top billing to a relatively unknown and unvetted name speaks to the constraints of censorship and shortages.

Without discounting the logistical concerns that the *VVV* collaborators faced, I argue that the authorial confusion that the reader encounters upon opening the journal is actually a thematic and technical strategy that runs throughout its four issues.¹⁷¹ By passing the baton of editor amongst multiple names, the magazine's makers in effect enlist each individual who picks up a copy of *VVV* to maneuver its handheld cinema. A skimming of content across issues reveals multiple contributions that expressly refer to the exchange of material between hands. Following the title-page manifesto of the first issue, Lionel Abel tells the reader "IT'S TIME TO PICK THE IRON ROSE," and handwritten figures in a chart "Concerning the Present Day Relative Attractions of Various Creatures in Mythology & Legend" (fig. 4.1) suggest a live or ongoing tabulation in the presence of those polled.¹⁷² Likewise, the double issue published as the nearly 150-page *VVV* Almanac in March 1943 includes, among additional components which will soon serve as the prime examples for this study, a "Dessin Successif" (fig. 4.2) created through participants copying one another's sketched figures from memory and a set of playing

¹⁷¹ The interactive component of handheld cinema that concerns me here relates to the recurring motif discussed in Kirsten Powell, "Hands-On Surrealism" *Art History* 20 (1997): 516–533. As will become more apparent by comparison in the chapter of my dissertation that concerns surrealist magnification in interwar Paris, a distinct shift in tendency from inward to outward gesture fundamentally alters the function of the hand in surrealist practice during World War II.

¹⁷² Lionel Abel, "It Is Time to Pick the Iron Rose," and "Concerning the Present Day Relative Attractions of Various Creatures in Mythology & Legend," *VVV* no. 1 (June 1942): 2, 62–63. The vast majority of names listed in the chart belong to journal contributors.

cards dispersed throughout the almanac with instructions for a new game.¹⁷³ The visual components of the fourth issue also ask a reader to uncover content layered beneath colored image plates that obscure text below, to unfurl a grayscale reproduction of Ernst's *Vox Angelica* (fig. 4.3), and to disassemble Duchamp's George Washington silhouette in *Allégorie de Genre* (fig. 4.4).¹⁷⁴

The frequency with which such manipulable content appears in *VVV* is not anomalous but instead extends from a tendency that art historian Adam Jolles has identified as “the tactile turn” in surrealist exhibition practice. Jolles describes the tactile turn as a means of “preventing [works of art] from ever reaching a state of decisive completion or permanent closure.”¹⁷⁵ As we shall see, the pages of *VVV* adamantly refuse closure in ways that prove that the ephemeral publication was a space of experimentation as well as communication and documentation. The journal's debut in 1942 did not just happen to prefigure the *First Papers of Surrealism (First Papers)* exhibition and Peggy Guggenheim's opening of her Art of This Century gallery – two New York events that display the propensity toward the tactile that Jolles describes. New York art collectors Bernard and Rebecca Reis indeed financed *VVV*'s handheld form and pliable contents.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ See M. Ernst, A. Breton, K. Seligmann, Matta, M. Duchamp, and S. Sekula, “Dessin Successif,” and “Le Jeu de Marseille,” *VVV* no. 2-3 Almanac (March 1943): 68, 89. Dimakopoulou, “Europe in America,” 750-51, also refers to the Tarot cards for a game that the surrealists devised in Marseille in 1939. The cards appear in groups of four on color plates dispersed throughout the *VVV* Almanac.

¹⁷⁴ See especially *VVV* no. 4 (February 1944): 36, 65-67. Neither Ernst's nor Duchamp's work is captioned. For a discussion of *Allégorie de Genre* in conjunction with the *First Papers of Surrealism Exhibition* and its catalogue, see David Hopkins, “The Politics of Equivocation: Sherrie Levine, Duchamp's 'Compensation Portrait', and Surrealism in the USA, 1942-45,” *Oxford Art Journal* 26, no. 1 (2003): 45-68. Duchamp initially assembled the silhouette with iodine-stained gauze as a contribution to the March 1943 “Americana” issue of *Vogue*, but the image was later deemed unacceptable for the magazine's cover.

¹⁷⁵ Adam Jolles, “The Tactile Turn,” in *The Curatorial Avant-Garde: Surrealism and Exhibition Practice in France, 1925-1941* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2013), 141.

¹⁷⁶ Dimakopoulou, “Europe in America” 749, describes *VVV* as a “lavish” publication.

The journal accordingly represents an under-examined manifestation of the same ideas that shaped landmark Surrealist installations. A brief overview of the milieu in which *First Papers* and *Art of This Century* came into being will thus aid me in introducing the interwoven threads of European avant-gardism that tangled into an untidy knot in New York during the Second World War.

The *First Papers* exhibition opened a week before Guggenheim's gallery and was on view from October 14 to November 7, 1942, in the ornate reception room of the former Whitelaw Reid Mansion, which in 1942 housed the Coordinating Council of French Relief Societies.¹⁷⁷ In addition to serving as a fundraiser for a war relief effort, the exhibition marked the arrival of a ragtag group of avant-gardists onto the scene in New York—a scene that was relatively conservative on the whole and especially within the auspices of the French Coordinating Council's cultural program. Unsurprisingly, *First Papers* did not have a profound effect upon staid display practices in New York's galleries and museums during the war, but Duchamp did manage to catch the press's attention with his installation of a reported *16 Miles of String* that crisscrossed the gallery. (An accurate measurement of the length that Duchamp arranged in the reception hall with the help of Breton, Ernst, Hare, and Jacqueline Lamba has never been confirmed. In the spirit of the exhibition catalogue, which refers to the installation as "twine" instead of the thereafter preferred "string," I will identify the installation as

¹⁷⁷ For a full account of *First Papers* upon which I base my discussion in this paragraph, see Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous*, 164-97. Also see T. J. Demos, "Duchamp's Labyrinth: First Papers of Surrealism, 1942," *October*, no. 97 (Summer 2001): 91-119, for more on the *First Papers* exhibition in conjunction with Duchamp's related *Art of this Century* activities.

String to eliminate the confusion of conflicting accounts of the length and material in reviews and scholarship.)¹⁷⁸

Considering the abundance of *VVV* collaborators involved in implementing Duchamp's project, it should come as no surprise that one of the two known photographic records of *First Papers* appears in the journal's 1943 Almanac issue (fig. 4.5). The (perhaps mistakenly) upside-down image, labeled "SOUVENIR DE L'EXPOSITION SURREALISTE 1942 (*Ficelles de Marcel Duchamp*)," at first flattens the depth of the room so that the eye traces white lines of *String* as if they are lines on a map.¹⁷⁹ The recession of the temporary walls erected to display paintings by a range of artists, including Marc Chagall and a young Robert Motherwell among more established surrealists, slowly emerges from the shadows. Brighter accumulations of overlapping white arcs then transform into the dense nests of *String* that made some of the one-hundred-plus *First Papers* contributions impossible to see.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ According to Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous*, 182-85, the exact details of the *String* installation are fuzzy for several reasons, including Duchamp's later recounting of a spontaneous combustion of a section of the twine due to its proximity to the light bulbs that illuminated the chandeliers in the gallery and the (possibly related) enlisting of his *VVV* collaborators, who assisted without his receiving exact instructions. The "sixteen miles" figure more likely represents total length that Duchamp purchased in anticipation of the *First Papers* exhibition.

¹⁷⁹ "SOUVENIR DE L'EXPOSITION SURREALISTE 1942 (*Ficelles de Marcel Duchamp*)" [SOUVENIR OF THE SURREALIST EXHIBITION 1942 (*Twine by Marcel Duchamp*)] *VVV* no. 2-3 Almanac (March 1943): 36. Capitalization in original. Though not captioned as such, the *String* image is one of two known photographs by John Schiff that document the *First Papers* exhibition; Kachur claims both installation shots were made at the suggestion of Katherine Dreier in *Displaying the Marvelous*, 187-88. A photograph of Breton, Duchamp, and Seligmann's "VITRINE POUR LA PART DU DIABLE, DE DENIS DE ROUGEMONT" [DISPLAY FOR THE DEVIL'S SHARE, BY DENIS DE ROUGEMONT] appears on the top half of the page above Schiff's upside-down image.

¹⁸⁰ Dickran Tashjian, "A Season for Surrealism and Its Affinities," in *A Boatload of Madmen: Surrealism and the American Avant-Garde* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2001), 216, quotes a review from the November 2, 1942, issue of *Time*, which mentions "105 artifacts, 'including dolls, idols, [and] ceremonial masks by American Indian primitives,' were on display," in lieu of the *First Paper's* exhibition catalogue because a full check list was not included.

If the same rather instinctive grasping for their familiars prompted the coalescence of the groups of exiled collaborators who published *VVV* and staged *First Papers*, the Art of This Century gallery motivated much of the experimental architectural design that the journal's creators would more pointedly adapt for the printed page.¹⁸¹ Guggenheim curated and renovated Art of This Century with designer Frederick Kiesler to serve as a more permanent showcase for her art collection. Unlike *First Papers*, the space did not merely create a Manhattan iteration of the Parisian *Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme*, in which Duchamp's 1938 coal-bag cave foreshadowed his *String*. For Kiesler's distinctive arrangements – from the Abstract Gallery's suspended pedestals to the Surrealist Gallery's curved wooden walls and light modulation – were designed to enhance rather than upstage the objects from Guggenheim's collection installed in Art of This Century.

As will become clear in the examples below, the *VVV* group attempted to replicate Guggenheim's melding of artworks with their context in print. Like the Art of This Century gallery's immersive environment, the journal's design encourages participation throughout on two fronts: mentally, as readers must contend with a variety of prose, poetry, and imagery from a wide range of geographic and temporal areas, and physically, as the orientation of illustrations and texts changes frequently. In comparison to similarly eclectic Parisian journals like *Minotaure* (1933-39), *VVV*'s foregrounding of the second more embodied component of participation marks a favoring of the haptic in relation to the optic that occurred when surrealism crossed the Atlantic. Negotiating the tension

¹⁸¹ For one version of the obstacles that Breton, Ernst, and Duchamp faced in their flights from war-torn Europe and their varied receptions in the United States, see Tashjian, "View and the Surrealist Exiles in New York," and "A Season for Surrealism and Its Affinities," in *A Boatload of Madmen*, 176-234.

between the expansiveness of the global war that had displaced them and their isolation from a disbanded European art community, the avant-gardists who managed to pull together *VVV* and other journals that circulated during World War II, such as *View* (1940-47) and *Dyn* (1942-44), were more aware of their precarious position than ever before. Reaching out through handheld cinema that could travel further than they could was thus a matter of survival that united the personal with the political and the logistical with the aesthetic.

Prior to their wartime displacements from Paris, *VVV*'s advisors all contributed to publisher Albert Skira's deluxe journal *Minotaure* in the 1930s, Breton and Duchamp serving as members of the journal's editorial board beginning in 1937.¹⁸² Ernst and Duchamp also each produced a cover for one of the publication's thirteen sumptuous issues. As mentioned in this study's introduction, Duchamp's cover features one of his rotoreliefs superimposed on a detail from Man Ray's *Dust Breeding* photograph that captured Duchamp's *Large Glass*'s transparent surface under a layer of grit (fig. 4.6).¹⁸³

Analyzing the ways in which *VVV*'s eventual editorial advisors contributed to *Minotaure* moreover reveals a nascent surrealist tactility from before the war's outbreak. Dr. Lotte Wolff's "Les Révélations Psychiques de la Main" presents analysis of famous hands alongside blackened impressions that render the palms and fingers of the likes of

¹⁸² The two are listed along with Paul Eluard, Maurice Heine, and Peirre Mabilie as members of the committee for the first time in *Minotaure*, no. 10 (Winter 1937). Earlier issues credit Skira as the magazine's administrative director alongside artistic director É. Tériade.

¹⁸³ Ernst created the cover for *Minotaure*, no. 11 (Spring 1938); and Duchamp for *Minotaure*, no. 6 (Winter 1935).

André Derain and Aldous Huxley in almost-life-size scale (fig. 4.7).¹⁸⁴ Breton's prints are among those in Wolff's gallery, and Skira also printed the surrealist leader's oft-cited text "La beauté sera convulsive," which includes two images by Man Ray that feature hands (one belonging to a mannequin, two others to Méret Oppenheim in "Érotique-Voilée") amid other photographic illustrations.¹⁸⁵ Breton's essay on convulsive beauty is part of *Minotaure*'s fifth issue, whose cover by Francisco Borès depicts a hand palming a nude figure (fig. 4.8) and which features a written and photographed litany of hands by Georges Hugnet.¹⁸⁶ As these examples attest, the future *VVV* editorial board members were among those who asserted the hand's role in surrealist practice a decade before conceiving *VVV* in exile.

Minotaure contributions from those outside the *VVV* group likewise substantiate a more conceptual interest in tactility within the interwar surrealist milieu. From the first issue of *Minotaure* onward, the journal's design incorporates images that traverse the gaps created by page gutters so that photographs, such as one that reproduces a sculpture by Picasso (fig. 4.9), bend into three-dimensional space.¹⁸⁷ The distortion of a photomechanical reproduction of Picasso's sculpture as it folds into the center of the journal draws the reader's attention to the material properties of the image in its printed context and, by comparison, to the medium of the photographed sculpture.

¹⁸⁴ Dr. Lotte Wolff, "Les Révélations Psychiques de la Main," *Minotaure* no. 6 (Winter 1935): 38-44. One assumes that the scale of the palm prints is reduced in reproduction—rather than that the selection criteria privileged those whose hands were conveniently child-sized.

¹⁸⁵ André Breton, "La beauté sera convulsive," *Minotaure*, no. 5 (1934): 9-16.

¹⁸⁶ Georges Hugnet, "Petite Rêverie du Grand Veneur," *Minotaure*, no. 5 (1934): 30.

¹⁸⁷ See Brassai, "L'Atelier de Sculpture," *Minotaure* no. 1 (1933): 15-23. Brassai's "Sculptures Involontaires" also appear in *Minotaure*, no. 3-4 (1933): 68.

In concert with graphic design that defies the flatness of the page, the papers of Skira's sumptuous publication have varied weights and sheens that compel the reader to consider *Minotaure* as an object to be admired. This is not to say that this material variation distracts from the journal's printed matter. Supple, glossy, coated paper lends crispness to the grayscale photographic images that make up the majority of *Minotaure*'s illustrations, and deviations from this standard can mimic the texture of other artistic supports. For example, another section from the journal's first issue, "Une Anatomie: Dessins de Picasso," replicates the artist's drawings with a matte surface that mimics drawing paper (fig. 4.10).¹⁸⁸ And several lengthier selections of text, such as Breton's "Souvenir du Mexique," are also distinguished from other contents through changes in paper stock or the inclusion of interior 'covers,' as was done to frame with the surrealist impresario's account of his trip to Mexico and encounter with the revolutionary Leon Trotsky in 1938.¹⁸⁹

Taken into consideration along with the fold-out components and image series that are a part of *Minotaure*, the journal's engagement with tactile and durational perception cannot be denied.¹⁹⁰ Still, the breakout of the Second World War and consequent destabilization of the Parisian avant-garde community interfered before the haptic became a part of a strategy that united the printed page with the medium of film and the producer with the consumer in the making of *VVV*. In sum, the crisis in the form

¹⁸⁸ See "Une Anatomie: Dessins de Picasso," *Minotaure*, no. 1 (1933): 33-37. The same paper extends to Pierre Reverdy's "Note Éternelle du Présent" (38-40), which is followed by a thick sheet of blank matte page before a transition back to glossy stock.

¹⁸⁹ André Breton, "Souvenir du Mexique" *Minotaure*, no. 12-13 (1939): 29-51.

¹⁹⁰ For example, Paul Éluard, "...le Monde tel qu'il est," *Minotaure*, no. 5 (1934): 17, is mainly comprised of a single-page foldout insert printed in color. The same issue also includes a double-page spread of serial photographs in Man Ray, "Dance Horizons," 28-29.

of a full collapse of the entrenched artistic milieu that *Minotaure* reproduced on the printed page—however inventively—in turn presented the exiles with the freedom to grasp the tactile.

A (deceptively) simple formal distinction between *Minotaure* and *VVV* provides the basis for distinguishing the function of tactility in each journal. While the Parisian publication's pages always maintain an unbroken rectangular shape, the pages of the wartime journal do not. I will return to specific instances of *VVV*'s defiance of standards throughout the remainder of this text, but I want to conclude this section by concentrating on the relative harmony of *Minotaure*'s pages. For in spite of Skira's willingness to tinker with ontological expectations in his incorporation of contrasting materials and serial juxtapositions of images and texts, *Minotaure* never prompts readers to question whether or not the object they are holding should function as a magazine.

Readers remain in their roles as passive observers, as consumers rather than participants.

In dialogue with the conventions of the illustrated periodical that had been culturally institutionalized by the mid-twentieth century, *Minotaure* participated in the surrealist critique of display practices in the interwar period. But just as the vitrines in Charles Ratton's gallery provided a normalizing context for the provocative assemblages on display during the 1936 *Exposition surréaliste d'objets*, *Minotaure*'s pages framed the journal's jarring contents in a regularized fashion that did not differentiate between the paintings of old masters and *objets trouvés* glimpsed on the street.¹⁹¹ Skira's publication also shares the ultimate impotence of the Ratton exhibition and other manifestations of

¹⁹¹ For an extended discussion of the 1936 exhibition and Ratton's gallery, see Janine Mileaf, "Surrealist Politics of Exhibition: Juxtaposition, Ethnography, and Revolution," in *Please Touch: Dada & Surrealist Objects After the Readymade* (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England: 2010), 119-55.

what James Clifford has notably termed “ethnographic surrealism” in obeying the restricted views of the institutions that they critiqued.¹⁹² Though surrealists arguably helped to shape the ethnographic discipline in interwar Paris, their ideas—no matter how much of a ruckus they stirred—remained enshrined in the rarified institutions whose modernization they facilitated.¹⁹³

The forced shuttering of venerable art galleries and museums in occupied Paris and simultaneous flight of artists and intellectuals from the French capital violently severed a connection which otherwise might have remained indefinitely. *VVV*'s porousness in comparison to *Minotaure*'s wholeness is therefore as much a product of circumstance as of choice. The wartime journal solicited the reader's grasp as a form of survival just as its disintegrated contents found camaraderie in the ephemerality of film.

Paging to a spread midway through the 1943 *VVV* Almanac, the large san-serif typeface initially pronounces the title of Kiesler's “Design-Correlation” with boldness and clarity (fig. 4.11).¹⁹⁴ Further reading reveals that the words in fact continue into the stream of a paragraph-length sentence that reaches the bottom of the page. The text

¹⁹² The first definition of the term appears in James Clifford, “On Ethnographic Surrealism,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23, no. 4 (October 1981): 539-64. Clifford also includes ethnographic surrealism in his book *The Predicament of Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988). For a more recent study of how ethnography and surrealism came into being synonymously in interwar France, see Julia Kelly, *Art, Ethnography, and the Life of Objects: Paris, c. 1925-35* (Manchester, UK, New York: Manchester University Press, 2007).

¹⁹³ For a discussion of *Minotaure* as a surrealist object and the journal's role in codifying ethnographic surrealism, see Jed Rasula, “Dangerous Games and New Mythologies: *Cercle et Carré* (1930); *Art Concret* (1930), *Abstraction-Création* (1932-5); and *Minotaure* (1933-9),” in *Europe 1880-1940*, vol. 3, part 1 of *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, ed. Peter Booker et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 265-285.

¹⁹⁴ This section describes Frederick J. Kiesler, “Design-Correlation,” *VVV*, no. 2-3 (March 1943): 76-79. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations in this section are from Kiesler's text and replicate his emphasis.

diminishes in size, gains serifs, and splits abruptly to accommodate a group of three illustrations. The placement of the word “break” at the beginning of the second section of Kiesler’s verbose definition of design-correlation indeed serves as one indicator of the continuity that the designer stresses in his architectural planning, here at play in the coordination of text and image.

If readers miss this subtle typographic move, they need not worry. Additional text in a right-facing panel on page 76 that directs the gaze toward a full-page illustration on page 77 will soon all but require the observer to become complicit in Kiesler’s demonstration of design-correlation. By rotating the *VVV* Almanac ninety degrees counterclockwise, the directions for “the correalist tool” become legible and finally satisfy the curiosity that the yellow biomorphic cut-out floating on the opposite page provokes. After a brief summary of ideas that he had also written about in *Architectural Forum* earlier in 1943, Kiesler provides instructions on how “to operate” the correalist tool, the first illustration in *VVV* so minimally attached to the rest of the journal at a single fixed point.¹⁹⁵ He insists that turning the cut-out around the grommet with which it is affixed to the page so that it rests in one of four numbered positions will reorganize the page such that “a field of attractions is created in which the tool as well as the environment participates.” In other words, as participant-observers manipulate the goldenrod-tinted tool, its position relative to the curving lines, grids, and other figures sketched in gray extending across the otherwise blank paper affects perceptions of both figure and ground. The simultaneous transformation of the movable biomorphic form and the expanse of the page, on Kiesler’s account, demonstrates the potency of design unity,

¹⁹⁵ Frederick J. Kiesler, “New Display Techniques for Art of This Century,” *Architectural Forum* 78, no. 2 (February 1943): 49-50.

which he contends has a particular application in “the multi-form needs of a museum-gallery.”

Though Kiesler does not name a specific museum-gallery in his instructions for the correalist tool as he does in his preceding definition of design-correlation, a turn to the subsequent spread reveals more pointed visual references to Guggenheim’s Art of This Century gallery, which the designer had completed the previous year. In its upright vertical position, page 79 of the *VVV* Almanac (fig. 4.12) displays a photograph from the Pix agency captioned “DETAIL OF GALLERY FOR ABSTRACT ART ‘ART OF THIS CENTURY.’” The caption also identifies Kiesler as the Abstract Gallery’s designer (a convention that will continue in the labeling of two photographs of the Surrealist Gallery on the following page). But the room in the photograph is also readily identifiable as the designer’s creation through a visual element near the center of the image: a more substantial version of the biomorphic cut-out from the previous spread. The yellow form is here rendered in grayscale, but its shape is almost immediately recognizable against the darker shade of the wall and its own cast shadow. In the installation of the gallery, the form serves as a plinth, its weightiness apparent in its ability to support another object and in its volume projected toward the wall in the photograph. In cooperation with a gallery-goer seated with legs crossed in a similarly configured biomorphic seat adjacent to the cut-out plinth, two sculptures suspended with lengths of string that reach from floor to ceiling convey spatial depth through layering that compliments the experience of manipulating the correalist tool. The observer can imagine the design elements of Kiesler’s Abstract Gallery shifting as she moves through Art of This Century just as the space of page 77 transformed through her maneuvering of the cut-out.

The correlation between the biomorphic forms in the contexts of pages 77 and 79 also serves as the potential key to unlocking the relations between the otherwise inscrutable elements layered on the page that appears in between. The verso of the yellow cut-out's grommet is a periwinkle disk that further separates into two halves. When unified the circle contains a photographic portrait of Breton accompanied by his signature and superimposed with the swirling lines of an iris shutter. When decoupled the circle reveals an underlying image of an open aperture that surrounds a photo-reproduction of cropped white text on a medium-grey background, which also contains a grid of rectangles and squares. Like its recto, the entire arrangement extending outward from the inner circle is in grayscale, from a black ellipsis punctuated by reflective circles to the portion of the back of a head with closely cropped hair, its ear projecting downward from the top of the page, to the image of a disembodied hand pulling the lever of a boxy contraption at the bottom of the page.

Another counterclockwise rotation provides access to the text to the left of page 79, which one might expect to contain an additional set of instructions from Kiesler. But the reader does not learn how “to operate” the “instrument to facilitate the co-reality of fact and vision, and specifically to demonstrate the transformation of images into eidetic visions” until the conclusion of a lengthy paragraph that describes a device related to another aspect of Kiesler's Art of This Century plans: the Kinetic Gallery.¹⁹⁶ The portion of the page that is now to our left is actually a detail of the boxy device at right. The backward head no longer appears as a sideways oddity but serves as a surrogate for *VVV*

¹⁹⁶ In addition to naming Kiesler's responsibility for “Design and layout” and stating that the whole arrangement is “Courtesy Art of this Century,” the text also attributes “Photos” to Bernice Abbott and “Detail-Photos” to K.W. Herrmann and David Hare. The distinction between the latter two image categories remains ambiguous.

readers, though they cannot actually replicate the usage of the peephole that Kiesler describes with the magazine materials they have been given. The operational guidelines instead provide a translation of the play between memory and image that the designer narrates in his description of the gallery installation. As Kiesler asks us to “slowly and simultaneously” separate the two halves of the periwinkle portrait of Breton to reveal the cropped reproduction of the poet’s *Portrait of Actor A.B. in His Memorable Role, the Year of Our Lord 1713* in the inner circle, his instructions transform visual spectatorship into a more profound manual action than the interactions that took place in Guggenheim’s gallery. Because Breton’s “portrait mutates into the remembered content of the relief [*Portrait of Actor A.B.*]” through mechanisms that are completely accessible to observers through their bodies and the tangible pages of the journal, those who engage with Breton’s poem-object in *VVV* are active memory makers rather than receivers.

The multiple incarnations of Breton’s object-poem attest to the significance of this concept in his definition of surrealism’s visual scope. *Portrait of Actor A.B.* is one of around a dozen object-poems that the surrealist gatekeeper assembled, beginning in the mid-1930s. Furthermore, Breton’s decision to draft “Du Poème-Objet” in February of 1942 suggests that his interest in arranging found objects and poetic text remained central to his ongoing theorization of surrealism at the time that he created *Portrait of Actor A.B.*¹⁹⁷ The majority of the relatively brief essay in fact describes the poem-object’s visual components and outlines the work’s historical references to the extent that one

¹⁹⁷ Though not immediately published, Breton’s text was eventually included in André Breton, *Le Surréalisme et la Peinture*. rev. ed. (Paris: Gallimard, 1965). A digitization of his handwritten manuscript can be found via <http://www.andrebretton.fr/work/56600100199560>.

suspects Breton wrote it in view of the assemblage mere months before *Portrait of Actor A.B.* became part of the initial installation of Guggenheim's gallery.

Kiesler's account of his conception of the Art of this Century gallery in *VVV* is not only a matter of documentation or theorization like Breton's essay but of transposition. The designer interweaves text and visual elements such that the observer is involved in an interaction with the material components of the journal – physically rearranging its pages before he realizes that he has transformed the object in his hand. This interweaving encourages moments of delight in rule bending that visitors to Guggenheim's space also enjoyed. Nevertheless, as an object that can be carried anywhere and accessed at any time, *VVV*'s status as a printed publication allows the reach of its contents to extend beyond the rarified space of the gallery—far enough that the journal also exists as an autonomous creation. In short, Kiesler's design-correlation in *VVV* also functions without prior knowledge of Art of this Century. This is not to say that the interactions we have with the correalist tool and eidetic vision instrument can occur without a decoding of conventions. It is ultimately *VVV*'s consistent defiance of the magazine format, preventing our forward progress through its multidirectional pages with cross-references and unhinged motifs, which cements its status as artwork rather than reportage.

VVV was not the only short-lived form that served as an extra-architectural space for tactile surrealist displays during the war. Though her own family had emigrated from Ukraine when she was a child, Maya Deren self-determined her position at the margin of the circle of exiled European artists living in New York in the mid-1940s—a decision

that has as much to do with her relative obscurity in art historical studies as her choice of medium. But her outsider status as filmmaker does not merit the isolation of her work from the painting and sculpture displayed as part of more canonical exhibitions like *First Papers* and in Guggenheim's gallery. Like Kiesler's graphic transpositions in *VVV*, Deren's 1943 film *Witch's Cradle* is a cinematic version of Art of This Century that does and does not exist as an autonomous work, independent of its referent. Taken together, the doubled meanings of Kiesler's design-correlation and Deren's film project confirm a more widespread strategy across surrealist media.

Deren's concentration upon the mobilized body not only in the *Witch's Cradle* footage that she shot in 1943 but also throughout her corpus of films becomes apparent after even the most cursory consideration of her oeuvre. While scholars have thoroughly analyzed the filmmaker's foregrounding of her own dancing form in films such as *Ritual in Transfigured Time* (1946) and testing of performance parameters in *A Study in Choreography for the Camera* (1945), much work remains in examining the embodied perceptual experiences that Deren elicits from viewers.¹⁹⁸ The delicate tightrope walk across time and space that Deren navigates so deftly her most well-known film *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943) does not translate into the randomly spliced and digitized footage that stands as the only publically accessible version of *Witch's Cradle* available today (of which I'm aware, at least).¹⁹⁹ Still, I argue that Deren's unfinished film *Witch's Cradle* is

¹⁹⁸ See Mark Franko, "Aesthetic Agencies in Flux: Talley Beatty, Maya Deren, and the Modern Dance Tradition in 'Study in Choreography for the Camera,'" in *Maya Deren and the American Avant-Garde* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 131-49, for Franko's pioneering effort to apply his expertise to Deren's cinematic reframing of dance movement.

¹⁹⁹ For my analysis, I reference the YouTube compilation "Witch's cradle (Maya Deren , M. Duchamp - 1943)," via <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NkMfRVaA6fs>. Interestingly, according to Lucy Fischer, "Afterlife and Afterimage: Maya Deren in 'Transfigured Time,'" *Camera Obscura* 28, no. 3 (2013): 1-31, a flux of re-appearitions of Deren's films,

actually the ideal place to conduct an examination of the tangible dimensions of her cinematic world. As we struggle to determine the film's intended sequence and to cohere the space of Guggenheim's gallery reframed in disjointed fragments on-screen, our enhanced participation involves us in Deren's grandest cultural ambitions for the medium of film. For Deren was ostensibly as interested in asking us to negotiate, to *feel* through her films as the exiled artists who created the immersive installations she filmed in the Art of This Century gallery.

Deren's *Witch's Cradle* footage includes a series of panning shots that slowly move across the shadowy interior of Guggenheim's gallery. The measured sweeping of the camera's gaze might suggest an aspiration to provide a general view of the room—the type of establishing shot designed to summarize a setting in order to expedite the viewer's mental leap into the diegetic space on screen. Yet Deren's panning does not provide access to the generalized, documentary view we might expect. Relationships amongst objects displayed in the room and the alterations to the décor, walls, and pedestals suspended with lengths of white string, remain illegible. Instead, the camera's sweeping movement, at times unexpectedly skewed, like a head tilting, focuses resolutely upon the material presence of the string – on its white contrast with the darkened space and on the patterns of its threading – so that the tension between the man-made webbing and the beholder's expectation to navigate the gallery freely becomes palpable. Deren's camera is a proxy for the fallible, sensing subject rather than a deliverer of an all-

facilitated by digital editing technologies and worldwide streaming services, have become as integral to the filmmaker's presence in contemporary culture as well as scholarship.

encompassing field of vision, a handheld tool that functions as much through the whims and limitations of its mobile user as through its optical mechanisms.²⁰⁰

In her recording of encounters between viewer and environment in which subject and object, interior and exterior, reality and representation all become inextricably muddled, we can observe Deren's shared preoccupation with the spontaneous corporeal collisions that fascinated other surrealists. True, the filmmaker's unedited outtakes confirm Sarah Keller's identification of a "tension between careful planning and an invitation to openness" in Deren's filmic incompleteness.²⁰¹ The footage neither matches the minimal description of six proposed sequences that Deren composed prior to shooting nor suggests a potential progression of events. No narrative or logical temporal solution emerges to cohere the jumbled shots. However, if we allow our attention to move through the actions of the two human performers who appear in the film, Anne Matta Clark and Duchamp, an unexpected material consistency emerges in Deren's repeated returns to specific aspects of Guggenheim's gallery.²⁰²

²⁰⁰ One could also connect the floating gaze of the camera to the viewpoint of a *disembodied* specter, an interpretation that the film's title and the occult symbol affixed to its central figure might encourage. Were the film complete, I might attempt to connect the cultic magic that Deren seems to want to convey to surrealist practice, but the fact that many of her tricks fail in the raw footage make such a reading less compelling.

²⁰¹ Sarah Keller, "Frustrated Climaxes: On Maya Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon* and *Witch's Cradle*," *Cinema Journal* 52, no. 3 (2013): 89. Keller's article was conceived among the influx of Deren-related projects that marked the fiftieth anniversary of the filmmaker's death and more recently expanded into book form in *Maya Deren: Incomplete Control* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015). Both provide productive models for connecting Deren's work both to contemporary reconfigurations and to the filmmaker's historical milieu. Affiliated, like Fischer, with the disciplines of English and Cinema Studies, Keller's paired analysis of Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon* and *Witch's Cradle* demonstrates that "incompletion is one of the guiding stars of her aesthetic" and then further subdivides into a comparison between the filmmaker's work and Duchamp's curatorial practice. Yet, despite hinting at the more expansive applications of her compelling juxtaposition, Keller remains fixated upon Deren's career.

²⁰² Keller, "Frustrated Climaxes," 93-95.

Duchamp's multifaceted appearance in *Witch's Cradle* surely confirms Deren's interest in his work. She not only films the artist's frustrated manipulation of the cat's cradle threads but also his recreation of his *String* installation from the *First Papers*.²⁰³ In a deviation from the seemingly impenetrable webbing that Duchamp installed at the *First Papers* exhibition, the strings installed in Guggenheim's gallery during the making of *Witch's Cradle* the following year provide tenuous sensorial access to the space that we, in turn, experience kinesthetically through Deren's filmic movement.²⁰⁴ Far from distinguishing her film from the curatorial mode that gave rise to *String*, Deren's extension of the mobility that Duchamp's re-installation allows actually confirms her involvement in Jolles' tactile turn. Rather than emphasizing the productive potential in the indefinite spatial divide between viewer and viewed, Matta Clark's fluid interactions with the gallery's guiding threads demonstrate that mediated-but-spontaneous gestures can themselves generate meaning. Considering this sustained interest in tactility as a strategy to reshape the space of the gallery in the years directly preceding Deren's project, the ambiguity of *Witch's Cradle's* spatial structure gains a critical context.

Indeed, the Art of This Century gallery does not just serve as the setting of *Witch's Cradle* but also as Deren's unflinching fixation. The panning shots that concentrate upon the intricate webbed or laced strings also skim over wood-grain surfaces in a manner that encourages a kinesthetic desire as we long to enact the camera's visual caress with our fingertips. We also follow Matta Clark's fingers and toes as they guide her through the space—as if grasping for meaning. But as her curiosity appears to beckon her

²⁰³ Deren's then-husband Alexander Hammid is quoted in Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous*, 191. Hammid recounts that the filmmaker "asked Duchamp to help her prepare the scene by stringing some strings."

²⁰⁴ Keller, "Frustrated Climaxes," 93.

to examine the unfamiliar environment through deliberate physical engagement, other shots seem to deny such agency through sculptural blockage or camera tricks (some more successful than others) that animate strands of string so that they climb limbs and even form traps. So, while the crisscrossed arrangement of white string at times appears to allow for further manipulation of objects within the gallery, sequences in which Matta Clark's male counterpart in the film, Duchamp, fumbles with a cat's cradle confuse the relationship between object and user as his hands become tangled in its web. To be sure, Deren's initially perplexing inclusion of a shot framing a beating heart, secured in an open chest cavity, becomes more discernible when we realize the filmmaker's attempt to align multiple interiors—mental and physical, organic and constructed—within Guggenheim's gallery.²⁰⁵ Equally palpable as Keller's idea of the tension of incompleteness is the tension between the materiality and agency of the body in relation to the spatial configuration of the interior and the inanimate objects contained therein, a dynamic that Deren transposes directly from tactile surrealist installation strategy.

While Deren's inability to form a codified spatial system in *Witch's Cradle* relates to her inexperience as a filmmaker as she embarked upon the project, her sustained interest in working out and rearticulating filmic space through embodied movement suggests that her decision to take on the Art of This Century as an early subject merits more serious attention. For many (if not all) of the makers of the objects in the exhibition on display in Deren's footage shared the filmmaker's desire to reconfigure the space of the gallery through innovative engagements of the modern mobile body.

²⁰⁵ The warm modulating light, intermittent rumbling of train sound effects, and concave walls of the Art of this Century's Surrealist Gallery have also provoked further comparison to the body's interior, especially the womb.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to account for the filmmaker's avowed distance from the surrealist movement as well as her criticism of surrealist practice in her theoretical writings, a stance that she shared with prominent European defectors during the war. Deren's adamant condemnation of the (frequently fluctuating, seemingly self-destructive) group as she simultaneously appropriated their curatorial strategies and tangible objects into her practice – most obviously in *Witch's Cradle* but also more subtly in the embodied perception that her later films encourage – does not, in fact, suggest the hypocrisy that we may first envision. Simply put, the radical manipulations of tactile surrealism were not as apparent in the 1940s as they have become through contemporary scholarship. In a specific example of a deficiency that can be applied to the overall curatorial practice, Jolles for one describes the “failure” of the Parisian *Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme* “to distinguish itself sufficiently from the very forms it hoped to critique: either the commercial venues its sought to desublimatize (the department stores) or the historical installations whose false ideology it aimed to expose (the wax museums).”²⁰⁶ In short, the gallery interior remained a sanctified space in spite of surrealist efforts to the contrary. Might Deren's transposition of *Art of This Century* into the mass medium of film then serve as a perfect solution, the ideal escape plan from the confines of the gallery?

To remain within the constellation of examples of tactile surrealism discussed thus far is tempting. One could map the collaborations to produce a schematic not unlike the nebulous *String*. Second readings and viewings also reward with repeated

²⁰⁶ Jolles, *Curatorial Avant-Garde*, 207.

appearances by, for example, Kiesler's biomorphic gallery instrument in the inky shadows of *Witch's Cradle* (fig. 4.13), which may have slipped by unnoticed if one were not so familiar with design-correlation. Or Matta Clark's caressing of the buttons and levers on Breton's eidetic vision device in Deren's footage might allow for a more profound comprehension of its transposition in *VVV*. Like the mythical mirage Breton questions in the final lines of the "Prolegomena To A Third Manifesto Of Surrealism Or Else" that appeared in the journal's first issue, the chain of references compels us forward while distracting us from the fact that we have moved far away from the physical confines of the Reid Mansion or Guggenheim's gallery. Also like the mirage, the chain of references is ephemeral, only available in the moment that the participant observer thinks of it. Surrealism thereby becomes completely portable in this remediation of tactile gallery installations, first, onto the flexible surfaces of paper and film and, in turn, into the imagination. But the movement also loses the locus of a fixed community space. To answer an inquiry into where surrealism escaped during World War II consequently requires one to trace circuitous movements rather than to pinpoint a new home base.

If we allow ourselves to time travel to 1946, Deren herself provides one answer to the question that *Witch's Cradle* poses about surrealism's territory—an answer that will help us grasp how *VVV*'s handheld cinema served the movement's exiles. Three years later, the filmmaker introduced her book-length essay, *An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form and Film*, with a gridded chart similar to the one that appeared in Charles Duits' "Le Jour est un Attentat" in the *VVV* Almanac (figs. 4.14-15).²⁰⁷ Like Kiesler's transposition of his design-correlation principles from the gallery to the page, Deren's extension of aspects of

²⁰⁷ Charles Duits, "Le Jour est un Attentat" [The Day is an Attack], *VVV*, no. 2-3 (March 1943): 16.

her *Witch's Cradle* footage into her writing in *Anagram* suggests the deliberate intermediality of her practice, further connecting her kinesthetic experiments to those of the surrealists. Though the filmmaker does suggest possible paths among her essays, the appeal of the anagram for her is that “all the elements exist in a simultaneous relationship. Consequently, within it, nothing is first and nothing is last; nothing is future and nothing is past; nothing is old and nothing is new...except, perhaps, the anagram itself.”²⁰⁸ On her own accord, Deren structures her treatise in a spatial grid rather than through the type of linear, progressive argument we might expect to find in a theoretical text. *Anagram* thus contains the potential for a mediated but unfixed interaction that prompts self-reflection as readers carve paths through the book—paths not unlike the individualized passages that visitors to the Art Of This Century, including Matta Clark, had to find for themselves.

For although Deren does suggest potential routes through *Anagram*, the schema she presents in the treatise's introduction ultimately encourages personal exploration.²⁰⁹ Depending upon our interests, we might choose to tackle the text column by column in three separate considerations of forms, art, and film, moving from general to specific. Or we could alternatively elect to consider each of the more dialectical rows in turn, first pondering the relationship between “The State of Nature and The Character of Man” before moving to “mechanics” and “methods” and, finally, to the instruments of

²⁰⁸ Maya Deren, “An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form and Film,” in *Essential Deren: Collected Writings on Film*, edited by Bruce R. McPherson (Kingston, NY: Documentext, 2005), 37. Also see Bill Nichols, introduction to *Maya Deren and the American Avant-Garde* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), viii, for a scholarly table of contents that repeats its subject's choose-your-own-route approach.

²⁰⁹ Deren, “Anagram,” 36. For example, reading the sections in “reverse order” for those “who prefer the inductive method” or a “slice through on the diagonal.” Further quotations in this paragraph reference her section titles.

discovery and invention. Either way, Deren doubly implicates each one of us by asking each of us personally to codify her *Anagram* text as, through our reading, our varied choices articulate the complex roles of film in an all-encompassing formal system. Her refusal to provide a fixed viewpoint in fact solves the problem. Like the tactile surrealist objects that might have rendered art-gallery etiquette obsolete, *Anagram*'s non-standard format confuses the rules of reading with the rules of viewing to create an upheaval that mimics the cultural effect of cinema.

Nonetheless, as apparent as Deren's recruitment of her reader in the manifestation of film form may be, *Anagram* does not possess "the special capacity of film [in] the manipulations made possible by the fact that it is both a space art and a time art."²¹⁰ According to Deren, the filmmaker's concurrent control of both temporal and spatial dimensions serves as the source of the medium's potency. In *Anagram*, Deren conversely cedes partial spatial control, as we are each allowed to move across the grid as we please, along with complete temporal control, determined by the length of time devoted to perusing the text, chosen path, reading speed, etc. *Anagram* exists as an incomplete work until physically and mentally engaged in an individual *act* of reading.

Projected on screen, the assemblage of footage we identify as *Witch's Cradle* lies beyond our reach. This distancing limits our kinesthetic involvement despite the fact that the film, like *Anagram*, has not been stabilized through editing.²¹¹ But while Deren certainly did not consider these raw shots among her finished work—she did not identify *Witch's Cradle* as a functioning film—the footage retains partial control of the spatial-

²¹⁰ Deren, "Anagram," 94.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 89. Deren identifies editing as a central component of filmmaking along with the camera itself.

temporal dynamic that the filmmaker claims in her definition of the medium. Deren has predetermined our visual access to the space through her decisions in filming the gallery, in selecting viewpoints that are regulated if not fully fixed in the durational unfolding of her film segments.

Therefore, despite Deren's unconscious transgressions of her more pointed statements about film form in *Anagram*, *Witch's Cradle* does curiously manage to participate in the wider world of forms in which she hoped her completed works would also traffic. The viewer/*auteur's* experience of her unedited footage provides a more overt but ultimately less potent version of the interactions that *VVV* encourages.²¹² Her projected cinema provides a point of departure for the participant observer tasked with decoding the movable components of the journal. Rather than flummoxing the reader with its feedback loop of non-linear elements, *VVV* transforms the viewer into someone else altogether—or, more accurately, enlists her in two different roles. The observer participates, on one hand, as Deren, as the filmmaker who coordinates and organizes the collection of voices that appear in the journal. Each page is a frame to be edited and

²¹² To complicate matters further, in their inability to become the film that Deren set out to make, the disjointed fragments of *Witch's Cradle* have come to serve the filmmaking factions that she attacks most aggressively in *Anagram*. First, because Deren relinquishes temporal control in the unedited footage, the traces of the gallery, imprecise as they may be, produce a spatial domination that encourages us to see the fragmented shots as an imperfect document of Art of This Century. In *Anagram*, Deren contends that documentary film is detrimental to the development of the medium as an art form because “art is primarily concerned with the effective creation of an *idea* (even when that may require a sacrifice of the factual material upon which the idea is based), and involves a conscious manipulation of its material from an intensely motivated point of view.” (79) Moreover, the *Witch's Cradle* footage draws attention to the surrealist movement, which the filmmaker decries as “primeval.” But Deren herself may not have recognized the Art of This Century installation as surrealist. In modeling the kinesthetic experience of Guggenheim's gallery, *Witch's Cradle* thus not only fails to function as a film but also subverts Deren's descriptions of filmic art in *Anagram*.

montaged. On the other hand, the observer is the bewitched gallery goer, Matta Clark, whose embodied gestures guide her through an unfamiliar space.

Put another way, Deren's filmic work models a way in which a cultural product like *VVV* that is both variable and incomplete can generate meaning and potentially even meaningful action. For example, the sweepstakes information printed on the back cover of the *VVV* Almanac might at first appear to be purely frivolous (fig. 4.16). But Kiesler's "Twin-Touch-Test" is also a culmination of the of the journal's continued appeal to the senses:

Place your hands on top of either side of the wire screen; run both hands simultaneously gently down, fingers and palms remaining in close contact. Repeat and Repeat until you can answer the following question:
Is it an unusual feeling of touch?
 If so, can you write an analysis of your experience in no more than one hundred words. Give also your explanation of the phenomenon.²¹³

These are instructions for a game with serious implications that become more available the more embedded one becomes in the webbing of surrealist creation.

Still, the strands that link *VVV*'s interactivity to *Witch's Cradle* are not merely important because they connect print and cinema to Duchamp's *String* in the space of a surrealist exhibition or to the longer-standing practice of surrealist parlor games like the Exquisite Corpse. Both the journal and the film are also distinctly accessible to those outside of the intimate, once closely guarded circle of surrealists. They depend as much upon the participant's familiarity with mass media as with the intricacies of Bretonian automatism. *VVV*'s status as handheld cinema is what finally allows the journal to fulfill the radical revelation that its introductory manifesto proclaims. The promise to make

²¹³ Frederick J. Kiesler, "Twin-Touch-Test," *VVV*, no. 2-3 (March 1943): back cover. Emphasis in original.

visible “the myth in process of formation beneath the VEIL of happenings” requires a level permeability that journal collaborators would have resisted if not for their wartime vulnerability.²¹⁴ As the surrealists’ forced displacements so violently repeated creative experiments in *dépaysement*, wrenching “all the reactions of the eternal upon the actual, of the psychic upon the physical” into an incomprehensible new reality, the pages of *VVV* convey the desperate longing for contact that had come to sustain the movement as never before.²¹⁵

By way of conclusion, I’d like to consider *VVV*’s precarious tactility in relation to a broader history of surrealist homelessness in the 1940s. It cannot be denied that the journal was too sporadic and short-lived to sustain surrealism into the postwar years, or that handheld cinema acted as a catalyst to the movement’s dispersion in exile. But I hope to assuage any lingering doubts that, though esoteric and enigmatic, *VVV* responded to a widespread aesthetic and political emergency that still resonates today.

The threat of homelessness that was a life-altering and potentially life-ending concern for many Europeans in the early 1940s directly resulted in the avant-garde’s migration across the Atlantic. Nevertheless, as unfamiliar with their new surroundings as they may have been, refugee artists in the surrealist milieu were no strangers to the idea of homelessness in the aesthetic sphere. Rosalind Krauss’s identification of “a kind of sitelessness, or homelessness, an absolute loss of place” as the determining condition of

²¹⁴ See, for example, *VVV* no. 1 (June 1942): 1. Capitalization in original. The same manifesto appears outlined by a rectangular frame on the first page of each issue’s table of contents. Though not stated explicitly in the manifesto, the prevalence of “V for Victory” allied slogan and inclusion of the capitalized word “Victory” multiple times in the text would have made the journal’s title an immediately recognizable play on symbolism to the wartime reader.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

modern sculpture confirms a scholarly acceptance of artist-initiated displacement.²¹⁶ *VVV* represents a reaction to the collision of these two types of homelessness, one controlling and one controllable, in the biographies of the journal's makers.

Yet, *VVV*'s tactile pages do not reflect a willingness to adapt to interminable displacement like Duchamp's contemporaneous *Boîte-en-Valise*.²¹⁷ Though the almanac issue of *VVV* does include an advertisement for the suitcase of miniature reproductions of the artist's oeuvre (available for purchase through Art of This Century, fig. 4.17), the editorial board used their journal's portability to support a strategy in direct opposition to the retrospective function of Duchamp's *Boîte*. Rather than repackaging readymade works in the service of their preservation, *VVV* records a nascent effort to reground surrealist practice in a new social context that was still largely unknown to its makers. Their forward-thinking mission required the relaxation of the tight grasp that surrealists had enjoyed in their familiar Parisian surroundings and the surrender of movement into the hands of dexterous readers. So, while *VVV* continued the "profane illumination" that Walter Benjamin had identified as fundamental to the revolutionary capabilities of surrealism prior to the war, the destabilization of the everyday lives of the journal's creators and consumers brought tactility to the fore to sustain last bastion of surrealism on the brink of its dissolution.²¹⁸

²¹⁶ Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1984), 280.

²¹⁷ For a full discussion upon which I base my comparison, see T.J. Demos, "Duchamp's Boîte: Between Institutional Acculturation and Geopolitical Displacement," *Grey Room* 8 (Summer 2002): 6-37.

²¹⁸ Reading the introduction to Mileaf, *Please Touch*, 17, brought to my attention Benjamin's phrase from his 1929 essay "Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia."

In short, what distinguished *VVV* from all previous surrealist publications was an utter lack of the habitual. In the midst of a worldwide conflict, none of the daily routines of modern existence were safe from interruption by destructive forces—real or imagined. The sly disruptions in quotidian rhythms that Benjamin tied to surrealism’s ability to affect change could not occur in the midst of such uncertainty. Nor could the *VVV* group expect their subscribers to hone their haptic faculties by repeated practice. Benjamin had described the use-value of the tactile in the interwar period in his most well-known essay on mechanical reproduction, wherein the critic identified tactile perception as a model upon which to build the extra-optical knowledge necessary to thrive in modernity.²¹⁹ But in the absence of any apparent internal logic, the journal possesses the same random tangibility as a grab bag. Even rare repeated encounters always surprise in a manner that destabilizes past meanings so that recurring contact confuses rather than familiarizes.

If the incorporation of the American vernacular – from Alaskan masks to pulp fiction – amongst lines of European poetry was an attempt on the *VVV* editorial board’s part to reproduce *Minotaure*’s ethnographic surrealism, such a willful arrangement of eclectic materials was no longer credible.²²⁰ Unlike the interwar Parisian publication, the wartime journal had no stable frame of reference, no disciplinary parameters to guide the

²¹⁹For one translation, see Walter Benjamin “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn, (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), 238-40. Benjamin discusses the formation of tactile perception as an antidote to modernized distraction both in relation to film and to architecture two of the final sections of his essay. Also, see Jolles, “The Tactile Turn,” 168-72, for a consideration of Benjamin’s thoughts on tactility in conjunction with Tristan Tzara’s more primitivist stance.

²²⁰ See “Wooden Mask, Southwestern Alaska” from “Coll. Robert Lebel” reproduced in a full-page photograph in *VVV* no. 4 (February 1944): 69; and Robert Allerton Parker, “Such Pulp as Dreams are Made On,” *VVV* no. 2-3 / 1943 Almanac (March 1943): 62-66. Parker discusses pulp fiction as an “ephemeral” cultural opiate, writing that “pulp are engaged in the mass-production of mass-dreams.”

selection of contents or graphic layouts. New York galleries like Art of This Century were struggling into existence alongside an equally unfocused and heterogeneous art community. To distinguish the particulars of surrealist practice from other forms of art making was all but impossible in a moment when no creative pursuit had a certain future.

To be sure, *VVV*'s continued allegiance to surrealism set the journal apart from its immediate contemporary, *Dyn*, which the exiled Wolfgang Paalen published out of Mexico City.²²¹ Paalen renounced the restrictions of Bretonian surrealism in *Dyn*, jettisoning the ineffability that arose from the misalignment between *VVV*'s supposedly orthodox adherence to the movement and the inconsistency of the journal's contents. For example, Paalen was able to print extensive reports on his travels to study indigenous visual culture in British Columbia as part of *Dyn*'s "Amer-Indian Number" (double issue no. 4-5) without the burden of conjuring a new mythology for surrealism in the Americas out of thin air.

Deren, too, went on to distance herself from avant-garde circles by pursuing an ethnographic interest in Haitian vodou in the late 1940s. And though she did not assemble the hours of footage she filmed into a complete film by the time of her death, she did write a book on the subject.²²² Deren's research in Haiti also coincided with her

²²¹ The most extensive analysis of *Dyn* to date, including Dawn Ades introduction that places the journal's six-issue run in conversation with *VVV*, appears in Annette Leddy and Donna Conwell, *Farewell to Surrealism: the Dyn Circle in Mexico*, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2012).

²²² Maya Deren, *Divine Horsemen: The Living Gods of Haiti* (London, New York: Thames and Hudson, 1953). Like her *Witch's Cradle* footage, Deren's unedited Haitian film is accessible digitally and in the form of a 1985 documentary that takes its name from her book.

transition from a filmmaker who coordinated gestures and framed handiwork on screen to a community organizer who supported cinema through the Creative Film Foundation.²²³

One final example from wartime America demonstrates still more directly the correlation between the *VVV* group's disbandment and their insistence upon relocating surrealism rather than accepting the movement's multilayered homelessness. Although Charles Henri Ford and Parker Tyler's *View* magazine featured many of the same artists who appeared in *VVV* and even ran a special issue devoted to surrealism (no. 7-8, 1941), like *Dyn*, the publication was adamantly independent from the movement. *View*'s unencumbered eclecticism combined with the financial savvy of its editors combined to prolong its run into the post-war years. Along with the flashy advertisements for commercial products that would keep their publication afloat, Ford and Tyler also welcomed experimental graphic design in *View*, most notably in the special issue devoted to Duchamp printed in March 1945, just two months before V-E Day.²²⁴

In addition to multiple essays that illustrate the highpoints of the artist's career, personal reminiscences, and reprinted texts from dadaist revues, the Duchamp number of *View* features an interactive feature designed by Kiesler (fig. 4.18).²²⁵ As in his

²²³ Deren continued to film the gestures of hands engaged in various pursuits through the 1940s, including the wrapping of yarn in *Ritual in Transfigured Time* (1946).

²²⁴ *View* 5, no. 1 (March 1945) is the "The Marcel Duchamp Number." The publication is subtitled "The Modern Magazine" by this time, and a famous quotation from Arthur Rimbaud's *Une Saison en Enfer* (1873), "Il faut être absolument modern," appears on the contents page of the Duchamp number, hinting at Ford's poetic proclivities. Stills from Maya Deren's *Witch's Cradle* featuring Duchamp are also part of the special issue, in a sequence of images that move from top to bottom of page 34, where it meets the center gutter. The accompanying caption reads as if from Deren's shooting script, and the vertical sequence looks like a filmstrip without perforations, showing single string constrict around Duchamp's neck like a noose.

²²⁵ The quotations in this paragraph and the next can all be found in Frederick Kiesler, "Les Larves D'Imagie D'Henri Robert Marcel Duchamp" *View* 5, no. 1 (March 1945): 24-31.

contributions to the *VVV* Almanac, Kiesler's instructions for "Les Larves D'Imagie D'Henri Robert Marcel Duchamp" appear in a panel on the page facing the interactive components of what that designer describes as a "Triptych," but there is no need to rotate the page to read them. The text is likewise more straightforward, uninterrupted by the more obtuse interludes that accompany the directions printed in *VVV*. Though Kiesler does note that there might be more to find "between the lines" than he lists amongst the contents of the space he depicts, he states plainly in the first sentence that the unfolded triptych "represents three walls of Duchamp's studio on 14th Street in New York." The bulk of the remaining text then describes what the reader can expect to find upon folding the pages: photographs that Kiesler has photomontaged approximate the artist's workspace; and cut-out sections that merge to create additional facsimiles. Unlike the correalist tool and the translation of a Bretonian object-poem that present each participant-observer with more fluid tactility in *VVV*, the "Poeme Espace dédié à H(ieronymus) Duchamp" in *View* represents a finite directive. To build the replica is to have access to a distinct studio space replete with a mound of crumpled paper, populated with photomechanical versions of Duchamp's standard stoppages and his *Large Glass*, and centered with a portrait of the artist himself, in profile from behind his desk. Kiesler's attempt at interactive encapsulation for *View* thus has more in common with Duchamp's compartmentalization of his homelessness in *Boîte* than with the handheld cinema the designer had created for *VVV*.

Despite differences in Kiesler's contributions to *VVV* and *View*, there are reoccurrences in motifs and language that invite speculation into what the surrealist-adherent journal might have become had it lived to see the victory its title so

enthusiastically prophesied. On the recto of one of the photomontaged triptych panels representing Duchamp's studio, the fine lines of what one surmises is a print in white of the artist's hand outstretched across the horizontal axis of a black ground (fig. 4.19). A rectangular cut-out detail from the *Large Glass* masks the upper palm, and the geometric grid of a chessboard also appears on the page along with two handwritten lines of French in circumflex forms. The hand opens, perhaps poised and prepared to act, between “du mirage des réseaux circonflexes en peinture (from the mirage of circumflex networks in painting)” and “du mirage de la cédille aux échecs (from the mirage of the cedille to chess)”. As with Breton's evocation of the mirage in *VVV*'s first issue, the outstretched hand appears in a moment of possibility, before we have fit together the pieces of Kiesler's design to form a distinct Duchampian space. No matter that this paper studio is a flimsy replica, lacking in functionality. Kiesler's design even manages to right the upended installation shot of *String* from *First Papers* on its final page. And with such infusions of pragmatism, *View* reabsorbs some of the unwieldy bulk of the everyday in a way that *VVV* never could due to ideological vigilance.

In the end, *VVV*'s fluid tactility reflects a historical moment that encouraged a specific strand of magical thinking in the minds of its creators. The preservation of surrealism, writ large, served as the mirage that gave purpose to those who continued to fight for the displaced movement. But as the tactile became tactical, surrealism slipped away from its most loyal guardians to be subsumed into the optical unconscious with cinema as its companion. *VVV*'s synchronicity with Deren's experimental film marks a moment when handheld cinema became fully contingent upon the connection between gesture and imagination—a moment when no medium could guide another.

CHAPTER FIVE

EPILOGUE

As I attempted to think of how to end this first study of handheld cinema, I remembered a photograph. Unlike the *Dust Breeding* image with which I began this text, the one I have in mind now is *not* one you know (fig. 5.1). Unless you are my mother (the initial recipient of the iPhone photo), or you have looked as deeply into my laptop memory as I did in order to track down the file, this particular image may not immediately resonate. But even if the photograph itself divulges none of the details of its production—in a library basement on a dreary day in Vancouver, BC, the Sunday after November 8, 2016—you might find some aspects of the image speak to you anew in light of what you’ve just read.

Perhaps you recognized the title “Les Larves d’Imagie d’Henri Robert Marcel Duchamp” in brushy hand lettering in the photo, and then you flipped back to the final section of the previous chapter to find the reference to the *View* layout pictured. Kiesler’s text, written to accompany his foldout triptych, occupies the center register of the photo, adjacent to a previously unmentioned inset identifying Duchamp as “M.D. emeritus for chronic diseases of the Arts.” Above and below Kiesler’s words, additional typed columns are also readable—but only just. I want to pause here in order to consider these features, the incidentals that make this photo an overdetermined representation, rather than on what I intended to record. For while my image does, in effect, reference an historical example of handheld cinema, this digital photograph of a screen illuminating a

microfilm frame also manifests the medium in our contemporary moment. Or, put slightly differently, now that you are aware of the origins of medium of handheld cinema, the image is equally as interesting for the information that distracts from our view of *View*. In my photograph's visual imperfections and optical noise, there is evidence of handheld cinema's subtle but palpable legacy beyond the examples discussed thus far.

Arrayed across the central register of the photograph, rectangular bars of light overlap the lettering of Kiesler's title to suggest that a reflective layer covers the *View* layout in the frame. The reflection of fluorescent light fixtures on the glassy screens of desktop computers, televisions, tablets, and myriad other devices with viewing windows is likely a familiar sight. You may even be dealing with glare as you read this sentence. The experience of reading digital text on a screen has become so commonplace as to rival the printed page, so commonplace that it is possible to move seamlessly between the two media. This ease with which we are able to shuttle between paper and pixels is based in an aptitude for perceptual displacement that also made handheld cinema possible. Focusing on this screen glare opens a dialogue between handheld cinema and new media that have emerged in the intervening years. But does such a pivot also require that we ignore analogue media of the past in order to have conversation about the digital present?

The primary reason for our inattention to handheld cinema until now lies in the split historical timelines that the medium braided together for a distinct period during and between the wars. In the post-WWII period, as visual art practices continued to dematerialize and the film studio system concurrently solidified, handheld cinema was displaced from both of its formative contexts. However, we must not equate this ontological displacement with disappearance. Like other "chronic diseases of the Arts"

that Kiesler references playfully in *View*, symptoms of handheld cinema's dispersion are still detectable if one accepts the divergent two paths of the medium's legacy.

Handheld cinema clears one path to a method of durational, embodied material analysis that opens beyond dada and surrealism to connect with concurrent as well as subsequent artistic movements and popular culture shifts. Even if the conditions of production in places and times outside of the medium's context do not adhere as specifically to the nascent experience of cinematic reception as in the examples in this study, select qualities of the perceptual experience of handheld cinema provide a basis for comparison. For example, the aesthetic ambiguity of dadaist handheld cinema in *Littérature* and *Mécano* contrasts Hans Richter's more prescriptive, even didactic invocation of cinematic forms in his Berlin-based journal *G: Material zur elementaren Gestaltung* (1923-6).²²⁶ This difference suggests a modification in how dadaist periodical makers perceived the medium of film within just a few years and a short distance traveled between France and Germany. Additionally, correlating the formation of editorial teams composed of writers and artists with the variability of verbal and visual interests in dadaist and surrealist handheld cinema can indicate points of comparison among periodicals produced as part of other modernist movements. It is likewise possible to contrast the participatory requirements of handheld cinema with popular illustrated magazines, such as France's *VU* (1928-40), which can be paracinematic but present references to standardized narrative filmmaking that are more closed to individual interpretation. Or, alternatively, handheld cinema could be envisioned as a precursor to

²²⁶For more on *G: Materials for Elemental Form-Creation*, see my article "Hans Richter's Rhythmus Films in G: the Collective Cinematographic," *InVisible Culture: An Electronic Journal for Visual Culture*, no. 24 (Spring 2016): <https://ivc.lib.rochester.edu/hans-richters-rhythmus-films-in-g-the-collective-cinematographic/>

postwar periodicals like *Radical Software* (1970-4) that take the medium's interactivity a step further.²²⁷ Through developments in motion picture technology, the journal's makers, the Raindance Corporation, instructed readers to make their own movies through self-contained portapaks—in other words, handheld video.

In sum, handheld cinema opens a path for visual and periodical studies to advance research on haptic and kinetic comingling on the printed page. To continue to privilege both touch and movement in analyses of fragile archival material will also require a pairing of physical and digitized resources. That is, until the translation of objects into code can accommodate tactile information. In the meantime, high resolution reproductions of periodicals that are digitized such that issues can be accessed by database users with as much freedom to scroll, click, and zoom as possible seem preferable to the static vitrine displays in most museums. Because no matter whether one observes handheld cinema, handheld video or handheld-but-extra-visual motion in print, periodicals are not static.

The second path of inquiry that handheld cinema guides us toward also involves a refusal of stasis in relation to methodology as well as objects of study. To position handheld cinema's era as a distinct period in the history of cinema would require an extensive revision of a narrative that tends to prioritize film as a storytelling medium. The self-directed, non-linear, medium handheld cinema could thus serve as a crucible in which a new historical model begins to brew. Rather than consistently revisiting a binary that divides prewar and postwar film or mining a lineage of studio system features for

²²⁷ For more on the community-minded corporation that made the magazine, see Elizabeth Coffman, "'VT Is Not TV': The Raindance Reunion in the Digital Age," *Journal of Film and Video* 64, no. 1-2 (Spring/Summer 2012): 65-71.

evidence of current media trends, scholars could instead find precedent for our digitally fragmented cultural sphere in analog technologies in the years preceding their regularization. I suspect that handheld cinema's displacements of film onto the printed page have been repeated over and over again as the mass medium of cinema continues to refuse containment.

A history of cinema that incorporates deviations and realignments would of course appear unwieldy, maybe even untamable, in comparison to stories in which Cinema remains a singular protagonist. Still, if we are ever to write a history of our cinematic past that might help us be more empathetic in the present, we have to sacrifice the comfort of simple stories and confront over a century's worth of media messiness. We've got to resist the temptation to be lulled in to complacency in our search for patterns that distract from the details in between that matter just as much.

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FIGURES



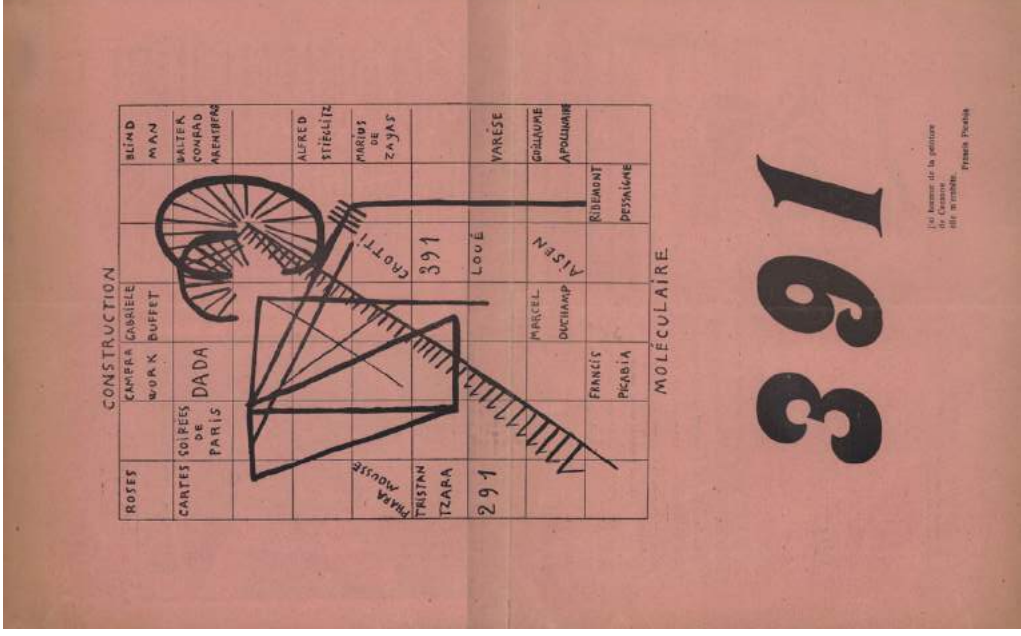
(Fig. 1.1) Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray, *Élevage de poussière (Dust Breeding)*, dated 1920. Gelatin silver print, c. 1967. Via Metropolitan Museum of Art.



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(Fig. 1.3) Front cover of *Minotaure*, no. 6 (1935)
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(Fig. 2.1) Front cover of 391, no. 8 (1919).
Image via <http://sdr.lib.uiowa.edu/dada/391/8/index.htm>

*Étang m'a emporté au Chili
 jamais l'as-tu remarqué
 par intervalles
 penchés d'un ton sec
 qui vous apporte le soleil
 de prédilection du jour sage homme
 d'anges au Purgatoire
 miracle du mariage des yeux cernés
 d'adoration belle sœur les mains pleines
 de sottises du malheur
 plus loin l'as-tu remarqué
 devant lui*

FRANCIS PICABIA

CHRONIQUE ZÜRICH

merde naquit pour la première fois Zurich en fromage - mais le peuple a son art c'est gentil même les théories on craint l'explosion, grande exposition au Kunsthaus : Picabia, Arp, monnaïnes de Guillaume tel et tel de Bauman, etc. autres religiosités, cubisme dans des boîtes d'allumettes, Tr. fait une conférence sur Tz. professeurs etc. projections poème crié grosse caisse accentue grétois gauche on cause interruption sec sobre scientifique statique reprise arrangement chimique explication de à à 6, a o i i e , image de quelques instantanés stellaires les fibres se réunissent encore une fois dans une fête majeure aux soupçons de two-step et de bowle parmi les jambes bien nourries de nos olympiques compagneones, grammophone pour la sagesse de chaque insecte dans son mortel cri-cri et la pénétration biologique dans les sphères de magis et de tranquillité — le Dr. Jung ayant mangé les pieds de son épouse les produits s'appellent psycho-banalyse, et le célèbre futuriste Rubiner prépare un ouvrage sur Jésus en villégiature

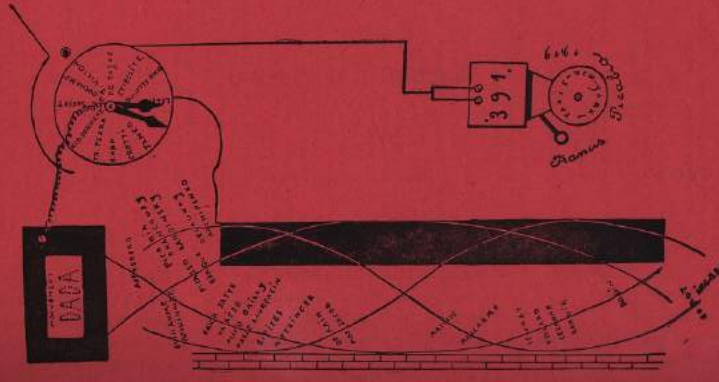
Re-Naissance de 301 numéro 8 revue en voyage fondée à New-York imprimée à Barcelone parue à Zurich

Tourbillon aléatoire l'émission prend proportions Mont-Blanc Manifeste nous voulons nous voulons chier en couleurs diverses pour orner la zoologie de toutes les couleurs des drapaux des consulats les chiens hurlent et la dissection du Panama sur piano sur piano et débarrasser s'en allèrent les jeunes filles et le fonctionnaire de l'amerturne

Tristan Tzara

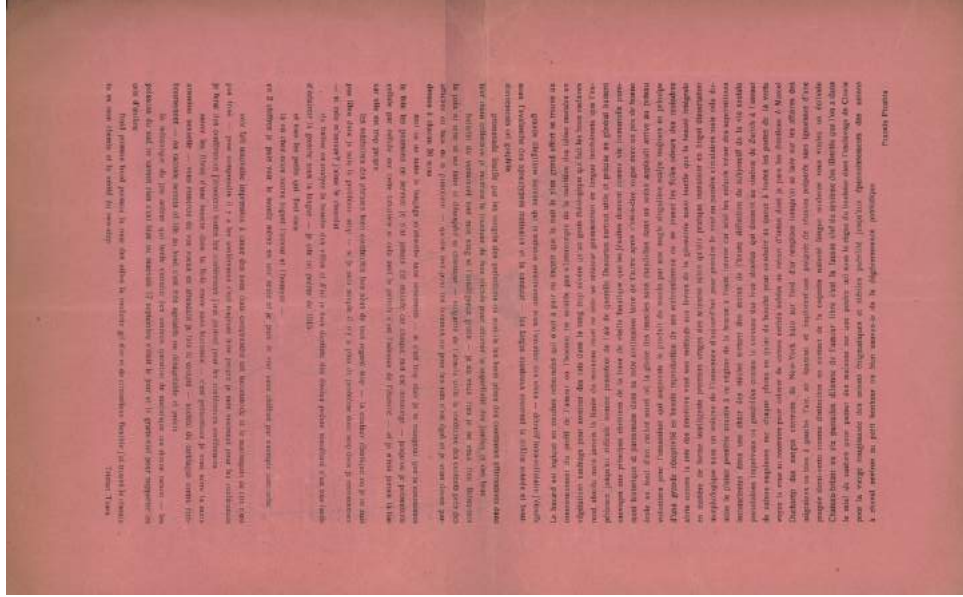
DADA 3
 Tzara: Manifeste Dada 1918. C. Raimondi:
 Sopra un quadro cubista. P. Reverdy: Regard
 Avant l'heure. Fr. Picabia: Salive américaine.
 Abri; (dessin). P. A. Brot: La joie des 7 couleurs. E.
 Frampoint: Bois. Ph. Soupault: Flamme. E. Scharbo:
 Mâra. H. Arp: 8 Bois. P. A. Brot: Croyon Bleu. H.
 Richter: 3 Bois. Tzara: G. Apollinaire: A. Segal: 2 Bois.
 P. Dermeé: Bâton. A. Savinio: Seconde origine de la voie
 lactée. Fr. Picabia: Apollinaire. Tzara: Circuit total. M.
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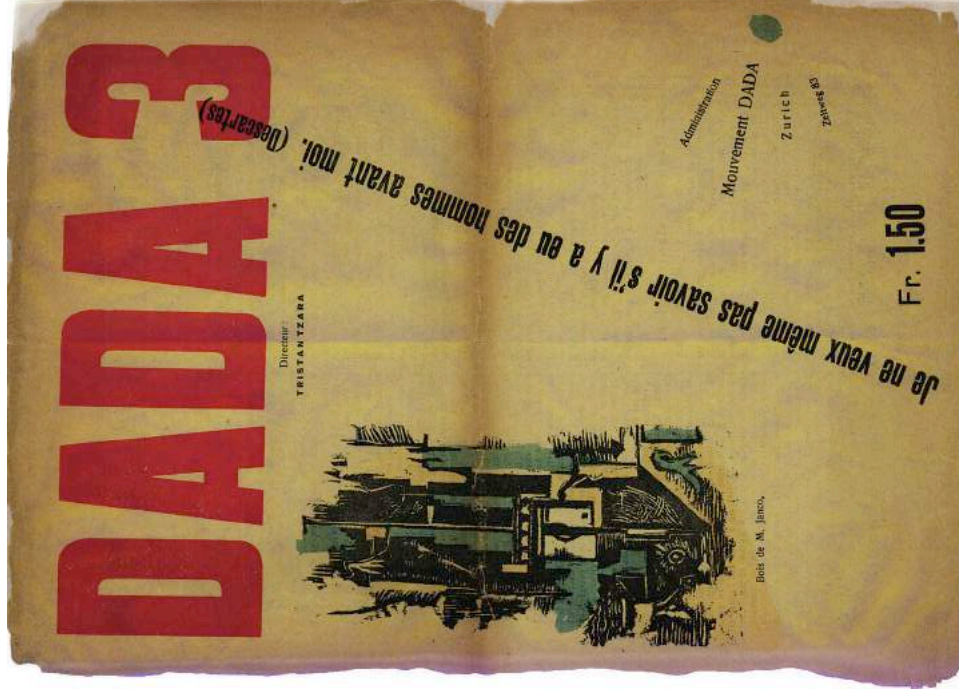


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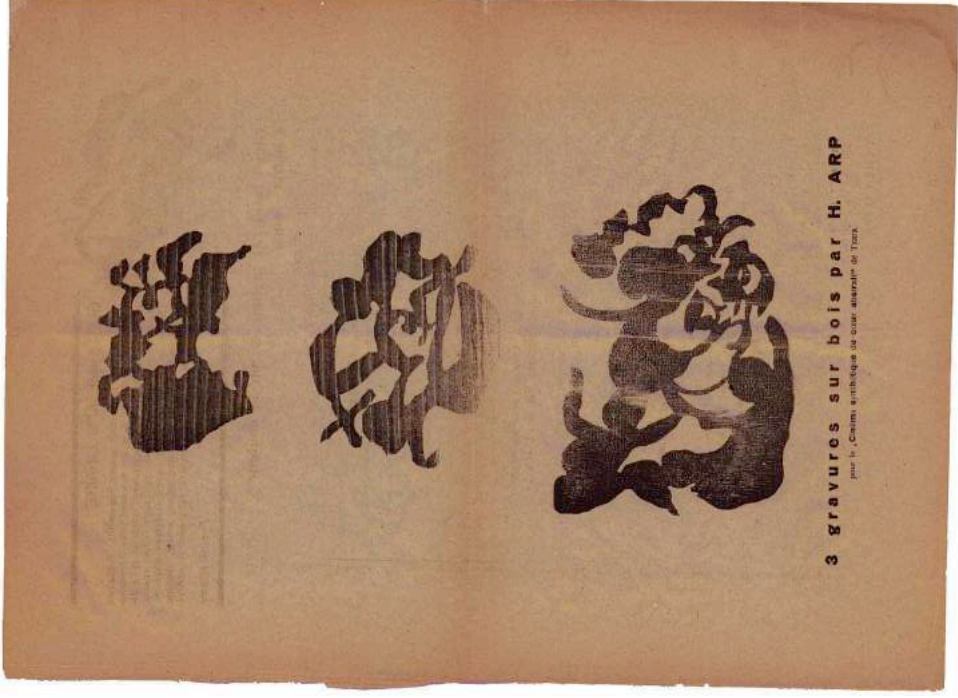
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(Fig. 2.4) Front cover of *Dada 3* (1918).
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(Fig. 2.5) From *Dada 3* (1918).
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W. Kandinsky: *La Tache rouge*
peint avec perm. du "Sturm"

CATASTROPHE

La lumière était artificielle les deux sentiments se sont
rencontrés comme deux trains
Puis les soldats indiens sont passés par dessus
Puis la terre a recommencé à rouler
Puis le métro est reparti
Pierre ALBERT-BIROT

• A plusieurs voix =

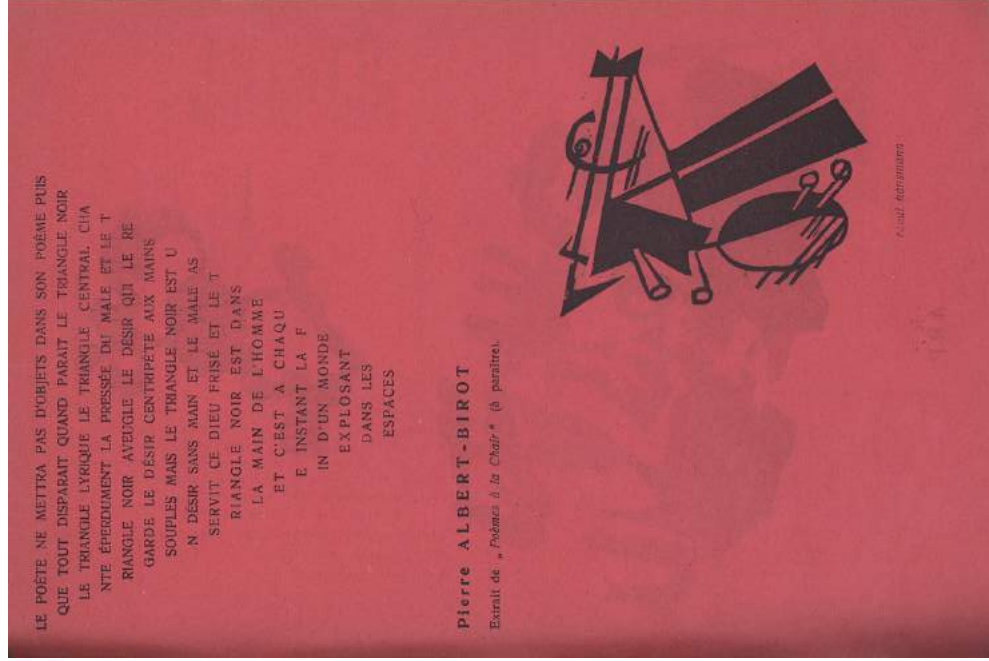
(fragment de Tohu)

Pardou monsieur
le monsieur c'est une dame
tous ces gens réunis sur la plus grande place
ah que je suis malheureux je n'ai qu'une bouche
ne peut en baisser qu'une à six fois
je suis aveugle pourquoi n'ai-je pas comme mon père
ces yeux
j'ai deux yeux ils ne me servent qu'à pleurer
je n'ai que deux yeux si j'en avais quatre peut-
être verrais-je mieux
être Borgne je pleurerais deux fois moins
la lumière ne parcourt que trois cent mille kilomètres à la seconde
quand elle arrivera dans ce pays je serai mort depuis
longtemps hélas! je ne verrais pas clair la lumière sera
pour mes enfants
peut-être si je tue ma sœur j'aurais sa tranche
de soleil
S S S JA RRYE
ph ph brusque éclairage de phare puissant
ô ma femme si laide je la croyais belle elle s'est
sauvée en me voyant
vite des canons
que la lumière fait mal aux yeux
au se se
accours il vient nous assommer avec cela qu'il veut nous faire croire
être de la lumière que vient-il faire ici il faut le tuer, il
n'est pas de notre pays;
Raymond RADIGUET.



H. ARP

(Fig. 2.6) From *Dada* 4-5 (1919).
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cœur de l'homme
n'est perpétuellement
de contre
d'ambiguïté
d'un liquide noir
l'été noir

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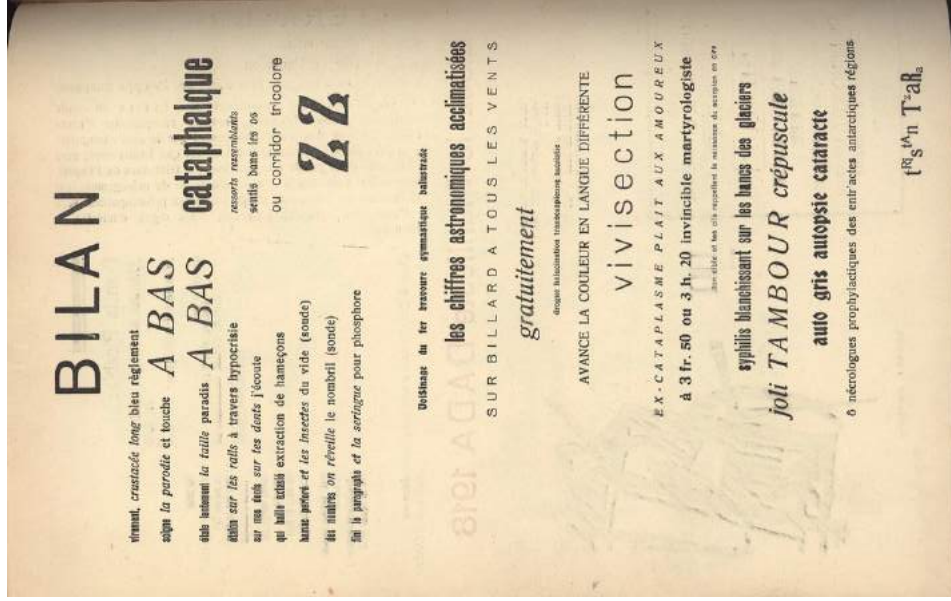
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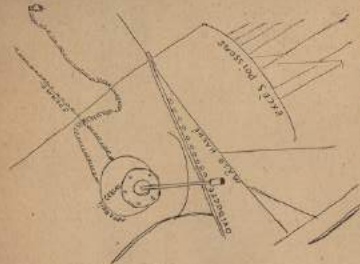
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les femmes s'occupent de
la décoration

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VOUS NE COMPRENEZ PAS
N'EST-CE PAS CE QUE NOUS
FAISONS.
EN BIEN CHERS AMIS NOUS
LE COMPRENONS ENCORE
MOINS.
QUEL BONHEUR REIN VOUS
AVEZ RAISON. J'IMAGINE
COUCHER ENCORE UNE FOIS
AVEC LE PAPE, TOUS NE
COMPRENEZ PAS? MOI NON
PLUS COMME C'EST TRISTE.



Francis PICABIA

à priori c'est-à-dire les yeux
fermés, DADA place avant
l'action et au-dessus de tout :
LE DOUTE. Dada doute de tout.
Dada est tatoué. Tout est DADA.
Méfiez-vous de DADA.
de l'antiphrisicopie.

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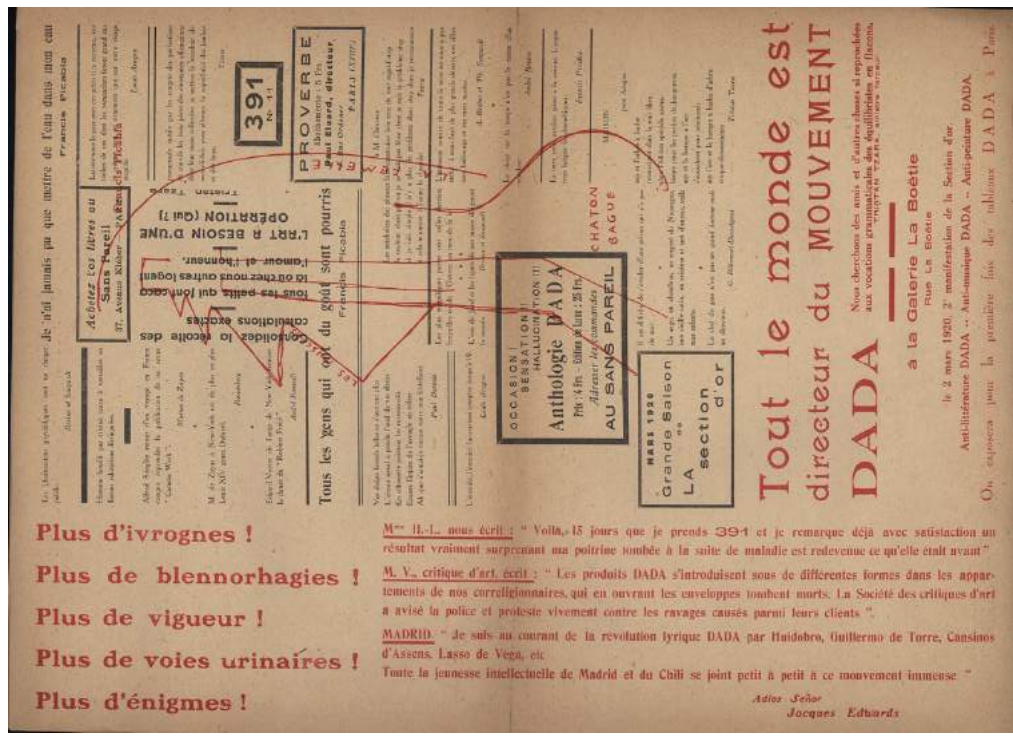
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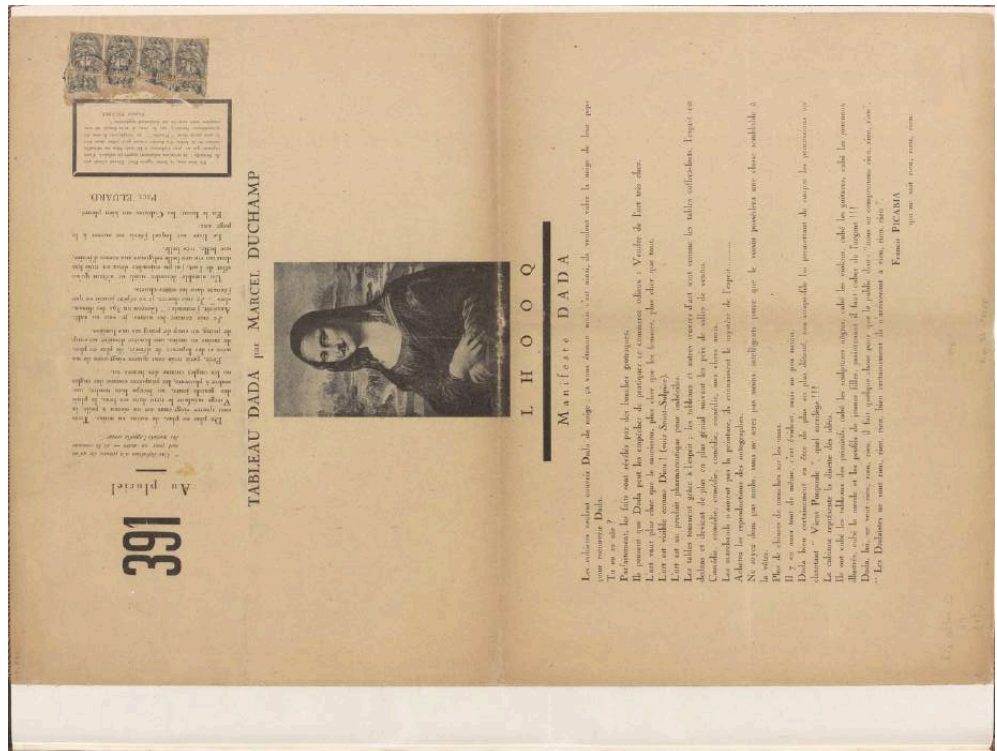
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(Fig. 2.13) Front cover of 391 no. 12 (1920).



(Fig. 2.14) Front cover of 391, no. 19 (1924).
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Pourquoi payer le prix de votre formation ou son ignorance ?
 Pourquoi être en peine si l'on pense.
 Pourquoi payer votre formation ou son ignorance ?
 Pourquoi payer le prix de son ignorance ?
 Pourquoi payer son ignorance ?
 Pourquoi payer son ignorance ?
 Pourquoi payer son ignorance ?
 Pourquoi payer son ignorance ?

Le conscient est l'évolution dernière et l'achèvement du système organique, et par conséquent aussi, ce qu'il a dans ce système de moins achevé et de moins fort.

Un instantané te

En rêve
 Les hordeles font une impression très forte.
 On croit sentir dans un Conservatoire,
 Les trivales justifiant le sublime.
 Le rôle positif d'un être n'est, par conséquent, en
 J'aime la bière et les vases brimés.
 Un homme en costume d'Adam.
 Les chats sont heureux de vivre en dessous des
 La vie est du sentiment.

RENÉ MAGRITTE

LES BALLETS SUÉDOIS DONNERONT
LE 27 NOVEMBRE
AU THÉÂTRE DES CHAMPS ÉLYSÉES
“ RELÂCHE ”

BALLET
 INSTANTANÉISTE
 EN DEUX ACTES, UN ENTR'ACTE CINÉMATOGRAPHIQUE
 ET LA OUIE DU CHIEN
 PAR
FRANCIS PICABIA
 MUSIQUE
 D.
ERIK SATIE
 CHOREGRAPHIE DE **JEAN BORLIN**

Apportez des lunettes noires et de quoi vous boucher les oreilles.
RETENEZ VOS PLACES

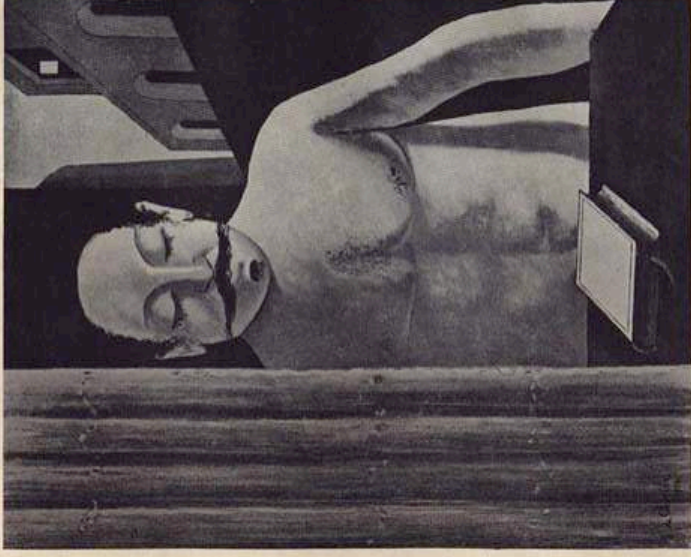
Messieurs, les étudiants sont priés de venir manifester et surtout de voter : * A BAS SATIE ! A BAS PICABIA ! VIVE LA NOUVELLE REVUE FRANÇAISE ! *

“ 391 ”
 N° 19 PRIX : 2 F rs

Dépositaire : " AU SANS PAREIL " 37, Avenue Kléber, PARIS
 Le Gérant, PIERRE DE MASSOT

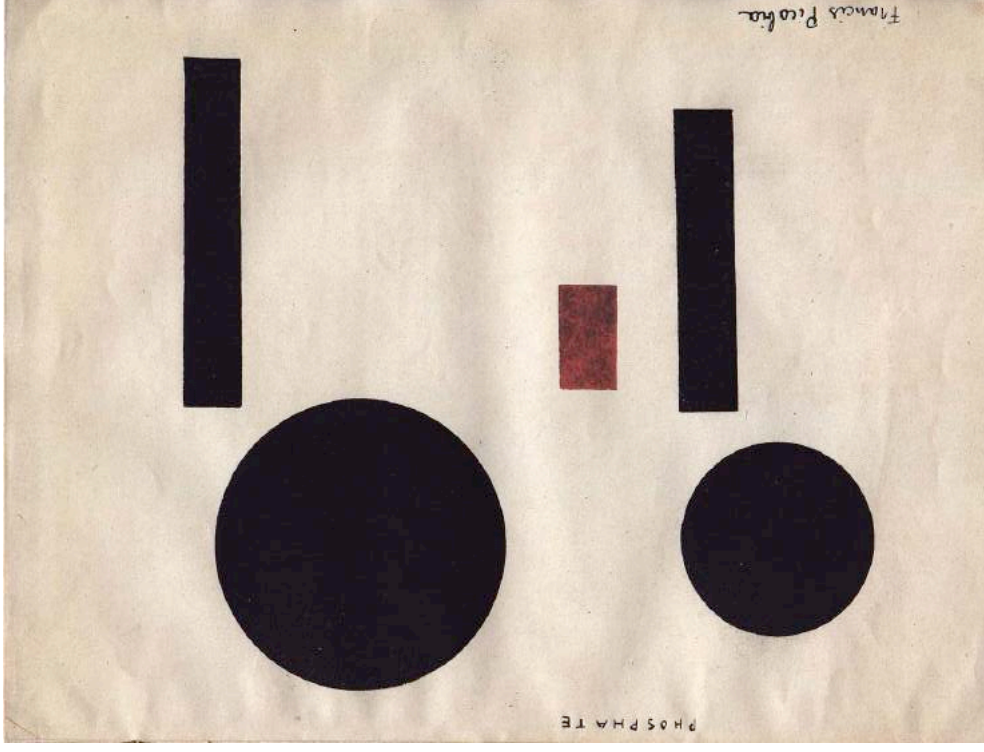
(Fig. 2.15) Back cover of 391, no. 19 (1924).
 Image via <http://sdr.lib.uiowa.edu/dada/391/19/index.htm>

contrôle, sans soupçons, nous avons jeté sur la toile ou sur le papier, tous ces mondes que nous avons peints, dessinés, écrits chantés, et qui sont votre poésie, celle d'Apollinaire et de quelques autres, mes peintures, celles de Picasso, de Derain et de quelques autres, ils sont tous jours là, mon cher ami, et on n'a pas encore dit sur eux le dernier mot : l'avenir les jugera bien mieux que ne font nos contemporains et nous pouvons dormir tranquilles. Mais une question, un problème me tourmente depuis bientôt trois ans : le problème du *miel*. C'est pour cela que je me suis mis à copier dans les musées : qu'à Florence et à Rome j'ai passé des journées entières, en été et en hiver, auprès des maîtres des XIV^e et XV^e siècles italiens, les étudiant et les copiant ; je me suis enfoncé dans la lecture des anciens traités de peinture et j'ai vu, oui j'ai vu enfin, que des choses terribles se passent aujourd'hui en peinture, et que si les peintres continuant sur cette voie, nous allons vers la lin. D'abord j'ai découvert, je dis découvert, parce que je suis le seul à le dire, que la maladie chronique et mortelle de la peinture aujourd'hui est l'huile, l'huile qu'on croit la base de toute bonne peinture. Antonello de Messine qui, d'après l'histoire, aurait apporté en Italie, des Flandres, le secret de la peinture à l'huile, n'a jamais fait cela : ce qu'on tendu se base sur le fait que les Flamands, surtout les frères Van Eyck, usaient pour repasser avec des glacis sur leur tempera, la minuscule où l'huile de lin ou de noix entrail en petite partie, mais qu'ils ne de leur peinture était la tempera ou détrempé à l'aquele. Ils n'avaient qu'un quefois des huiles et surtout des résines ou, d'autres, maîtres encore, comme je miel, la caséine, le lait de figuier, etc. ; ainsi j'ai peint, sans aucun doute, Durer, Holbein, Raphael, Pietro Perugino, et je crois que même Rubens et Titien n'ont jamais *peint à l'huile* comme on l'a écrit aujourd'hui. Lorsque j'eus compris cela, je me mis, avec la patience d'un alchimiste à filtrer mes verres, à brayer mes couleurs, à préparer mes toiles et mes planches et je vis la différence énorme qui en résultait : le mystère de la couleur, la lumière, l'éclat, toute la magie de la peinture (qui, soit dit sans vous fatiguer, vous ennuier qui soit toutes ces est, selon moi, l'art le plus compliqué et le plus intelligemment comme échafaudage d'une lumière nouvelle et je pense avec méfiance aux impressionnistes, aux Monet, aux Shubert, aux Bissau, à tous les peintres qui ont cru pouvoir résoudre avec leur technique le problème de la lumière, tandis que sur leur palette ils partaient la source même des ténèbres. Et j'ai peint aussi : je peins plus lentement, c'est vrai, mais combien mieux ! J'ai fait dernièrement un portrait par moi-même, dont je vous enverrai la photo : c'est une chose qui pourrait figurer au Louvre, je ne le dis pas pour me vanter, mais parce que je le pense. Excusez ma lon-



G. de Chirico : Le Cerveau de l'Enfant

(Fig. 2.16) *Littérature*, no. 1 NS (1922): 14-unpaginated image.
Image via <http://sdrclib.uiowa.edu/dada/litterature/1ns/index.htm>



(Fig. 2.17) *Littérature*, no. 6 NS (1922): unpaginated.
<http://sdrclib.uiowa.edu/dada/litterature/6ns/index.htm>

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programme :

1. **présentation des dadas** par Mac ROBBER
2. **le ventriloque désaccordé** par Paul DERMÉE
 parade en un acte de G. RIBEMONT-DESSAIGNES
 Personnages : le ventriloque, le maître, le soldat, une jeune fille... un lionne
3. **pas de la chicorée frisée** par Tristan TZARA
 Interprété au piano par Mlle Marguerite Buffet
4. **dadaphone**

11

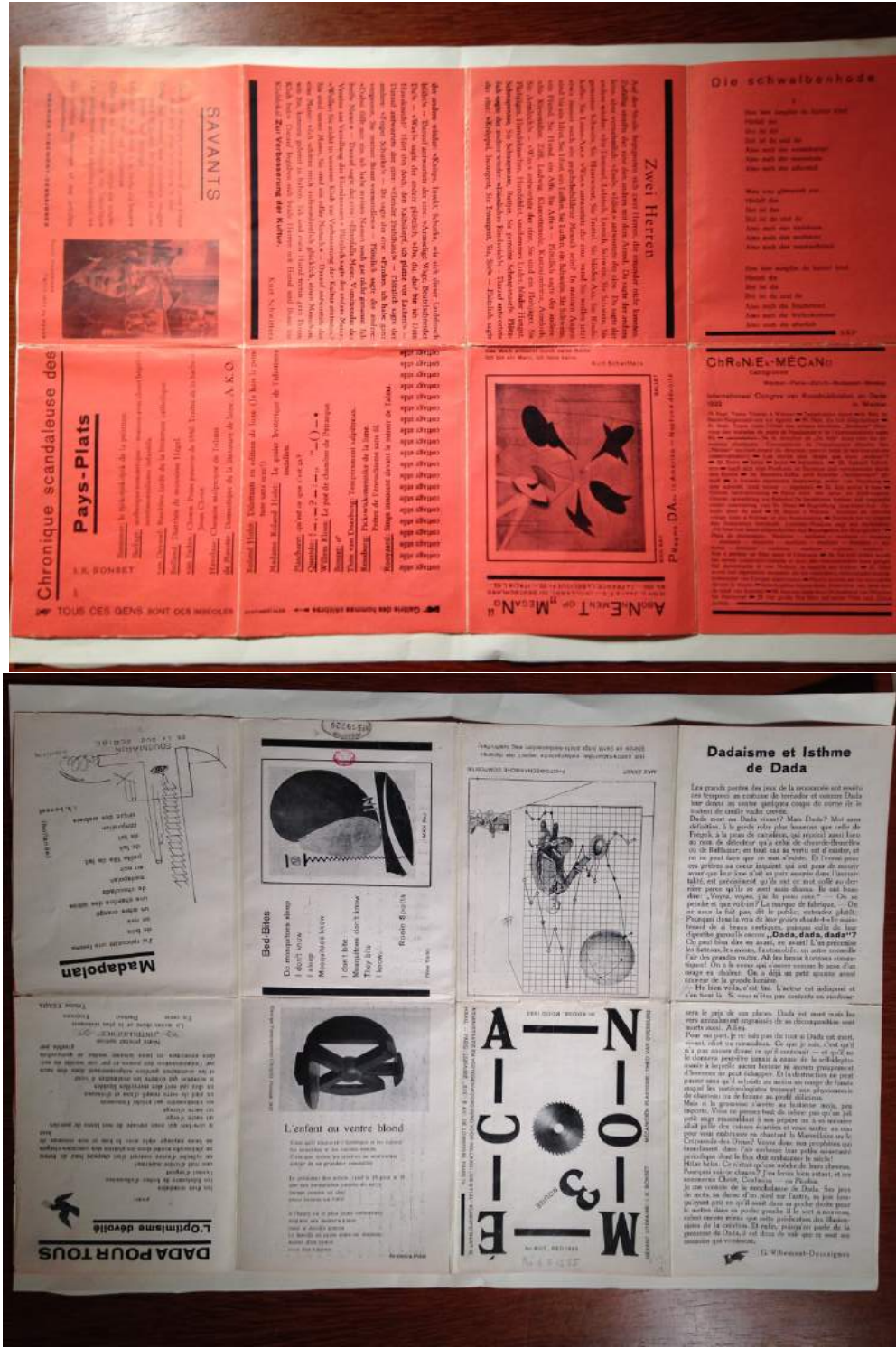
1. **manifeste cannibale dans l'obscurité**
 Lu par André Breton et accompagné au piano par Mlle Marguerite Buffet
 Texte et Musique de Francis PICABIA
2. **tours de prestidigitation** par Louis ARAGON
3. **dernières Créations Dada** par MUSIDORA
4. **manifeste** par Philippe SOUPAULT
5. **le serin muet**
 pièce en un acte de G. RIBEMONT-DESSAIGNES
 Personnages : André Breton, Mlle Lucien Buisson, Ph. Soupault
1. **si l vous plaît**
 Comédie de André BRETON et Philippe SOUPAULT
 Personnages : L. Eddu, A. Breton, Mlle L. Doyon, Une Photographie, Un Journal, Un Magasinier, Ph. Soupault
2. **e emples** par Paul ELUARD
3. **manifeste à l'huile** par Georges RIBEMONT-DESSAIGNES
4. **tableau** par Francis PICABIA
5. **la première Aventure céleste de M, Antipyrine**
 Double quadrilogue de Tristan TZARA
 Personnages : Ph. Soupault, M. Antipyrine, André Breton, Y. Cendrars, N. G. G. G., T. T. T. T., Paul Eluard, T. T. T. T.

VIENT DE PARAITRE : DADAPHONE N° 7. PRIX : 1 FR. 50
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DADA société anonyme pour l'exploitation des idées

(Fig. 2.18) From *Dada*, no. 7 (1920).
 Image via <http://sdr.lib.uiowa.edu/dada/dada/7/index.htm>.

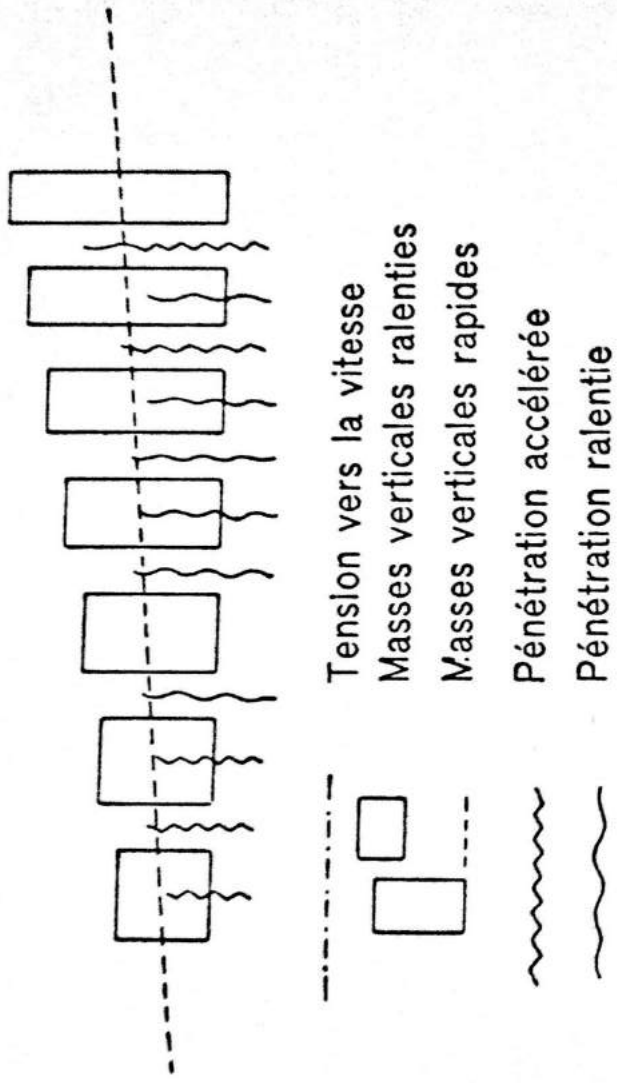


(Fig. 2.19-20) Two sides of unfolded *Mécano*, no. 3 “Red Number” (1922). Photo by author. Images courtesy of Bibliothèque nationale de France. Please do not circulate.



(Figs. 2.21-23) Front cover and page spreads from *Mécano*, no. 4-5 “White Number” (1923). Photo by author. Images courtesy of Bibliothèque nationale de France. Please do not circulate.

GRAPHIQUE DE CONSTRUCTIONS



(Fig. 2.24) Reproduction of Fernand Léger's diagram in Frederick Kiesler's *Internationale Ausstellung neuer Theatertechnik, Katalog, Programm, Almanach* (1924)



(Fig. 2.25) Still from *Ballet Mécanique* (1924) via EYE Film Instituut Nederlands digitization. Please do not circulate.



(Fig. 2.26) Front cover of 391 no. 7 (1917).



PAUL GUANANT ET BUCHERON. — PHOTO J.-M. BOUTARD.

CHRONIQUE

VARIÉTÉS

L'ESPRIT MODERNE ET LE JEU DES TRANPOSITIONS

Roger Vitrac, lorsqu'il a dénoncé dans *L'Intransigeant* (17 mars 1931) la faillite de *l'esprit moderne* n'a peut-être pas encore entièrement pris conscience de la gravité de son diagnostic. Il n'est pas sûr qu'il ait pu saisir tout ce que son œuvre qui ont relevé de cet esprit mais bien de marquer, alors que rien de traitement nouveau ne peut encore les remplacer, à quel point elles sont étudiées aujourd'hui en arrière. Les impulsions du monde moderne ont été, en fait, le résultat d'un fait autre que celui de les supporter et il est devenu impossible de les confondre (comme nous sommes beaucoup à l'avoir fait, jusqu'en 1928) avec les images beaucoup plus inquiétantes que forment un déformement des objets réels (ceci sans jamais sans considération pour la modernité naturelle ou pour le bon goût). Les œuvres des plus grands peintres modernes appartiennent si l'on veut à l'histoire de l'art, peut-être même à la période la plus libre de son histoire, mais il n'y a pas eu plus de liberté d'écritures, cela est évident, que pas pour en vivre d'images infiniment plus obscures.

Sous sa forme la plus accomplie, l'esprit moderne (celui qui a été le plus développé) n'a pu se développer sur un malentendu tel qu'il devait normalement cesser d'être sans une bien longue transition. Mais indépendamment de la volonté des théoriciens, il se trouve que les hommes de lettres engagés qu'il ne semble car ils ont surtout fait preuve d'inconsistance de la volonté, des transpositions symboliques ont été mises en avant dans tous les domaines avec l'insistance la plus pacifique. Le caractère spécifique de ces transpositions est méconnu avec une si grande inconscience qu'il a longtemps été difficile de choisir entre le caractère

éclatant d'une telle naïveté et la vésicé que représentait au fond l'intérêt marqué pour le jeu des transpositions.

Il faut dire que cette vésicé, cette lésion, est très exactement conforme à la nature humaine en ce qui concerne la partie visible, mais pas par exemple que le monde invisible du corps. Mais, d'autre part, le mécanisme même de l'hypocrisie pourrait assez justement être représenté comme un simple recat pour mieux sauter. Personne ne s'intéresse plus aujourd'hui au jeu des transpositions, mais on s'intéresse par ailleurs d'une façon plus conventionnelle et plus sûre, en se contentant de sembler à sauter...

Et réduit, cela peut être dit dans le sens le plus simple du mot, car personne n'en a la moindre idée. Il faut donc dire que l'homme moderne qui peut être mis en avant n'est de nature à tenir si peu que ce soit. Ainsi les photographes qui se trouvent réunis dans cet article (et que le hasard rassemble plus encore qu'une volonté qui ne se passe pas par l'imagination) ont évidemment la même de l'imagination actuelle. Ce qui fait que les quelques formes qui permettent de disposer, assez gratuitement il est vrai, de la lettre censée par la mort ou la pourriture, le sang qui coule, les yeux qui se ferment, les lèvres qui se dessèchent, ne prennent sur lui d'en disposer autrement que d'une façon parfaitement rhétorique ?

Le peu d'intérêt que présente relativement l'illustration de ces quelques pages marquée assez faiblement par les images liquides se trouvent placés aujourd'hui ceux qui, dans les autres, se trouvent avoir à manipuler et à transformer les tristes feuillets encore destinés à nous énoirer. Ainsi l'usage que des moines faisaient des cadavres de ceux qui les avaient précédés est devenu, dans l'usage moderne, un usage comme l'exemple de la vanité de tout effort pour suivre dans le même sens. Nous sommes loin des

(Fig. 3.1) From Georges Bataille, "L'Esprit Moderne et le Jeu des Transpositions" *Documents* 2, no. 8 (1930/1): 488-89. Reprint via Editions Jean-Michel Place (Paris, 1991).

sauvages qui lors d'énormes fêtes suspendent les crânes de leurs ancêtres à des nœuds de coasse, ne savent pas employer le sang ou les os à rompre d'un poce au moment où la tête esgorée vomit son sang et ses entrailles, ou à faire passer dans le tube digestif de l'homme et du bœuf des substances animales et humaines coagulées autour de mores. Mais nous autres hommes nous faisons les savants disciples de ces hommes fabuleux qui sont les seuls dieux d'un homme moderne dont la respiration pourrait nous survivre.

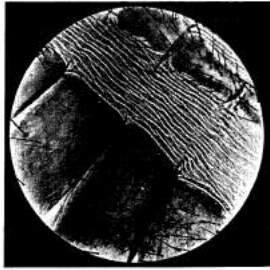


14800. VAINTE-MARIE, DE LA CONCEPTION À BORG, L'ESPÉRANCE, SAINTS ANGES.

La régularité de jours qui se perdent pour nous comme le contenu d'un tonneau mal joint. Le jeu de l'homme et de sa propre pourriture se joue sur un plateau qui se déplace sans cesse. L'un est l'ennemi de l'autre, il semble que jamais nous ne pourrions nous trouver en face de l'image grandiose d'une décomposition dont le risque intervenait à chaque souffle et pourtant le sans trêve d'une vie qui nous arrache dans la mort. Je ne suis pas un homme parfait, mais ne savons pourquoi, à cette d'un

dernie. Cette servitude se poursuit dans tous les lieux où un être normal peut encore se rendre. On entre chez le marchand de tableaux comme chez un pharmacien, on queue et on est bien pénalisé pour des maladies évitables.

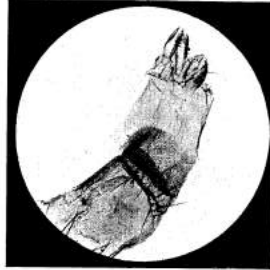
Un certain caractère public disqualifie — avant terme — toute espèce d'effort pour échapper à cette laillite. Ce qu'on aime vraiment, on l'aime surtout dans la mort. Je ne suis pas un homme parfait, mais ne savons pourquoi, à cette d'un



félicité aime une chaussure. Je ne crois pas introduire ici d'absurdes raffinements : je pense avec tout ce qu'il y a jamais eu jusqu'ici d'hommes en cuir, en bois, en métal, en os, en pierre, devant les horreurs multiples de la vie, c'est une volonté d'homme qui perd la tête, qui peut seule permettre d'affronter brutalement ce que tous les autres fuient. L'opini modernité n'a

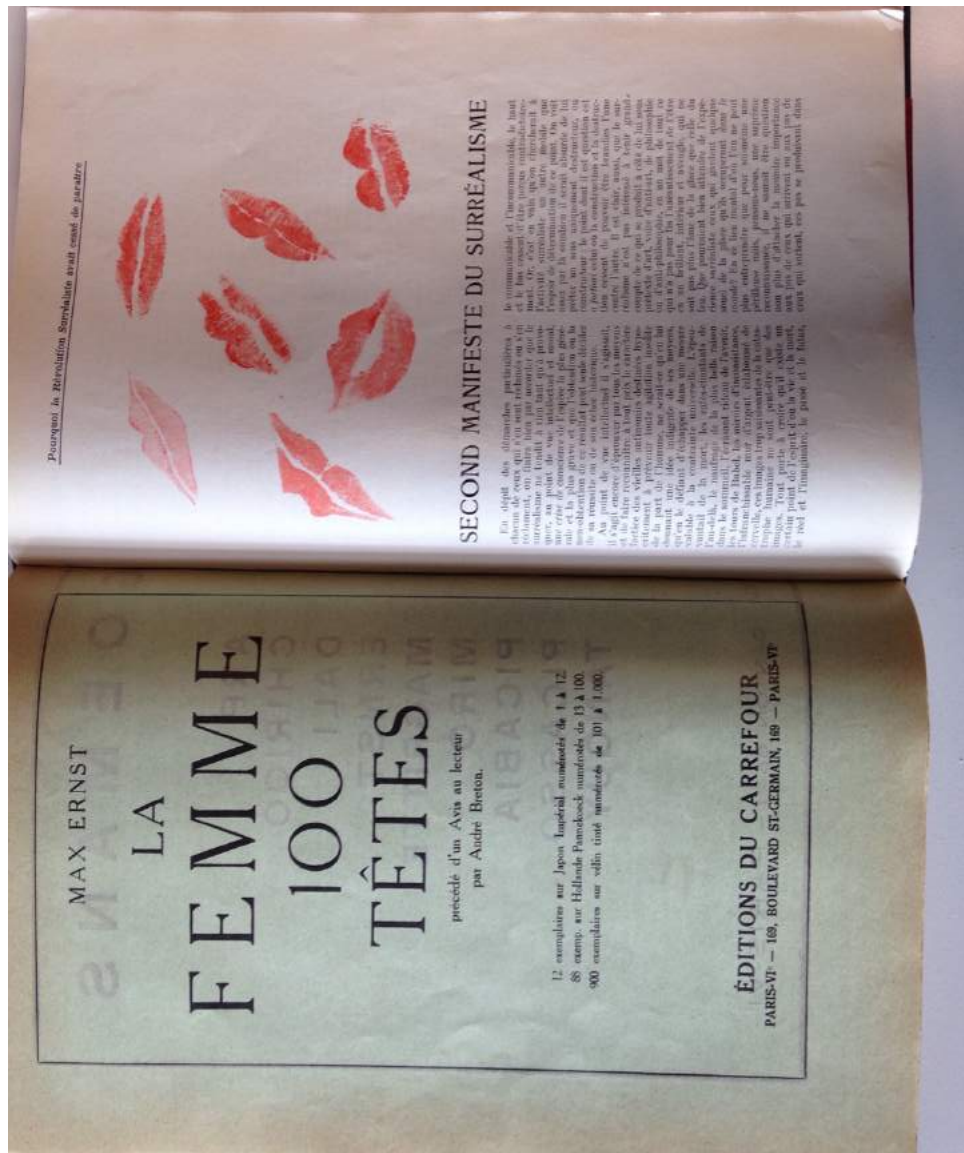


C'est la volonté soudaine, intervenant comme un coup de vent nocturne qui ouvre une fenêtre, de vivre, même seulement une ou deux petites minutes, en sautant par-dessus les horreurs de la vie, c'est une volonté d'homme qui perd la tête, qui peut seule permettre d'affronter brutalement ce que tous les autres fuient. L'opini modernité n'a



14911. HÉLÈNE (COMPOSITIONS N° 1, 27, 28) EN HAUTE ET 47 EN BAS D'ANDRÉ BRETON. — PHOTON DE L'INSTITUT DES MÉTIERS D'ART.

(Fig. 3.2) From Georges Bataille, "L'Esprit Moderne et le Jeu des Transpositions" *Documents* 2, no. 8 (1930/1): 490-91. Reprint via Editions Jean-Michel Place (Paris, 1991).



(Fig. 3.3) From André Breton, “Second Manifeste du Surréalisme,” *La Révolution Surréaliste*, no. 12 (December 1929): 1. Photo by author. Image courtesy of La Bibliothèque Kandinsky du Musée national d'art moderne/CCI, Centre Pompidou. Please do not circulate.

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Heinrich EHL, L'heure de naissance de l'art européen occidental. — Georges BATAILLE, La mutilation sacrificielle et l'oreille coupée de Vincent Van Gogh. — Michel LEIRIS, Le "caput mortuum" ou la femme de l'alchimiste. — Jean BOURDELLETTE, Franz Xaver Messerschmidt. — Zdenko REICH, Le massacre des porcs. — Carl EINSTEIN, L'enfance néolithique [Hans Arp]. — Une légende des Iroquois : la Grande Tête.

Chronique par G. Bataille, Maurice Lenhardt, Jacques Prévert.

Photographies de J.-A. Boiffard et de l'Institut de Micrographie.

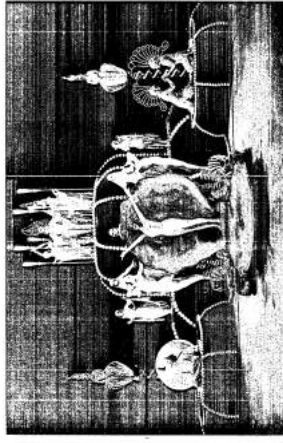
PARIS,

106, B^d Saint-Germain (VI)

(Fig. 3.4) Front covers of *Documents* 1, no. 1 (April 1929) and *Documents* 2, no. 8 (1930/1).
Reprint via Editions Jean-Michel Place (Paris, 1991).



La Saoua pendant l'hiver (1920-21) (cf. ci-dessus).



Un des rituels du feu pendant "l'été" (Hajjassid coïte).

veilleurs, la Saoua solidifiée tendit au-dessus son écran d'eau glacée, au passage des voitures, des passants et des animaux. Les hommes, les femmes, les enfants, les bœufs, les chèvres, les moutons, les chiens, les chats, les oiseaux, les insectes, tout ce qui est vivant, se cramponnait aux bords de la Saoua, comme à un pont de bois, et attendait que le vent emporte la Saoua vers le ciel. C'est ainsi que la Saoua se transformait en un pont de bois qui permettait à tous de traverser la Saoua sans danger. C'est ainsi que la Saoua se transformait en un pont de bois qui permettait à tous de traverser la Saoua sans danger.

Si le fleuve dégelait, c'en serait fait de ce trafic qui nous attire, de cette gigantesque circulation de denrées plus de dix kilomètres. Pour sortir de ce marécage, nous devons traverser le fleuve, ce qui est un véritable défi. C'est pourquoi, pendant l'hiver, les hommes et les animaux se rassemblent sur les rives du fleuve, attendant que le vent emporte la Saoua vers le ciel. C'est ainsi que la Saoua se transformait en un pont de bois qui permettait à tous de traverser la Saoua sans danger.

INFORME — Un éléphant, appartenant à un parti du moment où il se déplaçait plus à l'est, se trouva dans une situation difficile. Il avait besoin d'eau et de nourriture. Il se dirigea vers le sud, dans la direction de la Saoua. C'est ainsi que la Saoua se transformait en un pont de bois qui permettait à tous de traverser la Saoua sans danger.

même, puisqu'il avait la bouche — qui est le signe visible de l'intelligence — et qu'il savait se servir de ses sens pour trouver sa nourriture.

Le cruchet est enfin, par son inconscience, son caractère indifférent, l'opposition relative de sa condition, son état de dépendance, à son rôle de vase sacré.

En effet, la vie aujourd'hui se trouve liée et gelée dans une Saoua qui est un véritable défi. C'est pourquoi, pendant l'hiver, les hommes et les animaux se rassemblent sur les rives du fleuve, attendant que le vent emporte la Saoua vers le ciel.

(Fig. 3.5) From "Dictionnaire Critique," Documents 1, no. 7 (Dec 1929): 382-3. Reprint via Editions Jean-Michel Place (Paris, 1991).



Aux abattoirs de La Villette (61, p. 329). — Photo Eli Lotar.



1. Tête de arrette; 2. Tête de cralle. (61, p. 332). — Film Jean Ponthévé (1927).

(Fig. 3.7) From "Dictionnaire," *Documents* 1, no. 6 (November 1929): 330-31.
Reprint via Editions Jean-Michel Place (Paris, 1991).



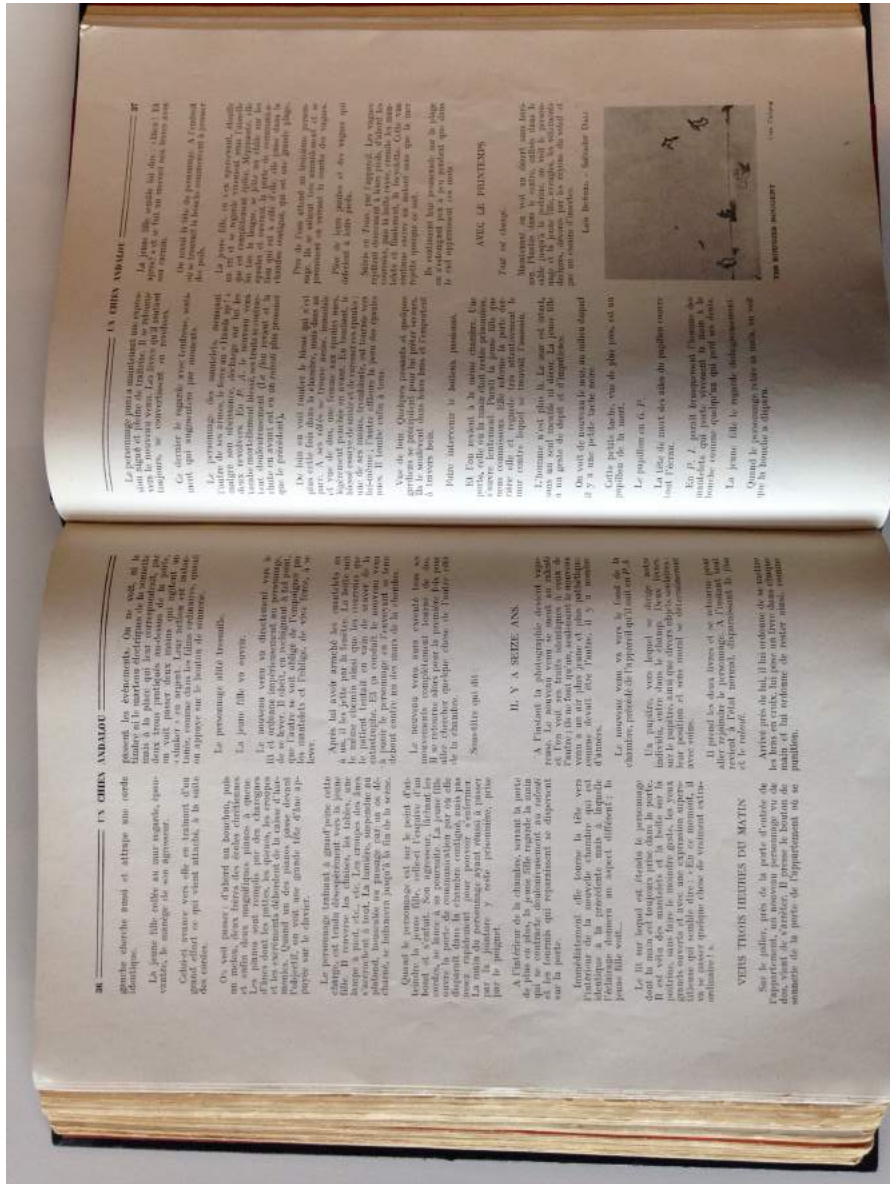
(Figs. 3.8-11) Stills from Jean Painlevé, *Les Oursins*, 1929. 10 m. B/W Silent Film. Via *Science Is Fiction: 23 Films by Jean Painlevé*.

Le maximum de grossissement des vues prises au microciné, est de 200.000 fois sur un écran normal de 2 m. 70 sur 3 m. 60.

A black and white still showing a person's shadow cast on a wall. The shadow is elongated and appears to be holding a long object, possibly a telescope or a camera.



(Figs. 3.12-13) Stills from Jean Painlevé, *Les Oursins*, 1929. 10 m. B/W Silent Film.
Via *Science Is Fiction: 23 Films by Jean Painlevé*.



(Fig. 3.14) Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí, "Un Chien Andalou," *La Révolution Surréaliste*, no. 12 (December 1929): 36-37. Photo by author. Image courtesy of La Bibliothèque Kandinsky du Musée national d'art moderne/CCI, Centre Pompidou.

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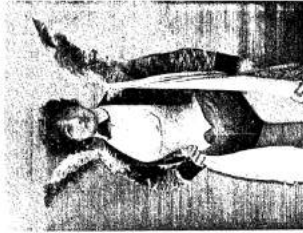


MARIAGE, SENNELET-MARNE (VERS 1945).

FIGURE HUMAINE

Faute sans doute d'indications suffisantes, nous devons citer une seule époque où la forme humaine s'est accrue dans l'ensemble comme une évasion générale de tout ce que l'homme a pu concevoir de grand et de violent. Qu'il en résulte aujourd'hui, dans un tout autre sens, un éclat de rire aussi naïf que tranchant, la simple vue (par la photographie) de ceux qui nous ont précédés immédiatement dans l'occupation de cette contrée n'en est pas moins hideuse. Sortis (mais en parlons comme du sein maternel) des tristes chambres où tout avait été disposé par ces vaniteux fantômes, non excepté l'odeur de la poussière rance, le plus clair de notre temps s'est passé, semble-t-il, à effacer jusqu'à la plus petite trace de cette honteuse ascendance. Mais comme, en d'autres lieux, les âmes des morts poursuivent ceux qui sont isolés dans la campagne, prenant l'aspect misérable d'un cadavre à demi décomposé (dans les îles cannibales de Polynésie, s'ils cherchent les vivants, c'est pour manger) ici, quand un malheureux jeune homme est livré à la solitude morale, les images de ceux qui l'ont devancé dans la plus fatigante absurdité surgissent à l'occasion de chaque exaltation insolite, juxtaposant leur souillure sévère aux plus charmantes visions, faisant servir les pures échappées du ciel à ce qu'on ne sait quelles comiques messes noires (où Susan serait le sergent de ville, d'une opérette, les hurlements des possédés des entechats).

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MADMOISELLE DE RIGNY.



MADMOISELLE CÉCILE BOREL.



MADMOISELLE LANGOIX, DE L'ILDOBAHO.



MADMOISELLE EBONI, DANS "LE VOYAGE DANS LA LUNE".

(Fig. 3.16) Georges Bataille, "Figure Humaine," *Documents* 1, no. 4 (September 1929): 194-95. Reprint via Editions Jean-Michel Place (Paris, 1991).

que nous discernons aujourd'hui clairement. Et bien entendu, seul le caractère spécifique de cet aspect humain révèle ici en question. Il serait possible aujourd'hui encore de donner une signification identique à certaines personnes rencontrées, mais, dans ce cas, il s'agit de faits plus ou moins communs à toutes les époques; le paradoxe semble et l'outrage contradictoire involontaire se sont donnés libre cours jusqu'aux premières années du XIX^e siècle seulement et personne n'ignore que, depuis lors, les efforts les plus obstinés ont été faits par le blanc et le blanc pour retrouver enfin figure humaine. Les corsets de cette époque de la révolution ont été inventés par les femmes qui ont si longtemps mis le chapeau de leurs époux. On a vu des femmes qui ont si longtemps servi, derrière les bambas, à donner quelques embarras aux femmes qui ont si longtemps plus que les affreux corsets de beaux vieillards effrénés, qui — agaçant chaque jour d'étranges melons gris — rêvent obstinément d'étrangler un torse muet dans le jeu obédient des baléines et des lacets... Et il y a probablement un cri de coq étouffé, mais grésillant dans la phrase où le globe terrestre apparaît à nos yeux sous les talons d'une éblouissante star américaine en maillot de bain.

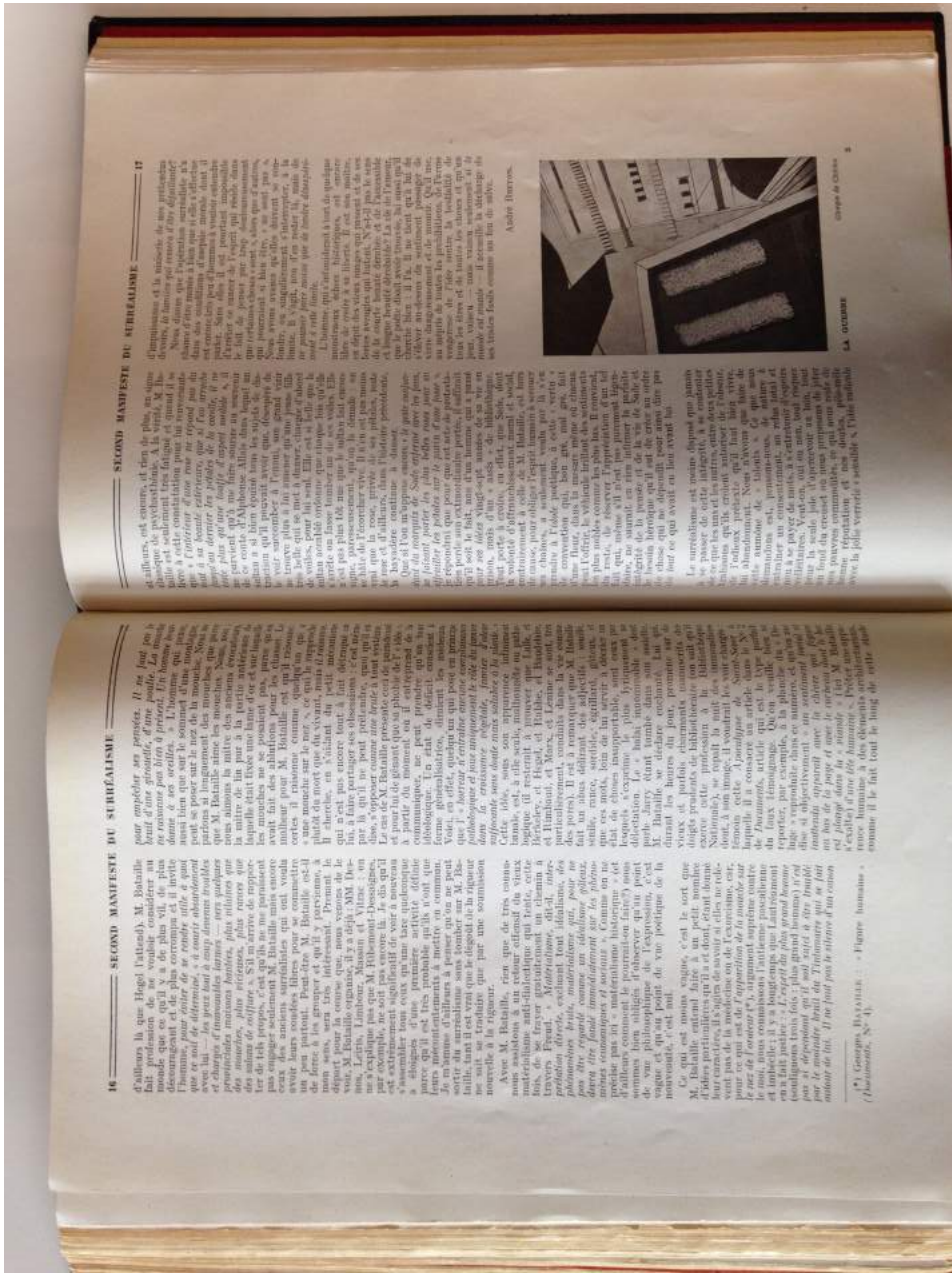
Pourquoi, en effet, aurait-on la pudeur d'une aussi brusque fascination? Pourquoi cacher que les rares espoirs présents qui subsistent sont décrits par les corps nus de quelques jeunes filles américaines? Que si quelque chose pouvait encore arracher des sanglots de tout ce qui a si récemment disparu, ce n'est plus la beauté de quelque grande comédienne, mais seulement une hallucination et sorcellerie pervertie. A nos yeux tant d'étranges personnages, monstrueux seulement à demi, apparaissent encore animés des mouvements les plus mais, après comme un carillon de boîte à musique par autant de vices innocents, de chakras égrillards, de vapeurs lyriques... En sorte qu'il n'est absolument pas question, en dépit de toute obsession contraire, de se passer de cette odieuse lueur, et que, quelque part encore, nous nous surprendrions à courir absurdement — les yeux tout à coup devenus troubles et chargés d'inavouables larmes — vers quelques provinciales maisons hantées, plus vilaines que des mouches, plus vicieuses, plus rances que des salons de coiffure.

Georges BATAILLE.

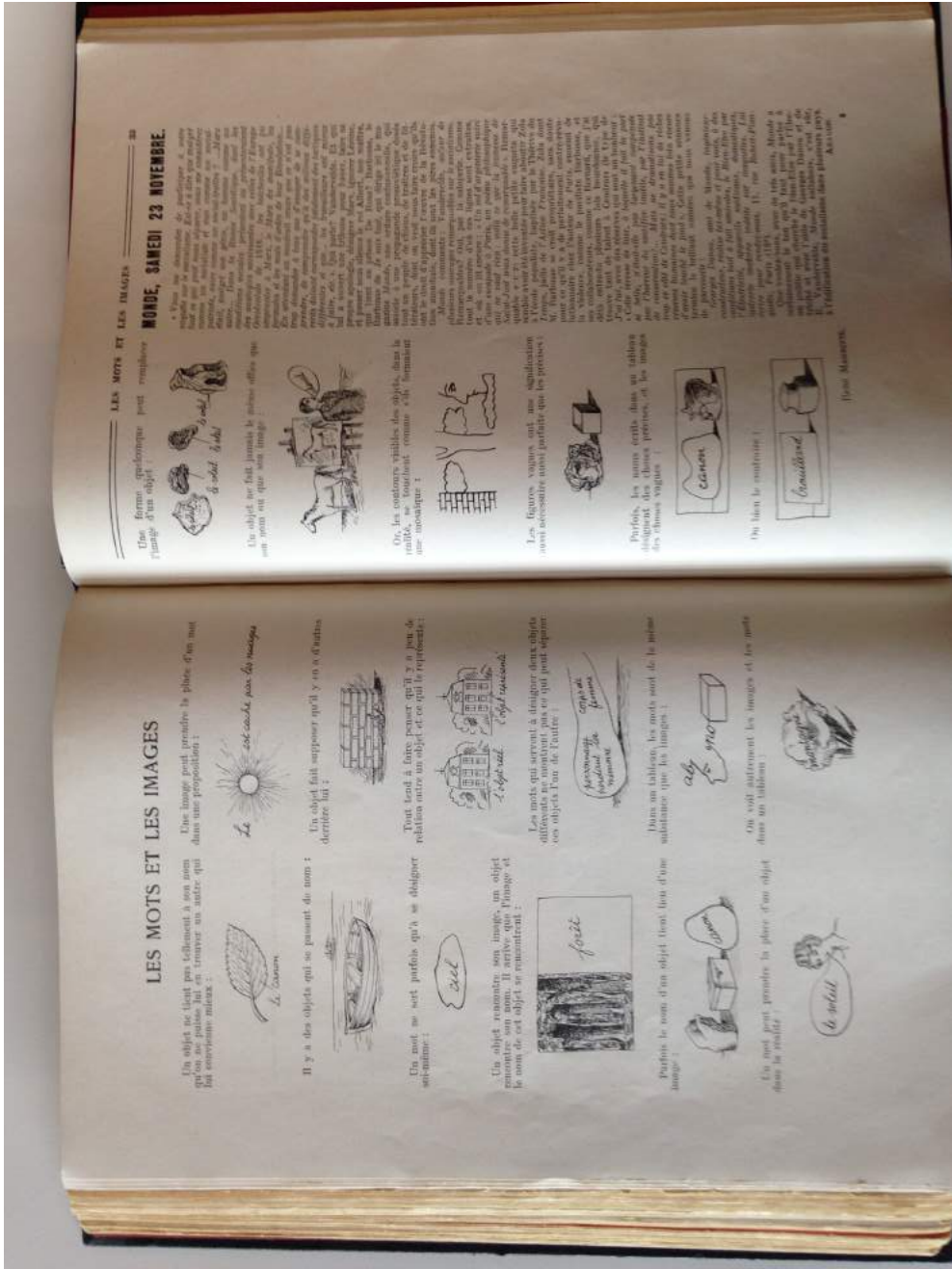
NOTES.— (1) Dès 1921, lorsque Tsvetaïeva reconnaît que « l'absence de système est encore un système, mais le plus complexe », ainsi que cette confession à des objections indignes de son style, elle écrit dans une lettre à son frère, « Il est évident que le principe de l'absence de système est en soi-même une sorte de système, et que, par conséquent, il y a toujours une certaine mesure de système, et que, par conséquent, il y a toujours une certaine mesure de système, et que, par conséquent, il y a toujours une certaine mesure de système. » (2) Les mots « système » et « système » sont utilisés dans le sens de « système » et « système ». (3) Les mots « système » et « système » sont utilisés dans le sens de « système » et « système ». (4) Les mots « système » et « système » sont utilisés dans le sens de « système » et « système ». (5) Les mots « système » et « système » sont utilisés dans le sens de « système » et « système ». 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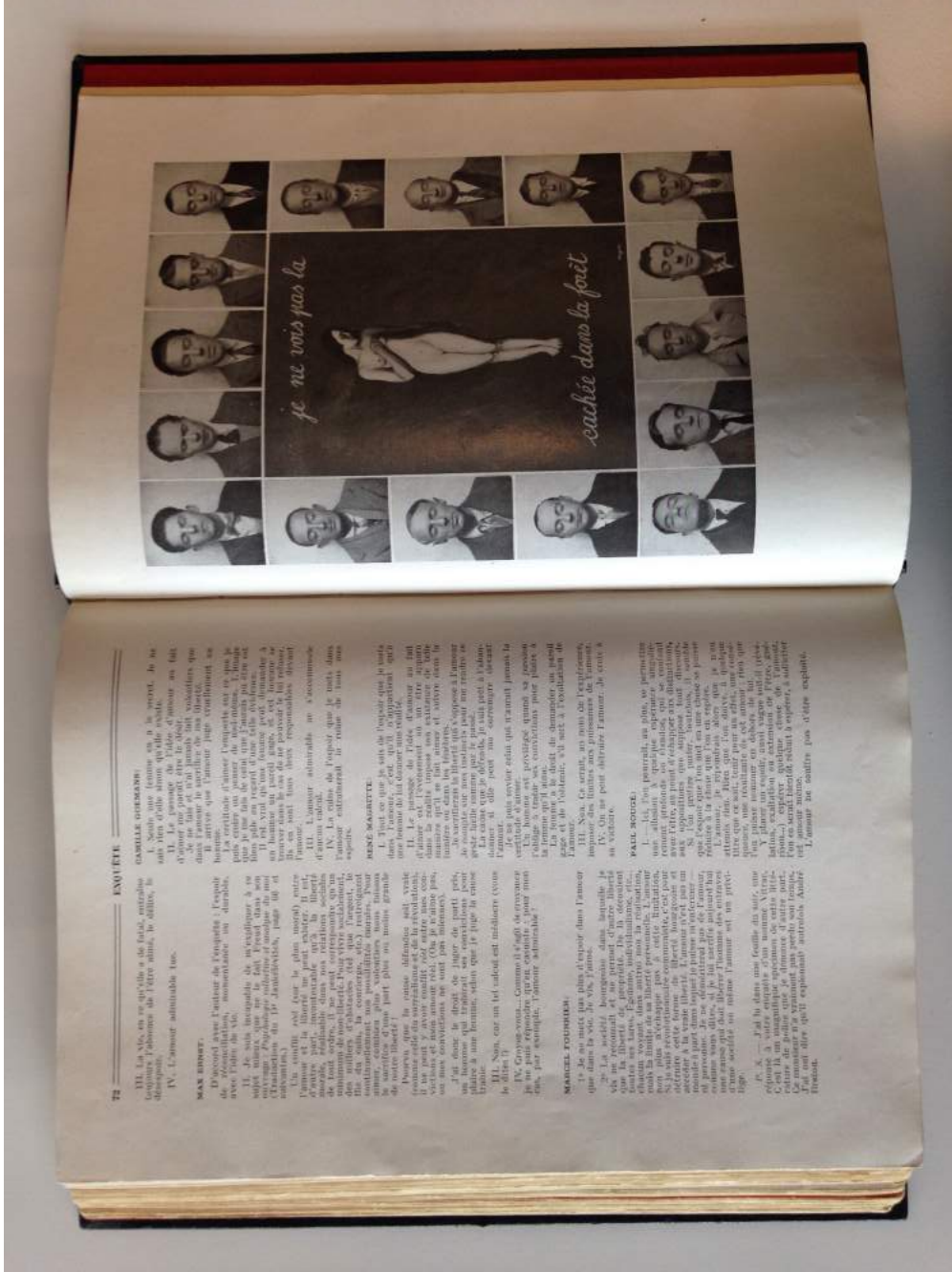
(Fig. 3.17) Georges Bataille, "Figure Humaine," *Documents* 1, no. 4 (September 1929): 200-01. Reprint via Editions Jean-Michel Place (Paris, 1991).



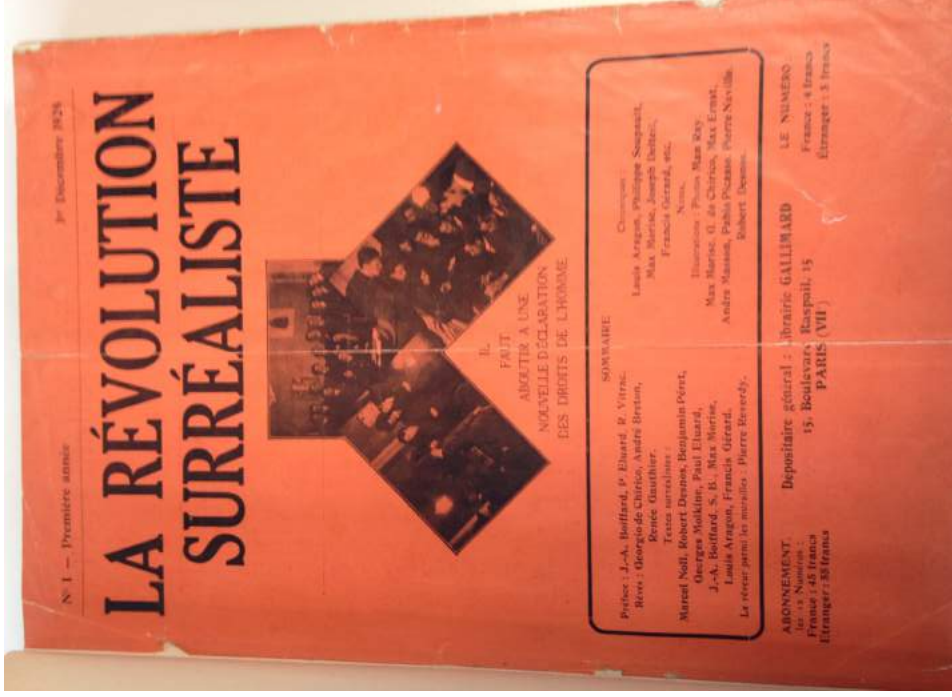
(Fig. 3.18) From André Breton, "Second Manifeste du Surréalisme," *La Révolution Surréaliste*, no. 12 (December 1929): 16-17. Photo by author. Image courtesy of La Bibliothèque Kandinsky du Musée national d'art moderne/CCI, Centre Pompidou. Please do not circulate.



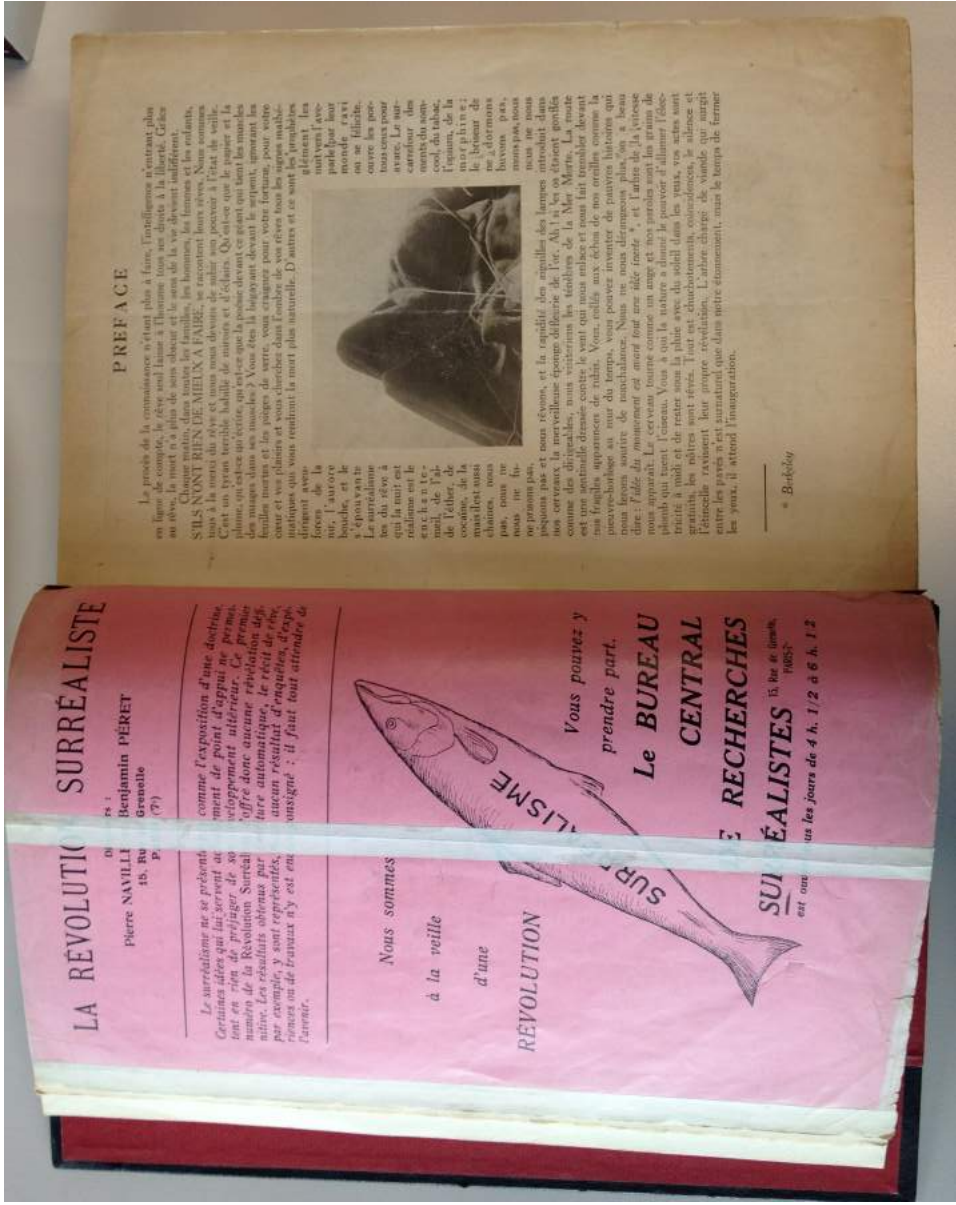
(Fig. 3.19) René Magritte, "Les Mots et Les Images" *La Révolution Surréaliste*, no. 12 (December 1929): 32-33. Photo by author. Image courtesy of La Bibliothèque Kandinsky du Musée national d'art moderne/CCI, Centre Pompidou. Please do not circulate.



(Fig. 3.20) "Enquête," *La Révolution Surréaliste*, no. 12 (December 1929): 72-73.
 Photo by author. Image courtesy of La Bibliothèque Kandinsky du Musée national d'art moderne/CCI, Centre Pompidou.
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(Fig. 3.21) Front cover of *La Révolution Surréaliste*, no. 1 (December 1924).
Photo by author. Image courtesy of La Bibliothèque Kandinsky du Musée national d'art moderne/CCI, Centre Pompidou.
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(Fig. 3.22) Front cover verso/editor's page and A. Boiffard, P. Eluard, and R. Vitrac, "Preface," *La Révolution Surréaliste*, no. 1 (December 1924): 1. Photo by author. Image courtesy of La Bibliothèque Kandinsky du Musée national d'art moderne/CCI, Centre Pompidou. Please do not circulate.



(Fig. 3.23) From *La Révolution Surréaliste*, no. 1 (December 1924): 16-17.
 Photo by author. Image courtesy of La Bibliothèque Kandinsky du Musée national d'art moderne/CCI, Centre Pompidou.
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CONCERNING
THE PRESENT DAY RELATIVE ATTRactions
OF VARIOUS CREATURES
IN MYTHOLOGY & LEGEND

Having asked a few friends to classify fifteen creatures of diverse mythological derivation in order of their attractions, we present the following table. The results obtained give us some basis for judging their contemporary relative attractions.

The order of choice was as follows:

1. Sphinx;
2. Chimera;
3. Minotaur;
4. Gorgon;
5. Unicorn;
6. Vampire;
7. Sarcophagus or Incubus;
8. Siren;
9. Bloody Nun;
10. Werewolf;
11. Nautilus;
12. Homonculus;
13. Dragon;
14. Gaiatea;

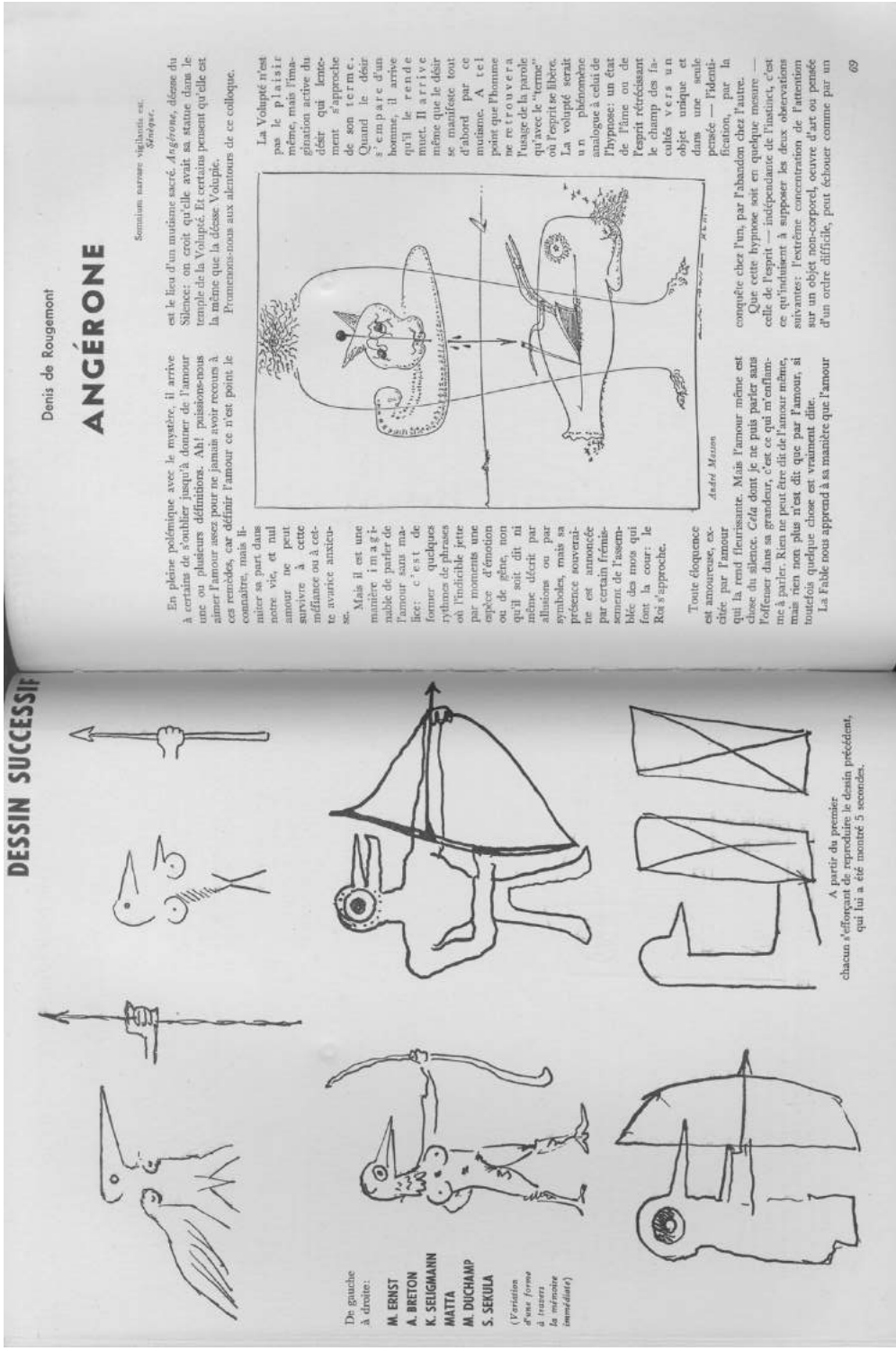
The very definite preeminence of the Sphinx is evident, since not only does it come at the head of the group classification, but also at the head of the masculine as well as the feminine classification. Even the two serpents, masculine and feminine, have resulted in very different choices. For example the Vampire, the Werewolf, and the Siren were feminine preferences. The masculine antipathy to the Dragon should be noted in contrast to the feminine antipathy to the Bloody Nun and Circe, etc.



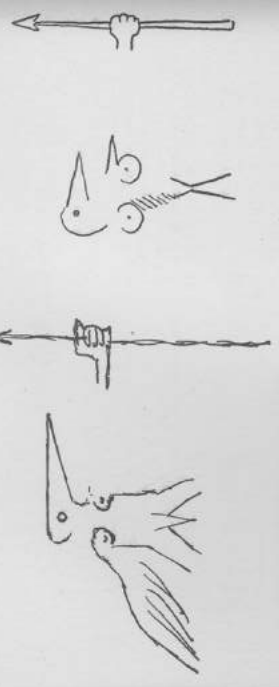
WEREWOLF	13	11	3	14	2	9	5	1	4	12	7	15	6	8	10
VAMPIRE	10	11	8	2	1	9	14	13	5	7	12	15	3	6	4
UNICORN	13	4	8	11	1	9	6	2	5	4	10	7	15	12	3
INCUBUS	15	12	7	11	6	1	8	14	3	10	4	13	2	9	5
SARCOPHAGUS	11	10	13	9	5	6	15	3	2	12	8	7	1	4	14
SIREN	11	4	6	10	1	2	7	3	5	15	12	14	8	9	13
SPHINX	2	8	4	10	5	14	9	3	6	13	15	11	1	7	12
STURBUS	13	9	10	8	7	14	3	2	4	1	12	15	11	6	5
NARCISUS	7	8	12	1	6	3	14	10	9	13	15	11	2	15	4
MINOTAU	8	11	1	7	4	13	15	2	14	5	6	3	9	10	12
GORGON	14	9	1	6	2	5	12	4	3	8	11	15	10	7	13
HOMONCULUS	1	4	10	6	7	15	9	14	5	3	13	11	8	14	2
DRAGON	7	5	10	1	3	9	3	8	13	4	12	15	11	14	2
CHIMERA	14	7	11	8	2	5	6	3	4	15	13	10	1	12	9
CIRCE	13	13	10	10	5	14	12	6	8	13	14	13	13	10	8
BLOODY NUN	2	3	1	2	1	10	11	12	6	4	14	9	3	15	7

LIONEL ABELE	
ANDRE BRETON	
NICOLAS CALAS	
GEORGES DUTHUIT	
MAX ERNST	
BRION GYSIN	
DAVID HARE	
ANDRE MASSON	
MATTA	
ROBERT ROTHERWELL	
HAROLD ROSENBERG	
KURT SELIGMANN	
VYVES TANGUY	
PATRICK WALDBERG	
TOTAL	♂
JACQUELINE BRETON	
LEONORA CARRINGTON	
SUSANNA HARE	
ANN MATTA	
ROSE MASSON	
ARLETTE SELIGMANN	
KAY TANGUY	
TOTAL	♀
GENERAL TOTAL	
CLASSIFICATION	

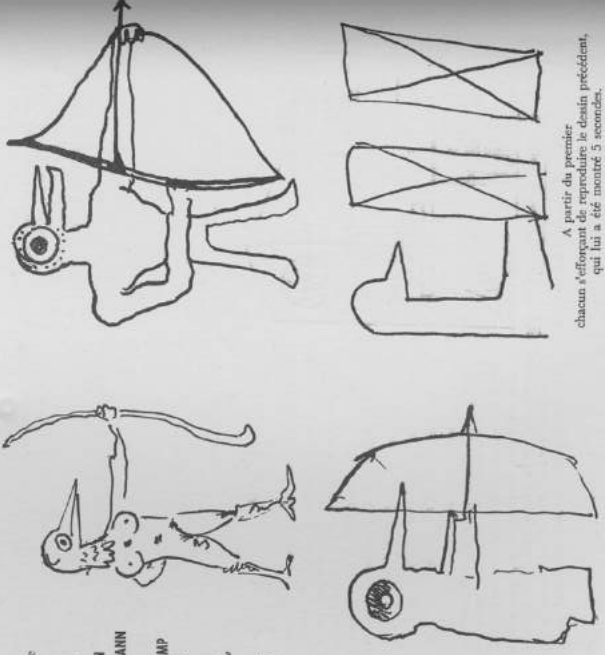
(Fig. 4.1) "Concerning the Present Day Relative Attractions of Various Creatures in Mythology & Legend," *WV*, no. 1 (June 1942): 62-63.



DESSIN SUCCESSIF



De gauche à droite:
M. ERNST
A. BRETON
K. SELIGMANN
MATTA
M. DUCHAMP
S. SEKULA
 (Variation d'une forme à travers la mémoire immédiate)



A partir du premier chacun s'efforça de reproduire le dessin précédent, qui lui a été montré 5 secondes.

Denis de Rougemont

ANGÉRONE

Somatium narrare vigilans est, Seneca.

est le lieu d'un mystère sacré, *Angéron*, dieu du Silence: on croit qu'elle avait sa statue dans le temple de la Volupté. Et certains pensent qu'elle est la même que la déesse Volupté.
 Promenons-nous aux alentours de ce colloque.

En pleine polémique avec le mystère, il arrive à certains de s'oublier jusqu'à donner de l'amour une ou plusieurs définitions. Ah! passions-nous aimer l'amour assez pour ne jamais avoir recours à ces remèdes, car définir l'amour ce n'est point le connaître, mais l'ignorer sa part dans notre vie, et nul amour ne peut survivre à cette confiance ou à cette méfiance aux yeux.
 Mais il est une manière inagilable de parler de l'amour sans malice: c'est de former quelques rythmes de phrases où l'indéchiffrable jette par moments une espèce d'émotion ou de gêne, non qu'il soit dit ni même décrit par allusions ou par symboles, mais sa présence souveraine est annoncée par certain frémissement de l'assemblage des mots qui font la cour: le Roi s'approche.

Toute éloquence est amoureuse, exotique par l'amour qui la rend fleurissante. Mais l'amour même est une forme de silence. C'est de ne pas parler sans s'efforcer dans sa grandeur, c'est ce qui m'enthousiasme à parler. Rien ne peut être dit de l'amour même, mais rien non plus n'est dit que par l'amour, à moins que quelque chose est vraiment dit.
 La Fidèle nous apprend à sa manière que l'amour

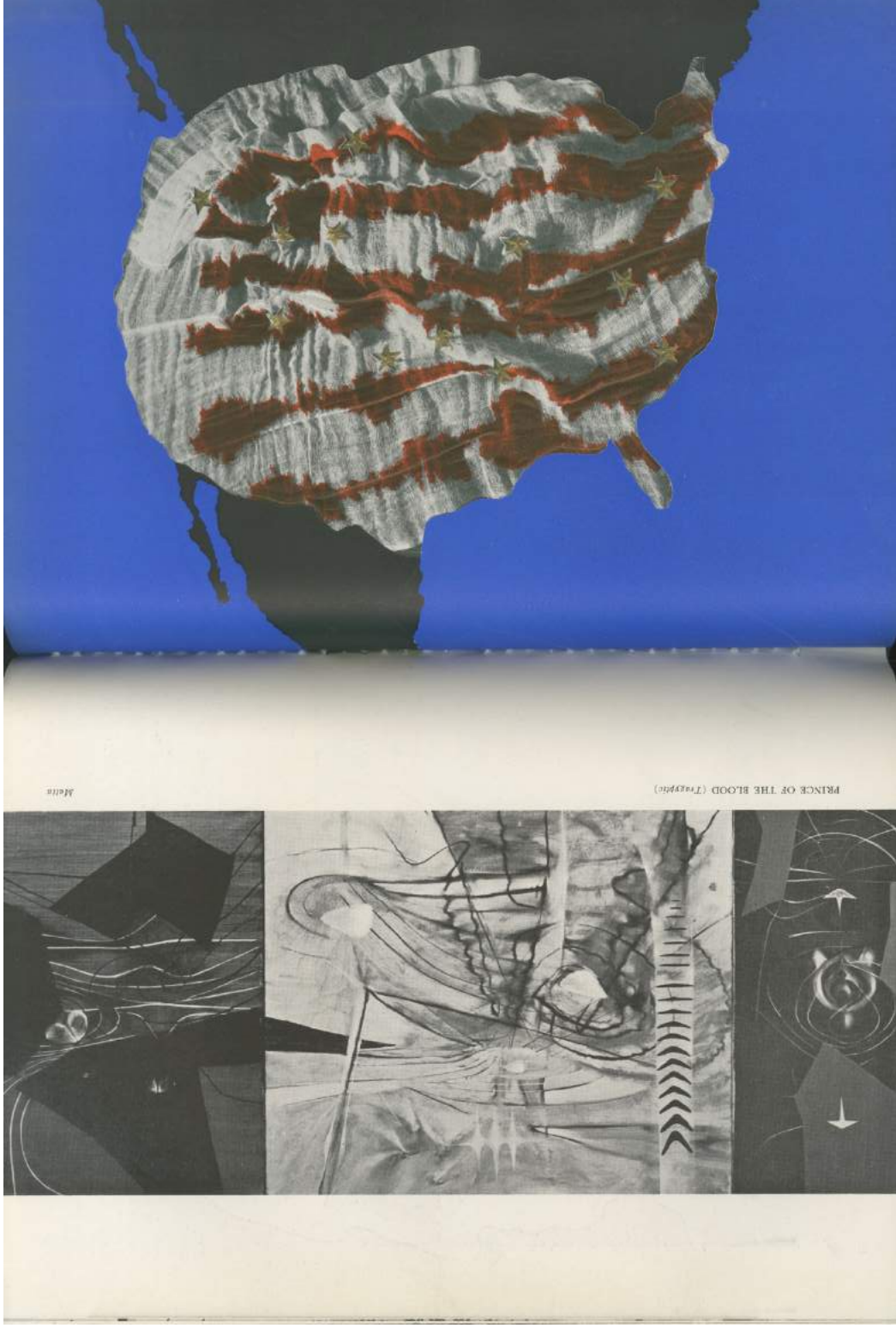
conquiert chez l'un, par l'abandon chez l'autre. Que cette hypnose soit en quelque mesure celle de l'esprit — indépendante de l'instinct, c'est ce qu'induisent à supposer les deux observations suivantes: l'extrême concentration de l'attention sur un objet non-corporel, oeuvre d'art ou pensée d'un ordre difficile, peut séduire comme par un

(Fig. 4.2) At left, M. Ernst, A. Breton, K. Seligmann, Matta, M. Duchamp, and S. Sekula, 'Dessin Successif,' *IVV*, no. 2-3 (March 1943): 68.



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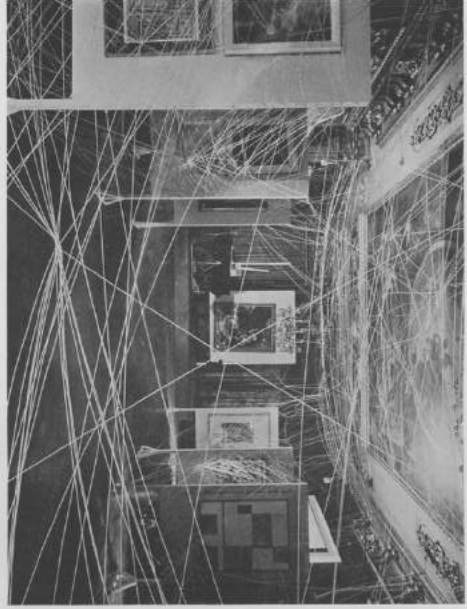
(Fig. 4.3) Max Ernst, *Vox Angelica* from *VVV* no. 4 (February 1944): 36.



(Fig. 4.4) At right, Marcel Duchamp, *Allégorie de Genre* from *IVV* no. 4 (February 1944): 65-67.



VITRINE POUR LA PART DU DIABLE,
DE DENIS DE ROUEMONT. (Berio-Duckamp-Stigmann)



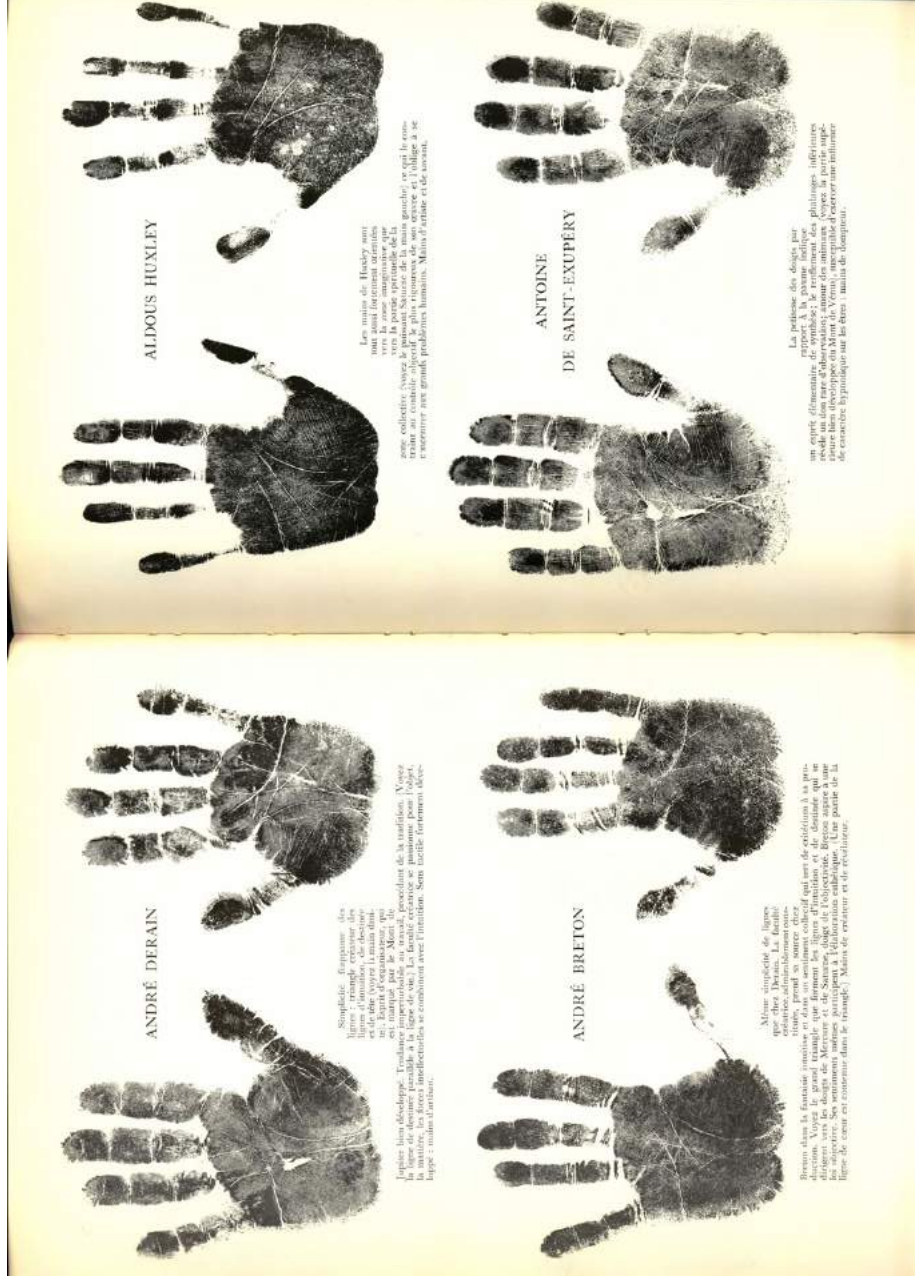
SOUVENIR DE L'EXPOSITION SURREALISTE 1942

(Fichet de Marcel Duchamp)

(Fig. 4.5) From *VVV* no. 2-3 (March 1943): 36.



(Fig. 4.6) Front cover of *Minotaure*, no. 6 (1935)
Photo by author. Image courtesy of Bibliothèque nationale de France. Please do not circulate.



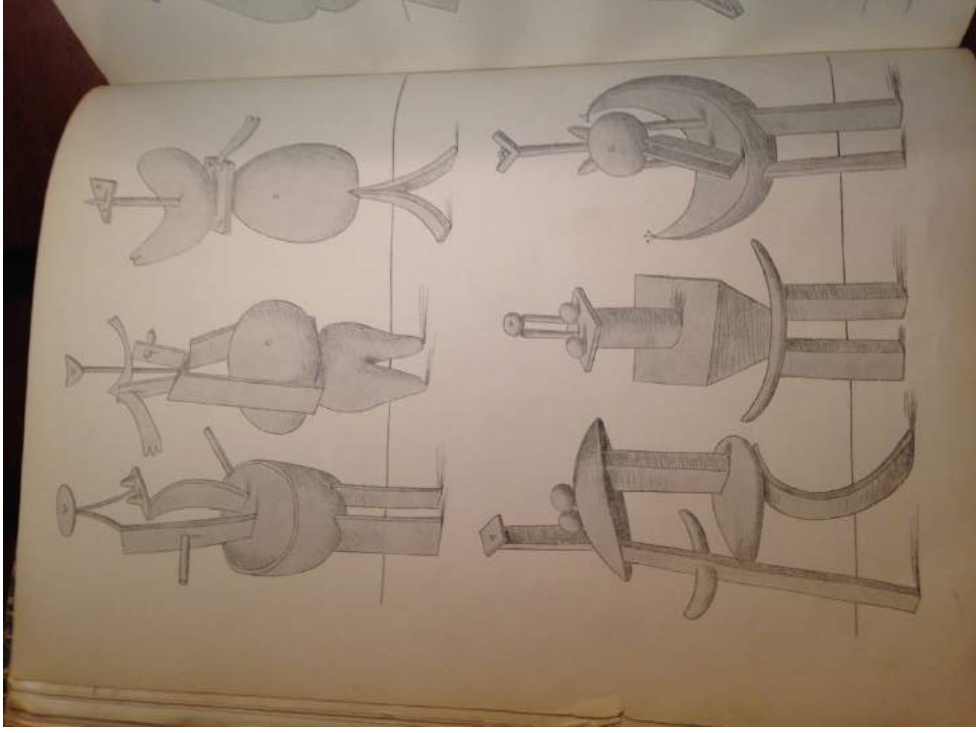
(Fig. 4.7) From Dr. Lotte Wolff, "Les Révélations Psychiques de la Main," *Minotaure* no. 6 (Winter 1935): 38-44. Photo by author. Image courtesy of Bibliothèque nationale de France. Do not circulate.



(Fig. 4.8) Front cover *Minotaure*, no. 5 (1934)
Photo by author. Image courtesy of Bibliothèque nationale de France. Do not circulate.



(Fig. 4.9) From Brassaï, "L'Atelier de Sculpture," *Minotaure*, no. 1 (1933): 21-2.
Photo by author. Image courtesy of Bibliothèque nationale de France. Do not circulate.



(Fig. 4.10) From "Une Anatomie: Dessins de Picasso," *Minotaure*, no. 1 (1933): 33-37. Photo by author. Image courtesy of Bibliothèque nationale de France. Do not circulate.

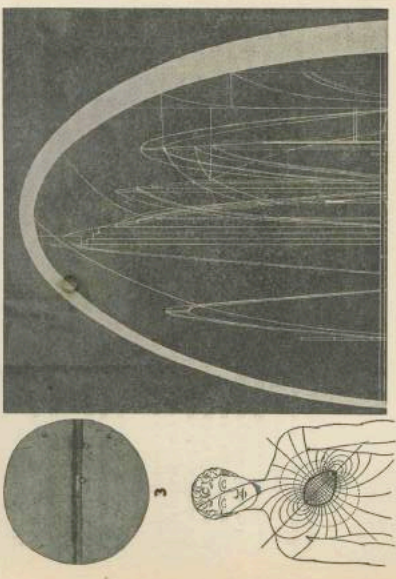
FREDERICK J. KIESLER:

DESIGN-CORRELATION

as an approach to architectural planning

demonstrated time and time again, as for example twenty years ago in the plans for "The Endless", to unify in one

structurally continuous building the visionary magic of the theatre, the cinema and sports, and currently, in the galleries of Peggy Guggenheim's "Art of this Century", I utilized it again to



break down the physical and mental barriers which separate people from the art they live with, working toward a unity of vision and fact as prevailed in primitive times, when seemingly conflicting experiences existed in complete harmony, when the God and the representation of the God, the demon and the image of the demon were equally immediate and real, thus following the processes of natural growth, developing the flow of inherent forces which produce forms while integrating and disintegrating at varying speeds, a continual rebirth of all organic and inorganic life and of the plastic arts, technology and architecture, factors which man has gradually learned to detect and measure, the radiation field of the human heart, the energy of a cosmic ray, the electrical emission of solar radiation, captured in the experimental Wilson chamber, whereby a radiant particle leaves a path of heat condensation are thus made to reveal, to the cosmic blindness of the human eye, nature's own design of forces, the ultimate significance of the unknown, that element matter which builds the poet's, the architect's or the plastic artist's structure on the orb of energy which simultaneously correlate and design.

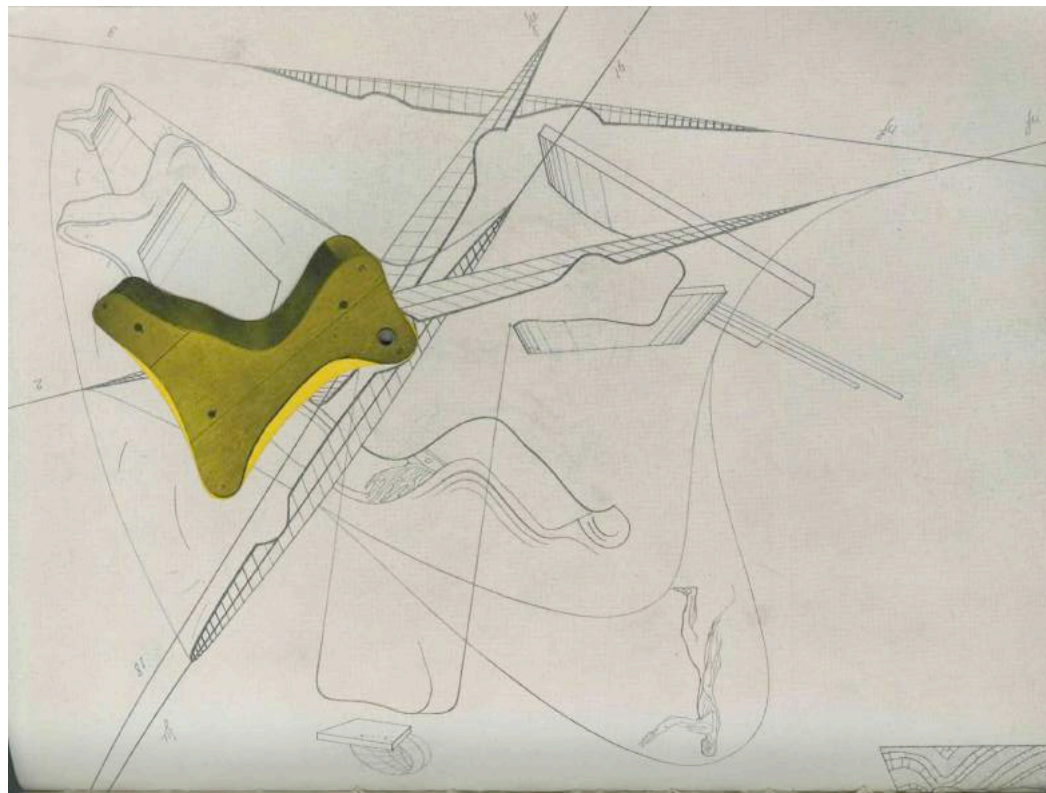
1. Study of "The Endless" in connection with "The Endless". Photo: Dr. Carl Anderson, California Institute of Technology. 2. Human torso with magnetic field lines. Photo: Dr. Carl Anderson, California Institute of Technology. 3. Hall of longitudinal sections of the plan for "The Endless" showing central figure. Photo: Dr. Carl Anderson, California Institute of Technology.

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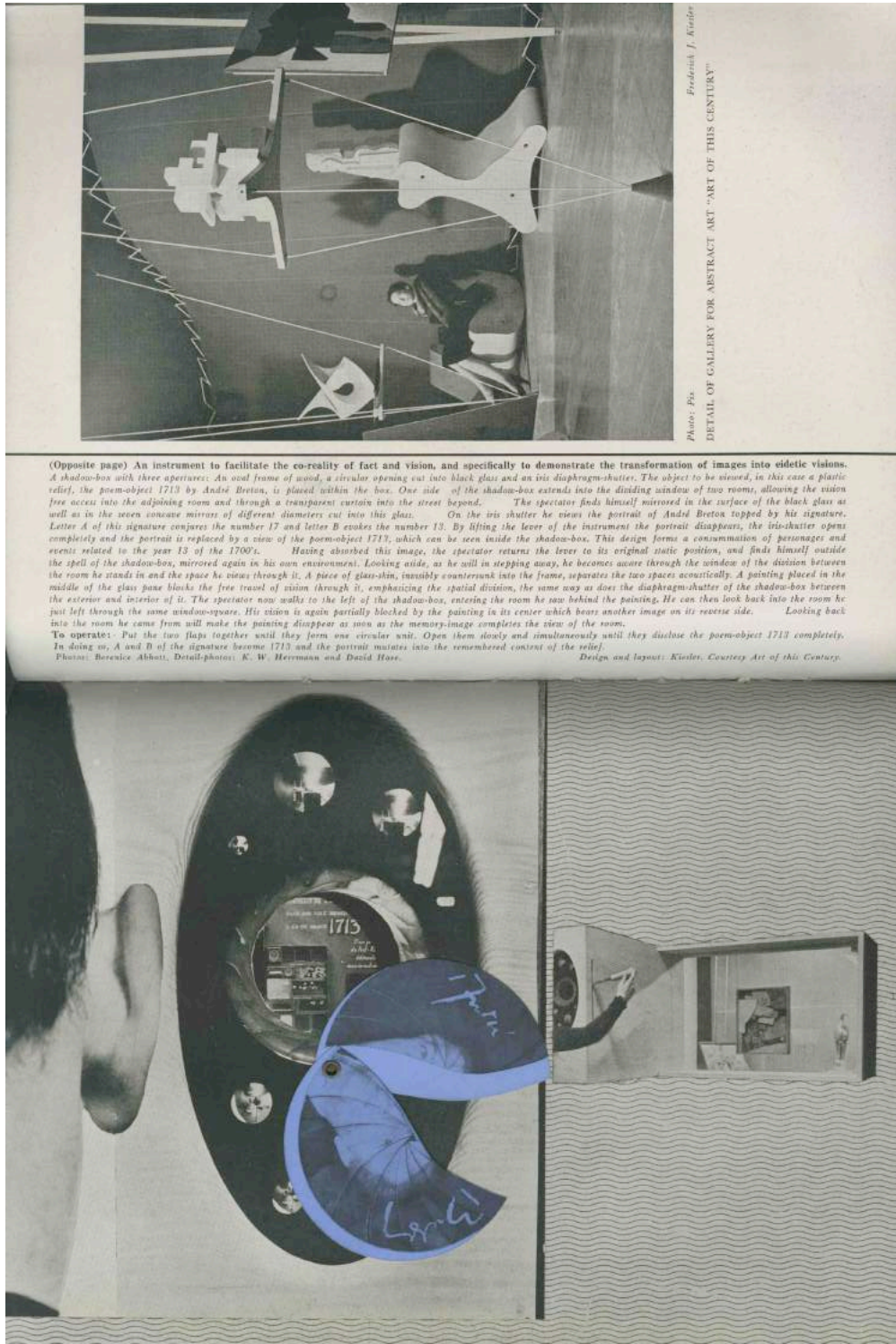
The correlational tool shown on the opposite page is intended for special service in the multiform needs of a museum-gallery. There is a minimum of sixteen variable inherent in the use of this tool as well as the extensive participation.

15. To operate turn current to fit into the two points of each of the four pointers designated as 1, 2, 3 and 4. 16. To find for nuclear point; the nuclear account for one of the 16 models. When brought into the nuclear form to rest in it; 17. To show the nuclear extending its attraction along an upright path towards an oval-shaped sculpture, the weight of which will ultimately be supported by the nucleus; 18. To illustrate the enlarging capacity of the original unit by centric rotation to accommodate a large influx of visitors in lectures or concerts; 19. To show points combining with the nuclear unit for exhibition purposes.

Photos: Mrs. Bangs and Eugene Klutner. Courtesy Art of this Century.



(Fig. 4.11) Frederick J. Kiesler, "Design-Correlation," *VVV*, no. 2-3 (March 1943): 76-77.



(Opposite page) An instrument to facilitate the co-reality of fact and vision, and specifically to demonstrate the transformation of images into eidetic visions. A shadow-box with three apertures: An oval frame of wood, a circular opening cut into black glass and an iris diaphragm-shutter. The object to be viewed, in this case a plastic relief, the poem-object 1713 by André Breton, is placed within the box. One side of the shadow-box extends into the dividing window of two rooms, allowing the vision free access into the adjoining room and through a transparent curtain into the street beyond. The spectator finds himself mirrored in the surface of the black glass as well as in the seven concave mirrors of different diameters cut into this glass. On the iris shutter he views the portrait of André Breton topped by his signature. Letter A of this signature conjures the number 17 and letter B evokes the number 13. By lifting the lever of the instrument the portrait disappears, the iris-shutter opens completely and the portrait is replaced by a view of the poem-object 1713, which can be seen inside the shadow-box. This design forms a consummation of personages and events related to the year 13 of the 1700's.

Having absorbed this image, the spectator returns the lever to its original static position, and finds himself outside the spell of the shadow-box, mirrored again in his own environment. Looking aside, as he will in stepping away, he becomes aware through the window of the division between the room he stands in and the space he views through it. A piece of glass-skin, invisibly counterunk into the frame, separates the two spaces acoustically. A jointing placed in the middle of the glass pane blocks the free transit of vision through it, emphasizing the spatial division, the same way as does the diaphragm-shutter of the shadow-box between the exterior and interior of it. The spectator now walks to the left of the shadow-box, entering the room he saw behind the painting. He can then look back into the room he just left through the same window-square. His vision is again partially blocked by the painting in its center which bears another image on its reverse side. Looking back into the room he came from will make the painting disappear as soon as the memory-image completes the view of the room.

To operate: Put the two flaps together until they form one circular unit. Open them slowly and simultaneously until they disclose the poem-object 1713 completely. In doing so, A and B of the signature become 1713 and the portrait materializes into the remembered content of the relief.

Photos: Berenice Abbott, Detail-photos: K. W. Herremans and David Hase.

Design and layout: Kiesler, Courtesy Art of this Century.

Photo: Pp. Frederick J. Kiesler
DETAIL OF GALLERY FOR ABSTRACT ART "ART OF THIS CENTURY"

(Fig. 4.12) Frederick J. Kiesler, "Design-Correlation," *I/V*, no. 2-3 (March 1943): 78-79.

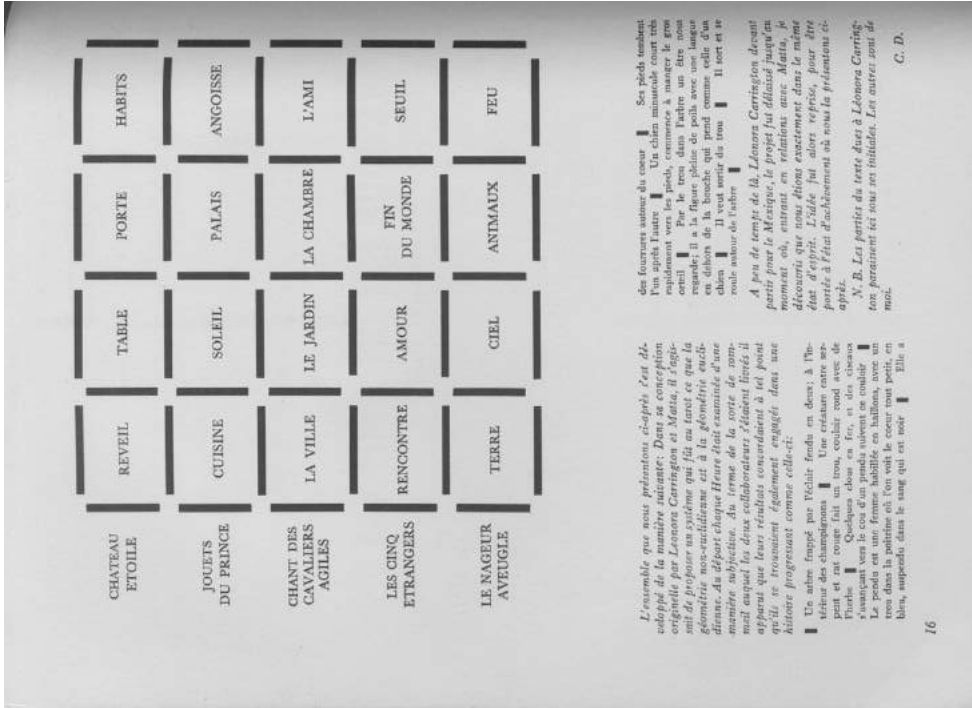


(Fig. 4.13) From Maya Deren, *Witch's Cradle* (1943)
Via <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NkMfRVaA6fs>

CONTENTS OF ANAGRAM

	A	B	C	
	THE NATURE OF FORMS	THE FORMS OF ART	THE ART OF FILM	
<p>1 THE STATE OF NATURE and THE CHARACTER OF MAN</p>	<p>1A Page 7</p>	<p>1B Page 18</p>	<p>1C Page 30</p>	
<p>2 THE MECHANICS OF NATURE and THE METHODS OF MAN</p>	<p>2A Page 11</p>	<p>2B Page 21</p>	<p>2C Page 37</p>	
<p>3 THE INSTRUMENT OF DISCOVERY and THE INSTRUMENT OF INVENTION</p>	<p>3A Page 14</p>	<p>3B Page 26</p>	<p>3C Page 44</p>	

(Fig. 4.14) From Maya Deren, "An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form and Film," in *Essential Deren: Collected Writings on Film*, edited by Bruce R. McPherson (Kingston, NY: Documentext, 2005)



(Fig. 4.15) Charles Duit, "Le Jour est un Attentat," *VVV*, no. 2-3 (March 1943): 16.

Twin-Touch-Test

Place your hands on top of either side of the wire screen; run both hands simultaneously gently down, fingers and palms remaining in close contact.

By Kessler

Repeat and Repeat until you can answer the following question:

Is it an unusual feeling of touch?

If so, can you write an analysis of your experience in no more than one hundred words. Give also your explanation of the phenomenon.



Photo: Thomas Touchard

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- If you have not a large sheet of chicken wire approximately two by two feet—you can use for the test the back cover of this copy.
- Put the magazine flat on a table, lift back-cover into vertical position, join hands on top of screen, fingers and palms remaining in close contact, slide gently along screen towards you.
- Repeat experiment at libitum.
- This also applies to a team of two persons:
 - a) first person to stand
 - b) lift magazine vertically
 - c) both persons stand or sit next to each other
 - d) the one at the left holds the bulk of magazine tightly down on the table
 - e) the person on the right grips the edge of the screen firmly
 - f) the two remaining hands now join across the wire-screen, fingertip touching
 - e) proceed as indicated above

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(Fig. 4.16) Back cover of VVV, no. 2-3 (March 1943)

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THE COMPLETION OF A PORTFOLIO OF
ELEVEN ORIGINAL WORKS
(Echanges-Prologues-Objects)

By André BRETON, Alexander CALDER, Leonard CARRINGTON, Marc CHAGALL,
 Max ERNST, David HARE, André MASSON, MATTA, Robert MOTHERWELL,
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 UNE SAU-POURTE DE HERTZ SELIGMANN

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 Je suis pour les alpes, dans les falles du roc où
 la mer"
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 qui hurlent"

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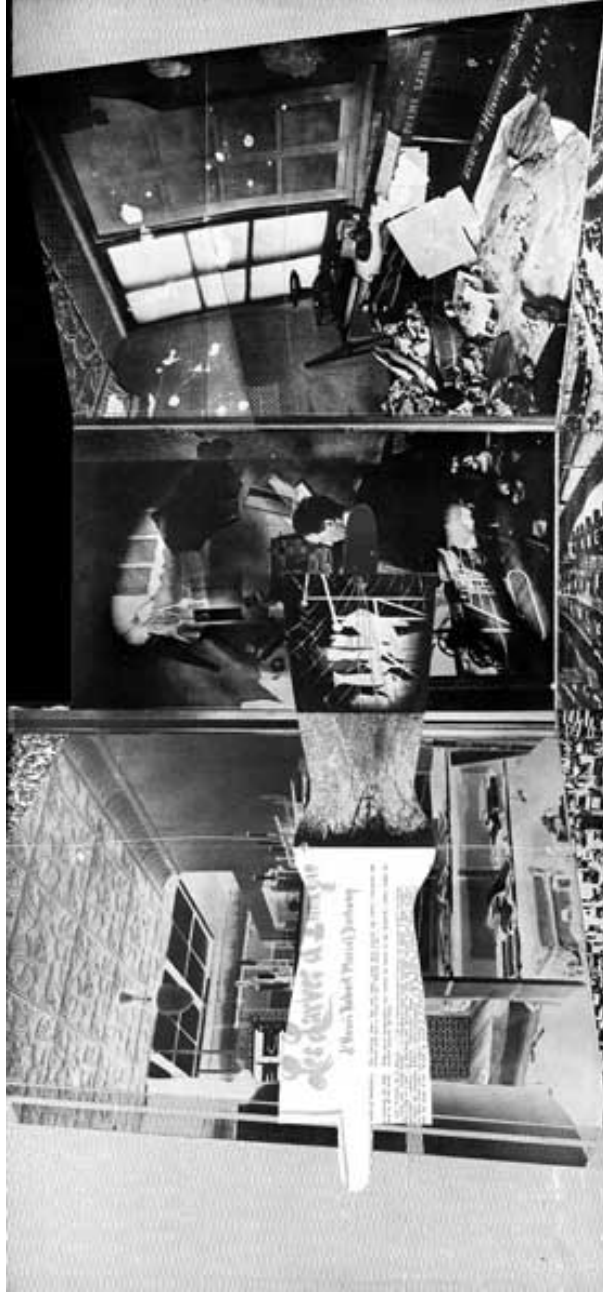
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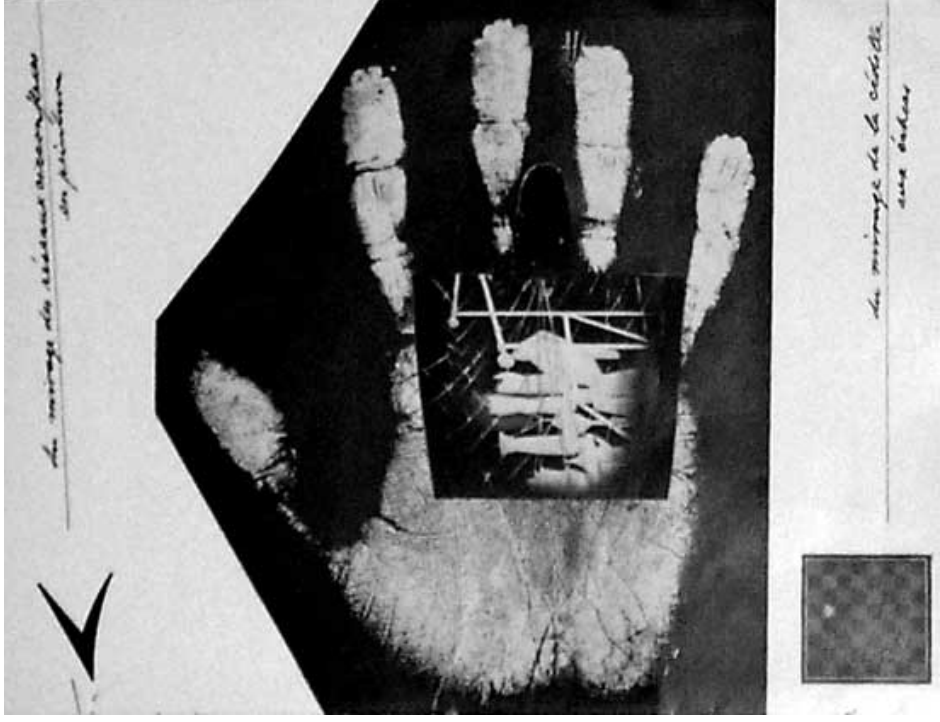
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(Fig. 4.17) From *VVV* no. 2-3 (1943)



(Fig. 4.18) From Frederick Kiesler, "Les Larves D'Imagie D'Henri Robert Marcel Duchamp," *View 5*, no. 1 (March 1945)



(Fig. 4.19) From Frederick Kiesler, "Les Larves D'Imagie D'Henri Robert Marcel Duchamp," *View 5*, no. 1 (March 1945)



tween acceptance and rejection that is the basis of Duchamp's philosophic and esthetic rationale. He resolves it by accepting both sides as concomitant parts of reality. Total skepticism could have meant suicide, as it did subsequently for one or two of the early surrealist poets. Or it could have meant complete inactivity resulting from a constant state of bewilderment or a persisting mood of indifference. (It has long been the general impression that Duchamp fell into this condition because he does not paint on canvas or make sculpture that is readily classifiable as such.) Irony, the "playful way of accepting something," has made it possible for Duchamp to attempt a synthesis. Instead of accepting the alternatives of annihilation or of living in a vacuum, he has worked out

for man's exaltation in the religious sense, but woman under the prevailing culture. Thus, though it follows the pictorial form of a religious picture, it is opposed to contemporary mores directly traceable to religious influences.

This picture is only one of a series of commentaries on contemporary culture which Duchamp has made. Another is the picture, quite disrespectfully titled in French *L.H.O.O.Q.*, 1919, a print of the *Mona Lisa* to which he added a moustache and beard as a boy marks up a poster in the subway. This act was evidently intended to register contempt for Renaissance culture, for the glorified sentimentality of the *Mona Lisa*, for the mere virtuosity of brush and of hand. A commentary on the level of popular taste points in the ready-made-aided, *Pharmacie*, 1914, a volpid and fuzzy autumn

M.P.
AMERICUS
for chronic diseases of the Arts

Les Larves d'Imagie
d'Henri Robert Marcel Duchamp

NOTE: The following Triptych when unfolded represents three walls of Duchamp's studios on 14th street in New York.

These seem to be a definite although unintentional correlation between the daily activities of the artist's environment and the inner structure common to all his work.

The interior of the Triptych contains: a) Ceiling hook and "Crochet de la Marie"; b) "voix lactée"; c) "A"; d) "ready-made"; e) "pendule-famille"; f) chessboard with large rectangles; g) box; h) "ready-made"; i) "Moulin à film et à son"; j) film; k) "ready-made"; l) "ready-made"; m) "ready-made"; n) "ready-made"; o) above head; p) "ready-made"; q) "ready-made"; r) "ready-made"; s) "ready-made"; t) "ready-made"; u) "ready-made"; v) "ready-made"; w) "ready-made"; x) "ready-made"; y) "ready-made"; z) "ready-made"; aa) "ready-made"; ab) "ready-made"; ac) "ready-made"; ad) "ready-made"; ae) "ready-made"; af) "ready-made"; ag) "ready-made"; ah) "ready-made"; ai) "ready-made"; aj) "ready-made"; ak) "ready-made"; al) "ready-made"; am) "ready-made"; an) "ready-made"; ao) "ready-made"; ap) "ready-made"; aq) "ready-made"; ar) "ready-made"; as) "ready-made"; at) "ready-made"; au) "ready-made"; av) "ready-made"; aw) "ready-made"; ax) "ready-made"; ay) "ready-made"; az) "ready-made"; ba) "ready-made"; 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um) "ready-made"; un) "ready-made"; uo) "ready-made"; up) "ready-made"; uq) "ready-made"; ur) "ready-made"; us) "ready-made"; ut) "ready-made"; uu) "ready-made"; uv) "ready-made"; uw) "ready-made"; ux) "ready-made"; uy) "ready-made"; uz) "ready-made"; va) "ready-made"; vb) "ready-made"; vc) "ready-made"; vd) "ready-made"; ve) "ready-made"; vf) "ready-made"; vg) "ready-made"; vh) "ready-made"; vi) "ready-made"; vj) "ready-made"; vk) "ready-made"; vl) "ready-made"; vm) "ready-made"; vn) "ready-made"; vo) "ready-made"; vp) "ready-made"; vq) "ready-made"; vr) "ready-made"; vs) "ready-made"; vt) "ready-made"; vu) "ready-made"; vv) "ready-made"; vw) "ready-made"; vx) "ready-made"; vy) "ready-made"; vz) "ready-made"; wa) "ready-made"; wb) "ready-made"; wc) "ready-made"; wd) "ready-made"; we) "ready-made"; wf) "ready-made"; wg) "ready-made"; wh) "ready-made"; wi) "ready-made"; wj) "ready-made"; wk) "ready-made"; wl) "ready-made"; wm) "ready-made"; wn) "ready-made"; wo) "ready-made"; wp) "ready-made"; wq) "ready-made"; wr) "ready-made"; ws) "ready-made"; wt) "ready-made"; wu) "ready-made"; wv) "ready-made"; ww) "ready-made"; wx) "ready-made"; wy) "ready-made"; wz) "ready-made"; xa) "ready-made"; xb) "ready-made"; xc) "ready-made"; xd) "ready-made"; xe) "ready-made"; xf) "ready-made"; xg) "ready-made"; xh) "ready-made"; xi) "ready-made"; xj) "ready-made"; xk) "ready-made"; xl) "ready-made"; xm) "ready-made"; xn) "ready-made"; xo) "ready-made"; xp) "ready-made"; xq) "ready-made"; xr) "ready-made"; xs) "ready-made"; xt) "ready-made"; xu) "ready-made"; xv) "ready-made"; xw) "ready-made"; xx) "ready-made"; xy) "ready-made"; xz) "ready-made"; ya) "ready-made"; yb) "ready-made"; yc) "ready-made"; yd) "ready-made"; ye) "ready-made"; yf) "ready-made"; yg) "ready-made"; yh) "ready-made"; yi) "ready-made"; yj) "ready-made"; yk) "ready-made"; yl) "ready-made"; ym) "ready-made"; yn) "ready-made"; yo) "ready-made"; yp) "ready-made"; yq) "ready-made"; yr) "ready-made"; ys) "ready-made"; yt) "ready-made"; yu) "ready-made"; yv) "ready-made"; yw) "ready-made"; yx) "ready-made"; yy) "ready-made"; yz) "ready-made"; za) "ready-made"; zb) "ready-made"; zc) "ready-made"; zd) "ready-made"; ze) "ready-made"; zf) "ready-made"; zg) "ready-made"; zh) "ready-made"; zi) "ready-made"; zj) "ready-made"; zk) "ready-made"; zl) "ready-made"; zm) "ready-made"; zn) "ready-made"; zo) "ready-made"; zp) "ready-made"; zq) "ready-made"; zr) "ready-made"; zs) "ready-made"; zt) "ready-made"; zu) "ready-made"; zv) "ready-made"; zw) "ready-made"; zx) "ready-made"; zy) "ready-made"; zz) "ready-made";

a system that has produced a new atmosphere in which irony functions like an acting element, causing a pendulum-like oscillation between acceptance and rejection, affirmation and negation, between them both, dynamic and productive.

(Fig. 5.1) Author's iPhone image