

A REVIEW ON SURREALISM MOVEMENT IN INDIAN ART

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ABSTRACT

The word "Surreal" was coined by the poet/art critic Guillaume Apollinaire (1880 -1918) and appeared for the first time in the program notes for ballet parade a Ballets Russes production that entitled the talents of Pablo Picasso, Jean Cocteau, Erik Satie and Leonid Massine. Apollinaire also described his play the Breasts of Tiresias as "Surreas". However Apollinaire died six years before Andre Breton published his "manifesto of Surrealism" and therefore his use of the word surreal may not be exactly the same as Breton's today we associate the word „surreal" with strange just appositions or absurd combinations, like those experienced in dreams. This concept belongs to Breton's interpretation of the word. In this Paper we also provide the result on Surrealism movement by the survey on it.

INTRODUCTION

Surrealism sought access to the subconscious and to translate this flow of thought into terms of art. Originally a literary movement, it was famously defined by the poet André Breton in the First Manifesto of Surrealism (1924): „SURREALISM, noun, masc. Pure psychic automatism by which it is intended to express either verbally or in writing the true function of thought. Thought dictated in the absence of all control exerted by reason, and outside all aesthetic or moral preoccupations."

Common to all Surrealistic enterprises was a post-Freudian desire to set free and explore the imaginative and creative powers of the mind. Surrealism was originally Paris based. Its influence spread through a number of journals and international exhibitions, the most important examples of the latter being the International Surrealist Exhibition at the New Burlington Galleries, London and the Fantastic Art Dada, Surrealism at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, both held in 1936.

With the outbreak of the Second World War, the center of Surrealist activity transferred to New York and by the end of the War the movement had lost its coherence. It has retained a potent influence, however, clearly evident in aspects of Abstract Expressionism and various other artistic manifestations of the second half of the 20th century.

Surrealism was officially founded in 1924, when André Breton wrote *Le Manifeste du Surrealism*. In it, he defined Surrealism as "Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express - verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner - the actual functioning of thought." In this, he proposed that artists should seek access to their unconscious mind in order to make art inspired by this realm.

Initially a literary movement, many Surrealists was ambivalent about the possibilities of painting, however, the group's leader, André Breton, later embraced and promoted painting. The work of Surrealist painters such as Joan Miró would be an important influence on the Abstract Expressionists in the 1940s.

Surrealism is one of the preminent art movements of the 20th century. The movement was proclaimed by André Breton in his *Surrealist Manifesto* of 1924. Like all art movements, Surrealism is a product of its historic period, yet it is not limited to the 1920s and 1930s. Art historians argue over the approximate date of the movement's completion. To many, Surrealism ended after World War II, when other modern art movements became popular. The death of André Breton in 1966 marks the end of the movement for others. While others contend that the movement continues to this day and is reflected in the work of contemporary artists. According to Breton in his *Surrealist Manifesto* of 1924, Surrealism is defined as follows:

1. **Surrealism**- Noun, masc. Pure Psychic automatism by which one tries to express verbally, in writing, or by any other method, the actual process of thinking. Thought-dictation without any control exercised by reason, beyond any aesthetic or ethical consideration.
2. **Encyclopedia**- Philosophy. Surrealism is based on the belief in the superior reality of certain heretofore neglected forms of associations, in the omnipotence of the dream, in the free-wheeling play of thought. It wants to bring about the ultimate destruction of all other psychic mechanisms and put itself in their place in order to solve the primary problems of life.

Surrealism stems directly from the effects of modern age warfare. Europe was left devastated and disillusioned after years of fighting in World War I. The effects of the war were visible everywhere in Europe as populations became stagnant, economies plummeted, buildings remained in ruins and many survivors suffered from depression. The general population had a feeling of utter destruction at the hands of man. There was a great void left in European cities that were battered and destroyed by the atrocities of war.

Emerging from this chaos, however, new artistic, political and scientific ideas developed in Europe. One example of this new growth of creative activity was the emergence of Dada, which in turn, brought about the birth of Surrealism. Dada was created by a group of writers and artists and began as a series of cabaret acts in Zurich, Switzerland in 1916. The term "Dada" was chosen to signify general disgust with the turbulent times. It is a nonsense word with different meanings in different

languages. In French Dada means a child's hobbyhorse, in Russian it means "yes, yes," and in Rumanian, it means "no, no." While Dada artists produced a great variety of images and performances that may at first appear to have nothing in common, they are similar in that they all attempt to provoke chaos and disgust in their viewers.

Dadaists sought to break with all previous artistic movements and to create an anti-aesthetic style. The Dadaists perceived this "anti-art," filled with irony and mockery of the conventions and rational thinking of the modern world as the appropriate manner to represent post war Europe. The death and destruction surrounding the Dadaists after the war was viewed as an outcome of the western world's rationale. The Dadaists wanted to deny any connection with the system of beliefs that man was a "rational" being. Max Ernst, a Dada and Surrealist artist, said of the Dada movement.

After World War I, Paris remained a haven of artistic growth. Like the US, Paris experienced the "roaring twenties." The city became a meeting ground for writers, poets, sculptors and painters where new ideas could be developed and exchanged. Coco Chanel began a new line of fashion. Pablo Picasso, a new Parisian resident, received international acclaim for his innovative art style of Cubism. And, countless other artists from photographers to sculptors flooded into the city. Some of the greatest Dada artists like Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst, and Kurt Schwitters either moved to Paris or began exhibiting their work within the city during this time. Many of the images created by these artists alienated the viewer in a manner similar to the first Dadaist cabaret series. The artists placed objects in settings with which they are not normally associated. Furthermore, objects that are not normally considered appropriate subject matter for art were cast as such. Duchamp, for example, presented a urinal on a pedestal, called it Fountain, and signed the work "R. Mutt, 1917." In this way he challenged the limits of representation as well as the viewer's conception of art.

Breton proclaimed in the Surrealist Manifesto that the ideal art form was created through the unconscious mind. Automatic writing, and later, painting, was encouraged in order to free the mind from the restrictions placed by modern day society. Freudian psychoanalysis, which became popular during this time, was one source of inspiration for Breton and other Surrealists. Freud was a major proponent of exploring the unconscious mind and dream imagery in order to uncover human desire and break down taboos surrounding human sexuality. In some respects Surrealist images can be considered visual renditions of Freudian analyses. The desires of the unconscious mind of the artist may manifest themselves in displaced images of women, the human form, birds, or insects. These estranged fragments float in dream like spaces and are often disturbingly violent whether they are rendered in paint, photography or film.

The Surrealists experimented with photography and film. *Un Chien Andalou*, a film by director Luis Buñuel co-written with Salvador Dalí in 1929 is the most famous example of Surrealist films. Prior to the 1920s, photography had been considered a lesser art form and was relegated to practical purposes only. With the photographic experimentation by such great Surrealists as Man Ray, the

medium gained acceptance as a true form of artistic expression. Within painting, other techniques such as frottage and decalcomania were also explored. These two methods, invented by Max Ernst, were thought to be techniques by which artists could express their unconscious minds. In frottage the artist builds up certain materials on canvas such as sand and grit and then scrapes away the paint to create a textural surface within a two dimensional space. In decalcomania, the artist applies paint to a surface, sandwiches the paint in-between the surface and another, and then peels it apart.

The outcome of the pressed paint becomes the painting. With the two methods, the artist uses the chance happening to then create a work. The artist will take the frottage or decalcomania technique and then add to the design. Due to the properties of the materials used for frottage and decalcomania, artists are not able to entirely control the outcome of their work. Many Surrealist artists, in an attempt to reach the sublime unconscious or spontaneous mind, would attempt to give up control over their work purposefully. One painting created by Joan Miró, a Spanish Surrealist, was said to have been inspired by a fallen blob of jelly. In other cases, artists collaborated so that no one person could dictate the direction that an individual piece would follow.

Surrealists feasted on the unconscious. They believed that Freud's theories on dreams, ego, superego and the id opened doors to the authentic self and a truer reality (the "surreal"). Like the Dadaists, they relished the possibilities of chance and spontaneity.

Their leader, the "Pope of Surrealism," was French writer André Breton (1896-1966), who joined fellow writers Philippe Soupault, Louis Aragon, Paul Éluard, and Robert Denos (among many others) in their appreciation of nineteenth-century "bad boys" Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891) and Isidore Ducasse (whose pseudonym was Comte de Lautrémont, 1846-1870). One quote from Lautrémont's prose-poem *Les Chants de Maldoror* expresses the Surrealist spirit concisely: "the chance meeting on a dissecting-table of a sewing-machine and an umbrella!"

The Surrealist movement was founded in Paris by a small group of writers and artists who sought to channel the unconscious as a means to unlock the power of the imagination. Disdaining rationalism and literary realism, and powerfully influenced by Sigmund Freud, the Surrealists believed the conscious mind repressed the power of the imagination, weighting it down with taboos. Influenced also by Karl Marx, they hoped that the psyche had the power to reveal the contradictions in the everyday world and spur on revolution. Their emphasis on the power of the imagination puts them in the tradition of Romanticism, but unlike their forbears, they believed that revelations could be found on the street and in everyday life.

RELATED WORK

Andre Benton was the first person who dominated the Surrealism Art which was based on a literary movement. International painters like Giorgio de Chirico later took over and the rest, as they say, is

history! Benton first published his discovery in a book called „Manifeste du surrealism.“ This book revealed that the rational thought represented powers of creativity and imagination leading to artistic expression. The hidden part of his mind was brought out through the medium of poetry in this piece of work. A very interesting thing about surrealistic art is that it is related to science too. For example, Michelangelo perfected the art of anatomy and in the process studied the human body. His vital research and paintings gave way to medical knowledge later on. Another example is that geographers created mathematics grids to make accurate maps based on translating the two dimensional painting into 3D.

As mentioned earlier, Freud and Jung laid the foundation for a whole new era of mankind by defining the constitution of man: the spiritual, the psychic and the material. Symbolism brought the contents of psyche and was represented in ancient methodology in the form of art. Surrealist artists wanted their work to be a link between spiritual realities and real forms of the material world. Their paintings were in abstract form. The concept of their art was that the object in the picture stood for inner reality. Now, it is made clear that art does not always mean painting. It could be drawings or sculpting also. Bringing the inner realities of the subconscious to the conscious mind and getting their meanings analyzed suddenly became very popular.

Surrealist poets were at first reluctant to align themselves with visual artists because they believed that the laborious processes of painting, drawing, and sculpting were at odds with the spontaneity of uninhibited expression. However, Breton and his followers did not altogether ignore visual art. They held high regard for artists such as Giorgio de Chirico (1888–1978), Pablo Picasso (1881–1973), Francis Picabia (1879–1953), and Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968) because of the analytic, provocative, and erotic qualities of their work.

For example, Duchamp's conceptually complex *Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (The Large Glass)* (1915–23; Philadelphia Museum of Art) was admired by Surrealists and is considered a precursor to the movement because of its bizarrely juxtapose and erotically charged objects. In 1925, Breton substantiated his support for visual expression by reproducing the works of artists such as Picasso in the journal *La Revolution Surrealist* and organizing exhibitions that prominently featured painting and drawing.

The visual artists who first worked with Surrealist techniques and imagery were the German Max Ernst (1891–1976), the Frenchman André Masson (1896–1987), the Spaniard Joan Miró (1893–1983), and the American Man Ray (1890–1976). Masson's free-association drawings of 1924 are curving, continuous lines out of which emerge strange and symbolic figures that are products of an uninhibited mind. Breton considered Masson's drawings akin, to his automatism in poetry.

About 1937, Ernst, a former Dadaist, began to experiment with two unpredictable processes called decalcomania and grattage. Decalcomania is the technique of pressing a sheet of paper onto a

painted surface and peeling it off again, while grattage is the process of scraping pigment across a canvas that is laid on top of a textured surface. He used a combination of these techniques in the *Barbarians* (1999.363.21) of 1937. This composition of sparring anthropomorphic figures in a deserted post-apocalyptic landscape exemplifies the recurrent themes of violence and annihilation found in Surrealist art.

The word "surreal" was created by the poet/art critic Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918), and appeared for the first time in the program notes for ballet *Parade* (May 1917), a Ballets Russes production that enlisted the talents of Pablo Picasso, Jean Cocteau, Erik Satie and Leonid Massine. Apollinaire also describe his play *The Breasts of Tiresias* (June 1917) as "surreal."

The Surrealist art movement stemmed from the earlier Dada movement. Dada was a movement in which artists stated their disgust with the war and with life in general. These artists showed that European culture had lost meaning to them by creating pieces of "anti-art" or "non-art." The idea was to go against traditional art and all for which it stood. "Dada" became the movement name as a baby-talk term to show their feeling of nonsense toward the art world. Art from this movement was often violent and had an attitude of combat or protest. One historian stated that, "Dada was born from what is hated". Though the movement was started to emphasize nonconformity, Picabia declared Dada to be dead in 1922, saying that it had become to organize a movement. Despite the fact that it was declared dead, the Dada movement planted the seeds of another, more organized movement.

Surrealism is defined as "Psychic automatism in its pure state by which we propose to express-verbally, in writing, or in any other manner the real process of thought. The dictation of thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason and outside any aesthetic or moral concerns". In other words, the general idea of Surrealism is nonconformity. This nonconformity was not as extreme as that of Dada since surrealism was still considered to be art. Breton said that "pure psychic automatism" was the most important principle of Surrealism. He believed that true surrealists had no real talent; they just spoke their thoughts as they happened Surrealism used techniques that had never been used in the art world before.

Surrealists believed in the innocent eye, that art was created in the unconscious mind. Most Surrealists worked with psychology and fantastic visual techniques, basing their art on memories, feelings, and dreams. They often used hypnotism and drugs to venture into the dream world, where they looked for unconscious images that were not available in the conscious world. These images were seen as pure art. Such ventures into the unconscious mind lead Breton to believe that surrealists equaled scientists and could "lead the exploration into new areas and methods of investigation"

Although many Surrealist painters studied traditional art, Max Ernst was a self-taught painter. He felt that true subconscious art was the images in the minds of those thought to be insane. He studied philosophy and psychiatry and even visited an asylum to experience those images first hand. His paintings repeatedly used the vegetable, the animal, the mineral, and the human kingdoms. In 1925 he began to use frottage to express his feelings of fantasy and of the bizarre. Frottage is a rubbing technique in which the texture of an object is rubbed onto a piece of paper. These rubbings were then arranged into collages.

The Surrealist art movement opened the doors to a style of art that the world had never before seen. Odd techniques were used to paint and interpret images of the subconscious and the dream world. Though many Surrealist artists used traditional means of painting, they developed techniques to bring metaphor and meaning into their work. The obvious may have been stated but the meaning to Surrealist art was symbolic and often opens to interpretation. This style and technique received much rejection by the art world but was eventually accepted and paved the way for other expressive forms of art.

The surrealists assembled for their own use an 'ideal museum' made up of a small number of works which they admired. They did not wish to destroy existing libraries or art galleries, but merely to give them a thorough shaking-up, to sweep away hallowed glories, and to bring unappreciated geniuses into the full light. Surrealism is based on the belief that there are treasures hidden in the human mind. It was this that brought the surrealists to claim that in the cultural legacy of the past there remained undiscovered personalities and works which were to be preferred to the names and titles revered by official teaching.

If we consider only those forerunners of surrealism whom the surrealists themselves recognized as such, and whom they regarded as authorities, we find that they all fall into one or another of three groups: visionary art, primitive art and psycho-pathological art. It was this triple influence which gave birth to surrealism, which is in a sense a fusion of the principles behind each of these three forms of art.

Finally, very close to their own beginnings, surrealists in search of precedents came across the Norwegian Edvard Munch, who, although claiming to be an expressionist, goes far beyond expressionism in his paintings, where he gives mystical expression to love, to solitude and to primitive tears: such paintings as *The Dance of Life* (1899-1900, Oslo, Nasjonalgalleriet). They found also Alfred Kubin, who, at the time he published his novel *Jenseits* (1909), was painting virgin forests inhabited by extinct animals, and who set down his night dreams in pen drawings the moment he woke.

One thing which the majority of these visionary artists had in common was that they could develop their faculties only by starting from subjects from Graeco-Roman mythology, from the

Bible or from daily life. What distinguishes them from the surrealists is that the latter wanted to invent their own mythology, or to draw it from sources which had hitherto remained untapped. They sought this new stimulation from primitive art. They developed to the highest degree the interest that it is possible to feel in the creations of distant peoples.

SURREALISM PAINTING

In this paper we recommendation and provide relevant information about Surrealism movement, Indian Surrealism, surrealism in eastern Europe and biographies of surrealist artists we also discussed surrealism and its design influence of surrealism and later development of surrealism. It translates into English as "super-realism". The term, according to authentic art history records, originated in Parisian studios and manifestos in the early 1920s. Andr Breton, Salvador Dali, Louis Aragon, Max Ernst, Marcel Duchamp, Yves Tanguy and Man Ray were among the founders of Surrealism.

Three painters too great to be contained by Surrealism- Picasso, Klee and Miro - produced Surrealist work, while remaining somewhat aloof from the group. Miro and Picasso created improvisatory images and techniques that were ambiguous and suggestive rather than figurative. The Three Dancers, painted by Picasso in 1925, is a brilliant example of this kind of painting. Klee's 'poetry of the heart', was a deceptively simple attempt to transcend the gulf between people and nature, and is at once abstract and representational.

Surrealist works of artists Ashok Bhowmik, Shipra Bhattacharya, Yolanda de Sousa, K.Muralidharan, Arup Das, AshokeMullick, Diptish Ghosh Dastidar, SisirSahana, Ranadip Mukherjee, Swapan Kumar Mallick, Partha Shaw also formed part of the show at Kolkata based Aakriti Art Gallery that continued till first week of January, 2008.

A curatorial note by Professor SovonSom explained how surrealism, unlike the art movement in Europe exists in Indian visual-arts' contemplation from time immemorial. It mentioned the fact that Indian iconography presents a unique panorama of surrealistic images, and stated how our epics, legends, rituals and the wide variety of folk arts which thrive as a living tradition, showcase the range of imagination of the Indian mind.

'Surrealism is taken for granted as a generative force that offers explorations into the plastic possibilities in the visual range. The exhibition intends to present Surrealism as a human predicament in the Indian sensibility,' the curatorial note explained.

In the decades after the Second World War, some of the most potent and persuasive examples of Surrealism's influence on graphic design came from Eastern Europe – from Czechoslovakia and Poland. In 1934, the photographer and collagist JindrichStyrsky and the painter

To yen co-founded a Surrealist group in Prague, and they kept closely in touch with the Parisian Surrealists, creating rich soil for later developments in graphic art and design. In both Poland and Czechoslovakia, the street poster was the medium in which this new sensibility flourished. Where American and British commercial Surrealism can seem much too neatly manicured, given the movement's flagrantly anti-bourgeois origins, these Eastern European images were barbed and unsettling interpretations of the films and plays they announced – by turns enchanted, capricious, enigmatic, fantastical, bizarre and sometimes monstrous.

The surrealist assumes that art which flows directly from the subconscious must be of a higher, more spiritual order. He believes that the subconscious is divinely inspired and therefore any art developed by the thoughts of mere man would have to be inferior to those of the subconscious. The idea of combining the poet with an oracle goes way back. There is evidence that the chants of the cave dwellers were poetic in nature and often brought on by sensory deprivation and natural hallucinogens. In the primitive tribes it was the poet-oracle who rose to the position of power and authority. He deciphered the spirit world and directed the tribe through conjuring and the interpretation of myths.

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Today, these theories are often embraced by those who feel unfulfilled with the prevailing religion of their era and locale. Often, when one becomes dissatisfied with his faith, he or she might reject the idea of a personal God for that of a mystical force. Instead of seeking a new approach to God or a better religion, whatever teachings the devotee has had are thrown out in favor of more stimulating rites of passage. It is safe to say that the young Jim Morrison made this transition. While some may see this as a cosmic case of throwing the baby out with the bath water, he saw it as an inspiring new frontier of spiritual awareness.

While some surrealists believe these practices put them in touch with something akin to God, there are others who believe that such intentional altering of the senses evokes demonic spiritual entities and that it is these entities that serve as the poet's muse. If this were the case, then the Surrealist's path to truth does not lead to truth, but to more lies.

Surrealism, born of the political ideology of Karl Marx and the psychoanalysis of Sigmund Freud, is one of the most influential art movements of the 20th century. The term was first coined in 1917 by the art critic and poet Guillaume Apollinaire, and in 1924 it was used by Andre Breton to describe a politically radical movement that aimed to change perceptions of the world. In exploring dreams and the irrational, the Surrealists used 'automatic' techniques to draw images from the realm of the unconscious.

During the 1930s Surrealism escaped the bounds of a radical avant-garde art movement and transformed the wider worlds of theatre, design, fashion and advertising. For some, Surrealism's assimilation into the commercial world was to be celebrated and embraced, while for others it went against the political principles of the movement.

SURVEY

In this paper we discuss about surrealism groups, international politics, and internal politics representation of woman in surrealism to complete this analysis. The original Paris Surrealist Group was disbanded by member Jean Schuster in 1969. Surrealist theatre and Artaud's "Theatre of Cruelty" were inspirational to many within the group of playwrights that the critic Martin Esslin called the "Theatre of the Absurd" (in his 1963 book of the same name). Though not an organized movement, Esslin grouped these playwrights together based on some similarities of theme and technique; Esslin argues that these similarities may be traced to an influence from the Surrealists. Eugene Ionesco in particular was fond of Surrealism, claiming at one point that Breton was one of the most important thinkers in history. Samuel Beckett was also fond of Surrealists, even translating much of the poetry into English. Other notable playwrights whom Esslin groups under the term, for example Arthur Adamov and Fernando Arrabal, were at some point members of the Surrealist group.

Surrealists have often sought to link their efforts with political ideals and activities. In the Declaration of January 27, 1925, for example, members of the Paris-based Bureau of Surrealist Research (including André Breton, Louis Aragon, and Antonin Artaud, as well as some two dozen others) declared their affinity for revolutionary politics. While this was initially a somewhat vague formulation, by the 1930s many Surrealists had strongly identified themselves with communism. The foremost document of this tendency within Surrealism is the Manifesto for a Free Revolutionary Art, published under the names of Breton and Diego Rivera, but actually co-authored by Breton and Leon Trotsky.

From the Modern Era Surrealism is an art form that came about in the 1920's. The artists that we typically think of as being surrealist artists are the people who created works in that era and became famous for the work that they did. Salvador Dali, Man Ray and Joan Miro are all artists who

are well-known for the work that they did in the Surrealist style. Many people name each of them as their favorite artist.

However there are other modern contemporary artists who are still making surrealist art today in the twenty-first century. This art is magical, attention-getting, fantastical, beautiful and fun to look at. The tools that these artists use may differ from those used by the original Surrealist artists but the effect is at least (if not more so) as visually appealing as the work that came from that bygone era.

CONCLUSION

It was important because it grew out of the war-era as a reaction against violence and the "rationality" which led to the war in the first place. The main point of their manifesto was to replace rational thought with imagination, which they believed was much more valuable than reason. The Surrealist movement was completely revolutionary; it wasn't just an artistic movement it was a whole philosophy to the artists who practiced it.

Opening on 8 October, the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid is presenting the first great monographic exhibition on Surrealism and the dream. Including a total of 163 works by the great Surrealist masters. Andr Breton, Salvador Dal, Paul Delvaux, Yves Tanguy, Joan Mir, Ren Magritte, Max Ernst, Andr Masson, Jean Arp and Man Ray the exhibition will offer a thematic presentation of the Surrealists' visual interpretation of the world of dreams.

The Yantra of the Goddess Bagalamukhi, one of the ten goddesses of great wisdom the yantra being her Tantric geometric symbol, painted in Guler, Punjab Hills, circa 1800-20, is a rare example of a Tantric diagram of courtly patronage. Chinnamasta, the self-decapitated tantric goddess, also from a Guler workshop circa 1800-20, conveys the full power and intensity of Tantric imagery through the lyricism of one of India's most celebrated painting schools.

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