

THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART PRESENTS **MONSTERS & MYTHS:  
SURREALISM AND WAR IN THE 1930S AND 1940S**

*Masterpieces by Salvador Dalí, Max Ernst, André Masson, Pablo Picasso, and Dorothea Tanning  
Reveal the Psychological Impact of War and Exile*

BALTIMORE, MD (January 17, 2019)—The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) presents the first major exhibition to examine how 20th-century European and American Surrealist artists used monsters and mythic figures to depict their experiences of war, violence, and exile. *Monsters & Myths: Surrealism and War in the 1930s and 1940s* includes 90 works by Salvador Dalí, Max Ernst, André Masson, Pablo Picasso, Mark Rothko, Dorothea Tanning, and others who were affected by the political turmoil of the Spanish Civil War and World War II. On view in Baltimore February 24–May 26, 2019, this ticketed exhibition is co-organized by the BMA and the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art.



“This groundbreaking exhibition explores a facet of one of the 20th-century’s most influential and revolutionary avant-garde art movements,” said BMA Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director Christopher Bedford. “The Surrealist artists’ monstrous responses to the wars in Europe are a perfect evocation of both the violent external forces and the internal anguish they experienced.”

During the pivotal years between the world wars, European and American avant-garde artists responded to the rise of Hitler and the spread of Fascism by creating some of the most compelling images of the Surrealist movement. Monstrosities in the real world bred monsters in paintings and sculpture, on film, and in the pages of journals and artists’ books. The BMA’s exhibition is organized with thematic sections that focus on prominent subjects such as the Minotaur, as well as sections on the artists’ responses to social and political upheavals, including Premonition of War, The Spanish Civil War, World War II, and Surrealism in the Americas. Exhibition highlights include Picasso’s *Minotauromachy* (1935), Dalí’s *Soft Construction with Boiled Beans (Premonition of a Civil War)* (1936), Ernst’s *Europe After the Rain II* (1940–42), and Masson’s *There Is No Finished World* (1942). Among the works by American artists responding to the war are Rothko’s *The Syrian Bull* (1943) and Tanning’s *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* (1945/46). The exhibition concludes with two films: *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) by Luis Buñuel and Dalí and *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943) by Maya Deren.

“This exhibition features art created in dark and truly horrifying times,” said BMA Associate Curator of European Painting and Sculpture Oliver Shell. “What is remarkable is the vulnerability and resilience of these artists both in their personal lives and in their efforts to investigate, at times through myths, those areas of the mind where the propensity for violence lies.”

The Surrealist artists first came together in 1924 in response to the carnage of World War I. Many of the artists had served in that conflict and became extremely antinationalistic and antimilitary. They were interested in the new field of psychology and drew inspiration from Sigmund Freud’s theories of the unconscious, dream analysis, and free association. Images from mythology with demons and other menacing creatures were often employed as metaphors for the threat of violence and the experience of war. Many European Surrealist artists sought refuge in the United

States. Artists like Masson and Ernst traveled around the country and began combining mythological figures with images of the animal and plant life they encountered. The work of the exiled Europeans influenced young American artists such as Jackson Pollock, Rothko, and Tanning, who began experimenting with some of the same subjects and artistic techniques. Many artists contributed to *VVV*, a magazine devoted to Surrealism that was produced in New York from 1942 to 1944. The magazine was published and edited by David Hare in collaboration with André Breton, Marcel Duchamp, and Ernst. Each edition was lavishly illustrated by Surrealist artists, including Giorgio de Chirico, Roberto Matta, and Yves Tanguy.

Both the BMA and the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art were at the forefront of promoting Surrealist art in the United States. The Wadsworth presented the first U.S. exhibition of Surrealist art in 1931. One of the BMA's most generous donors, Saidie Adler May, collected works by Surrealist and other European and American avant-garde artists and gave many of them to the museum. She also provided the funds to rescue artist André Masson and his family from Nazi-occupied France in May 1941. Six months later, the BMA presented the first U.S. retrospective of Masson's work, which opened on October 31, 1941.

*Monsters & Myths* is co-organized by The Baltimore Museum of Art and the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art in Hartford, Connecticut. The Baltimore presentation is curated by Associate Curator of European Painting and Sculpture Oliver Shell.

The exhibition and its related programs are generously supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and by generous funding from Transamerica.

#### **TICKET INFORMATION**

Tickets are available through [artbma.org](http://artbma.org). Prices are \$15 for adults, \$13 for seniors, \$12 for groups of 7 or more, \$10 for students with ID, and \$5 for youth ages 7–18. BMA Members and children age 6 and under are admitted free. For more information, call 443-573-1701.

#### **CATALOGUE**

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue published by Rizzoli Electa with essays by exhibition curators Oliver Shell, BMA Associate Curator of European Painting & Sculpture, and Oliver Tostmann, Susan Morse Hilles Curator of European Art at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art. Other contributors are Robin Adèle Greeley, Associate Professor of Modern & Contemporary Latin American Art History at the University of Connecticut and the author of *Surrealism and the Spanish Civil War*, and Samantha Kavky, Associate Professor of Art History at Pennsylvania State University-Berks and co-editor of the *Journal of Surrealism and the Americas*.

#### **TOUR**

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art: October 20, 2018–January 13, 2019

The Baltimore Museum of Art: February 24–May 26, 2019

Frist Art Museum: June 21–September 29, 2019

#### **THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART**

Founded in 1914, The Baltimore Museum of Art is a major cultural destination recognized for engaging diverse audiences through dynamic exhibitions and innovative educational and community outreach programs. The BMA's internationally renowned collection of 95,000 objects encompasses more than 1,000 works by Henri Matisse anchored by the famed Cone Collection of modern art, as well as one of the nation's finest holdings of prints, drawings, and

photographs. The galleries showcase an exceptional collection of art from Africa; important works by established and emerging contemporary artists; outstanding European and American paintings, sculpture, and decorative arts; significant artworks from China; ancient Antioch mosaics; and exquisite textiles from around the world. The 210,000- square-foot museum is also distinguished by a grand historic building designed in the 1920s by renowned American architect John Russell Pope and two beautifully landscaped gardens featuring an array of 20th-century sculpture. The BMA is located in Charles Village, three miles north of the Inner Harbor, and is adjacent to the main campus of Johns Hopkins University. General admission to the BMA is free so that everyone can enjoy the power of art.

#### **VISITOR INFORMATION**

General admission to the BMA is free. Special exhibitions may be ticketed. The BMA is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. The museum is closed Monday, Tuesday, New Year’s Day, July 4, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. The BMA is located at 10 Art Museum Drive, three miles north of Baltimore’s Inner Harbor. For general museum information, call 443-573-1700 or visit [artbma.org](http://artbma.org).

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**Image:** Salvador Dalí. *Soft Construction with Boiled Beans (Premonition of Civil War)*. 1936. The Philadelphia Museum of Art: The Louise and Walter Annenberg Collection. © Salvador Dali, Gala-Salvador Dali Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.