La durée poignardée (Time Transfixed)
René Magritte
Gallery 396

A major figure of the Surrealist movement, René Magritte approached painting as a philosophical and poetic art. In Time Transfixed, he transformed a stovepipe into a charging locomotive, situating the train in a fireplace vent so that it appears to be emerging from a railway tunnel. The surprising juxtaposition and incongruous scale of unrelated elements bring a sense of mystery to the everyday.

“This composition was painted at a moment when Magritte was attempting to elicit 'poetic secrets' through his work. The artist challenged himself to juxtapose two images in such a way that they would suggest in the viewer's mind a third un-pictured thing.”

Forest and Sun
Max Ernst
Gallery 395

Surrealist Max Ernst used an unusually wide range of styles and techniques to create his works. In 1925, he developed a method called frottage, which involved rubbing paper or canvas over a textured surface to create an image. In Forest and Sun, the wood grain patterns become a cluster of towering forms recalling a forest, a source of fear and fascination for Ernst since his youth.

“This dark and mysterious forest scene dates to one of the most creative periods of Ernst’s career. He painted six variations of this theme. As in the other five canvases, the tree trunks suggest a letter in the artist’s name: in this case, a capital M.”

This Is So Surreal

Wander through the dreams and unique perceptions of these Surrealist artists.
**The Policeman**

Joan Miró  
Gallery 398

After moving to Paris in 1920, Joan Miró met a group of avant-garde artists who advocated merging the everyday world with dreams and the unconscious to produce an absolute reality, or unreality. In The Policeman, Miró derives an image of a mustachioed policeman and his horse from seemingly unplanned stains on the canvas and graffiti-like strokes and squiggles, as if composing without conscious intention.

“Between 1925 and 1927, Miró unleashed a revolutionary series of works called the 'dream paintings,' which straddle abstraction and representation in freely moving, calligraphic compositions.”

**The Earth Is a Man**

Matta  
Gallery 398

Matta referred to this imaginative landscape—his best-known painting—as an “inscape.” He painted it in honor of the poet Federico García Lorca, who was assassinated in 1936, and used the technique of psychic automatism, developed by the Surrealists, to create the composition’s turbulent forms. Exhibited in New York City, the mural-size canvas influenced a new generation of American artists: the Abstract Expressionists.

“Here the forces of brilliant light seem to battle those of darkness. Matta’s vaporous paint washes render the invisible waves of energy that shape and dissolve a molten, primordial terrain. It recalls a volcanic eruption Matta witnessed in Mexico in 1941.”

**Object**

Claude Cahun  
Gallery 396

Claude Cahun was closely associated with the Paris Surrealists of the 1930s. Attracted to the group’s desire to transform society through exploring the unconscious, she challenged traditional ideas about gender and sexuality. For Object, Cahun altered a number of seemingly unrelated components—a doll’s hand, a cloud-shaped piece of wood, and a tennis ball painted with a wide-open eye—to produce a work with startling psychological resonance.

“Cahun’s assemblages were typically ephemeral, made to be captured on film. Object is the only sculptural work by the artist known to still exist in its original form.”

**Untitled (Butterfly Habitat)**

Joseph Cornell  
Gallery 397

For nearly 30 years, Cornell worked in relative obscurity in the basement of his home in Queens, New York, creating wondrous miniature worlds within his boxed constructions. These deeply personal and poetic assemblages of found objects and materials often prompt a dizzying array of associations. In Untitled (Butterfly Habitat), these include Christmas decorations, collector’s specimen cabinets, microscopes, natural history displays, and windows.

“Cornell's deeply personal and elusive work combines the enthusiasms of his childhood—butterflies, marbles, seashells, sky charts, stamps—with adult fascinations such as ballerinas, empty cages, and movie stars.”