

SURREALISM MOVEMENT IN INDIAN ART

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ABSTRACT

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 this Paper work we extract the information about Surrealism movement on the basis of surveyed results of 20th century, previous related data and analyze the data in aspect of this work; some are based on Surrealism movement.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important and subversive movements of the 20th century, Surrealism flourished particularly in the 1920s and 1930s and provided a radical alternative to the rational and formal qualities of Cubism. Unlike Dada, from which in many ways it sprang, it emphasized the positive rather than the nihilistic.

A number of distinct strands can be discerned in the visual manifestation of Surrealism. Artists such as Max Ernst and André Masson favoured automatism in which conscious control is suppressed and the subconscious is allowed to take over. Conversely, Salvador Dali and René Magritte pursued a hallucinatory sense of super-reality in which the scenes depicted make no real sense. A third variation was the juxtaposition of unrelated items, setting up a startling unreality outside the bounds of normal reality.

Surrealism has come to be seen as the most influential movement in twentieth century art. Salvador Dali and Man Ray not only had an important influence on avant-garde art, but through their commercial work - in fashion photography, advertising and film - they brought the style to a huge popular audience. Following the demise of Minimalism in the 1960s, the movement's influence also returned to art, and since the 1970s it has attracted considerable attention from art historians.

Surrealism was the second style of Fantastic art. It was born out of the Dada movement in 1924, between World Wars I and II when Dada was losing its creativity and potency. Surrealism was a visual and literary movement that explored the realm of the imaginary and unreal. In French, Surrealism translates to "beyond real". States of the unconscious mind were examined and expressed through a range of innovative techniques in which artists created unusual juxtapositions of subject matter that spoke to the viewer's subconscious. Unlike the nihilism of the Dada, Surrealist artworks were more positive in their content and purpose. Many new members of the Surrealism transitioned from the Dada movement because they lost interest in the Dada's aggressive attacks on art.

Due to the terrors of war, Surrealists encouraged people to cure themselves by tapping into their unconscious instead of rebelling against the conventions of the society and art. This process was achieved by psychoanalysis that examined the dream world. In his writings, Sigmund Freud thoroughly researched this subject seeking a way to cure disturbing thoughts, repressed addictions, and sexual drives. Surrealists on the other hand invited everyone to embrace these symptoms and investigate their potential using various forms of art.

The French writer and poet, André Breton, was the founding father of the Surrealist movement. In addition to his profound and extraordinary ideas that shaped Surrealism, he was also an influential figure in the Dada movement. Breton revealed that the idea of the surreal was first born in his mind when all of the sudden he visualized a phrase "There is a man cut in two by the window" which led him to think about two strange realities colliding into one bizarre union. Breton believed in the union of the conscious and the subconscious realms that could coexist in everyday world. He also strongly felt that through the practice of Surrealism, fantasy, dreams, and desires would become part of everyone's lives and coexist with reality. These ideas were developed in response to the war's violence and irrationality, and explained in Breton's first Manifesto of Surrealism (1924). He described Surrealism as "pure psychic automatism, by which an attempt is made to express, either verbally, in writing or in any other manner, the true functioning of thought. The dictation of thought, in the absence of all control by reason, excluding any aesthetic or moral preoccupation." In other words, automatic and natural processes that lacked rational thought or control allowed the true and subconscious feelings to surface. The writer also stressed that Surrealism could be applied to any aspect of life, not just the artistic discipline.

He encouraged artists and poets to seek this "pure automatism" in their work by embracing the chance juxtapositions of ideas, forms, and meanings. His passion for his beliefs and enthusiastic participation inspired many intellectuals to contribute their personal interpretations of the fantasy world. In addition, Breton also published the Second Surrealist Manifesto in 1930 and many

novels that examined the meaning and purpose of the subconscious and the effect that it has on the human beings.

Dada was first of all a mental attitude. Our aim was total subversion. A ghastly and senseless war had cheated us out of five years of our lives. We had seen all that had been held up to us as good, beautiful and true topple into an abyss of ridicule and shame. The work I produced in those days was not meant to please but to make people scream. While Zurich is considered the birthplace of Dada, the movement soon spread to other hubs of cultural activity and international influence - Paris, Cologne, Berlin and New York City.

Perhaps Dada's most important contribution to art history, however, is that it spawned the Surrealist movement. Many of the Dada artists who moved to Paris adopted the ideas of André Breton, the literary founder of Surrealism. Breton expressed similar ideas to those of Dada in his first Surrealist Manifesto of 1924. He too ridiculed conventional artistic traditions and western confidence in reason and order. Breton first envisioned Surrealism as a literary group and it was not until a few years after its conceptions that it came to encompass the visual arts. Like Dadaist's images, Surrealist works share similar theories, but vary greatly in style. Thus Surrealism encompasses the realistically rendered dreamscapes of Salvador Dali as well as the biomorphic characters of Joan Miro.

The role of women within Surrealism became that of the object of desire. Female Surrealist artists struggled to define a space for themselves within a movement which presented women as the muse of art rather than as its creator. Because of this, female Surrealists have been largely ignored by art historical discourse. It is only within the last few decades with the growth of feminist theory that important female Surrealists such as Dorothea Tanning and Meret Oppenheim have received their overdue acceptance and acclaim.

Finally, it should be noted that Surrealism drew its influence not only from Dada and Freudian psychoanalysis, but from non-western artistic traditions. At this time, art from Africa and Oceania was flooding into European galleries and becoming popular around the continent. The Surrealists saw this non-western art as primal and magical, devoid of the rationalization that typified their own culture. Because of this Surrealists became fascinated with it and attempted to incorporate the aesthetics of this art into their work.

Throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s, Surrealism enjoyed widespread acclaim culminating in the International Surrealist Exhibition held in London in 1936. Surrealist theory embraced the irrational in human thought and behavior and its practice in the visual arts resulted in several different styles of art. Thus the biomorphic forms of Jean (Hans) Arp and Joan Miró and the

realistic visions of Salvador Dalí are considered Surrealist images as they many beliefs of the Surrealists continue to influence artists today.

Some of the theories of Sigmund Freud were adopted into defining surrealism; it was a means of reuniting the conscious and unconscious realms so that the world of fantasies and dreams could be applied into the rational world like “surreality”. Some of the best art is produced based on this form of thinking and creativity. It was said that all the poets and painters who could tap this realm were works of genius! For some more jaw dropping revelations on surrealistic art, read more.

RELATED WORK

Surrealism originated in the late 1910s and early '20s as a literary movement that experimented with a new mode of expression called automatic writing, or automatism, which sought to release the unbridled imagination of the subconscious. Officially consecrated in Paris in 1924 with the publication of the Manifesto of Surrealism by the poet and critic André Breton (1896–1966), Surrealism became an international intellectual and political movement. Breton, a trained psychiatrist, along with French poets Louis Aragon (1897–1982), Paul Éluard (1895–1952), and Philippe Soupault (1897–1990), were influenced by the psychological theories and dream studies of Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) and the political ideas of Karl Marx (1818–1883).

Using Freudian methods of free association, their poetry and prose drew upon the private world of the mind, traditionally restricted by reason and societal limitations, to produce surprising, unexpected imagery. The cerebral and irrational tenets of Surrealism find their ancestry in the clever and whimsical disregard for tradition fostered by Dadaism a decade earlier.

In 1927, the Belgian artist René Magritte (1898–1967) moved from Brussels to Paris and became a leading figure in the visual Surrealist movement. Influenced by de Chirico's paintings between 1910 and 1920, Magritte painted erotically explicit objects juxtaposed in dream like surroundings. His work defined a split between the visual automatism fostered by Masson and Miro (and originally with words by Breton) and a new form of illusionistic Surrealism practiced by the Spaniard Salvador Dalí (1904–1989), the Belgian Paul Delvaux (1897–1994), and the French-American Yves Tanguy (1900–1955).

In the *Eternally Obvious* (2002.456.12a-f), Magritte's artistic display of a dismembered female nude is emotionally shocking. In the *Satin Tuning Fork* (1999.363.80), Tanguy fills an illusionistic space with unidentifiable, yet sexually suggestive, objects rendered with great precision. The painting's mysterious lighting, long shadows, deep receding space, and sense of loneliness also recall the ominous settings of de Chirico.

In 1929, Dali moved from Spain to Paris and made his first Surrealist paintings. He expanded on Magritte's dream imagery with his own erotically charged, hallucinatory visions. In *The Accommodations of Desire* (1999.363.16) of 1929, Dali employs Freudian symbols, such as ants, to symbolize his over whelming sexual desire. In 1930, Breton praised Dali's representations of the unconscious in the Second Manifesto of Surrealism. They became the main collaborators on the review *Minotaur* (1933–39), a primarily Surrealist-oriented publication founded in Paris.

The organized Surrealist movement in Europe dissolved with the onset of World War II. Breton, Dali, Ernst, Masson, and others, including the Chilean artist Matta (1911–2002), who first joined the Surrealists in 1937, left Europe for New York. The movement found renewal in the United States at Peggy Guggenheim's (1898–1979) gallery, *Art of This Century*, and the Julien Levy Gallery.

Today, we associate the word "surreal" with strange juxtapositions or absurd combinations, like those experienced in dreams. This concept belongs to Breton's interpretation of the word. Sometimes concluded history, something comes along that changes everything as it has been known thus far. In the 1920's, such an art movement came around that changed the way art was defined. The Surrealist art movement combined elements of its predecessors, Dada and cubism, to create something unknown to the art world. The movement was first rejected, but its eccentric ideas and unique techniques paved the way for a new form of art.

The Surrealist movement started in Europe in the 1920's, after World War I with its nucleus in Paris. Its roots were found in Dada, but it was less violent and more artistically based. Surrealism was first the work of poets and writers. The French poet, André Breton, is known as the "Pope of Surrealism." Breton wrote the Surrealist Manifesto to describe how he wants to combine the conscious and subconscious into a new "absolute reality". He first used the word surrealism to describe work found to be a "fusion of elements of fantasy with elements of the modern world to form a kind of superior reality." He also described it as "spontaneous writing" (Surrealism 4166-67). The first exhibition of surrealist painting was held in 1925, but its ideas were rejected in Europe. Breton set up an International Exhibition of Surrealism in New York, which then took the place of Paris as the center of the Surrealist movement. Soon surrealist ideas were given new life and became an influence over ing artists in the United States and Mexico. The ideas of Surrealism were bold and new to the art world.

Surrealists strongly embraced the ideas of Sigmund Freud. His method of psychoanalytic interpretation could be used to bring forth and illuminate the unconscious. Freud once said, "A dream that is not interpreted is like a letter that is not opened," and Surrealists adapted this idea

into their artwork. Although Surrealists strongly supported the ideas of Freud, Breton visited him in 1921 and left without his support.

Freud inspired many Surrealists, but two different interpretations of his ideas led to two different types of Surrealists, Automatists and Veristic Surrealists. Automatists focused their work more on feeling and were less investigative. They believed automatism to be “the automatic way in which the images of the subconscious reach the conscious”. However they did not think the images had a meaning or should try to be interpreted. Automatists thought that abstract art was the only way to convey images of the subconscious, and that a lack of form was a way to rebel against traditional art. In this way they were much like Dadaists. On the other side, Veristic Surrealists believed subconscious images did have meaning. They felt that these images were a metaphor that, if studied, could enable the world to be understood. Veristic Surrealists also believed that the language of the subconscious world was in the form of image. While their work may look similar, Automatists only see art where veristic Surrealists see meaning.

Salvador Dali, one of the most famous Surrealist artists, was known for his wild art and a public personality to match. He once said, “It is not necessary of the public to know whether I am joking or whether I am serious, just as it is not necessary for me to know it myself”. Dali first wrote poems, essays, and even books, his most famous being *The Secret Life of Salvador Dali*. Inspired by the Dutch masters of the 17th century realism, Dali's art was known for its realistic qualities. He used multiple symbolic images to suggest his subconscious. His paintings were odd, influenced by his dreams and his fear of sex. This fear was present in many of his works, which depict sexual and violent images. Dali felt that the three constants of life were “the sexual instinct, the sentiment of death, and the anguish of space and time”. He had two methods for creating art: the oneiric-critical method and the paranoiac-critical method. In the former, the artist freezes and interprets his dreams through art. The latter is the science of painting so as to study the psyche through subconscious art. Dali rejected induced sleep use by other artists and termed his own style to be the paranoiac-critical method. A few of his pieces even had the words “paranoiac critical” in their titles. Even though he is one of the best known surrealist artists, in 1938 Dali dissociated himself from Surrealism and turned to Classicism. He stated his change as “a religious Renaissance based on a progressive Catholicism”, and in 1940 he moved to the United States to take part in the commercial culture.

Pre-surrealists were a group of artists that produced surrealist-like paintings before 1924 when surrealism became an official doctrine. Hieronymus Bosch is considered one of the prime examples of pre-surrealism and any artist that produced dream-state or hallucinatory art would fit into the pre-surrealist category. Any metaphysical, supernatural, double image, trompe, psycho-pathological state type paintings fit the surrealist unconscious art.

Certain art forms like cubism and abstract forms (especially automatic drawing and painting) found surrealist support as long as they were depictions of the altered mind, the irrational dream state. The preference was for realism that is realistic renderings of the subconscious, was idealized by artists like Magritte and Dali with their highly refined technique. Therefore the pre-surrealists, in general, exhibited the unconscious in a realistic way. Here is an article from History of Art detailing some important pre-surrealists.

There were more forerunners of surrealism among sixteenth-century German painters. Albrecht Durer's woodcuts and copper engravings gave episodes from the Apocalypse and various allegories the force of hypnagogic images. Albrecht Altdorfer, an architect at Regensburg in Bavaria, applied miniaturist techniques to his large painting *The Victory of Alexander* (1529, Munich, Alte Pinakothek), and by this method was able to make hundreds of warriors, lit by dawn in the heart of a mountain landscape, swarm over the canvas in a hallucinatory way. Matthias Grunewald, the greatest colourist of the German school, reached the heights of the fantastic in his *Isenheim altarpiece*, and did so through a very excess of realism. Hans Baldung Grien's frenzied imagination, shown in his linking of *Pleasure and Death*, and in his witches' sabbaths, compelled the intense attention of the surrealists.

Antoine Caron, the court painter of the Valois, whose job it was to commemorate the festivities of the court of Charles IX, has a place of honor in the surrealists' ideal museum. He painted two pictures of massacres, in particular the *Massacre of the Triumvirs* (1566, Paris, Musee du Louvre), in which the convulsions of the beheaded victims and the bloody rage of the soldiers contrast with the smiling calm of the statues and the harmony of the architecture to create a nightmare of cruelty. There is a strange quality, too, in other paintings by Caron, such as the *Apotheosis of Semele* and *The Elephant Carousel*, and also in his engravings for *Le Livre de Philostrate*, which had a great success during his lifetime.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, some painters began to formulate demands which the surrealists later applauded. They admired Gauguin for his rebellion, and for his rejection of civilization for a wilder form of life; they admired Van Gogh, with whom Antonin Artaud identified himself in some impassioned pages; they admired Seurat, whose Neo-Impressionism they regarded as a 'pre-surrealism' which bathed everyday reality in a magic light; and they admired Charles Filiger, who was a painter of Gauguin's Pont-Aven group, living a hermit's life at Plougastel, whose plans for stained glass for an imaginary church have a spare, hieratic quality. This period was dominated by Gustaves Moreau, a master whom the surrealists rated second only to Hieronymus Bosch. A refined and learned teacher at the Ecole Nationale des Beaux-Arts, where his pupils included Rouault and Matisse, Moreau was a solitary whose

contempt for modern life led him to shut himself up in his house in Montmartre (now his museum), and to spend his life evoking visions of Greece and the Orient. Moreau had a sense of visual splendor.

SURREALISM PAINTING

In this Paper we provide the result of surrealism movement and its later development. The most known and famous surrealist artists like Andre Breton, Luis Bunuel Joseph Cornell etc. Initially, 'The objective of surrealism was infinite expansion of reality as a substitute for the previously accepted dichotomy between the "real" and the "imaginary"'.

Defined as the principles, ideals, or practice of producing fantastic or incongruous imagery or effects in painting or any other art form by means of unnatural or irrational juxtapositions and combinations, the term Surrealism comes from the French word surrealism.

A new exhibition titled 'Indian Surrealism' made an effort to track the trajectory of surrealism in the contemporary Indian art. The artists invited to participate include Paritosh Sen, Bijan Choudhury, Haku Shah, Prafulla Dahanukar, Sanatkar, Ratan Parimoo, Sakti Burman, Ganesh Pyne, Lalu Prasad Shaw, Jogen Chowdhury, Dinanath Pathy, Partha Pratim Deb, Shuvaprasanna, Asit Mondal, P.R. Narvekar and Dipali Bhattacharya among others.

According to one of participating artists Ratan Parimoo, a creative person sees the world around him in his or her own inimitable way, gets involved with experiences of life, which effect his emotions. He believes that an artist lives in an imaginative world induced by such experiences and feelings, and is very lucid about the concept of creativity and aesthetics.

One of the leading painters from the Bengal School of Art, Ashok Mullick combines a sense of satire with contemporary conditions. His paintings focus strongly on the ordinary man and the contradictions he faces. There is a mingling of pictures and a blurred effect in Arup Das's work which 'facilitates interpretations of my creations', he has once stated.

The disorder of surrealism is only on a superficial level. The true surrealist attempts to get in touch with what they consider the ultimate order contained within their subconscious. It is the seeking of order through disorder or reality through illusion. The surrealists believed that creating without a conscious order allowed the subconscious to dominate.

Surrealism influenced the worlds of fashion, design, theatre, interiors, film, architecture and advertising. The Surrealists explored unique ways of interpreting the world, turning to dreams and the unconscious as inspiration for a new vision. Their innovative thinking challenged convention, changing perceptions of the world in which they lived and transforming the language

of art and design. Surrealist imagery and ideas inspired designers. They were absorbed into the worlds of fashion, commercial design, graphics and film and many Surrealist artists were actively engaged with these activities throughout their careers.

SURVEY

In this Paper we analyses and evaluates surrealism movement to validate the presented framework. Surrealist individuals and groups have attempted to carry on with Surrealism after the death of André Breton in 1966.

The fragmentary style of rendering creates a surrealist feel to Sakti Burman work that seems removed from all reality. The rich surfaces and vivid colors fabricate a mythical world inhabited by men, women, children, birds and beasts.

On the other hand, Ganesh Pyne draws his inspiration from Bengal's rich storehouse of folklore and mythology, stories that his grandmother told him in his childhood. The painter blends romanticism, fantasy and free form and an inventive play of light and shade to create a world of 'poetic surrealism'.

The concept of using art to get in touch with the subconscious excited Jim. To understand his lyrical and poetic imagery on the first album it is necessary to grasp at least the basic principles of surrealist art. The idea is that by avoiding traditional concepts of order, the surrealist allows his subconscious to flow free through his art. But the surrealists carry it much further than that as C.W. Mills describes in Surrealism in Art.

"Acknowledging the human need for metaphysical release, the surrealist believed that through the exploration of the psyche, through the cultivation of the miracles of objective chance, through the mystique of eroticism, through the diverting of objects from their familiar functions in surroundings, through a more cosmic perspective of life on this earth and finally through the alchemy of language that would learn to express this more dynamic reality, man might be able to satisfy his thirst for the absolute within the confines of his counted number of heartbeats."

Surrealism as a political force developed unevenly around the world: in some places more emphasis was on artistic practices, in other places on political practices, and in other places still, Surrealist praxis looked to supersede both the arts and politics. During the 1930s, the Surrealist idea spread from Europe to North America, South America (founding of the Mandragora group in Chile in 1938), Central America, the Caribbean, and throughout Asia, as both an artistic idea and as an ideology of political change.

Politically, Surrealism was Trotskyist, communist, or anarchist. The split from Dada has been characterized as a split between anarchists and communists, with the Surrealists as communist. Breton and his comrades supported Leon Trotsky and his International Left Opposition for a while, though there was openness to anarchism that manifested more fully after World War II. Some Surrealists, such as Benjamin Peret, Mary Low, and Juan Brea, aligned with forms of communism. Dali supported capitalism and the fascist dictatorship of Francisco Franco but cannot be said to represent a trend in Surrealism in this respect; in fact he was considered, by Breton and his associates, to have betrayed and left Surrealism. Benjamin Peret, Mary Low and Juan Brea joined the POUM during the Spanish Civil War.

With their traditionally masculinist articulations of revolutionary ideals, avant-garde movements pose a special challenge to feminist scholars. On one hand, by conceiving their activities in terms of the reassertion of a virile creative power, many of the male founders of movements such as modernism and surrealism paint themselves as warriors against the feminization and attendant bourgeoisification of culture; the feminine, therefore, comes to represent that which has rendered art inoffensive and flabby. On the other hand, by privileging the subversive, the radical, and the new, the avant-garde shares many of feminism's central ideological tenets and would seem a congenial fellow-discourse. The primary task for feminist critics, therefore, has been to locate textual moments when the emancipator's potential of the avant-garde may be harnessed for explicitly feminist ends. While modernism has proved fertile ground for such scholarship,

Surrealism has not; addressing this gap, Katharine Conley elaborates a feminist rereading of literary surrealism in her book, *Automatic Woman*, examining the ways in which women figure within the movement as both the objects and agents of representation. As Conley points out, those feminists who have addressed surrealism tend to dismiss it as an unremittingly patriarchal practice; with its mannequins, machines, and other lifeless representations, surrealism has been charged with objectifying women in particularly literal ways. Questioning this critique, Conley examines the ways in which surrealism's women writers were able to find within the movement sources of support and inspiration. While the book is focused on the feminist potential of surrealism, however, its evocative portrayal of feminine suffering and madness - the painful underside of life for female surrealists complicates and threatens to overshadow its optimistic stance.

CONCLUSION

Surrealism is important because it was strong enough to become a world renowned movement for one reason or another. Its real contribution to art may be a little limited. It is in the main a form of illustration, it has to employ a high degree of realism in representation in order to

tell the story of obscurity. This means that the pure understanding of the formal elements of visual language are compromised and have to play 'second fiddle' to the high 'narrative, hence a form of illustration.

The works in the exhibition are loaned from museums, galleries and private collections around the world including the Centre Pompidou (Paris), Tate Modern (London), the Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), among many others. The exhibition is curated by Jos Jimnez, Doctor of Philosophy and Surrealist Historian.

Surrealism should not be considered just one more art movement: rather, it was an attitude to life essentially based on a vision of interior images accessed through the flow of desire. Its ideas have had a key influence on all subsequent art and on the contemporary mindset. The present exhibition aims to demonstrate that this influence has its most profound roots in the Surrealist connection between dream and image. In order to do so, the exhibition will include examples from the wide range of media in which this link is evident: painting, drawing, graphic work, collage/, objects, sculptures, photography and film.

The exhibition also features significant works from the Tantric traditions of India and Nepal. Tantra is a complex concept with many facets, but it can broadly be defined as referring to practices based on a group of historic texts called 'Tantras,' which emphasize specific rituals, secrecy and the importance of the teacher (guru) in the pursuit of spiritual gain. A folded manuscript from 18th century Nepal, The Chakras of the Subtle Body, is a manifestation of the seven 'chakras', or internal centers of energy, within the 'spiritual' body. The painting is over three meters long and accompanies a Hindu text that outlines specific mantras (sounds or words to aid meditation).

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