

*Bound Objects and Blurry Boundaries*  
*Surrealist Display and (Anti)Nationalism*

Susan Power

Université de Paris I, Panthéon-Sorbonne, Paris

On Wednesday evening, October 14<sup>th</sup>, 1942, notable New York art world enthusiasts congregated at the former residence of millionaire industrialist Whitelaw Reid, an imposing late-nineteenth-century Italianate mansion along Madison Avenue. Provisionally housing the Coordinating Council of French Relief Societies, this unlikely venue was host to “First Papers of Surrealism,” the first “official” international exhibition of Surrealism to be held in the United States. The opening night gala guests were unexpectedly caught up in a gigantic Surrealist object, strung together by an exhibition-hanging team assembled under the direction of Marcel Duchamp.<sup>1</sup> Fabricated from “miles” of basic white string – a material displaced from its ordinary use in hanging pictures and further suggestive of the unraveling of the threads of a blank canvas – the giant entanglement wound around exhibited objects, architectural space and visitors alike.

The visually-stunning photographs of Marcel Duchamp’s string labyrinth in the main room of this show have inspired much art historical scholarship, from passing mention in general histories of Surrealism to pride of place in recent accounts of twentieth-century art and beyond to the contemporary recreation of Duchamp’s “Miles of String” installation by American artist Josh Smith at the Greene Naf-tali gallery group show “Genesis, I’m Sorry,” in August 2007.<sup>2</sup> Hailed as a “chef-d’oeuvre,” Duchamp’s “crazy” “cat’s cradle” virtually stole the Surrealist show if critical reception to date may be a measure of its success. One critic quite perceptively commented on how the installation “forever gets between you and the assembled art, and in so doing creates the most paradoxically clarifying barrier imaginable.”<sup>3</sup> This astute observation invites speculation on the nature of what was both exposed and veiled behind what another critic described as a “geometric semi-cacoon (sic).”<sup>4</sup> Another more prosaic interpretation saw the string as performing its literal func-

Susan Power: [spower@noos.fr](mailto:spower@noos.fr)

Copyright © 2008 (Susan Power). Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. Available at <http://jsa.asu.edu/>

tion of binding the disparate parts into a unified whole where “even the American Indian finds a place – alongside Picasso, Chagall, Dalí, Calder, Delvaux, Klee, Breton, Duchamp and Max Ernst.”<sup>5</sup> Prefacing this enumeration of Surrealism’s mainstays, the anonymous critic authoritatively asserted that such jarring juxtapositions – that is, hanging “the untutored primitivism of Morris Hirshfield... on equal terms with the suave sophisticated work of Yves Tanguy, the fiery brilliance of Matta or the knowing distortion of Seligmann,” were the exclusive domain of Surrealist display.<sup>6</sup>

Revisiting the reception of “First Papers of Surrealism” in another way, I shall focus on the exhibition as a lens for examining how the non-Western objects exhibited were “entangled” not only physically but conceptually.<sup>7</sup> If fanciful combinations of incongruous objects were *de rigueur* in a Surrealist environment, the appearance of Native American works side by side with modern art was apparently novel – at least it was in the New York City of the early 1940s. The shifting status of these objects – like the twine that Marcel Duchamp and his cohorts had gleefully strung around the exhibition space – presents one of the myriad threads in the entangled mesh intertwining with broader issues of identity, place and nation. In an effort to unravel this chaotic cultural crisscrossing, the purpose of my paper will thus be to examine the web of ideological, institutional and individual interests in which these Native American objects were caught. “First Papers of Surrealism” is one point of convergence, a knot with strings attached to considerations of both the American context of the exhibition and the history of Surrealist exhibitions.

As the show’s title suggests, “First Papers of Surrealism” promised to be an initiation, a beginning, an introduction to the artistic antics of the Surrealist group in exile. In 1942, however, the Surrealist movement was hardly an unknown entity, having already gained much notoriety from Salvador Dalí’s theatrical, publicity-seeking maneuvers in New York during the 1930s. If Alfred Barr’s “Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism” had garnered the movement institutional acclaim by 1936, then Dalí’s *Dream of Venus* pavilion at the 1939 New York World’s Fair had popularized an erotically-charged funhouse version of Surrealism for a wider American audience.<sup>8</sup> So exactly what was this 1942 international Surrealist exhibition proposing as a first? Quite literally, the title “First Papers of Surrealism” was a reference to the administrative documents issued to U.S. asylum-seekers, an allusion to the émigré status of the European artists in exile, underscoring the dislocation of the formerly Parisian-based Surrealist group during the Second World War.<sup>9</sup> Beyond referring to the European artists’ displacement to New York City as a result of the Nazi threat, the show’s deceptively didactic title also contended that the exhibition marked a starting point for Surrealism on American soil, thereby implying that all previous exposure to

Surrealist production had not painted an entirely accurate picture of the movement.

That the public at large and even art scene initiates would misinterpret the movement's motives was inevitable, especially as it ventured abroad, crossing borders to encounter new cultural landscapes.<sup>10</sup> Recognizing the perpetual challenge that a deterritorialized, drifting Surrealism faced, André Breton expressed this concern during his New York sojourn. In his 1942 *Prolegomena to a Third Surrealist Manifesto or Not*, Breton unselfconsciously lamented that:

.... Every great idea is perhaps subject to being seriously altered the instant it comes into contact with the mass of humanity, where it is made to come to terms with minds of a completely different stature than that of the mind it originally came from. The evils that are always the price of favor, of renown, lie in wait even for Surrealism though it has been in existence for twenty years... Surrealism is already far from being able to cover everything that is undertaken in its name, openly or not, from the most unfathomable 'teas' of Tokyo to the rain-streaked windows of Fifth Avenue... What is being done in any given direction bears little resemblance to what was wanted.<sup>11</sup>

"First Papers of Surrealism" could thus have provided a corrective to the false identity that Surrealism had assumed in the United States – one epitomized by Dalí's media-savvy posturing as Surrealism's provocative prophet on the cover of *Time* magazine in 1936.<sup>12</sup> Already in 1935, the 29-year-old Dalí was lecturing on "Surrealist Paintings; Paranoiac Images" at the Museum of Modern Art for an audience in search of the keys to unlocking the enigmas of his and other Surrealist works.<sup>13</sup>

Identity was indeed central to the Surrealist project, as was visually underscored by the Surrealists' virtual obsession with portraiture—both individual and collective—to which the "compensation portraits" in the "First Papers of Surrealism" catalogue attest (Fig. 1).<sup>14</sup> The outwardly playful device of replacing the portrait photographs of participating artists with apparently anonymous likenesses resonates with the Surrealist fascination with psychoanalytical theories of the self.<sup>15</sup> Purportedly compensating for the unavailability of photographic images for exhibitors residing overseas, these seemingly random replacements play upon notions of subjectivity and artistic authority by subversively mimicking an identity-photo format to undermine photography's reproductive promise of physical likeness.<sup>16</sup> On one level the "compensation portraits" allude to the loss of identity experienced by the European



Fig. 1. Introductory page to compensation portraits from *First Papers of Surrealism* catalogue (New York: Coordinating Council of French Relief Societies, 1942)

exiles, while on another they suggest the shifting identity of Surrealism as it traveled abroad or the Surrealist effort to disrupt the Enlightenment ideal of a fixed identity.<sup>17</sup>

British art historian David Hopkins discusses the use of the passport photo in the context of “First Papers of Surrealism,” linking the “compensation portraits” to the practice of falsifying identity papers that exiles commonly had to resort to in order to gain entrance to the United States.<sup>18</sup> The notion of false identity, moreover, ties in with Breton’s attempts to correct the misguided perception of Surrealism. Viewed as a group portrait, the choice of surrogate photographs portraying stereotypical American subjects appears to interrogate constructs of national identity and reinforce the idea of a new American identity for Surrealism: one represented by depression-era sharecroppers, gangsters, industrialists, an Eskimo, an African-American and a Wild-West saloon hostess.<sup>19</sup>

The use of “compensation portraits” usurps the photographic claim to representational objectivity corresponding to the purportedly impersonal, mechanical character of the indexical imprint. Identifying the outward appearance of one individual with that of an “other” triggers an associative mechanism whereby the absence of physical likeness elicits alternative identifications.<sup>20</sup> The objective imprint, stripped of its representational reliability, lays bare subjective impression – the question of what one might be like replaces what one looks like.<sup>21</sup> The obvious discrepancy between the text and the corresponding image (the artist’s name and the anonymous photograph) thus (doubly) exposes the cracks in conventional notions of portraiture.<sup>22</sup> Disguised, the artist as imposter or masquerader assumes a ques-

tionable identity.<sup>23</sup> This interest in postures and posturing appears to relate in turn to issues of identifying and identification, in particular with respect to Amerindian masks.<sup>24</sup>

Northwest Coast transformation masks held special significance for André Breton, who was drawn to them for their “power of suggestion” rather than aesthetic or ethnographic considerations.<sup>25</sup> Nonetheless, Breton began his essay on these masks with a reference to Georges Buraud’s book *Les Masques* (1948), followed by a lengthy quotation in which Buraud describes his poetic and fanciful vision of how the masks function within a general ritual context. The selected quotation by Buraud no doubt appealed to Breton for its description of how the spectators, identifying with the masked dancer as the embodiment of the being represented by the mask, collectively participate in the transformative action, resulting from the release of unconscious forces.<sup>26</sup> The essential quality of the masks for Breton is thus functional and transformative. The mask operates as an instrument to “becoming other,” performed by virtue of a mechanism (literally a string) that activates the shift from one form to another – animal to man, dream state to waking state.<sup>27</sup>

While the masks were tied to the Surrealist conception of self, the appropriation of non-Western objects in general, masks and otherwise, contributed as well to the construction of the Surrealist movement’s identity. As collective constructs, the international exhibitions of Surrealism participated publicly in this Surrealist self-fashioning by performing the transhistorical and transnational boundaries of the Surrealist endeavor yet necessarily inscribing the movement within a specific time and place – in the case of “First Papers of Surrealism,” the upheaval of the Second World War, the uprootedness of exile in New York City, and competing nationalisms in the 1940s.<sup>28</sup>

Despite New York’s familiarity with Surrealism by 1942 and its ambivalent attitude toward the movement – one tinged with fascination and fatigue – the premier appearance of Native American objects amongst the astounding array of Surrealist paintings, sculptures and other ephemera, all enshrouded in Duchamp’s gigantic web, clearly captured the critics’ attention. *Time* magazine pointed out that “among the show’s 105 exhibits, including dolls, idols, ceremonial masks by American Indian primitives, was work by painters Masson, Delvaux, Chagall, Tanguy, Magritte, Vail, Hirshfield,” a designation that assigns the Native American objects to the ranks of collectible curiosities.<sup>29</sup> Edward Alden Jewell of *The New York Times* concurred that:

...a little bit of everything has been brought in to produce Surrealism’s all-out against the Axis. The maze contains not paintings alone,

but quantities, as well, of ‘out-of-this world’ objects, as they are now aptly being called. Whether the famous fur-lined teacup and saucer are there I can’t at the moment say, for installation had not been completed at the time of my visit. But it was evident that the primitive North American Indian is looked upon by modern experts in the field as having been to some extent versed in the mysteries of the subconscious.<sup>30</sup>

Their commentary suggests that the inclusion of indigenous objects was surprising and original whereas the accompanying Surrealist artwork, perceived as lacking vitality, was labeled tiresome, repetitive and academic. Furthermore, the statements reveal much about prevailing perceptions of Native American objects little more than a year following the Museum of Modern Art’s 1941 watershed exhibition “Indian Art of the United States,” as well as predominant American attitudes toward Surrealism, which was generally conceived of as an exclusively artistic movement.<sup>31</sup> Whereas Native American objects were enlisted by an American cultural elite in search of authentic artistic origins independent from European tradition, they appealed to Surrealist sensibilities for somewhat different reasons. The latter sought to establish analogies between the Native American objects and their own anti-national politics and poetics of consciousness, while the former (both in New York and in Mexico) embraced them as a means of developing a national American (or Mexican) identity that would compete with European hegemony.<sup>32</sup> This common ground of appropriation paradoxically blurred the contrasting values and qualities which either American or European avant-garde modernism attached to the indigenous arts. The Surrealist strategies of display, however, unconsciously exposed these underlying competing interests.

Although the *First Papers of Surrealism* catalogue prominently mentions indigenous arts, no visual trace of the non-Western objects on display was documented, either in the catalogue or in the two extant photographs of show.<sup>33</sup> On the pale green introductory page of the catalogue, a statement under the rubric “Primitive Art” announces the Surrealist position regarding the Native American objects:

Surrealism is only trying to rejoin the most durable traditions of mankind. Among the primitive peoples art always goes beyond what is conventionally and arbitrarily called the ‘real.’ The native of the Northwest Pacific coast, the Pueblos, New Guinea, New Ireland, the Marquesas, among others, have made *objects\** which Surrealists par-

ticularly appreciate.<sup>34</sup>

A footnote further specifies the provenance of these objects from the collections of members of the Surrealist movement (Max Ernst, André Breton), New York art dealers (Pierre Matisse, Julius Carlebach and Segredakis) as well as French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, who had journeyed to New York via Martinique with André Breton the previous year.<sup>35</sup> Centered in the middle of the page, directly above the paragraph on “primitive” art, a phrase describing the opening night features a more elusive reference to the long-standing Surrealist affinity with Northwest Coast cultures “Vernissage consacrée aux enfants jouant, à l’odeur du cèdre” (Cedar-scented opening dedicated to children playing).

Although neither critics nor attendee accounts corroborated this claim of odiferous appeal, the boisterous presence of children tossing balls and jumping rope hardly went unnoticed. While the ritual association of cedar burning evoked the exotic other, the youthful exuberance of recreational games referred to the Surrealist privileging of childhood, and lent an ambiance of freedom that was the rallying cry for the latest international exhibition of Surrealism.<sup>36</sup> In effect, the introductory text by Breton, appearing at the top of the page in French and English, underscored the Surrealist mission to liberate mankind:

The Surrealist cause, in art as in life, is the cause of freedom itself. Today more than ever to speak abstractly in the name of freedom or to praise it in empty terms is to serve it ill. To light the world freedom must become flesh and to this end must always be reflected and recreated in the *word*.<sup>37</sup>

Both the evocation of ritual incense and the chaos of physical activity added a performative aspect to the event—one that upset tradition, disrupted vision, and displaced objects as well as participants.

The format and themes of the 1942 exhibition were not entirely innovative but rather translated earlier experiments with the medium of display in Paris and further afield in Copenhagen, London, Tenerife, Brussels, and Mexico City.<sup>38</sup> Often designed as multi-sensorial environments that showcased an enthralling assortment of objects – ranging from the more traditional genres of painting, sculpture and photography, by artists more or less closely affiliated with the Parisian Surrealist group, to non-Western objects, folk art, art of the insane and children’s art – Surrealist exhibitions functioned as snapshots of the movement fixed in a moment of “dwelling-in-



travel.”<sup>39</sup> Surrealist display incorporated appropriation and displacement of myriad objects of diverse origins, reassembling them in complex configurations to construct both individual and group identity – the former in Surrealist collecting practices and the latter in group exhibitions.<sup>40</sup> Perhaps the most emblematic precursor, the 1938 “Exposition International du Surréalisme,” held at the Galerie des Beaux-Arts in Paris, was even reviewed in *The New York Times* under the headline “Paris Joke.”<sup>41</sup> Extensively documented, the 1938 show has since become the subject of much scholarly discussion.<sup>42</sup> In a contemporary Paris review, Maurice Henry, a writer, cartoonist and member of the movement involved in organizing the show, described it as “an honest expression of the current state of the movement” that inspired the viewer to “abandon him/herself to an adventure.”<sup>43</sup> Interestingly, the 1938 show was exceptional in that non-Western objects were not exhibited. Only an olfactory presence hinted at a New World connection – *odeurs du Brésil*, the aroma from a coffee-roasting machine wafting through the galleries.

Clues to the Surrealist slant on indigenous cultures may be gleaned from texts and documentation of other Surrealist displays incorporating “primitive” art, both in exhibitions and journals.<sup>44</sup> In fact, non-Western objects had entered into Surrealist practices of display in the 1920s with two exhibitions combining a monographic format of a Surrealist artist with that of a particular culture—“Tableaux de Man Ray et objets des îles” (March 26-April 10, 1926)<sup>45</sup> and “Yves Tanguy et objets d’Amérique” (May 27-June 15, 1927), which presented paintings by Tanguy with pre-Columbian art, Hopi kachinas and Northwest Coast objects, all from the collections of Aragon, Breton, Eluard and Roland Tual.<sup>46</sup> The American objects metonymically represented the imaginary dream-world of the Americas against which Tanguy’s oniric landscapes were inscribed. In the 1931 anti-colonial exhibition “La Vérité sur les colonies,” the Surrealists again mobilized non-Western objects, instrumentalizing them to denounce the veiled imperialist propaganda of the concurrent Colonial Exhibition.<sup>47</sup> Non-western art also featured prominently in two 1936 Surrealist exhibitions: a Hopi kachina adorned the cover of the catalogue for the *Exposition Surréaliste d’Objets*, held at the Galerie Charles Ratton, which specialized in non-Western art – where kachina dolls, Eskimo masks, and pre-Columbian ceramics as well as masks and sculpture from Oceania alternated with an unusual and intriguing selection of objects, from ready-mades and mathematical models to found and natural objects.<sup>48</sup> At the massive *International Surrealist Exhibition* staged at New Burlington Galleries in London, roughly twenty non-Western objects – most of them from Oceania, with the exception of one African and three American objects – were interspersed with nearly four hundred artworks, found objects, natural objects interpreted, and Surrealist objects as



well as photographs of ethnographic objects from the British Museum.<sup>49</sup>

Written shortly after the London show, Breton's essay "Non-national Boundaries of Surrealism" outlines some key concepts, which shed light on the dissemination of Surrealism's broader aims through the staging of exhibitions.<sup>50</sup> According to Breton, the popular appeal of Surrealism – quantifiable in the extraordinary turnout for the London show, with roughly 20,000 visitors – provided a misleading measure of the movement's success. Instead, he located the movement's true achievement in its reach beyond national borders. The international lineup of the exhibitors including artists from fourteen countries, thus demonstrated the unity of aspiration and innovation in "a new awareness of life that is common to all," rather than "simply a unification of style."<sup>51</sup> While clearly aligning the Surrealist movement with concurrent political events, Breton reiterated the defining principles of Surrealism as an intellectual movement in order to correct apparent misconceptions of it as another "ism" in the genealogy of modern art.<sup>52</sup> In 1936, the paradoxical consequences of widespread success, mainstream recognition and critical acclaim remained a source of concern that Breton would return to in 1942.<sup>53</sup> It follows that Surrealist exhibitions operated as foils to conventional exhibitions by subversively employing common conventions of public display to expose their underlying social and political underpinnings – whether the commercial pursuits of gallery exhibitions, the classifying and categorizing efforts of ethnographic and art museum exhibits, or the nationalist discourse of international expositions.<sup>54</sup>

On another level, the Surrealist exhibitions functioned as dynamic points of convergence and transit, as "contact zones."<sup>55</sup> Their international scope brought together a diversity of objects and individuals, whose centripetal movement resulted in an ephemeral configuration of haphazard juxtapositions, a principal strategy of Surrealist collage and assemblage aimed to disorient and deconstruct. This potential to trigger associations served as a catalyst, sparking unexpected and uncontrollable reactions in random directions. In moving beyond representation, the Surrealist exhibitions created and produced an intensely local in-between space that exceeded the international.<sup>56</sup> Stylistic diversity and non-Western objects, both basic elements of Surrealist display, thus visually encoded the movement's non-aesthetic and antinationalist stance. Amanda Stansell has argued that the apparent contradictions in Surrealist politics and collecting practices, at once opposing and unconsciously perpetuating the colonialist discourse of their day, nonetheless had far-reaching implications for destabilizing and exposing racial constructs.<sup>57</sup>

The tension between non-Western cultural appropriation and Western cultural critique in Surrealist display was further vexed when transplanted to the Ameri-

can continent. In the context of “First Papers of Surrealism,” the international Surrealist exhibition was a “contact zone” located within the national borders of the United States, where the transhistorical and transnational character of the Surrealist movement collided with the construction of an American cultural identity. The American reception of both Native American art and Surrealism—both having been recently promoted at the Museum of Modern Art under the direction of Alfred H. Barr, Jr.—thus intersected with that of “First Papers of Surrealism.”<sup>58</sup>

While the 1936 “Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism” presented an overwhelming “potpourri” of over seven hundred objects, including a category labeled “comparative material” comprising “children’s art, art of the insane, folk art, commercial and journalistic art, miscellaneous objects and pictures with a Surrealist character, scientific objects,” Native American objects were surprisingly absent from the exhibition.<sup>59</sup> In his preface to the catalogue, Alfred Barr stated that “Oriental art and the extremely relevant art of primitive and prehistoric man have not been touched,” but did not account for this conscious omission.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, Barr had attended the “International Exhibition of Surrealism” in London earlier that year in preparation for the upcoming Museum of Modern Art show “Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism” and would no doubt have been struck by the non-Western pieces interspersed with the modern works in the crowded salon-style hanging.<sup>61</sup> The reasons behind Barr’s exclusion of non-Western works remain open to speculation.<sup>62</sup> His choice of a neutral, orderly display format, however, suggests a deliberate decision to maintain the Museum of Modern Art’s policy of clear, didactic exhibition design, one of the institution’s hallmarks under his direction.<sup>63</sup> Barr opted for a chronological hanging, with proto-Surrealist works displayed in rooms according to century up to the twentieth, which was divided into Dada, organic abstraction (Arp, Picasso, Miro, Masson) and realistic Surrealism (Dali, Magritte, Ernst).<sup>64</sup>

In view of the conspicuous lack of non-Western art in the 1936 show, the American critics’ references to Surrealism with respect to the Native American objects exhibited in the Museum of Modern Art’s 1941 “Indian Art of the United States” elicits conjecture.<sup>65</sup> The critical reception of the latter show drew parallels between the Native American objects and Surrealist imagery, a link forged in the perceived expression of the unconscious common to both.<sup>66</sup> That “Indian Art of the United States” was unanimously heralded as a manifestation of indigenous American ingenuity and held up to comparison with modernist European models might at first glance have seemed antithetical but in fact both reactions were mutually reinforcing. By placing Native American art on a par with the most advanced European modern art, the organizers and critics established an origin and legitimacy for American

artistic production. At a time when the United States was looking to indigenous cultures for an original homegrown cultural tradition independent of its European roots, Native American art had an entirely distinct resonance from the Surrealists' universalizing vision. Entangled within the web of national interest and international conflict, the Native American objects on display in "First Papers" were thus floating signifiers.<sup>67</sup> The displaced objects, liberated from their original culturally-determined significance, were reduced to signs whose polysemic quality was reinforced in the various resulting chains of association.

If the Surrealists envisioned the exhibition as a deterritorialized domain for collective action, then its New World setting was a mental construct, conceived of as a fertile terrain for artistic exploration and discovery, a *terra incognita*, an uncharted territory to be exploited by Western artists—both European and American, Surrealist or otherwise. Just as the decontextualized Native American objects alternately stood for American nationalist sentiment or the Surrealist universal quest to liberate mankind, the equivocal potential of the New World trope likewise sparked both the American and the Surrealist imaginations. Reporting on the State Department-sponsored conference on "Inter-American Cultural Relations in the Field of Art" in an editorial entitled "The New World is Still New," American Federation of Arts member F.A. Whiting, Jr. rallied artists, scholars and museum people to unite in a Pan-American effort to discover new creative horizons in the "vast, uncharted field of activity within the Americas."<sup>68</sup> Similarly, André Breton explored the New World imaginary and its regenerative possibilities in his preface to Peggy Guggenheim's 1942 *Art of This Century* inaugural catalogue.<sup>69</sup> Paradoxically – given the Surrealists' anticolonial stance – Breton applied the colonial metaphor of Christopher Columbus and his discovery of the New World to the modern artist's exploration of the interior world. The European artist thus becomes an adventurer in search of new models, and the modernist endeavor a story of travel encounters.<sup>70</sup>

Invoking its magical and transformative properties, the Surrealists exhibited non-Western art as an antidote to European rationalism and its visual culmination in modernist aesthetics.<sup>71</sup> Integral to this romanticized vision of non-Western art as a product of a pure, uncorrupt state of consciousness was the belief that Native Americans, in particular, living in harmony with nature, embodied the Surrealist quest for the resolution of opposing principles that located an idealized former state of existence "elsewhere."<sup>72</sup> Paradoxically, the magical aura or "savage heart" of non-Western objects, which Surrealists so cherished, was entirely disrupted in the process of appropriation and displacement.<sup>73</sup>

Disruption was indeed the pervasive theme of the "First Papers" installation,

with Marcel Duchamp's *16 Miles of String* literally tying it all together while blurring boundaries and shattering the gallery space. The choreographed chaos of "First Papers" resonated with the current state of the Western world. Critics wittily drew parallels with the war by commenting that Duchamp's string effectively camouflaged or combated the bourgeois décor.<sup>74</sup> Yet, the Surrealist exhibition space was much more. It was an ideological battlefield that lay siege to the orderly classifications and linear development of conventional modern art genealogies, virtually exploding Alfred Barr's modern art chart and by extension his historicizing vision of Surrealism, while launching an assault on the status of the traditional art object and the authority of the artist, the critic, and the viewer as well.

This attempt to unravel some of the threads entwined in "First Papers of Surrealism" in order to loosen the concealed contextual knots, inevitably untangles other Surrealist strings, extending and converging across a vast temporal and spatial network in novel configurations. The recurrent themes of identity and community that are intrinsically related to the Surrealist embrace of non-Western and particularly Native American cultures thus reappear along Surrealism's post-war itineraries, winding through both real and imagined American landscapes. The chance encounters choreographed in "First Papers of Surrealism" enacted the irrational, ineffable nature of Surrealism. Thus introducing an ill-informed American public to Surrealism might be likened to an initiatory ritual, one that the Surrealists would translate, adapt and transport elsewhere. Individual artists closely associated with the Surrealist movement such as Max Ernst relocated to the Southwest during the late 1940s and cultivated an intense identification with Native American culture.<sup>75</sup> Traveling east, along the path taken by many of the exiled artists returning to their homelands and landing in post-war Paris, the non-Western takes over the exhibition space in "Surrealism in 1947" at the Galerie Maeght in 1947.<sup>76</sup> In his preface to the *Surrealism in 1947* catalogue, André Breton, taking stock of Surrealist activity since the previous Paris-based International Exhibition of Surrealism in 1938, stressed the premonitory atmosphere of both that show and "First Papers of Surrealism," suggesting how both had unconsciously registered the impending socio-political climate.<sup>77</sup> If, in the gloomy darkness of the 1938 show, Surrealism had prefigured the cataclysmic events of the Second World War, and the resulting ruins in the shattered space of "First Papers of Surrealism," then it would follow that the movement would set the tone for the future with an invitation to undertake an initiatory excursion, envisioned as a new myth in the making.

This cursory description offers a fleeting glimpse of the future potential for examination of Surrealist exhibitions, as in-between sites of dwelling-in-travel that

perform the non-national boundaries of the Surrealist enterprise, contact zones where myriad elements combine to embody the dynamism, diversity, and complexity at the heart of the movement's concerns.

1 For a thorough account of "First Papers of Surrealism," see Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2001), 166-197.

2 Marcel Jean, *The History of Surrealist Painting*, trans. Simon Watson Taylor (New York: Grove Press, 1960) 312-316; Gérard Durozoi, *History of the Surrealist Movement*, trans. Alison Anderson (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002) 401-403; Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois, Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, eds., *Art Since 1900* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2004) 299-301; Roberta Smith, "Genesis, I'm Sorry," *The New York Times*, August 3, 2007, B31. Incidentally, this review describes the effects of the recent installation in terms that seem to echo some of the critics in 1942: "The famous photograph of this webbed installation is persistently startling, so it is no surprise that a version of the real thing is deeply weird and disorienting. [...] The string renders literal both the challenging nature of art and the fear of not being able to meet the challenge, and so remaining cut off from aesthetic experience." In-depth scholarship addressing "First Papers of Surrealism" abounds and is subsequently cited.

3 Edward Alden Jewell, "In the Realm of Art: Surrealism in Current Shows," *The New York Times*, October 18, 1942: x9.

4 "Miles of String," *The Art Digest*, November 1, 1942: 7.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Duchamp's string installation thus visualizes and performs the interpretive web that enshrouds ethnographic objects. Nicolas Thomas theorizes the invisible network of intersecting interests enveloping these objects in *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

8 See Dickran Tashjian, *A Boatload of Madmen: Surrealism and the American Avant-Garde 1920-1950* (New York: Thames and Hudson, Inc., 1995), who devotes a chapter, ironically entitled "The First Papers of Surrealism," to the New York reception of Surrealism in the 1930s. For a more recent examination of the complexities of Surrealism's American reception during the same period, see Sandra Zalman, "The Vernacular as Vanguard: Alfred Barr, Salvador Dalí, and the U.S. Reception of Surrealism in the 1930s," *Journal of Surrealism and the Americas* 1, No. 1 (2007), <http://jsa.asu.edu/index.php/jsa/article/view/17/14>.

9 Tashjian, "A Season for Surrealism and Its Affinities," *A Boatload of Madmen*, 215; Martica Sawin, "New York, 1942: Veils and Transparents," *Surrealism in Exile: The Beginning of the New York School* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), 225.

10 James Clifford has observed that "Surrealism traveled and was translated in travel," "Traveling Cultures," *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 30. He imagines rewriting his seminal essay "On Ethnographic Surrealism" from the perspective of the New World, decentering the established narrative of modernism in such a way that Paris of the 1920s becomes one of any number of destinations along an itinerary rather than a point of departure.

11 André Breton, "Prolegomena to a Third Surrealist Manifesto or Not," *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen Lane (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969), 286 (originally published in *VVV*, no. 1, June 1942).

12 *Time* 24, December 14, 1936. The cover portrait of Dalí by Man Ray introduced the accompanying story "Marvelous and Fantastic," which reviewed Alfred Barr's *Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism* at the Museum of Modern Art. For more on Dalí's role in the reception of Surrealism during the 1930s, see Zalman, "The Vernacular as Vanguard," 52-57.

- 13 “Surrealist Art is Puzzle No More,” *The New York Times*, January 10, 1935: 21. Dali’s talk coincided with a three-day private viewing of two recently painted portraits by the artist at the Julien Levy gallery.
- 14 *First Papers of Surrealism* (New York: Coordinating Council of French Relief Societies, 1942), n.p. The statement in the catalogue indicates that Duchamp and Breton had suggested the idea of “compensation portraits,” though the provenance and attribution of each photograph may have included others who were involved in the organization of the exhibition. Collective games were a privileged Surrealist activity and could well have been played out in the selection process for the “compensation portraits.” The introductory page to this section of the catalogue portrays Picasso as a gangster, Magritte a colonial explorer, Giacometti as a mustached gentleman, Breton looking down and out, David Hare as a young Andrew Carnegie, the Scottish-born American steel magnate. According to the artist’s son Morgan Hare, David Hare was not flattered by the organizers’ choice for his compensation portrait. Jasper Sharp, “Natural-Born Surrealist: David Hare (1917-1992),” (paper presented at the *Surrealism and the American West* conference, Arizona State University, October 26-27, 2006).
- 15 For two compelling examinations of Surrealism and subjectivity, see Elza Adamowicz, “Masking,” *Surrealist Collage in Text and Image: Dissecting the Exquisite Corpse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 129-158, and David Lomas, *The Haunted Self* (New Haven, Conn. and London: Yale University Press, 2000).
- 16 Adamowicz discusses the uses of identity photographs in Surrealist collage; see “Masking,” *Surrealist Collage*, 142-144.
- 17 For a lengthy analysis of the “compensation portraits” in relation to Duchamp and his ambiguous position regarding Surrealism, see David Hopkins, “The Politics of Equivocation: Sherry Levine, Duchamp’s ‘Compensation Portrait’, and Surrealism in the USA 1942-45,” *Oxford Art Journal* (January 26, 2001): 45-68. Hopkins discusses the political implications of Duchamp’s compensation portrait, which pictured him as a sharecropper’s wife cropped from a 1935 Ben Shahn documentary photograph of rehabilitation clients in Boone County, Arkansas.
- 18 The photo booth portrait, a practice carried over from Dada, was commonly used in collective portraiture from the first issue of *La Révolution Surréaliste* in 1924. Hopkins, “The Politics of Equivocation,” 53.
- 19 *Ibid.*: 58.
- 20 If the confusion surrounding the reasons behind the choices for each portrait can be attributed to a photographic version of the Surrealist game of analogy, then the game is perpetually reactivated by the viewer, who by extension joins in the interpretive game. Art historians, myself included of course, have been among the foremost to seek associations, in attempting both to establish the connections between the “compensation portrait” and the artist portrayed as well as to locate the source of the actual photos. Fabrice Flahutez suggests links between the Max Ernst surrogate, a long white-haired and bearded old man, and both the Druid of Celtic mythology and Johann Wolfgang Goethe’s *Faust*, played by Gösta Ekman in the 1926 Friedrich-Wilhelm Murnau film version. See Fabrice Flahutez, *Nouveau monde et nouveau mythe: mutations du surréalisme, de l’exil américain à l’Écart absolu* (Dijon: Les Presses du réel, 2007), 85-86. I attribute one possible source for the photographs to Julien Levy, who owned a diverse photographic collection, including one photograph – a Henri Louis Meurisse portrait of British suffragette Lady Liliane G., c. 1910-1914 – that bears the mark of an intended crop that corresponds quite closely to the format of the photographs used for the “compensation portraits.” To the right of the cropping frame, part of an editor’s annotation reads “comp,” which would further support this identification. For a reproduction of this photograph, see Peter Barbaric, “Found Objects, or a History of the Medium, to No Particular End,” in *Dreaming in Black and White: Photography at the Julien Levy Gallery* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2006), 141.
- 21 Some of the photographs did, however, play upon physiognomic resemblance in providing uncanny “look-alikes.” Hopkins points out that Duchamp’s portrait echoes the artist’s facial features – a long, thin nose and sunken-cheeks in a narrow face. Interestingly, Hopkins, in attempting to establish the provenance of Duchamp’s portrait, traces a link to Julien Levy, who had exhibited Ben Shahn’s paintings at his gallery in 1940. Although no mention of Julien Levy appears amongst the list of sponsors in the *First Papers of Surrealism* catalogue, it seems quite likely that he may have anonymously taken part in the “compensation portrait” component. Levy had met Duchamp in New York in 1926 and had traveled to Paris with him aboard the *Paris* the following year. See Calvin Tomkins, *Duchamp: A Biography* (London: Pimlico, 1996), 275-276. In view of Levy’s personal and professional



- ties to Surrealism, his collection of found photographs would have been familiar to the organizers of “First Papers of Surrealism,” since Levy also sold his photographic finds, displayed in a bin in his gallery. In fact, Duchamp had rekindled his friendship with Levy upon returning to New York in 1942. See Barbarie, “Found Objects,” 159.
- 22 For a discussion of Duchamp’s use of the photographic medium to disrupt the notion of “likeness” in portraiture and the troubling of gender categories, see Dawn Ades, “Duchamp’s Masquerades,” in Graham Clarke, (ed.), *The Portrait in Photography* (London: Reaktion, 1992), 94-114.
- 23 Julien Levy’s *FBI Wanted Notice: Edward Aloysius Hannon, Wanted for the Crime of Impersonation (Marcel Duchamp)*, c. 1950, also plays upon the notion of criminal offense associated with assuming another identity. Copying Duchamp’s reversal of the “compensation portrait” tactic in *Wanted – \$2,000 Reward*, a 1923 rectified ready-made in which Duchamp attached his “mug shots” to a tourist souvenir he had picked up in New York, Levy took similar front and profile shots of friends (including Duchamp, Yves Tanguy, Enrico Donati and their respective companions), which he then mounted on actual FBI wanted posters. Barbarie, “Found Objects,” 159.
- 24 For an interesting discussion of portraiture and masks, see Adamowicz, “Masking,” *Surrealist Collage*, 154-158.
- 25 Masao Suzuki, “L’entrée des masques: André Breton et le mythe comme événement,” in *Pensée mythique et surréalisme*, Jacqueline Chenieux-Gendron et Yves Vadé (eds.), (Paris: Lachenal & Ritter, 1996), 52. For another analysis of Breton’s essay, see Marie Mauzé, “Le tambour d’eau des castors: l’art de la Côte Nord-Ouest et le surréalisme,” *Arts d’Afrique Noire, arts premiers*, no. 89, Spring 1994: 42-43.
- 26 André Breton, “Note sur les masques à transformation de la côte Pacifique Nord-ouest,” *Œuvres complètes*, Tôme III (Paris: Editions Gallimard, Collection La Pléiade, 1999), 1029-1030: “...toutes les puissances avec lesquelles l’individu entre en rapport sont les forces de son inconscient dont il a peuplé le monde et qui, sous forme de fluides, de présences, de craintes, d’énergies, reviennent vers lui pour le contraindre ou l’exalter. Lui-même et toute sa tribu avec lui (faisceau colossal de forces instinctives) s’enveloppent, comme d’une chrysalide gigantesque, à l’intérieur de laquelle ils restent enfermés, de ce réseau immense d’influences bienfaisantes ou terrible et qui est en réalité sorti d’eux” from Georges Buraud, *Les Masques*, (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1948). Furthermore, the parallel that Buraud draws between the ritual structure and a giant cocoon or network of invisible forces enveloping the participants conjures a mental image that uncannily recalls descriptions of Duchamp’s “Miles of String” around the Surrealist exhibition space. Suffice to add that Breton clearly articulates the ritual association of the Surrealist exhibition (referring to both the 1938 and 1942 exhibitions) in his introductory text to the catalogue of *Surrealism in 1947*. See André Breton, “Devant le rideau,” *Œuvres complètes*, Tôme III, 740-749.
- 27 Suzuki, “L’entrée des masques,” 58.
- 28 The *First Papers of Surrealism* catalogue played on exhibition catalogue conventions much as the Surrealist exhibition itself ironically referenced institutional and gallery shows. Hence, Surrealist “catalogues” undermined the presumed scientific accuracy and documentary function of the museum or gallery catalogue while adding to the movement’s collective publications and further defining Surrealism’s aims.
- 29 “Inheritors of Chaos,” *Time*, November 2, 1942: 47.
- 30 Edward Alden Jewell, “Surrealists Open Display Tonight,” *The New York Times*, October 14, 1942: 26.
- 31 Paradoxically perhaps, the Surrealist-organized exhibitions were an attempt to publicly enact the aims of the movement, which extended beyond aesthetic concerns to embrace social and political change. See José Pierre, “Une révolution dans l’accrochage: les expositions internationales du surréalisme,” *Cahiers du Musée national d’art moderne*, no. 17-18, 1986: 104-113. Conversely, Surrealist strategies of display expanded the field of artistic creation to the exhibition space, transforming it into a Surrealist environment that enveloped both objects on display and visitors, who participated in an experience surpassing the visual. See Adam Jolles, “Espèces d’espaces surréalistes,” in *Pensée de l’expérience, travail de l’expérimentation sein des Surréalismes et des avant-gardes en Europe*, eds. Jacqueline Chenieux-Gendron and Myriam Blédé (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 145-172.
- 32 For an in-depth study of the problematic relationship between Surrealism and non-Western cultures, see Sophie Leclercq, “Le refuge dans l’Amérique noire et indienne: un reflux de l’anticolonialisme?,” *Les Surréalistes face à la question coloniale, 1919-1962*, PhD dissertation, Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin, 2006, 392-536, (book forthcoming in 2009: *La Rançon du colonialisme*, Dijon: Presses du Réel). For the reception and use of Native

American objects in New York and Mexico, see Amy Winter, *Wolfgang Paalen, DYN and the American Avant-Garde of the 1940s*, PhD dissertation, CUNY Graduate Center, 1995, 320-446; and Amy Winter, "'Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art' at the Museum of Modern Art, 1940: The Politics of Americanism and the Reception of Pre-Columbian Art in the New York School," CAA Conference, New York, 1997 (audiotape).

33 Katherine Dreier arranged to have John D. Schiff take these photographs to document Duchamp's installation, hence both views show the main exhibition space through the white string mesh from opposite sides of the room. Entry for October 30, 1942, "Ephémérides," in *Marcel Duchamp, Work and Life*, Pontus Hulton, ed. (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1993), n.p. Presumably, no attempt was made to document the entire exhibition, which occupied the main drawing room and two adjacent rooms.

34 *First Papers of Surrealism*.

35 In the exhibition catalogue, the organizers also extended their thanks to the Brooklyn Museum and the Museum of Modern Art for loans to the show. During research undertaken for my unpublished Master's thesis "Les ficelles de l'exposition surréaliste: 'First Papers of Surrealism,' New York, 1942," Université de Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2001, the Brooklyn Museum provided documentation for six non-Western objects lent to Max Ernst: a Zuni Shulawisti Kachina mask, a Hopi Tateukti Kachina mask, a Hopi Tcolawitze Kachina mask, an Apache Ga'an mask, as well as a polychrome wood shield and hook, both from the Elema culture in New Guinea: email correspondence with Deborah Wythe, Brooklyn Museum of Art Archives and Bill Siegmann, Curator in April 2001.

36 On Surrealist games and play, see Emmanuel Garriques, *Les jeux Surréalistes, mars 1926 – septembre 1962* (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1995); Susan Laxton, "The Guarantor of Chance: Surrealism's Ludic Practices," *Papers of Surrealism 1* (Winter 2003), available at <http://www.Surrealismcentre.ac.uk/papersofSurrealism/index.html>; and Claudia Mesch, "Serious Play: Games and Early Twentieth-Century Modernism," in *The Space Between: Literature and Culture 1914-1945*, Vol. 1 No. 1 (2006): 9-30.

37 *First Papers of Surrealism*.

38 In a historicizing gesture, André Breton enumerates eleven "official" Surrealist exhibitions that were held between 1935 and 1965. "First Papers of Surrealism" is listed as the fifth, following the 1940 *Exposición Internacional del Surrealismo* in Mexico City, the 1938 *Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme* in Paris, the 1936 *International Surrealist Exhibition* in London and the 1935 *International Kunststijling, Kubisme – Surréalisme* in Copenhagen. See Gilles Rioux, "A propos des expositions internationales du surréalisme," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, April 1978: 163-171.

39 For a discussion of "dwelling-in-travel," see James Clifford, "Traveling Cultures," 17-46.

40 A case in point is André Breton, photographed in the context of his studio apartment (both in Paris and in New York City), surrounded by his collection of artwork and ethnographic objects, which by association are an extension of the poet's identity. One wall of Breton's Parisian studio, which he inhabited from 1921 until his death in 1966, has been preserved behind glass at the Musée national d'art moderne in the Centre Georges Pompidou. The rest of the collection was sold at auction in 2003. For a detailed description and analysis of the "wall" of Breton's studio, see Fabrice Flahutez "Le mur de l'atelier d'André Breton: un testament surréaliste?" *Nouveau monde et nouveau mythe*, 423-445. For a sumptuous photographic study of Breton's studio, taken shortly after his death by Gilles Ehrmann, see *42, rue Fontaine* (Paris: Société nouvelle Adam Biro, 2003).

41 Howard Devree, "Paris Joke," *The New York Times*, March 6, 1938: 157: "...the Surrealists declared that it was impossible to give any such idea of their movement. 'We do not aim to show paintings and sculptures with a special character,' announced the organizer, 'and we have no ambition to proclaim new esthetic theories. A much greater dismay exhales from this exhibition of Surrealism, which forms the entry to a world in which foreboding predominates over burlesque and the laughter of the visitors conceals their uneasiness, their anger itself expresses their discomfiture. Surrealism is not a game: it is a haunting, a pursuit.'"

42 The 1938 "Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme" has earned pride of place in the history of twentieth-century exhibitions. See Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1999), 66-75; Germano Celant, "A Visual Machine: art installation and its modern archetypes," in *Thinking about Exhibitions*, eds. Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson and Sandy Nairne (London: Routledge, 1996), 382-384; Uwe M. Schneede, "Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme, Paris 1938,"

in *L'Art de l'exposition: Une documentation sur trente expositions exemplaires du XXe siècle*, eds. Bernd Klüser and Katharina Hegewisch (translated from German by Denis Trierweiler), (Paris: Editions du Regard, 1998), 173-187. For an extensively documented account of the 1938 "Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme," as well as Dalí's 1939 *Dream of Venus* pavilion and the 1942 "First Papers of Surrealism," see Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2001). For a recent reassessment of the political dimension of this emblematic exhibition, see Elena Filipovic, "Surrealism in 1938: The Exhibition at War," in *Surrealism, Politics and Culture*, eds. Raymond Spiteri and Donald LaCoss (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2003), 179-203. Critical reception and subsequent art historical scholarship have both tended to cast the "Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme" as signaling the Surrealist shift from radical politics to aesthetic escapism. See Susan Rubin Suleiman, "Between the Street and the Salon: The Dilemma of Surrealist Politics in the 1930s," *Visual Anthropology Review*, vol. 7, no. 1, Spring 1991: 39-50. For an analysis of the 1938 show in the context of contemporaneous Parisian exhibitions, see James D. Herbert, *Paris 1937: Worlds on Exhibition* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998).

43 Maurice Henry, "Le surréalisme dans le décor," *Marianne*, January 26, 1938.

44 For a detailed account of the Surrealists' interest in Native American objects, see Elizabeth Cowling, "The Eskimos, the American Indians and the Surrealists," *Art History*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (December 1978): 484-500; Marie Mauzé, "Le tambour d'eau des castors," 35-45; Amy Winter, *Wolfgang Paalen, Artist and Theorist of the Avant-Garde*, (Westport and London: Praeger, 2002).

45 Sophie Leclercq points out how the captions next to objects from Oceania in *Tableaux de Man Ray et objets des îles* reflect the Surrealist penchant for modifying common hierarchies and adapting them to their world vision. Thus, "Easter Island, the Athens of Oceania" suggests an analogy between the South Pacific cultures the Surrealists admired and the classical heritage of European art. Leclercq, *Les surréalistes face à la question coloniale*, 151. During the interwar period, the embrace of classicism in the arts accompanied widespread political and social conservatism and the rise of nationalisms. For an informed view of the non-Western object and the Surrealist object in the 1930s context of French colonialism and Surrealist politics, see Romy Golan, "Triangulating the Surrealist Fetish," *Visual Anthropology Review* 10, (Spring 1994): 50-65. See also, Wendy Grossman, "Lost and Found: Man Ray's Photographs of Arts of the Americas in Context," in this issue.

46 Mauzé has documented the beginnings of André Breton, Paul Eluard and Roland Tual's collecting of Native American objects in 1927, the same year as the Tanguy and American Objects show. Mauzé, "Le tambour d'eau des castors," 35-36.

47 See Adam Jolles, "Visitez l'exposition anti-coloniale! Nouveaux éléments sur l'exposition protestataire de 1931," *Pleine Marge* 35 (June 2002): 107-116; Janine Mileaf, "Body to Politics: Surrealist Exhibition of the Tribal and the Modern," in *Res* 40 (Autumn 2001): 239-255. Julia Kelly devotes the first chapter of her book *Art, Ethnography and the Life of Objects: Paris, c. 1925-1935* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007) to the reception of ethnographic material in interwar Paris. Although Kelly deals primarily with the intersection of ethnography and art history in the writings of Michel Leiris and sculptor Alberto Giacometti, her analysis includes much material that is pertinent to Surrealist display, especially in relation to ethnographic display at the Trocadéro Museum.

48 For an analysis of the theoretical stakes underlying Surrealist activity at the time of the "Exposition surréaliste d'objets," see Steven Harris, "Beware of Domestic Objects: Vocation and Equivocation in 1936," *Surrealist Art and Thought in the 1930s* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 2004), 178-218. Sophie Leclercq demonstrates how the non-Western objects were analogically bound to Surrealist objects in the "Surrealist Exhibition of Objects," (1936) in *Les surréalistes face à la question coloniale*, 157-164.

49 *International Surrealist Exhibition* (London: Women's Painting Society, 1936), "Preface" by André Breton, trans. David Gascoyne, "Introduction" by Herbert Read, 29-30. Photographs of the dense salon-style installation show New Guinea masks, polychrome shields and boards from New Guinea placed on plinths alongside or hung between Surrealist paintings. Available at <http://www.atelierandrebreton.com>

50 André Breton, "Limites non-frontières du surréalisme," *Œuvres complètes*, Tôme III (Paris: Editions Gallimard, Collection La Pléiade, 1999), 259-271. The original title in French points to two directions in Breton's text, a nuance that is lost in the English translation. The text, which was delivered in London on June 16, 1936 as the

first in a series of five lectures organized in conjunction with the *International Surrealist Exhibition*, New Burlington Galleries (June 11- July 4, 1936), was revised and subsequently published in *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, February 1, 1937: 200-215, and in English as "Limits not frontiers of Surrealism" in *Surrealism*, Herbert Read, ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 1936) 95-116. In a more recent English translation, the title appears as "Nonnational Boundaries of Surrealism," in *Free Rein*, trans. Michel Parmentier and Jacqueline d'Amboise (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 7-18. In the latter translation, the Surrealist oppositional stance to the threat of growing nationalism in Europe in the 1930s comes across more clearly.

51 Breton, "Nonnational Boundaries of Surrealism," in *Free Rein*, 9. Exhibitors in the London show included America, Austria, Belgium, Czecho-Slovakia, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Italy, Roumania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland; *International Surrealist Exhibition* (London: Women's Painting Society, 1936).

52 Ibid., 7-8, Breton begins by situating the "International Surrealist Exhibition" within the context of the Spanish Civil War and workers' protests in France.

53 In his 1930 *Second Manifesto*, André Breton had called for the occultation of Surrealism as a protective measure against the confusion accompanying public approval.

54 For a discussion of precedents for two openly denunciatory exhibitions organized by the Surrealists, ("Here lies Giorgio de Chirico" in 1928 and "The Truth about the Colonies" in 1931), see Jolles, "Espèces d'espaces surréalistes," 156-164. For recent scholarship on the political dimension of later international Surrealist exhibitions, see Alyce Mahon, *Surrealism and the Politics of Eros, 1938-1968* (New York: Thames and Hudson, Inc., 2005).

55 I have borrowed and adapted the concept of "contact zone" from Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes, Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 6. Pratt's "contact zone" refers to a space of colonial encounter, wherein "peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict." She highlights the interactive, improvisational character of the "contact zone," which I apply to the Surrealist exhibition space, where disparate entities collide to catalytic effect.

56 For an analysis of the Surrealists' ironic use of conventional notions of the national and the international in the *Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme* in 1938, see Herbert, *Paris 1937, Worlds on Exhibition*, 133-134. Only four years later in an international context of heightened conflict, a similar stance can by extension be associated with "First Papers of Surrealism."

57 Amanda Stansell, "Surrealist Racial Politics at the Borders of 'Reason': Whiteness, Primitivism and Négritude," in *Surrealism, Politics and Culture*, eds. Raymond Spiteri and Donald LaCoss (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2003), 111-126. The author analyzes this process at work in a collage by Benjamin Peret, but the common Surrealist practice of juxtaposition she describes can equally be extended to Surrealist display.

58 Both in the press reviews and subsequent histories of avant-garde exhibitions, "First Papers of Surrealism" is often discussed in comparison to Peggy Guggenheim's gallery *Art of This Century*, which opened the following week. See "Inheritors of Chaos," *Time*, November 2, 1942: 47; Edward Alden Jewell, "Gallery Premiere Assists Red Cross," *The New York Times*, October 21, 1942: 22; "The Passing Shows," *Art News* 41, November 1, 1942; Robert Coates, "The Art Galleries, Sixteen Miles of String," *The New Yorker*, October 31, 1942; Bruce Altshuler, *The Avant-Garde in Exhibition: New Art in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1994), 148-155; Tashjian, *Boatload of Madmen*, 215-232; Sawin, *Surrealism in Exile*, 225-236; Alyce Mahon, "Surrealism and World War II," *Surrealism and the Politics of Eros*, 77-88; T.J. Demos, "Duchamp's Labyrinth: First Papers of Surrealism, 1942," *October* 97, Summer 2001: 91-119. This last article contrasts the homeless aesthetic of Duchamp's installation *Miles of String* with Frederick Kiesler's gallery design for *Art of This Century*. While Demos convincingly argues that these avant-garde installations were diametrically opposed in form and effect, his interpretation of Kiesler's design as a materialization of the repressive tensions underlying Surrealism is to my mind problematic. Although a thorough consideration of Demos' claims is beyond the scope of this article, it is worth noting that Duchamp's installation was created in the context of an "official" Surrealist exhibition, whereas Kiesler's was designed as an integrative gallery space to display both Surrealist and abstract artwork from Peggy Guggenheim's collection.

59 *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism*.

- 60 Alfred H. Barr, Jr., "Preface," *Fantastic Art*, 7.
- 61 Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous*, 14.
- 62 Interestingly, Barr had previously drawn parallels between pre-Columbian art and modern art in *American Sources of Modern Art*, held at the Museum of Modern Art in 1933. The absence of non-Western pieces in "Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism" seems all the more puzzling by virtue of the juxtaposition of "primitive" and modern works in the *Cubism and Abstract Art* show, which was the lead-in as well as antithesis of the former. See Mary Anne Staniszewski, *The Power of Display: A History of Exhibition Installations at the Museum of Modern Art* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: MIT Press, 1998), 81.
- 63 Sybil Gordon Kantor, *Alfred H. Barr, Jr. and the Origins of the Museum of Modern Art* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: MIT Press, 2002), 314. On Alfred Barr's curatorial philosophy, see Zalman, "The Vernacular as Vanguard," *Journal of Surrealism and the Americas* Vol. 1 No. 1: 57-58.
- 64 Staniszewski, *The Power of Display*, 136.
- 65 For an account of the changes in the European-American reception of Northwest Coast art, see Aldona Jonaitis, "Creations of Mystics and Philosophers: The White Man's Perceptions of Northwest Coast Indian Art from the 1930s to the Present," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, vol. 5, no. 1, 1981: 1-45.
- 66 W. Jackson Rushing, *Native American Art and the New York Avant-Garde: A History of Cultural Primitivism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 109. In a chapter devoted to institutional exhibitions of Amerindian art, Rushing provides an in-depth analysis of the Museum of Modern Art's *Indian Art of the United States*.
- 67 This was also the case with the fragments and elements of Surrealist collage and assemblage. Elsa Adamowicz similarly discusses the portrait photograph as a nomadic sign in *Surrealist collage in text and image*, 150.
- 68 F.A. Whiting, Jr., "The New World is Still New," *Magazine of Art* 32, November 1939: 613.
- 69 André Breton, "Genesis and Perspective of Surrealism," in *Art of This Century*, Peggy Guggenheim, ed. (New York: Art of This Century, 1942), 13.
- 70 The Surrealists recognized and acknowledged their own compromised Western position regarding primitivism in texts such as "Murderous Humanitarianism." See Stansell, "Surrealist Racial Politics at the Borders of 'Reason,'" 119-120.
- 71 Cowling, "The Eskimos, the American Indians and the Surrealists": 484-485.
- 72 Jonaitis, "Creations of Mystics and Philosophers": 13.
- 73 Nonetheless, Breton was well aware of the neutralizing effect of ethnographic museum display, which he laments in his essay on the Northwest Coast transformation masks: "Il est bien certain que les masques, tels qu'ils s'offrent au regard des visiteurs dans les musées d'ethnologie, ne sont que très exceptionnellement appréhendés et appréciés sous cet angle. Le public ne leur prête qu'une attention distraite, incapable de s'attacher à autre chose qu'aux singularités extérieures les plus frappants..." Breton, "Note sur les masques à transformation," *Œuvres complètes*, 1030-1031.
- 74 "Agonized Humor," *Newsweek*, (October 26, 1942: 76), and Jewell, "Surrealists Open Display Tonight."
- 75 Cowling, "The Eskimos, the American Indians and the Surrealists": 494-497.
- 76 For an elaborately documented analysis of "Surrealism in 1947," see Mahon, "Post-War Paris and 'Surrealism in 1947,'" *Surrealism and the Politics of Eros*, 107-141, and Fabrice Flahutez, *Nouveau monde et nouveau mythe*, 282-298. Flahutez devotes a large part of his book to the impact of American culture (both Native American and popular American culture) on the Surrealists in exile and subsequently on post-war developments in Surrealist thought, visual arts and poetic production, in particular the imbrication of Surrealist interest in Native American culture and European knowledge and belief systems such as esotericism, occultism, alchemy and Charles Fourier's utopian socialist philosophy.
- 77 André Breton, "Before the Curtain," *André Breton: What is Surrealism? Selected Writings*, Franklin Rosemont, ed. (New York: Pathfinder, 2000), 359-361.