

The Surrealist Collage: Where Dreams and Reality Meet
In Collaboration with Timothy Baum
April 25 – June 27, 2025

Di Donna Galleries is pleased to announce *The Surrealist Collage: Where Dreams and Reality Meet*, opening at the gallery's Madison Avenue location on April 25. Organized in collaboration with Timothy Baum—a renowned poet, essayist, collector, and expert in Dada and Surrealism—the exhibition will showcase a significant collection of collages by leading Surrealist artists.

The Surrealist Collage celebrates the evocative power of collage as a unique medium and explores how it embodied both the imagination and ingenuity of the Surrealists. By assembling fragments of printed images, photographs, and other ephemera, they created dreamlike compositions that merged the boundaries between reality and the imagination.

The exhibition features works by Surrealist poets and artists alike, including André Breton, Joseph Cornell, Marcel Duchamp, Nusch Éluard, Paul Éluard, Max Ernst, Georges Hugnet, Valentine Hugo, René Magritte, Man Ray, Joan Miró, Meret Oppenheim, Pablo Picasso, Jindřich Štyrský, Remedios Varo, and others active in the movement.

Dadaism emerged during the turbulent years of World War I, with collage serving as a powerful medium for political and satirical expression in the hands of artists such as Max Ernst, Hannah Höch, Raoul Hausmann, and Kurt Schwitters. The Surrealists expanded upon this foundation, using collage to access the unconscious, conjure poetic visions, and construct fantastical realms. By juxtaposing disparate materials in unexpected ways, they infused their works with magic, mystery, and narrative intrigue, transforming the ordinary into the surreal. These dreamlike compositions illustrate collage as a key means of expressing the Surrealist desire to explore new dimensions of thought and perception.

Two major influences particularly inspired the Surrealists. One was *Les Chants de Maldoror* (1868–69) by Isidore Ducasse, celebrated for its unconventional and transgressive writing, particularly its striking imagery and poetic turns of phrase—most notably: “*beautiful as the chance encounter on a dissecting table of a sewing machine and an umbrella.*” This line epitomized the Surrealist fascination with unexpected juxtapositions and dreamlike absurdity, a theme echoed in Magritte's important 1926 collage—one of the exhibition's highlights—which incorporates a fragment of sheet music transformed into his iconic bowler-hatted figure standing beside a monumental chess piece transforming into a tree. Other examples include André Breton's whimsical transformation of Buster Keaton into a formally attired André Breton and selections from Max Ernst's extraordinary collage-novels.

The second major influence was Sigmund Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), which profoundly shaped the Surrealists' understanding of the unconscious and the symbolic potential of dreams.

Through the deceptively simple yet meticulously crafted medium of collage, the Surrealists conjured worlds teeming with unexpected imagery and boundless surprises. As a catalytic force in art history, collage has continually sparked new artistic expressions and remains vital to contemporary practice.

DI DONNA

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Today, artists use it to deconstruct and reassemble visual culture, challenging narrative, materiality, and meaning in ways that resonate with the Surrealists' radical vision.

The Surrealist Collage: Where Dreams and Reality Meet will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue, which will include an informative text by Timothy Baum.

Exhibition Dates

April 25 – June 27, 2025

Opening Night

Thursday, April 24 | 6-8PM

Monday – Friday | 10AM to 6PM

Select Saturdays | 11AM to 6PM

Di Donna Galleries

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