

*Man Ray's Lost and Found Photographs
Arts of the Americas in Context*

Wendy Grossman

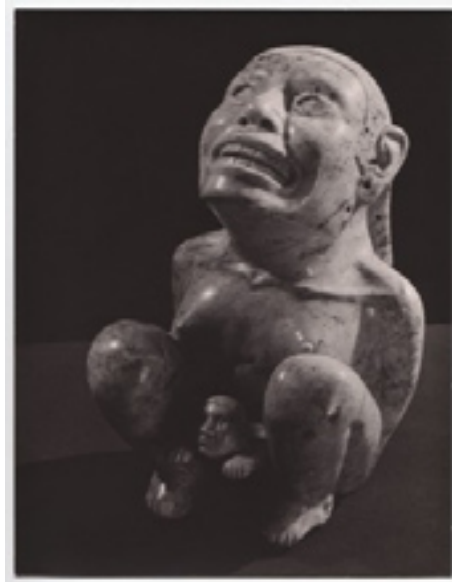


Fig. 1. Man Ray, *Untitled* (Aztec figurine of the goddess Tlazoteotl), n.d., Gelatin silver print © 2008 Man Ray Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

Man Ray's 1930s photograph of an Aztec birthing figure (Fig. 1) literally and figuratively shines new light on a little-explored chapter of Surrealism's engagement with the indigenous arts of the Americas. Commonly identified as Tlazolteotl—the goddess of earth, sex, and childbirth in Aztec mythology—the stone carving provided the photographer with a captivating object embodying the Surrealists'

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fascination with dualities and the grotesque. The anguish and tension conveyed by her jutting jaw, teeth-baring grimace, and face grossly contorted in the agony of labor belies her empty and expressionless gaze. Evoking conflicting responses of empathy and revulsion as she gives birth to a misshapen creature, the crouching figure presents incongruities appealing to Surrealist sensibilities. Indeed, this enigmatic figure attracted an entourage of admirers among aficionados of pre-Columbian art in the 1930s, André Breton foremost among them. He acquired a ceramic copy of the coveted statuette that in spite of being a rather mediocre facsimile he nonetheless added to his eclectic collection and retained until the end of his life.

Despite the “Tlazolteotl” figure’s status as one of the most exhibited, reproduced, and celebrated objects of Aztec art, Man Ray’s photographic engagement with it has surprisingly escaped attention until now.¹ This oversight might be explained in part by the apparent absence of the image in any publication or exhibition, either at the time it was made or subsequently. The obscurity of this photograph nonetheless seems odd given that this work and a highly unusual photomontage constructed from a series of related prints (Fig. 2) are in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, where they have languished since they arrived in 1941 as part of a bequest from James Thrall Soby.²



Fig. 2. Man Ray, *Untitled* (Aztec figurine of the goddess Tlazolteotl), n.d., Photomontage of gelatin silver prints © 2008 Man Ray Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

While Man Ray’s photographs of African and—to a lesser extent—Oceanic art are attracting increasing critical interest, these images and his other photographs of objects from indigenous peoples of the “New World” are virtually unknown.³ This article aims to incorporate these overlooked images into Man Ray’s photographic repertoire of other non-Western objects, exploring the framework and manner in which indigenous art of the Americas became a vehicle for his creative expression alongside the arts of Africa and Oceania. In so doing, I hope to recover these works from the dustbin of art history and bring new attention to their art

historical context and significance.

Although Man Ray's engagement with the arts of the Western Hemisphere would continue in different forms until the end of his career, my focus here is on the way he used these objects in photographs made during the two decades he spent in Paris between the wars. This body of images provides both a window into the way in which such cultural artifacts became enmeshed in transatlantic artistic practices of the interwar period and insight into the role of Man Ray's photographic endeavors in that process.

Modernist Primitivism, Photography, and the Life of Objects

The early twentieth-century appropriation and transformation of non-Western objects into reified art forms within Western values and frames of reference is by now a well-rehearsed and critiqued chapter of art history. Narratives of this phenomenon, codified as modernist primitivism, recount the embrace of indigenous objects by vanguard artists in the West as both a repudiation of traditional Western artistic hierarchies and as catalysts for infusing new vitality into their art-making.⁴ In scholarship on this historical development, photography as such has historically been relegated to a marginal status, if recognized at all.⁵ Due to the mimetic nature of the medium and the rhetoric of photographic truth, photographs of non-Western sculpture have largely been dismissed as nothing more than transparent documentary representations of objects. This attitude persisted in art historical scholarship until recently, despite the fact that photographic reproduction of non-Western objects, as noted by print scholar William Ivins as early as 1953, "has changed Asiatic, African, Polynesian and Amerindian curiosities into works of art."⁶

Photography's mediating influence in transforming the way we experience and understand art—not only through the camera angle but also selective focus, lighting, framing and cropping—was famously illuminated in André Malraux's *Museum without Walls* (1947), a virtual museum constructed of photographic reinterpretations of objects.⁷ Since then, this discussion has extended into the field of anthropology and ethnography, with pioneering scholars such as Elizabeth Edwards arguing that "the actual way objects are photographed is integral to their influence, as images, in affecting the perception not only of the object itself, but also of the cultures in which they originated."⁸ In the field of art history, scholars of Surrealism have been among the first to enter this discourse, compelled to examine these issues due to the privileged place within this movement held by both indigenous objects and the photographic medium.⁹

Man Ray's photographs featuring objects from Africa, Oceania and the Americas—such as those he composed of the "Tlazolteotl" figure—are inexorably

linked to these various histories. While the formal qualities of indigenous objects attracted the attention of the previous generation of artists, Man Ray related to many newly encountered masks and sculptural figures in a more conceptual manner, befitting his iconoclastic creative vision.¹⁰ For him, they frequently functioned—like other found objects—as raw material to be altered and transformed at whim not only for their formal qualities but also for the ideas they provoke. This approach carried over into his photographic practice, as well. The resulting images introduced new ways of perceiving such objects and played a key role in their transformation from artifact to art in Western eyes.

One of Man Ray's earliest endeavors reflecting these ideas is *Black and White* (Fig. 3), a composition revealing his pioneering artistic vision that engaged photography's conceptual possibilities and—in title and content—underscored the



Fig. 3. . Man Ray, *Black and White*, 1924; July 1924 cover of 391 © 2008 Man Ray Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

nature of the black-and-white medium through which the objects were rendered. In this confrontation of a Baule spirit figure from the Ivory Coast with a neoclassical Venus-like statuette, African art is invoked as a literal and figurative challenge to the hegemony and hierarchy of Western classical tradition. Mirroring its irreverent Dada spirit, this photograph appeared on the July 1924 cover of Francis Picabia's journal *391* framed by a field of irreverent aphorisms. The strategic pairing of image and text wittily illustrates contemporary political and aesthetic debates in which

African sculpture was being positioned as equal—or even superior—to its Western counterparts.¹¹ In the postwar atmosphere where repudiation of perceived excesses of the *avant-guerre* was widespread and resentment against foreign “perversions” of classical French cultural traditions prevailed, this cover of *391* constituted a radical indictment of the *rappel à l'ordre*, the appeal by recidivist cultural forces for a return to the classicizing underpinnings of French culture.¹²

Oscillating between document and art and created within the framework of Surrealist interest in the objects themselves, Man Ray's images of non-Western art occupy an ambiguous space between the ethnographic and the surreal. It is, in fact, the context in which they appear rather than any intrinsic aesthetic quality that frequently defines them. The reproduction of his photographs in publications such as *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Cahiers d'art* and Surrealist exhibition catalogues illustrate James Clifford's frequently invoked notion of “ethnographic Surrealism” and its “continuous play of the familiar and the strange.”¹³ Man Ray's photographs of indigenous masks and figural sculptures—however engaged in Surrealist play as they are—are in no way immune to critiques of their role in the cultural colonialism in which they participated. That said, an examination of them and the circumstances in which they were created reveals the complex nature of the Surrealists' reception of such objects and how Man Ray's photographs functioned within that context. My integration of his “lost” photographs of arts of the Americas into this narrative is situated within this framework.

The Transatlantic Avant-Garde and the Reception of the Art of the Americas

The Surrealists' “discovery” and embrace of pre-Columbian and contemporary indigenous arts of the Americas in the 1920s was a homecoming of sorts for Man Ray. Active in the New York art scene more than a decade earlier, he was exposed at that time to the burgeoning interest in Native American cultures. This interest manifested itself in collecting practices and the artistic appropriation of motifs by New York avant-garde artists such as Max Weber and Marsden Hartley as expressions of their modernist visual vocabulary.¹⁴ This community saw the assimilation of American Indian art and ideas as a uniquely American counterpoint to European creative activities, in which objects from African and Oceanic colonies were celebrated as antidotes to seemingly moribund Western artistic traditions.

Man Ray also embraced these ideas, as reflected in his 1914 painting *Totem* (Fig. 4), a canvas he included among what he later identified as “a series of compositions inspired by forms in primitive sculpture.”¹⁵ Art historians Gail Levin and Francis Naumann, respectively, have interpreted this work as “a pastiche of such American Indian wood carvings of Zuni War Gods and Northwest Coast Indian

totems, such as could be seen at the Brooklyn Museum and the Museum of Natural

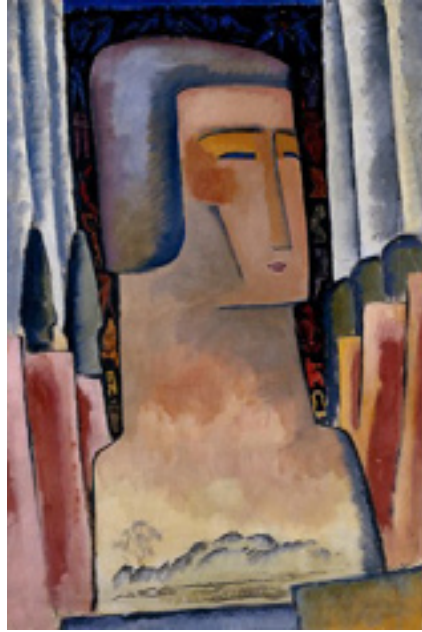


Fig. 4. Man Ray, *Totem*, 1914, Oil on canvas, 36 x 24 in. Collection of the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan © 2008 Man Ray Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

History” and a resemblance of “the monumental volcanic carvings from Easter Island.” The painting indeed suggests—both in title and totemic imagery—the artist’s search for inspiration in indigenous forms at an early stage of his career.¹⁶

After his arrival Paris in 1921, Man Ray’s engagement with the arts of the Americas corresponded to the interest in non-Western cultures expressed in the ideas and practices of the Dada and Surrealist movements with which he was actively involved. Unlike the previous generation’s appreciation of indigenous objects principally for their aesthetic form, these avant-garde movements engaged with such objects and the cultures from which they came for radical political reasons. For them, a wholesale rejection of Western values was the only acceptable response to the folly of World War I, which in the name of civilization was responsible for the slaughter and degradation of human life on an unprecedented scale. As scholarship of the past several decades has revealed, the avant-garde’s turn to indigenous cultures in quest of alternatives was also guided by a perception of these societies and their arts as more authentic and elemental, allegedly untainted by Western corruption.¹⁷

Despite the seeming contradiction posed by the Surrealists’ own practice in

collecting, displaying, and decontextualizing indigenous artifacts from the colonies, they were among the first Westerners to protest the horrors and inequities of colonialism. In the face of massive European political and economic expansion into Asia and Africa, the Surrealists considered their tracts, pamphlets, manifestos and demonstrations against colonial exploits as part of their larger commitment to revolutionary social change. Opposing the French government's colossal 1931 International Colonial Exposition organized to display the country's commercial prowess as a colonial power, they drafted a signed petition, "Ne visitez pas l'Exposition Coloniale," decrying colonialism and urging the public to boycott the event.¹⁸ In the midst of this imperial spectacle, which ran from May to November, the Surrealists organized *L'Exposition Anti-impérialiste: La Vérité sur les colonies*, a politically didactic exhibition organized to foster anti-colonialist sentiment and to evoke moral outrage.¹⁹ Notably missing from the names of the signatories to the petition or the individuals associated with this provocative exhibition is Man Ray, who refused to conform to any artistic, social or political doctrine throughout his life. While he was neither explicitly involved in these anti-colonial activities nor overtly political at any time, his photographs are nonetheless inextricably intertwined in this moment in the history of Surrealism.

Man Ray's relocation to Paris in the wake of World War I came at a pivotal juncture in the growing interest in non-Western cultures and artifacts, reflected in both avant-garde practice and popular culture. As a result of a large influx of masks and figural statues from the French colonies and a burgeoning market for products, African and Oceanic artifacts became widely accessible, avidly collected and intricately assimilated into the visual and performing arts.²⁰ By contrast, indigenous American objects were difficult to obtain and entered French avant-garde thought and artistic practice at a more measured pace.²¹ As a result of the accessibility of African objects and the popularization of the work of a generation of European avant-garde artists profoundly influenced by this art, by the mid-1920s African art forms became assimilated into mainstream culture, even reflected in the fashions and furniture exhibited at the 1925 *Exposition des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes*.²²

The growing popularity of African art led a number of Surrealists to the conclusion that such objects had been drained of value for their radical agenda, precipitating a search for new sources of inspiration.²³ They turned instead to the indigenous arts of the South Seas and the Americas, perceiving in these cultures a spiritual, vital essence and magical allure akin to their own artistic aspirations. Their preoccupation with the unconscious and fascination with dreams, myth, ritual, animism and the occult, drew them to these objects, whose power they sought to channel.

It was not only among the Surrealists, however, that the arts of the Americas were gaining attention. *Les arts anciens de l'Amérique*, an exhibition held in the Louvre's Pavillon de Marsan in 1928 featuring more than nine hundred objects from across the ancient American world, greatly advanced public awareness of these cultures.²⁴ In the same year, related articles and photographic illustrations began to appear in the recently established journal, *Cahiers d'art*, dedicated to painting, sculpture, architecture, ancient art, ethnography, and cinema.²⁵ The heightened interest in the arts of the Americas was further reflected in the increasing frequency with which such objects could be seen in curio shops, galleries, and private collections.

Complicating this newfound interest in arts of the Western hemisphere was France's colonial history in the Americas (which provided the foundation of their public collections of objects from this region) and the retention after the loss of its colonies early in the nineteenth century of the country's "nostalgic attachment to the first Americans."²⁶ This history was further confounded by an indiscriminate intermingling of ancient and contemporary cultures from the Americas and a proclivity in popular culture to subsume non-Western objects under an undifferentiated notion of *l'art nègre*.²⁷ This ill-defined comprehension of indigenous arts from the Western hemisphere extended to contemporary institutional taxonomies that deemed pre-Columbian objects ethnographic and classified them as "primitive" rather than as ancient art, which was the terminology applied to material of comparable age from China, India, and Egypt.²⁸

The ambiguous place these objects occupied—as the work of either "savage" or "civilized" peoples—presented, as Elizabeth Williams notes, a "profound enigma" for the contemporary art world. She concludes that the "final task of revaluation of the *ars americana* was accomplished only in the wake of the 'primitivist revolution' in European aesthetics, a process set in motion by avant-garde artists who appear to have been little indebted to previous endeavors of ethnographic labors among the 'primitive arts.'²⁹ Although the debt of the avant-garde to ethnographic endeavors was arguably not as unencumbered by the ethnographic past as Williams claims, it was indeed the embrace of arts of the Americas by these artists—the Surrealists in particular—that served as a catalyst for the surge in interest in the "New World" after the first World War.

One of the earliest proponents in Paris of the modernity of pre-Columbian art was George Sakier (1897-1988), an American graphic and industrial designer and painter whose role in this development has been largely absent in scholarship from this period. An avid collector of Mayan art, he joined the wave of literary, performing, and visual artists who were drawn to the city following the war. In a 1923 article for the international magazine *Broom*, published on the Left Bank by

its American editor Matthew Josephson, Sakier wrote: “Today, when a new order of artists is trying to rescue art from the morass of misused realism and to bring direction to an inchoate aesthetic, Maya art particularly recommends itself.”³⁰ His knowledge of Mayan art influenced a small circle of Dada artists, including Paul Eluard and Hans Arp, and his writings on the topic allegedly stimulated the rescue of a collection of Mesoamerican objects from the basement of the Trocadéro.³¹

What effect Sakier’s interest in Mayan art might have had on Man Ray is unknown. There is nonetheless an intriguing relationship between these two Brooklynites whose acquaintance went back to childhood. As my previous scholarship revealed, Sakier—then working as an art director at Paris *Vogue*—provided Man Ray with the Baule-style mask featured in his now iconic composition *Noire et blanche* (Fig. 5) published in the May 1926 issue of Paris *Vogue*.³² *Noire et blanche* and the artist’s other photographs featuring non-Western objects reflect the history of reception of the arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas during this period. Masks and figures from French colonies in West Africa were the first non-Western objects to appear in his images, featured in a range of photographs that reveal his idiosyncratic approach both to the objects and to the medium that was increasingly commanding his artistic energies.³³ Although *Noire et blanche* has been



Fig. 5. Man Ray, *Noire et blanche*, 1926, Gelatin silver print © 2008 Man Ray Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

treated as an isolated example of Man Ray's engagement with indigenous arts in most current scholarship, a body of largely overlooked photographs tells a more complex story.³⁴

Among this under-examined body of work is a series of photographs of Oceanic art Man Ray produced in conjunction with the March 1926 inaugural exhibition of the Galerie Surréaliste, *Tableaux de Man Ray et objets des îles*.³⁵ This exhibition and another one mounted a year later at the same gallery, *Yves Tanguy et objets d'Amérique*, set the tone for other Surrealist exhibitions of non-Western objects that followed.³⁶ Indeed, they could profitably be examined as trial runs for the more famous 1936 *Exposition surréaliste d'objets*, which is discussed below. In these exhibitions, the work of Man Ray and Tanguy, respectively, was displayed alongside sculptures from the Pacific Islands and the Americas borrowed from the collections of members of the Surrealist circle. Manifest in the incongruous juxtapositions that surfaced in these two exhibitions are Surrealism's embryonic ideas about the use of non-Western art as a vehicle to rupture, deconstruct, and redefine artistic production and hierarchies, thereby provoking unexpected responses. The exhibitions and the photographs Man Ray made in conjunction with *Tableaux de Man Ray et objets des îles* established the framework for his subsequent approach to the engagement of non-Western objects.

The eclectic and iconoclastic nature of Man Ray's work was apparently perceived as providing the ideal counterpoint to the Oceanic masks and sculptures assembled in the first Surrealist endeavor of this nature.³⁷ Not only did *Tableaux de Man Ray et objets des îles* feature twenty-four of his canvases, assemblages and works on paper but he also provided the photographs for the accompanying exhibition catalogue. The photographs on the front and back covers typify the photographic style and evocation of mystery, otherworldliness and the uncanny commonly associated with Surrealist modes of representation. Set in a dreamlike atmosphere that confounds dream and reality, and animated through photographic transfiguration, these compositions of an ancestral figure from the island of Nias (Fig. 6) and a mask from the Sepik River region of New Guinea (Fig. 7) embody the dislocations and defamiliarized forms characteristic of the movement's engagement with dream theory and the unconscious. In drawing attention to the artifice of the image, these compositions challenge traditional object photography, which veils the photographer's subjective engagement under the guise of objective neutrality. These images offer neither a documentary nor an ethnographic representation, but rather an evocation of the objects' spiritual and mystical qualities, promoting a new way of representing non-Western objects within the rhetoric of the photograph's presumed objectivity. In this paradigm, the unfamiliar is contained inside the established



Fig. 6. Man Ray, *La lune brille sur l'île Nias*, 1926, Gelatin silver print © 2008 Man Ray Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris



Fig. 7. Man Ray, *Untitled (Mask, New Guinea)*, 1926, Gelatin silver print © 2008 Man Ray Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

autonomous art frame, thus facilitating possession and appropriation of objects whose original cultural meanings and functions were profoundly different.

While the front cover composition, *L'île brille sur l'isle Nias*, is frequently reproduced and commonly associated with the exhibition, Man Ray's other photographs for this catalogue have received little attention.³⁸ They nonetheless provide the potential for a greater understanding of the complexity and diversity of his photographic engagement with non-Western objects. Unlike the more obvious Surrealist contrivances evident in these cover images, Man Ray's four interior photographs of Pacific culture objects appear to have more in common with "straight" or documentary photography than with Surrealist photographic practices. Inserted throughout the four-and-one-half-pages of seemingly random passages by Surrealist writers and by poets, prophets, philosophers, novelists and critics from antiquity to the turn of the century (Fig. 8), these photographs are more nuanced and complex than the manipulated images commonly associated with Surrealist photography.³⁹

The interplay of word and image throughout the catalogue inflects new (Surrealist) meanings into the photographs and undermines any attempt to read them as documentary representations of reality.⁴⁰ The juxtaposition of these prosaic photographs with the assembled texts and elusive captions produces a curious synthesis, illustrating how photography was used to disrupt, exploit and subvert prevailing notions of its veracity to Surrealist ends.⁴¹ It equally illustrates what Clifford calls the "surrealist moment in ethnography [which] is the moment in which the possibility of comparison exists in unmediated tension with sheer incongruity."⁴²



Fig 8. Preface, *Tableaux de Man Ray et objets des îles*. Exhibition catalogue, Galerie Surréaliste, 1926.

'This exercise in overcoming the "dualism of perception and representation," as Breton advocated, is critical to understanding Man Ray's subsequent Surrealist photographic treatment of objects from the Americas."⁴³

Across the Commercial and Artistic Divide

Making sense of many of Man Ray's photographs of non-Western objects is complicated by the multivalent nature of most of his creative work. Given that he was forced to make a living as a commercial photographer, the division between his work-for-hire and the photographs he made as conscious artistic expressions is often blurred, as is clearly manifest with *Noire et blanche*. Moreover, even his commercial and documentary work is frequently inflected with Dada and Surrealist sensibilities, resulting in a slippage between artistic and scientific taxonomies in defining photographs such as those he took of objects in the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro.

Man Ray's visits to the collections of the Trocadéro on several occasions between the late 1920s and mid-1930s were previously a matter of speculation. They can now be substantiated by archival correspondence I've uncovered between Man Ray and the museum's director Georges Henri Rivière and by his photographs of objects in the museum's collection. At the time of his visits, the Trocadéro was no longer the mythic, dusty repository for exotic objects where Picasso had encountered and fallen under the spell of African and Oceanic masks and sculptures. More than two decades later, the collection had greatly expanded as a result of colonial activities and been significantly reorganized according to emerging scientific ethnographic principles.⁴⁴

In new installations—which now demonstrated concern for cultural context as well as aesthetic display—Man Ray encountered and photographed at least three objects that can be identified as belonging to the museum at this time. These include a large Easter Island head (moai), a wicker sculpture of a god (Ki'i hulu manu) from Hawaii and a mask of the Katukina peoples of the upper Juruá region in Brazil (Fig. 9).⁴⁵ While the Hawaiian and Easter Island sculptures have been thoroughly documented, the Katukina mask and Man Ray's photograph of it have, until now, received little attention.⁴⁶

Following Man Ray's experiments photographing other non-Western objects, this image is one of the earliest manifestations of Man Ray's rekindled interest in the arts of the American continents during his time in Paris. Crudely constructed of found objects such as a calabash and a feather, this mask clearly resonated

with the artist's own iconoclastic approach to art making. In fact, until my recent discovery of this object in the Quai Branly Museum, the identity of the mask in the photograph remained a mystery; Man Ray's notation on the verso of the print, "Trocadéro," provided the only clue that he had actually discovered rather than



Fig. 9. Man Ray, *Untitled* (Mask, Katukina), c.1929, Gelatin silver print © 2008 Man Ray Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

constructed the object himself.

The obscurity of this mask and dearth of information regarding its meaning and function are the legacy of colonial history, making even the authenticity of the object difficult to ascertain. By the mid-1920s when the mask was collected, Katukina culture was endangered by rapacious colonial activities and was facing the risk of extinction. Indeed, today information on this culture in general and the mask in particular is difficult to obtain. The legacy of colonial and collecting history of the time is evident in the absence of any substantive information accompanying this mask today at the Musée du quai Branly or in its catalogues. While Man Ray's photograph of the mask was previously dated c. 1921, since it was brought back from Brazil by the missionary Father Constant Tastevein and did not enter the museum's collection until 1928, I would suggest a revised date of 1928 or later.⁴⁷

While it is impossible to discern Man Ray's intention in making this

photograph, we might find clues in his letter to the museum director Georges Henri Rivière. On July 18, 1931, he writes: “Some time ago I did a series of photographs in the museum, with the idea of making a poster or using one in a catalogue. You have evidently let the matter drop entirely; and if you have no further use for these prints, I should like very much to have them back, to include in a comprehensive exhibition I am preparing for New York.”⁴⁸ Although this exhibition did not materialize, this correspondence suggests that Man Ray may have initiated this project and makes clear that he considered his photographs of objects in the museum as inseparable from his larger artistic endeavors. Since only three photographs have surfaced that can be definitely tied to objects in the Trocadéro’s collection at this time, his photograph of the Katukina may well be one of those to which he refers in his letter.⁴⁹ That Man Ray had undertaken to photograph these objects of his own volition rather than as work-for-hire is further suggested in his offer to Rivière “to pick one out for yourself, for the service you rendered me in taking them.”⁵⁰

Man Ray again returned to the Trocadéro on a photographic mission in 1936, this time to photograph Dogon objects for an article in *Cahiers d’art*. In their reproduction in *Cahiers d’art*, these photographs accompanied a brief exposé on Dogon culture by the Surrealist writer-cum-ethnographer Michel Leiris, a dense article that oscillates between ethnographic description and impenetrable prose.⁵¹ The strange mix of fact and fantasy and interplay of text and image in the article, which forces the reader to make meaning out of these juxtapositions, epitomizes Surrealist practice.

The photographs Man Ray made for this article provide perhaps some of the most compelling examples of the artists’ multifaceted approach to what was arguably a commissioned project. In his composition featuring a monkey mask (Fig. 10), for example, he imbues the Dogon mask with life and mystery, monumentalized through techniques of framing and ambiguous use of space and animated through the interplay of light and shadow across its surfaces. Employing compositional techniques and visual codes that reinforce a reading of the objects through a Surrealist lens, he confers reverential status upon the mask as an art form. But in highlighting these Dogon objects as works of art, Man Ray—blind to the inherent artistic colonization of this practice and the political contradictions it posed—also contributed to their displacement from their original cultural context and significance.

The theatrical high-key, side lighting throws the mask’s features into deep shadow while the backlighting sets its eyes aglow, heightening the eerie effect of the image. Notably, this effect also mirrors lines from the Dogon verse with which



Fig. 10. Man Ray, *Untitled* (Monkey mask, Dogon), 1936, Gelatin silver print © 2008 Man Ray Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

Leiris opens his article:

The red eye of the mask has come to the village

The eye of the mask is an eye of the sun

The eye of the mask is an eye of fire . . .⁵²

Intentionally or not, the symbolism in Man Ray's photographs of Dogon masks evokes the ritual context of the masks' makers in a similar manner, even as his photographic transfigurations of the disembodied forms epitomize Surrealist modes of representation. Moreover, as a close examination of the print reveals, this image is a total construct of Man Ray's imagination; the mask and background were photographed separately and combined to produce this enigmatic image. Conveying far more than a documentary representation of the objects in his composition of the Dogon objects, the artist once again created photographs that defy simple categorization.

These photographs, reproduced on six pages surrounding the article,

function to underscore the fragmentation and juxtaposition of cultural values in Leiris's text. Although photographs of objects of ethnographic interest were ubiquitous in *Cahiers d'art*, what is unusual in this instance is the clear artifice of the images and the manner in which they assert a visual importance on a par with the essay. The uniqueness of these photographs is underscored by their full-page reproduction and the captions that identify Man Ray by name, in contrast to the conventionally anonymous and ancillary nature of such work, as seen elsewhere in the journal. These photographs suggest that the artist was inspired by this undertaking to explore in new ways the creative potential of photographing non-Western objects, creating images that dramatically reveal how photographs have functioned at the intersection of the ethnographic and the surreal to create new meaning.⁵³

Galerie Ratton

Only several months before the article on the Dogon was published in *Cahiers d'art*, the journal published a special issue dedicated to the *Exposition surréaliste d'objets* at the Galerie Ratton, an event perceived as a benchmark in Surrealist ideas and practices.⁵⁴ Sponsored by Charles Ratton, the pre-eminent dealer of indigenous art, and lasting only one week in May 1936, the exhibition featured an array of objects in a seemingly random display. Approximating a curiosity cabinet, but without any system of classification, the installation included Surrealist artworks along with Cubist constructions; ready-mades by Marcel Duchamp; animal and mineral specimens; mathematical objects; curiosities of natural and artificial manufacture; and non-Western objects, principally from Oceania and the Americas. This event was the paradigmatic Surrealist meeting of the "tribal" and the modern, focusing on neither aesthetic qualities nor political didactics but on the disruption of Western hierarchies and traditions through such jarring juxtapositions.

While Man Ray contributed several of his own works to this exhibition—including *Boardwalk* (1917), *Ce qui nous manque à tous [What We All Lack]* (1927), *Varlopp* (1935) and *Mon Rêve* (1934)—and made photographs of the installation, his relationship with Ratton predated this provocative project. His visit to an exhibition of Eskimo and Northwest Coast art Ratton mounted at his gallery in 1935 led to his purchase of an inexpensive Eskimo mask the day after the exhibition closed.⁵⁵ This purchase, the only sale of the show, is particularly notable, because the artist was never a collector per se of non-Western objects.⁵⁶ The odd piece that found its way into his possession would be seamlessly integrated into the family of found objects and altered ready-mades that populated his studio and provided inspiration for his own artmaking. Man Ray's relationship with Ratton is further attested to by a

number of his photographs of the dealer's African sculptures circulating during this period. This not only suggests that he worked behind the scenes at Ratton's Gallery as an unofficial photographer of this internationally acclaimed collection, but also provides insight into the context in which a number of his photographs of non-Western objects were created.⁵⁷

It was in fact at the Galerie Ratton where Man Ray encountered and photographed the unusual Aztec birthing figure with which this article opened. Whether this undertaking was commissioned by Ratton or initiated by the artist, both the resulting photographs and the fact that Breton obtained a replica of the object (not on paper but in ceramic) underscore the fascination this figure held for the Surrealists.

Characteristically, Man Ray seized upon the opportunity to explore the creative potential of both the medium and the object. While extant prints show that he chose to enlarge and print only one of the series of seventeen negatives he made (Fig. 1), the number of shots he took and the unusual photomontage he constructed from four selected contact prints (Fig. 2) imply that he approached this enterprise as much more than merely a commercial or documentary exercise. Indeed, this work is a rare example of montage in Man Ray's oeuvre—despite the prevalence of this technique in avant-garde practice at this time—again suggesting that the artist saw this as an opportunity for creative experimentation.⁵⁸

Capitalizing on the object's distinctive qualities in the four frames of the photomontage, Man Ray utilized a short focal length, dramatic lighting, varying perspectives, tight framing and theatrical use of space to draw attention to the sculpture's expressive face, vitality and dynamism. As the figure seems to rotate before the viewer, it appears almost cinematic in its sequence of frames. Well-versed in the Surrealist practice of provocative engagement of non-Western objects, Man Ray liberates latent meaning in his evocation of life, mystery and magic. How his approach to this unusual sculpture broke with conventions for photographing such objects within their traditionally ethnographic frame is illustrated in a comparison of Man Ray's composition with the sculpture's photographic debut in the *Journal de la Société des Américanistes* in 1906 (Fig. 11). E.T. Hamy, the first director of the Ethnographic Museum at the Place du Trocadéro, had the figure photographed to accompany his article on what he concluded was "a piece absolutely unique in the history of the art of Mexico."⁵⁹ The reproduced photograph, published in a full-page plate, is representative of the type of images gaining popularity in publications of ethnographic collections at the time, such as the British Museum's *Handbook to the Ethnographical Collections* (1910).⁶⁰ Set off against a dark backdrop, frontally and

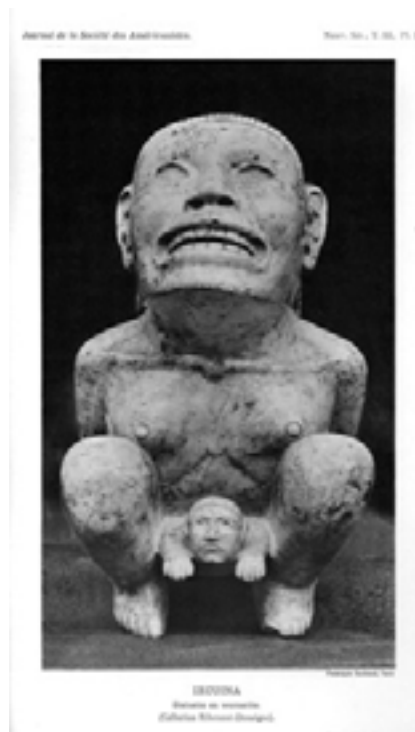


Fig. 11. Berthaud, *Ixcuina*, *Satnette en wernerite*. Reproduced in *Journal de la Société des Américanistes de Paris* 3, no. 1, 1906 © 2008 Société des Américanistes

evenly lit, photographed close-up at eye level and tightly cropped, the object in this image is showcased under the guise of what is assumed to be a faithful and scientific representation.

In the case of this enigmatic figure, there are several ironic turns in its path to fame and, more recently, notoriety. Dr. Ribemont-Dessaignes—the owner of the object at the turn of the century when it first gained international attention—was an obstetrician and pioneer in promoting “painless childbirth,” a little-known historical fact that lends a peculiar aspect to its reception and provenance. As the “first scientific advocate of painless childbirth to base his whole case not on humanitarian grounds, but on the actual superior safety of removing pain,” the doctor presumably appreciated the grimacing figure in the throes of childbirth for very different reasons than did the Surrealists who were later drawn to her.⁶¹ Moreover, in a quintessentially Surrealist twist of fate, the obstetrician was also the father of Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes, the Dada poet, artist, writer and, coincidentally, author of the first monograph on Man Ray in 1929.⁶²

Perhaps the colorful history of this Aztec goddess should prepare us for

the most recent chapter in the endless intrigue that has surrounded her: there now appears to be compelling evidence that she is a fake.⁶³ As one scholar shrewdly notes, this enigmatic stone figure is like the Anastasia of pre-Columbian art; she may be a fake but her tale never ceases to fascinate.⁶⁴ Indeed, her tale continues to fascinate today as the story of Man Ray's manipulation of her image comes to the fore.

The recovery of Man Ray's photographs of the "Tlazolteotl" figure from obscurity and the examination of his engagement with the indigenous arts of the Americas provide new insight into the work of this artist and contribute to a comprehensive understanding of his innovative approach to photographing objects of non-Western art. Turning his camera lens to such objects, Man Ray produced images that—through a symbiotic relationship of content and form—imbued the objects with the same modernist aesthetic he pioneered in his photographs. In so doing, he created a new type of photography that defies categorization and functions ambiguously in the gap between the ethnographic and the surreal. While advancing modernist strategies of representation, however, these images also contributed to the process through which indigenous objects were appropriated without regard for their cultural context or for the political implications such practices raised. Further research into the production and use of these images will undoubtedly provide greater insight into the complex relationship between Surrealism, ethnography, and notions of the "primitive" and how Man Ray's photographs have functioned at their crossroads.

I am indebted to all those who have encouraged me to follow the trail of Man Ray's photographs of indigenous arts of the Americas and especially to the editor of this issue of the *Journal of Surrealism of the Americas*, Amy Winter. Her interest in my research and diligence as an editor have greatly contributed to this essay. The insightful comments and suggestions of my colleagues Kirsten Hoving and Martha Bari are also greatly appreciated, as are the attentiveness with which John Greathouse and my research assistant Sasha Wasserman read earlier drafts.

1 First reproduced and brought to public attention in 1906 in an article in the *Journal de la Société des Américanistes de Paris*, this figure subsequently has been featured in countless international exhibitions and publications. It has developed an almost cult following, culminating in its starring role and reincarnation as the mythic gold treasure commanding Indiana Jones' attention in the opening scenes of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. The attribution of this figure as Tlazolteotl, while contested, has contributed to the object's popularity and intrigue. On the iconography and contested history of this sculpture, see Susan Toby Evans, "Female Figure" and "Two Sculptures in Aztec Style," unpublished

manuscript in progress. Today the figure is in the collection of Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C. See Elizabeth P. Benson, "The Robert Woods Bliss Collection of Pre-Columbian Art: A Memoir," in *Collecting the Pre-Columbian Past*, Elizabeth Hill Boone, ed. (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1993), 15-38. I am grateful to Susan Evans, Joanne Pillsbury and the staff at Dumbarton Oaks for their encouragement of my research and assistance in obtaining important documentation. On Breton's copy, see "Copie de la déesse 'Tlazolteotl,'" Lot 6235, *Andre Breton - 42, rue Fontaine*, Vol. III: *Arts Primitifs* (Paris: Drouet-Richelieu, 2003), 254. <http://www.atelierandrebreton.com/mainIndex.php?action=fiche&cursorDroit=44&cidDroit=4541000>.

2 Soby organized the first exhibition of Man Ray's photographs in the United States at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut in 1934 accompanied by the first monographic treatment of the artist's photographs. See James Thrall Soby, *Photographs by Man Ray 1920 Paris 1934* (Hartford, 1934; Dover reprint, 1979). In 1941 he gifted nearly a hundred Man Ray photographs to MoMA, including many of those reproduced in his monograph.

3 While this article focuses on his work in the interwar period, Man Ray's interest in photographing art of the Americas does not end here. Among the body of virtually lost photographs of non-Western art that my research aims to recover is a group of images of Mesoamerican objects that can be dated to his time in Los Angeles where he relocated between 1940 and 1951 to escape the ravages of the war in Europe. On Man Ray's photographs of African and Oceanic objects, see my "Portfolio Man Ray," *TRIBAL: Magazine of Tribal Arts* (Autumn/Winter 2005): 150-159 and "Modernism between the Ethnographic, the Primitive and the Surreal: Man Ray's Photographs of African Art in the Goldberg/D'Affitto Collection," in *Man Ray Luces y sueños*, Pilar Parcerisas, ed. (Madrid: Fundación Carlos de Amberes, 2006), 26-31.

4 For an overview of primary sources and the critical scholarship on this history, see Jack Flam, ed., *Primitivism and Twentieth-Century Art: A Documentary History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

5 See Wendy Grossman, "From Ethnographic Object to Modernist Icon: Photographs of African and Oceanic Sculpture and the Rhetoric of the Image," *Visual Resources*, Vol. 23, no. 4 (December 2007): 291-336.

6 William Ivins, *Prints and Visual Communication* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), 178.

7 André Malraux, *The Psychology of Art: The Museum without Walls* (1947), trans. S. Gilbert (London: A. Zwemmer, 1949), 21.

8 For a trenchant investigation of the intersection of photography and anthropology, "Photographing Objects," *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology and Museums* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001), 51-79. See also Melissa Banta and Curtis M. Hinsley, *From Site to Sight: Anthropology, Photography, and the Power of Imagery* (Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum Press, 1986); Elizabeth Edwards, ed., *Anthropology and Photography 1860-1920* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

9 See Ian Walker, *City Gorged with Dreams: Surrealism and Documentary Photography in Interwar Paris* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002); David Bate, *Photography and Surrealism: Sexuality, Colonialism and Social Dissent* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004).

10 The first generation of modern artists to find inspiration in the formal qualities of non-Western art include those whose work fall under the admittedly problematic categories established by Robert Goldwater: Romantic Primitivism (Gauguin and the Fauves); Emotional Primitivism (the Brücke and the Blaue Reiter); and Intellectual Primitivism (Picasso and Matisse). See Robert Goldwater, *Primitivism in Modern Painting* (1938; repr. as *Primitivism in Modern Art* [Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1986]).

11 On this cover of *391* and Man Ray's photograph *Black and White*, see Wendy Grossman, "Man

Ray's Endgame and Other Modernist Gambits," in *The Art of the Project: Projects and Experiments in Modern French Culture*, Johnnie Gratton and Michael Sheringham, ed. (London: Berghahn Books, 2005), 38-41. The debates over the status of non-Western objects played out internationally in exhibitions and articles in which prominent members of the avant-garde community as well as from the art establishment interjected their strong opinions. In Paris the deliberation over whether to admit so-called primitive art to the Louvre unfolded in a survey published in three issues of the *Le Bulletin de la vie artistique* (November 15 and December 1 and 15, 1920). See Flam, *Primitivism and Twentieth-Century Art*, 148-166.

12 The call or return to order promulgated by Jean Cocteau and other conservative cultural forces was linked to the postwar political rhetoric. See Kenneth E. Silver, *Esprit de Corps: The Art of the Parisian Avant-Garde and the First World War, 1914-1925* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989); Romy Golan, *Modernity and Nostalgia: Art and Politics in France Between the Wars* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995).

13 James Clifford, "On Ethnographic Surrealism," *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art*, 121.

14 See W. Jackson Rushing, *Native American Art and the New York Avant-Garde: A History of Cultural Primitivism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995).

15 Man Ray made this comment in March 23, 1957 in response to a questionnaire from the Whitney Museum of American Art on the occasion of its acquisition of *Five Figures*, a painting arguably derived from African sources and inspired by Picasso's *Demoiselles d'Avignon*. See Francis Naumann, *Conversion to Modernism: The Early Work of Man Ray* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 96; 241, fn 14.

16 Gail Levin, "American Art," in *Primitivism in 20th Century Art*, William Rubin, ed. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1984), 462; Naumann, *Conversion to Modernism*, 102.

17 See Elizabeth Cowling, "Another culture," in *Dada and Surrealism Reviewed*, Dawn Ades, ed. (London: Westerham Press, 1978), 450-468; Evan Maurer, "Dada and Surrealism," in Rubin, 535-394; Mark A. Pegrum, "Voicing the Other," in *Challenging Modernity: Dada between Modern and Postmodern* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000), 113-144; Louise Thyacott, *Surrealism and the Exotic* (London: Routledge, 2003).

18 See José Pierre, ed., *Tracts surrealists et déclarations collectives 1922-1939*, vol. 1 (Paris: Le terrain vague, 1980), 195. The twelve signatories included Breton, Éluard, Aragon, and Tanguy.

19 The exhibition officially opened on September 19, 1931. See Janine Mileaf, "Body to Politics: Surrealist exhibition of the tribal and the modern at the anti-imperialist exhibition and the Galerie Charles Ratton," *res* 40 (Autumn 2001): 239-255.

20 See Jody Blake, *Le Tumulte noir: Modernist Art and Popular Entertainment in Jazz-Age Paris* (University of Pennsylvania Press: University Park, PA, 1999).

21 See Elizabeth Cowling, "The Eskimos, the American Indians and the Surrealists," in *Art History* 1: 4 (December 1978): 484-500. Although Apollinaire wrote about the Mexican and Peruvian collections in the Trocadéro as early as 1914 and Northwest Coast arts in 1917, it wasn't until a decade later that these objects entered the Surrealist repertoire in any notable measure. See Thyacott, *Surrealism and the Exotic*, 164-5; 175.

22 See Michelle Tolini Finamore, "Fashioning the Colonial at the Paris Expositions, 1925 and 1931," *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture*, vol. 7, no. 3-4 (September 2003): 345-360.

23 See Elizabeth Cowling, "L'oeil Sauvage," Oceanic Art and the Surrealists," in *The Art of Northwest New Guinea*, Suzanne Greub, ed. (Rizzoli: New York, 1992), 181. This perception was in actuality more

- ideological than based on any salient aesthetic distinctions and was rooted in the Surrealists' desire to distance themselves from the more mainstream appreciation of African art. See also Tythacott, *Surrealism and the Exotic* and Maurer, "Dada and Surrealism," in Rubin, ed., *Primitivism*, 534-593.
- 24 See Georges Henri Rivière and Alfred Métraux, eds., *Les arts anciens de l'Amérique*, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Musée du Louvre (1928). See also, Elizabeth A. Williams, "Art and Artifact at the Trocadéro: Ars Americana and the Primitivist Revolution," in *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*, George W. Stocking, Jr., ed. (University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 146-166; and Amy Winter, *Wolfgang Paalen, Artist and Theorist of the Avant-Garde* (Praeger, 2002), 37-38.
- 25 See Winter, *ibid.*, Chapter Two, "À Paris, 1928-1935" re *Cahiers d'art*.
- 26 Marie Mauzé, "North American Objects in French Collections," in *Sculptures: Africa Asia Oceania Americas*, Jacques Kerchache, ed. (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2001), 29.
- 27 In his 1912 article published in *Comoedia*, the French art critic André Warnod was probably the first to use the term *l'art nègre* to refer to African and Oceanic art. See André Warnod, "Arts décoratifs et curiosités artistiques: l'art nègre," *Comoedia* (January 2, 1912), translated and published in Flam, *Primitivism and Twentieth-Century Art*, 59-60.
- 28 See Tythacott, "Surrealists' pre-Columbian objects," in *Surrealism and the Exotic*, 175-178.
- 29 Williams, Art and Artifact at the Trocadéro: 148.
- 30 George Sacken, "Maya Art," *Broom* (January 1923): 86-88. Sacken changed his name to Sakier shortly thereafter. While Sakier allegedly played an important role in developing the pre-Columbian collection at the Trocadéro, his contributions have received little scholarly attention.
- 31 George Sakier (1897-1988), the name Sacken would ultimately adopt, was a graphic and industrial designer. On his involvement with the Dada community and his role in promoting Maya art, see Raoul Schrott, *Dada 1922/1923* (Innsbruck: Haymon Verlag, 1988), 154-166; and personal memoirs in the Sakier Estate Archives. See also Leslie Piña, *Fostoria Designer George Sakier* (Atgen, PA: Shiffer Publishing, 1996).
- 32 See Wendy Grossman and Steven Manford, "Unmasking Man Ray's *Noire et blanche*," *American Art* (Summer 2006): 135-138.
- 33 See Grossman, "Portfolio Man Ray."
- 34 See Whitney Chadwick, "Fetishizing Fashion/Fetishizing Culture: Man Ray's *Noire et blanche*," *The Oxford Art Journal* 18: 2 (1995): 3-17; Wendy Grossman, "(Con)Text and Image: Reframing Man Ray's *Noire et blanche*," in *Phototextualities: Intersections of Photography and Narrative*, A. Hughes and A. Noble, ed. (Albuquerque, NM. 2003), 119-135; Grossman and Manford, "Unmasking Man Ray's *Noire et blanche*": 134-147. On the place of *Noire et blanche* in primitivist discourses, see: Evan Maurer, "Dada and Surrealism," in Rubin, ed., 539; Marianne Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 34-36; Colin Rhodes, *Primitivism and Modern Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994), 140-141; David Bate, "Black object, white subject," in *Photography and Surrealism: Sexuality, Colonialism and Social Dissent* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 172-202.
- 35 *Tableaux de Man Ray et objets des îles* (Paris: Galerie Surréaliste, 1926). The exhibition catalogue lists twenty-four works by Man Ray, including canvases, works on paper, photographs and assemblages. The Nias figure on the front cover (owned by Breton) was displayed in the window of the exhibition and, undoubtedly to the great delight of the Surrealist community, scandalized the popular press and was deemed "indecent" by the media. The cover choice was arguably not accidental; the prominent phallus and provocative erotic quality of the object echoed the preoccupation with sex, sexuality and the body that pervaded Surrealist thought and practice.
- 36 André Breton and Paul Eluard, *Yves Tanguy et objets d'Amérique* (Paris: Éditions Surréalistes, 1927).

The shifting proclivities in Surrealist taste in non-Western objects is reflected in the 1931 auction of Breton's and Eluard's collections, which was precipitated by the economic climate in the years following the 1929 market crash. See *Sculptures d'Afrique, d'Amérique et d'Océanie* (Paris: Hôtel Drouot, 1931).

37 Among the 24 works by Man Ray listed in the exhibition catalogue are items dating from 1908 (*Étude*) to a Rayogram as recent as 1925, providing a retrospective of his diverse work at this early stage in his career.

38 On Man Ray's photographs for the exhibition catalogue, see Grossman, "From Ethnographic Object to Modernist Icon": 311-315.

39 Surrealist writers represented in the catalogue include Breton, Paul Eluard, Louis Aragon, Robert Desnos, Philippe Soupault, Michel Leiris, and Benjamin Peret. Other contributors range from Cornelius Agrippa—alchemist, magician, occultist and influential writer of Renaissance esoterica—and the prophet Nostradamus to the poets and novelists of the nineteenth century such as Lautréamont and Alfred Jarry, authors whose interests in mysticism, the erotic, the sordid, and the fantastic resonated with those of the Surrealists.

40 On the interplay of word and image in Surrealist practice, see Judi Freeman, *The Dada & Surrealist Word-Image* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989) and Dawn Ades, "Photography and the Surrealist Text," in *L'Amour fou: Surrealism and Photography* (Washington, DC: Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1985), 153-87.

41 On the use of "straight" photography for Surrealist ends, see Ian Walker, *City Gorged with Dreams: Surrealism and Documentary Photography in Interwar Paris* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002). Within the context of Walker's argument, it is interesting to note that the photographs from this 1926 exhibition catalogue, other than the clearly contrived cover composition, have been virtually ignored in previous scholarship on Man Ray and on the exhibition, which itself has attracted curiously little critical attention. For a conventional view of Surrealist photography that privileges manipulated over straight photographs, see Rosalind Krauss and Jane Livingston, ed., *L'Amour fou* and Rosalind Krauss, "The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism," *October* 19 (Winter 1981): 3-34.

42 Clifford, "On Ethnographic Surrealism," 146.

43 André Breton, "Océanie" (1948); repr. in Breton, *Free rein (La clé des champs)*, M. Parmentier and J. d'Amboise, trans. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 172.

44 The significant shift in the 1920s in the display of objects formerly squired away in dusty ethnographic collections was evident in such events as the 1923 *Exposition de l'art indigène des colonies françaises* at the Pavillon de Marsan. The reorganization of the Trocadéro, in which aesthetic concerns were taken into consideration for the first time, was a manifestation of this shift. See Georges-Henri Rivière, "Musée de Beaux-Arts ou Musée d'Ethnographie," Georges Hilaire, ed., *Musées: Enquête internationale sur la réforme des galeries publiques* (Paris: Cahiers de la République, n.d.); Georges-Henri Rivière, "The Ethnographical Museum of the Trocadéro," *Documents* 1 (1929); Nina Gorgus, "Georges Henri Rivière 'Lehrjahre' am Pariser Musée d'ethnographie, 1928-1937," *Die Schau des Fremden: Ausstellungskonzepte zwischen Kunst, Kommerz und Wissenschaft*, Cordula Grewe, ed. (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006), 187-206.

45 The objects from Easter Island and Hawaii are documented in Kerchache, ed., *Sculpture: Africa Asia Oceania Americas* 321-323; 326-329.

46 The mask was acquired by Father Constant Tastevin during his missionary activities in the Amazon region in Brazil from 1906 to 1926 and entered the museum's collection in 1929. On the Katukina, see Maria Sueli de Aguiar, "Los grupos nativos 'Katukina,'" *Amazonía Peruana*, v. 12, n. 23

(December 1993), 141-52 and Herbert Douteil, *Wie der Mond an seine Flecken kam Mythen, Geschichte und Kultur der Katukina-Indios aus dem Amazonasgebiet Brasiliens; von ihnen selbst erzählt und gezeichnet* (Dormagen: Missionsverl. Knechtsteden, 2000).

47 Tastevin served as intermediary for Paul Rivet, secretary general of the Ethnological Institute at the University of Paris at the time, which resulted in entry of this mask into the Trocadéro collection in 1929. On Tastevin, see Priscila Faulhaber, "El itinerario del padre Constant Tastevin: entre la religion y la ethnología," in *Documentos sobre Lenguas Aborígenes de Colombia del archivo de Paul Rivet*, Jon Landaburu, ed. (Sante Fe de Bogotá, Colombia, 1996): 95-104.

48 Man Ray, undated letter to Georges Henri Rivière, stamped with a received date of 20 July, 1931. MNHN Archives: 2AM 1 K 36e; Document 2.

49 The other two photographs are of a large Easter Island head and a woven Hawaiian mask.

50 In Rivière's response of July 22, he expresses his regret that he has not yet had opportunity to use Man Ray's photographs, stating that the planned exhibition of works from Easter Island had been postponed to the following year. He gratefully accepted Man Ray's offer to keep one print, selecting the photo of the "grosse tête" (the Easter Island head) and promising that it will be utilized in the future. MNHN Archives: 2AM 1 K 36e; Document 1.

51 Michel Leiris, "Bois Rituels des Falaises," *Cahiers d'art* 11, no. 6-7 (1936): 192-199. On the Dogon objects and the history of their entry into the Museum's collection, see Denise Paulme, "The Paulme-Lifchitz Collection at the Musée de l'Homme," *African Arts*, vol. 1, no 4 (August 1988): 46-49.

52 Ibid, 193. Identified as a discourse in the secret language of the male society of the Dogon peoples of Sanga, the verse reads in full:

L'oeil rouge du masque est venue au village.

L'oeil du masque est un oeil de soleil,

L'oeil du masque est un oeil de feu,

L'oeil du masque est un oeil de lance,

L'oeil du masque est un oeil de flèche,

L'oeil du masque est un oeil de hache,

il est rouge.

53 Man Ray's photographs and the article they accompanied were inspired by the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro's acquisition of objects purchased during dissertation field research by ethnographer Denise Paulme and linguist Deborah Lifchitz Paulme. See Paulme, "The Paulme-Lifchitz Collection": 46-49. These objects are now in the Musée du quai Branly, and many of them are prominently displayed in their permanent collection. Leiris was "archivist-secretary" of the 1931-1933 *Mission Dakar-Djibouti*, which was funded by the French government to collect art for French museums. See "Mission Dakar-Djibouti 1931-1933," *Minotaure* 2 (1933). On Leiris, see Torgovnick, "The Many Obsessions of Michel Leiris," in *Gone Primitive*, 105-118.

54 On this exhibition, see Mileaf, "Body to Politics": 249-254.

55 According to Cowling ("The Eskimos...": 488), Ratton organized this exhibition upon his return from his productive purchasing trip to the Museum of the American Indian in New York in 1931-32, where he benefited from the financial straits brought on by the Depression and from the Museum director's generally dismissive attitude toward Northwest Coast and Eskimo objects. As Cowling notes, this exhibition was one of the first—if not the first—exhibitions of Eskimo and North West Coast art to be held in Paris in a gallery, rather than in a specialist museum, and, hence to lay stress upon the artistic qualities, rather than the ethnographic interest of the exhibits. Subsequent

scholarship has established 1935 as the date of this exhibition. See Marie Mauzé, “Aux invisibles frontières du songe et du réel. Lévi-Strauss et les surréalistes: la ‘découverte’ de l’art de la Côte nord-ouest,” in *L’Herne*, no. 82, 2004: 152-161.

56 The purchase of the Eskimo mask from Ratton is the only documented case of Man Ray’s acquiring a non-Western sculpture. Photographs from his various studios provide no evidence of his collecting such objects, with one exception of a self-portrait from the early 1930s in which a double-headed neckrest from Papua New Guinea appears on the cabinet behind him. At the end of his life, the few small African and Oceanic objects and a Kachina doll remaining in his studio further suggest that he was attracted to these objects not as an art collector but as an iconoclast. See Sotheby’s, *Man Ray: Paintings, Objects, Photographs*, LN5173, March 22-23, 1995, Lots 323, 324, 325, 328, 329.

57 Ratton participated actively in the organization of the Museum of Modern Art’s groundbreaking 1936 exhibition *African Negro Art*, contributing a significant number of the more than 600 objects accumulated for that show. As I have suggested elsewhere, many of the photographs Ratton supplied for use in the exhibition catalogue were—based on compelling visual evidence—taken by Man Ray. See Grossman, “From Ethnographic Object”: 334-335, fn 89 and 99. Given Man Ray’s ongoing relationship with Ratton, it is possible that future scholarship may establish that the artist played a more active role in the installation of the 1936 exhibition than is largely assumed.

58 Notably, one of the few other projects for which Man Ray employed photomontage was in 1930 for the cover of the book *Henry Music*, which was a montage of African objects from Nancy Cunard’s collection. See Grossman, “Portfolio Man Ray.” “Contact prints of this Aztec figure at the time of this writing are on display in a temporary installation at the Pompidou. This is, to the best of my knowledge, the first time these prints have been displayed.

59 E.T. Hamy, “Note sur une statuette mexicaine en wernerite,” *Journal de la Société des Américanistes de Paris* 3, no. 1 (1906): 5. The photographer is identified in the caption as Berthaud.

60 Interestingly, this publication from the British Museum was, as Elizabeth Cowling notes, “one of the ‘Surrealists’ primary sources of information about tribal art and culture—there was nothing comparable published in France at the time.” Cowling, “The Eskimos...”: 487.

61 Marguerite Tracy and Mary Boyd, “A French Experiment of To-Day,” in *Painless Childbirth* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1915), 156.

62 As I am hoping to establish through my ongoing research, I suspect that both Breton’s cast of this object and Ratton’s possession of the actual figure may well have come through Ribemont-Dessaignes.

63 Susan Toby Evans, “Female Figure” and “Two Sculptures in Aztec Style,” unpublished manuscripts. See also Jane MacLaren Walsh, “South American Idol,” *Archaeology* 61, no. 3 (May-June 2008): 41.

64 Susan Toby Evans, personal correspondence, April 2007.