

Dada/Surrealism, issue: Surrealism & Egypt

Deadline: Oct 16, 2011

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Dada/Surrealism (<http://ir.uiowa.edu/dadasur/>) special journal issue:

"Wonderful Things" - Surrealism and Egypt

In November 1922 Howard Carter opened the tomb of Tutankhamun in Egypt's Valley of the Kings, the greatest archaeological discovery of the 20th century. This discovery triggered an enormous Egyptomanic craze in Europe and America, evident across architecture, the arts and popular culture. This special issue of Dada/Surrealism (<http://ir.uiowa.edu/dadasur/>) will mark the 90th anniversary of the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb by evaluating Egypt's significant and diverse impact on surrealism.

This influence can be traced throughout surrealism's diverse artistic productions and manifestations, as Martine Antle notes: "among all the countries of the Middle East, Egypt remained the country of predilection for surrealism throughout the vanguard period" (2006). Sphinxes, pyramids, eyes of Horus and other Egyptian figures and symbols play significant roles in the artworks and writings of Lee Miller, Man Ray, Georges Bataille, Robert Desnos, Leonora Carrington, Roland Penrose, Jane Graverol, Joyce Mansour, Marcel Duchamp, Alberto Giacometti and Gordon Onslow Ford. Desert landscapes and hieroglyphic inscriptions are a recurrent theme in works by Leonor Fini, Kay Sage, Max Ernst, Joseph Cornell, Salvador Dalí, René Magritte, André Breton, Victor Brauner and many other surrealists' works.

Egypt's significance for surrealism is also evident in Breton's display of Egyptian ornaments on the famous mur of his studio. Surrealist reading included books such as Antoine-Joseph Perney's *Les fables égyptiennes et grecques* (1758), Ludwig Achim von Arnim's *Isabelle d'Égypte* (1812), Émile Soldi-Colbert de Beaulieu's *La langue sacrée - La cosmoglypie* (1902), and Arthur Rimbaud's *Lettres de Jean-Arthur Rimbaud: Égypte, Arabie, Éthiopie* (1899). Surrealists were highly interested in R. Falconnier's Egyptian tarot and his writings on it. A recurring focus for surrealists and their associates was the obelisk at the Place de la Concord. Described by Bataille as "without a doubt the purest image of the head and the heavens", it was a significant meeting place for Acéphale, and a repeated focus in Brassai's photographs and Benjamin Péret's writings. In turn, surrealism developed in Egypt through the Egyptian Georges Henein, who joined the movement in 1936 and whose establishment of the movement *Art et liberté* in 1937, together with Ramsès Younane, Fouad Kamel and Kamel el-Telmessany, marks the first beginning of surrealism in Egypt. *Art et liberté* regarded surrealism as the "means to create a new mythology reconciling reality and legend."

Egypt marks a nodal point for a range of surrealist investigations into myth, colonial identity, cultu-

ral hybridity, and for the movement's dialogues with science and pseudo-science including ethnography, psychoanalysis, physics, cosmology, and natural history. Surrealist adaptations, appropriations of and exchanges with Egypt and its signs, symbols and philosophies open significant questions about surrealist aesthetic representations and political critiques of the 'orient', the 'exotic', colonialism and ancient civilizations.

This special issue invites essays that explore the significance of the multiple relations, points of contact, dialogues, engagements and exchanges between surrealism and Egypt.

Please send a 250-word abstract, tentative title and brief CV to the guest editors Patricia Allmer at p.allmer@mmu.ac.uk and Donna Roberts at dmrobe@googlemail.com by October 16th, 2011. Completed essays will be due February 13th 2011, and should be between 6000-8000 words. For queries please contact Patricia Allmer and Donna Roberts at the email addresses above. For further information on Dada/Surrealism please visit <http://ir.uiowa.edu/dadasur/>.

Reference:

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