But Live Here?

Thanks: Surrealism and Anti-fascism

October 15, 2024– March 2, 2025

But Live Here? No Thanks: Surrealism and Anti-fascism

ΕN

Surrealism was a political movement of international reach and internationalist conviction. While it had its origins in art and literature, it far exceeded both. Surrealists declared reality to be insufficient. Their ambition was to radically alter society and reimagine life.

As early as the dawn of the movement in the 1920s, surrealists denounced the European colonialist project. Later they organized against fascists, fought in the Spanish Civil War, called on Wehrmacht soldiers to commit sabotage, were detained in camps and persecuted, escaped Europe, and died in war. They wrote poems, worked on paintings and collective drawings, took photographs, assembled collages, and organized exhibitions—with the goal to disarticulate a supposedly rational language in a supposedly rational world. They refused to grant the "pathetic" imaginary world of daily politics access into their art.

The government and occupation by fascist parties in Europe and throughout the world, as well as the World Wars and colonial wars, shaped Surrealism at the time of its emergence, and forced the lives of its protagonists into unpredictable trajectories. At the same time, these upheavals resulted in remarkable encounters and actions of international solidarity, whose connecting threads ran from Prague to Coyoacán in Mexico City, from Cairo to republican Spain, from Marseille to Fort-de-France on Martinique, from Puerto Rico and Paris to Chicago and back. Surrealist thinking and action, then as today, happened in various places simultaneously. Thus, instead of presenting a didactic, linear narrative, the exhibition is organized into several episodes,

arranged akin to a map. The goal is to make Surrealism visible as the contentious, connected, and politicized movement its protagonists understood it to be.

Within their artistic work, the surrealists insisted on an absolute "freedom" that was to infect the rest of society. The surrealists' understanding stood at odds with Fascist freedom: the freedom to command and obey. For the surrealists, emancipation meant a way of life whose rhythm was not that of wage labor and whose goals were larger than the glorious Nation and bottomless Profit. They bemoaned the stunted imagination of a society for which art and poetry had become eccentric activities. "If anyone comes to tell us that our present has other things on its mind than writing poetry, we'll reply: 'So do we!'," wrote a member of La Main à plume, a group that fought in the Resistance in occupied Paris and secretly published volumes of poetry.

Not least because of this constitutive but open relationship between art and politics, later movements repeatedly invoked Surrealism: as a method that connected quite naturally with emancipatory goals, it was taken up during the 1968 protests and by representatives of the Black Liberation Movement. The exhibition at Lenbachhaus is conceived as a bundling of attempts to revise a still narrowly defined and politically trivialized Surrealist canon. Our goal is to arrive, together with our public, at new answers to the question, "What is Surrealism?"

Paris: Révolution surréaliste?

The first Surrealist group formed around the poet André Breton in Paris in the 1920s. The Surrealists wanted to fundamentally change life and society. This desire arose not least from the traumatic experience of the First World War, which several founding members spent at the front. The utter lack of meaning and the brutality of the war made them question the logic of bourgeois society and its ideals.

They drew on a combination of Marxism and Sigmund Freud's theory of the unconscious to formulate their accusation of capitalist society. They revered chance, spontaneity, and dreams, as well as any method that helped to undermine the alleged rationality of modern thought. To this end, they developed work techniques such as automatic writing (écriture automatique) or cadavres exquis (a joint drawing in which several people participate without knowing what the others are doing). The beginnings of surrealist strategies were literary, but they were soon adopted in the visual arts, photography, film and theater.

From the outset, the group was notable for its political activities. Numerous pamphlets, articles and manifestos provide impressive proof of this. Certain events shaped the political self-understanding of Surrealism in particular: these included the Rif War of the Spanish and French colonial powers in Morocco (1921–1926) and the *Exposition Coloniale* in Paris (1931), which the Surrealists and the Communist Party boycotted. They also organized a counter-exhibition.

The Groupe Octobre, led by Jacques Prévert, saw itself as proletarian and anti-fascist theater troupe and formed the wing of early Surrealism that was more inclined to realpolitik.

The threat of fascism looming in many places in Europe was also evident in the immediate Parisian surroundings: in 1930, a Surrealist group exhibition took place in the same cinema that showed Luis Buñuel's film *L'Âge d'or* (an excerpt is projected here). Fascists vandalized it, damaging works by Yves Tanguy, Salvador Dalí, Max Ernst and Joan Miró.

The capital of colonial France, Paris, was also a meeting place for people from all over the world. Surrealism as well is international, and even in its early days was not exclusive to the Breton circle in Paris: in their surrealist and Marxist journal *Légitime défense*, the editors, a group of students from Martinique, raised the "question of the Antilles;" the *Bulletin international du surréalisme* appeared in four bilingual issues in Prague, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Brussels and London. A group of surrealist "dissidents", many of them ethnographers, formed around the philosopher Georges Bataille.

The political discussions of the Surrealists are reflected in numerous other magazines, from *La Révolution* surréaliste to Surréalisme au service de la révolution (Surrealism in the Service of the Revolution), and there were also collaborations with communist party organs, including the Association des Écrivains et Artistes Révolutionnaires, or A.E.A.R (Association of Revolutionary Writers and Artists).

Specters in Prague

"A specter is haunting Europe ... the specter of fascism," proclaimed the founding manifesto of the Czechoslovak Surrealist Group, Skupina surrealistů v ČSR, in 1934, penned by Vítězslav Nezval. The phrasing was an adaptation of the first sentence of the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848—a central text for the group: While its authors Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx used the "specter of communism" to mockingly allude to the conservative rumors surrounding the emerging communist movement, the specter of fascism in 1930s Europe was all too real.

With the National Socialist's rise to power, Prague had become a center of the anti-fascist avant-garde where exiles such as John Heartfield were active. The Munich Agreement of September 1938 between Nazi Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy and France stipulated that Czechoslovakia cede the Sudetenland to the "German Reich." On October 1, 1938, the Wehrmacht invaded the Sudetenland, followed by the invasion of the rest of Czechoslovakia when Hitler deliberately disregarded the agreement: on March 15, 1939, the Germans took Prague.

Even before this point in time, the Prague Surrealists had closely linked the development of new artistic forms with the battle against capitalism and fascism: While their artistic work largely denied access to the intrusive clamor or current political events, the group members organized themselves in communist and anarchist movements, published anti-fascist anthologies, and discussed the relationship between artistic work and Marxism.

The Surrealist group emerged from the Devětsil movement, which was founded in 1920 and included not only authors and artists but also actors, designers, architects, and photographers. Devětsil sought to engage with popular culture and to establish closer ties between art and literature and the proletarian class, characteristics that also prevailed in the Surrealist group. The Prague Surrealists were initially suspicious of Parisian Surrealism. It was only with Breton's Marxist turn with the *Second Manifesto of Surrealism* in 1929 that closer ties developed with Paris.

During the 1930s, the Skupina surrealistů established a broad sphere of influence through exhibitions and publications. In addition to Toyen, its members included the painter Jindřich Štyrský, Vítězslav Nezval, the psychoanalyst Bohuslav Brouk, the group's chief theorist Karel Teige, and other members from the fields of theater, film, and linguistics. Toyen and Jindřich Štyrský's work in painting was essential to the development of the group's identity: Beginning in the mid-1920s they elaborated a dialectical form of painting in which contradiction such as foreground and background, proximity and distance, volume and hollowness were mediated. In 1938, the photographer and poet Jindřich Heisler joined the Prague group. As a Jew, he was particularly threatened by the German occupation. He created his surreal photographic works during the three and a half years he spent in hiding in Toyen's apartment.

The Spanish Civil War

The Spanish Civil War (1936–39) received extensive media coverage worldwide and inspired great international solidarity. Spain had been a republic since 1931. In 1936, a coup d'état was carried out by monarchist and fascist military forces under the leadership of General Francisco Franco, with the support of Germany, Italy, and Portugal. "The revolution divided Spain into two factions. On the one side were the poorly armed, improvised militias with their socialist ideal. On the other side, Franco was supported by the powerful armies of the modern fascist states" (Eugenio Granell). The POUM (Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista) played a special role; it was the most important left-wing Marxist party during the civil war.

The poets Benjamin Péret, Mary Low and Juan Breá were members of the POUM. Other intellectuals and artists whose works are shown in this exhibition were involved in various ways supporting the Republic: for example, the German art historian Carl Einstein and the artists André Masson and Wifredo Lam. The photographer Kati Horna documented the everyday life of the civilian population and illustrated satirical magazines. In response to the defeat of the Republicans, Max Ernst created his *Angel of Hearth and Home*.

The most famous work is surely Pablo Picasso's *Guernica*, which was dedicated to the eponymous Spanish town that had been destroyed by German and Italian air raids in April 1937. The giant painting was first shown in the Spanish Pavilion at the 1937 World Expo in Paris.

While Germany and the Soviet Union erected ostentatious propaganda buildings, the pavilion of the Spanish Republic stood out for its modern and open appearance. It had been designed by the architects Luis Lacasa and Josep Lluís Sert. A model of his famed building is on view here. In addition to documentary information about the Spanish regions, it contained agitprop and numerous other works of art: Joan Miró designed the mural *El Segador* (Catalan Peasant in Revolt), Alexander Calder designed the *Mercury Fountain* and Alberto Sánchez designed the surrealist outdoor sculpture *El pueblo español tiene un camino que conduce a una estrella* (The Spanish People Have a Way That Leads to a Star). Miró and Picasso designed prints that were sold for the benefit of the Republic.

The films *Aidez l'Espagne* (Help Spain) by Pere Portabella, named after the eponymous print by Miró, and *Guernica* by Alain Resnais represent two different aesthetic approaches. Both intercut footage from the Spanish Civil War with artworks by Picasso and Miró respectively: While *Guernica* is accompanied by Paul Éluard's poetry to dramatic effect, Portabella's film is more documentary and agitational in style.

Rumpus in Paris

"Documents, not dreams. De Sade, not Marx."

This provocative formula was used by the philosopher George Bataille to describe the difference between his ideas and the Surrealism of André Breton. Bataille considered the people in Breton's circle to be "emmerdeurs idéalistes" (idealistic nuisances). He and his fellow campaigners countered this idealism of lofty ideas with a so-called "lower materialism." An example of this is Jacques-André Boiffard's photograph of a toe that is much too close—the opposite of the idealistic head.

Breton's highhandedness, which earned him the sobriquet "Pope" of Surrealism, was the subject of the pamphlet *Un Cadavre* (A Corpse). It appeared in 1930 and shows Breton wearing a crown of thorns.

Documents was the name of the journal published by the group around Bataille and the German art historian Carl Einstein between 1929 and 1931. The ethnologist Michel Leiris described the journal as a "war machine against preconceived opinions and ideas." The Documents group was essentially composed of two different Parisian circles: the circle around the Bibliothèque nationale, where Bataille worked as a librarian, and a second circle consisting of ethnologists, most of whom were associated with the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro (renamed the Musée de l'Homme in 1937). In their texts, they reversed habitual patterns: They posited the objects of European culture as foreign, while rejecting the commonplace exoticization of artifacts from other areas of the world.

Carl Einstein, an expert of Cubism, wrote art criticism for *Documents*, in which he examined what a revolutionary form could be. He saw it realized in the work

of Paul Klee, to whom he devoted an entire chapter in his volume on 20th-Century Art (Propyläen Kunstgeschichte, 1931). In Klee's quasi-magical painting, he saw "new figures drilling into reality" and recognized a "new formation of reality." Einstein's break with Surrealism was marked by the text Fabrication of Fictions, a reckoning with "the intellectuals" and the "artists." As soon as he had finished, Einstein moved to Spain in 1936 to fight on the Republican side.

A dispute over direction that led to further breaches in the Surrealist movement concerned the relationship to Stalinism. The Moscow show trials (1936-38) marked the beginning of the Great Terror: High-ranking officials of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks) and the entire leadership of the October Revolution were sentenced to death or forced labor for alleged subversive activities. Paul Éluard and Louis Aragon, important intellectuals of the anti-fascist resistance in France, remained loyal to the Soviet line. This led to a break with most of the Surrealists. A few years earlier, during the so-called Aragon Affair, the Surrealists had still defended the poet: Aragon was facing a five-year prison sentence for his poem Front Rouge (Red Front), published in 1931, which was said to have called for the murder of police officers and the refusal of orders by soldiers.

Disagreements divided and united a wide range of groups within the Surrealist movement, even across generational lines. The pamphlet *Nom de dieu!* by the poetry and resistance group La Main à plume railed against Éluard for his close ties to the Communist Party, condemned Bataille's as well as Ubac's alleged mysticism.

But Live Here? No Thanks: The German Void—Part 1

The National Socialists seized power on January 30, 1933. Hitler became Reich Chancellor, and the NSDAP (National Socialist German Workers' Party) was the only party permitted in Germany. The art policy of the "Third Reich" radically rejected modernism and presented it as a manifestation of degeneration. Jewish and left-wing artists, some of whom had already emigrated, were defamed and persecuted in particular. The touring exhibition *Degenerate Art* began in Munich in 1937, and was shown simultaneously to the national socialist *Great German Art Exhibition* in the neighboring "Haus der Deutschen Kunst."

With our exhibition positing an inherently political Surrealism, the question arises as to the possibilities for its existence in Germany. Due to the (art) political situation, most of the Surrealists who were dedicated leftists and anti-fascists had to leave the country. We therefore speak of a surrealist void in Nazi Germany. An open and consistent continuation of surrealist practices possible only in exile, and even there under difficult conditions.

Among the artists who lived in France for a time were Max Ernst, Wols, Hans Bellmer, Heinz Lohmar, Wolfgang Paalen, John Heartfield, Erwin Blumenfeld, and Kati Horna.

In his texts, the Berlin critic Paul Westheim vehemently protested against the fascist distortion and defamation of modern art. In Paris, he was involved in publishing for the Freier Künstlerbund (Free Artists' Association) This was the most important organization of émigré visual artists in the 1930s; it saw itself as a non-partisan organization fighting against National Socialist cultural policy worldwide.

Many of the emigrated artists were interned as enemy aliens after the German invasion of France in the summer of 1940. The men's internment camp at Les Milles, near Aix-en-Provence, is a pivotal point in this episode. Max Ernst, Hans Bellmer and Wols, among others, found themselves in the disused brick factory; Lion Feuchtwanger wrote about his time in the camp. During and after their internment, the artists created drawings in which they incorporated the striking brick structure of the camp building. Wols, who was not able to take photographs in the camp, began to draw here for the first time.

But Live Here? No Thanks: The German Void—Part 2

The Egyptian surrealist group Art et Liberté was founded in 1938 with the manifesto "Vive l'art dégénéré" (Long Live Degenerate Art) written by George Henein. They appropriated the term "degenerate" as a distinction and thus showed solidarity with internationally persecuted artists and intellectuals. The heterogeneous group, with connections to dozens of Arab, African and European countries, in addition to Henein included Amy Nimr, Lee Miller and Roland Penrose, among others.

In 1940–1941, Miller documented "The Blitz," the German air raids on Great Britain. From 1944 to 1945, she accompanied the U.S. military through northern France and Germany, photographing the Allied invasion and the liberation of Germany. Accredited through American *Vogue*, she was one of the few female war correspondents allowed to cover the war. The famous photographs

by Lee Miller and David E. Scherman in the bathroom of Hitler's Munich apartment were taken in the night after they had visited the recently liberated Dachau concentration camp.

A surrealist cabaret founded in Berlin in 1949 was called "Die Badewanne" (The Bathtub). In the immediate post-war era, the group, with its anti-fascist self-image, focused on French Surrealism in particular. The participants included poets, painters, dancers, and musicians. All art forms were granted equal weight: paintings by Paul Klee, Joan Miró and Pablo Picasso were used as stage sets and brought to life with dance, while poems by Paul Éluard or André Breton were staged and accompanied by music. The evenings of collective improvisation were celebrated for their anarchic charm.

Transit Marseille → Martinique

In his travelogue Tristes Tropiques, French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss describes his escape from Europe on a ship that left Marseille for Martinique in the Lesser Antilles in 1941. The Cuban painter Wifredo Lam is known to have fled there as well; after setting sail from Marseille writer Anna Seghers took notes for her novel Transit (1944) focusing on the experience of impossible bureaucracy and imposed exile. It turns out that all three traveled together and in good company: On March 24, 1941, the converted freighter Capitaine Paul-Lemerle left Marseille. Also on board were André Breton and Jacqueline Lamba Breton, the left-wing revolutionary and writer Victor Serge, the photographer Germaine Krull, who captured the crossing in photographs, and hundreds of other people. The rescue ship was provided by the Emergency Rescue Committee (ERC) and its local director, Varian Fry. A photograph by Dyno Lowenstein, a young man from Berlin who was fleeing from the Nazis with his mother, shows the arrival in Martinique (visible in the projection and the documentation on the wall).

This journey was preceded by some of the ship's passengers at the Villa Air Bel, an unheated mansion with a garden in Marseille. Other Surrealists also came and stayed here, such as Max Ernst, who had recently been released from the Les Milles internment camp and exhibited his paintings in the trees in the garden (allegedly because Breton would not let him into the villa). Also among them were Remedios Varo and Óscar Domínguez, who had fled Francoist Spain via Paris, and the Jewish-Romanian painters Jacques Hérold and Victor Brauner. All of them were waiting

for the numerous documents they needed to escape: Only once departure had been approved, each country that had to be passed had granted transit, and a visa for the destination country had been obtained, could the departure take place. And even then, people were kept from boarding because of their political orientation or because of prior detainment in a camp. Most countries in the world refused to host refugees. The Evian Conference in July 1938 marked the culmination of a consistent refusal by the international community to respond to the life-threatening reality of people persecuted in Nazi Germany, and the fascist countries of Europe. Accordingly, the process of leaving the country was lengthy and ac- companied by fear, if not impossible. While waiting in "Château Espère-Visa" (Château Visa Hope), as Victor Serge christened the villa, the group entertained itself with collaborative drawings, the so-called cadavres exquis, or "exquisite corpses." Some of the artists also designed the Jeu de Marseille, a set of 54 playing cards. Victor Brauner and Jacques Hérold were involved in the collaborative drawings. However, as Jews from Romania, they did not receive a visa and went into hiding in France.

The episode *Transit Marseille* → *Martinique* shows works and documents from this period: drawings, photos, small paintings, and literary texts that originated from this shared experience. The encounter in Martinique with the writers Aimé and Suzanne Césaire, who published the surrealist magazine *Tropiques*, is the subject of the eponymous episode in the exhibition.

Tropiques

The magazine *Tropiques* (1941–45), founded in Martinique, is an outstanding document of anti-colonial and anti-fascist cooperation. Important thinkers of "Négritude" (the literary-philosophical movement that advocates black self-assertion in Africa and the diaspora) collaborated on it. They developed an autonomous surrealist approach that engaged in critical dialogue with the former "center" of the movement, Paris, in poetic and essayistic texts. They celebrated surrealist strategies as an international language that could be applied in many contexts. In Martinique, Surrealism became the weapon of choice against the authoritarian Vichy government, whose policies were rigorously implemented by the High commissioner Georges Robert.

Suzanne Césaire (née Roussi) wrote only seven texts during her lifetime, but they conveyed the magazine's program in impressive language ("1943: Le Surréalisme et nous"). The magazine saw itself as the organ of an international movement emanating from the Antilles. Not least, Surrealism was supposed to overcome reactionary thought patterns and enable new connections worldwide. In this capacity, *Tropiques* was a sequel of the magazine *Légitime défense*, which had been founded in 1932, and referred to Marxism and Surrealism from a Martinican perspective. *Tropiques'* disguise as an unassuming literary magazine did not last long, leading to direct confrontations with the censorship authorities ("Réponse de Tropiques").

All refugees from France were held in an internment camp for four weeks. Many of them later entered into contact with the editorial team of *Tropiques*. Apart from Suzanne Césaire and Aime Césaire, the team included René Ménil, Lucie Thésée, Aristide Maugée, Georges Gratiant and Étienne Léro.

A few weeks later, André Masson arrived in Martinique as well. He began on a series of mythological paintings with titles such as *Antilles* or *Pythie* (Pythia – the Oracle of Delphi).

For Lam, the exchange with the Césaires was a further step towards the conception of a specific "tropical," syncretic Afro-Caribbean painting, that fused a wide range of visual idioms into a unique formal language. Like the editorial team of *Tropiques* he posited a philosophy of contacts. This favored a mutual permeation and transformation of cultures over a myth of cultural clarity, or worse, such notions as "purity."

A work that speaks to the long-lasting friendship of Lam and Aimé Césaire is *Annonciation*, a series of prints. Césaire responded to these images by way of poems. By then Aimé Césaire had already published his key work *Discours sur le colonialism* (Discourse on Colonialism, 1950). He is one of the most influential thinkers of anticolonialism.

La Main à plume: Poetry + Resistance

France was occupied by the Wehrmacht between 1940 and 1944 and initially divided into two zones: a zone occupée (northern zone) under German control and a zone libre (free zone) in the south of France that collaborated with the Germans under Marshal Philippe Pétain (Vichy France). From 1942, the south of France was also administered by the Nazis; it is referred to as the zone sud (southern zone).

In this historical situation, a new surrealist group, La Main à plume, was formed. Unlike many Surrealists of the older generation, they stayed in France and joined the armed struggle of the Resistance. The founding members had been politically socialized in leftwing circles and the majority of them were influenced by Trotskyism (the internationalist current of Marxism-Leninism shaped by Leon Trotsky, which opposed Stalinism). They wanted to combine these Trotskyist attitudes with a renewed Surrealism. The group was heterogeneous, with a high number of refugees (for example from Spain and Romania), some of them Jewish, and most of them only in their 20s.

Their approach forced them to live underground: they hid each other in private apartments in Paris and in the south, forged papers and earned money by copying paintings. The group named itself after an Arthur Rimbaud verse that questions the social division of labor between writing and manual labor (La Main à plume stood for "the leading" or "writing hand"). The members wrote poems that were not shaped by political circumstances and experimented with various artistic approaches to renew surrealist painting. To escape censorship, their publications appeared under different names. They often compiled collectively written poems, philosophical articles, and polemical discussions with the church, the Vichy government, and the French Communist Party (PCF).

Despite its demand for the autonomy of poetry, La Main à plume saw its work as resistance. Its publications circulated in political networks and were intended to function like leaflets, distributing surrealist poetry instead of propaganda. The members secretly left politically more explicit writings in church pews, in telephone books or between toilet paper rolls, similar to Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore's "Paper Bullets."

The majority of the members were active in political networks and various resistance organizations. Acts of sabotage, wiretapping, organizing escape routes, and founding an armed resistance unit near Fontainebleau came at a high price: many lost their lives in the antifascist struggle, while others were deported and murdered in concentration and extermination camps.

Paper Bullets: Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore

The partners Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore (birth names Lucy Schwob and Suzanne Malherbe) hosted an artistic salon in Paris in the 1920s and 1930s and were part of the Surrealist circle.

Claude Cahun was a writer who also took photographs and appeared in plays. Instead of identifying as male or female, they used neutral pronouns and played a wide range of roles in their self-portraits. Marcel Moore worked as an artist and graphic designer, including for the fashion industry. She assisted Cahun with the photography; together they created the photomontages for the 240-page book *Aveux non avenus* (Unavowed Confessions), which was published in 1930 after 10 years of work. It subverted the conventions of traditional autobiography using surrealist methods and contained kaleidoscopic illustrations, aphorisms and poetic texts.

In 1932, they both joined the Association des Écrivains et Artistes Révolutionnaires (A.E.A.R), founded on the Soviet model; in 1935, Cahun co-founded Contre-Attaque, a group of anti-Stalinist communists, surrealists, and political allies outside the orbit of the French Communist Party (PCF).

As a surrealist artist, Jew, communist and openly living in a lesbian relationship, Cahun was a literal provocation to the reactionary and fascist view of humanity. In their anti-fascist texts, Cahun pleaded for the freedom of poetry and art and for artistic resistance against all forms of oppression. It is therefore fitting that in 1939 Cahun became a member of the short-lived International Federation of Independent Revolutionary Art (F.I.A.R.I.), which André Breton had founded with Leon Trotsky.

From 1937, Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore lived on the small Channel Island of Jersey. When the German army occupied the Channel Islands, the two of them secretly distributed anti-fascist propaganda: messages written in German and signed as "soldier(s) without name." These were intended to demoralize German soldiers. Cahun and Moore were interned for their political activities and sentenced to death. The end of the war and the liberation of the Channel Islands prevented the execution of the sentence.

A self-portrait of Cahun from this period refers to the triumph over National Socialism: Cahun bites on a medal of the imperial eagle with a swastika.

Exiles

After the German occupation of France in the summer of 1940, it became increasingly difficult to obtain exit visas. Between 1940 and 1942, the Mexican consul general in Marseille, Gilberto Bosques, issued visas for his home country to around 40,000 people in Marseille (see also the episode *Transit: Marseille → Martinique*). Mexico City thus became an important center for exiled artists, revolutionaries, and writers. Among them were the authors Anna Seghers, Victor Serge, and Paul Westheim, the artists Leonora Carrington, Remedios Varo, and Wolfgang Paalen, and the photographer Kati Horna. They lived and worked in Mexico in the following years; many stayed well beyond the Second World War and often until the end of their lives.

Exile led to many places. For André Breton, Jacqueline Lamba and André Masson, the route went from Martinique to New York; the Cuban Wifredo Lam, who lived in France, fled back to Cuba via Martinique and settled in Europe again after the Second World War. The life of the musician and painter Eugenio Granell was an odyssey: a Spaniard and Republican fighter in the Civil War, he went to Paris after the defeat, then via Marseille to Santo Domingo, Guatemala, and Puerto Rico, finally to New York, before returning to Spain in 1985.

Manuel Álvarez Bravo's photographs are among the earliest works of the episode. His everyday shots often have surreal echoes, showing workers, political events and the art scene. In 1938, he documented a meeting of Leon Trotsky, André Breton, and Diego Rivera: Mexico was a destination for revolutionaries. In 1938, the socialist president Lázaro Cárdenas had nationalized the country's powerful petroleum industry and implemented a land reform that provided land expropriated from large landowners to cooperative collectives.

Breton and his wife Jacqueline Lamba had traveled to Mexico City at the invitation of Trotsky, who was seeking protection from the Stalinist secret police. They stayed in the hospitable home of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera in the Coyoacán district, the Casa Azul. Trotsky and Breton co-authored a manifesto that led to the founding of the F.I.A.R.I. (International Federation of Independent Revolutionary Art). The aim was to "unite the revolutionary supporters of art to serve the revolution through the means of art and to defend the freedom of art itself against the usurpers of the revolution." Since it was a manifesto that posed the question of art, Trotsky had the painter Rivera sign it in his place. Many Surrealists also joined the F.I.A.R.I. association.

Le Grand tableau antifasciste collectif

The Grand tableau antifasciste collectif (Great Collective Anti-Fascist Painting) was created in 1960 against the backdrop of a horrific crime: the torture and rape of Djamila Boupacha, an activist of the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN).

France had occupied Algeria in 1830 and declared it a part of France in 1843. Almost a century later, the majority of the Algerian population had French citizenship, but they were denied full French civil rights and the economic advantages of this involuntary affiliation. Protests by the population were violently suppressed by the French army. The long Algerian War of Independence began in 1954 and only ended with Algeria's independence in 1962. Torture and rape were among the brutal methods used by the French military to crush the resistance.

In 1960, French-Tunisian lawyer and feminist Gisèle Halimi took on the defense of Djamila Boupacha, who had con-fessed under torture to having placed a bomb in a café in Algiers that did not detonate. The case attracted

a great deal of attention, partly because Halimi persuaded the well-known socialist intellectual Simone de Beauvoir to publish an article in *Le Monde* that appeared two weeks before the trial. Nevertheless, Boupacha was sentenced to death, however, the Évian Armistice Agreement suspended the sentence.

With the *Grand tableau antifasciste collectif,* the artist and committed anti-colonialist Jean-Jacques Lebel initiated an art project in solidarity with Boupacha and the Algerian struggle for freedom. Together with his artist friends Enrico Baj, Roberto Crippa, Giovanni Dova, Erró and Antonio Recalcati, Lebel created a painting that combines stylistic elements of Surrealism with the collaborative principle of cadavre exquis and a narrative pictorial language. The names of two cities in Algeria appear on the canvas: Sétif (Arabic: سطيف) was the scene of a massacre committed by colonial police, the military, and French settlers against the Algerian population in 1945, and Constantine was one of the first places to be colonized in 1830.

Shortly before the work was first presented in the Anti-Procès 3 exhibition at the Galleria Brera in Milan in June 1961, Lebel collaged a copy of the manifesto of the 121st Declaration on the Right to Refuse Service in the Algerian War onto the surface, which had been signed by 121 intellectuals, artists, and university employees. Several of them were subsequently dismissed from their municipal or state employment, and charges were brought against some of them, such as the anthropologist Michel Leiris. Two weeks after the opening, the Carabinieri, acting on an order from the public prosecutor Luigi Costanza, tore the tableau out of its frame, carelessly folded it up (the damage can still be seen today) and confiscated it at the local police station. The badly damaged work was not returned to the artists until 26 years later.

Ted Joans – Jazz is my religion

Ted Joans, born in Cairo, Illinois in 1928, saw Surrealism as "point of view." When he began his artistic career in the 1950s, the movement was no longer new. Nevertheless, he continued to consider it a weapon: In the everyday anti-racist struggle for survival, Surrealism held the promise of a comprehensive liberation of humanity.

However, he was not uncritical of either the Beat scene, where he was initially active, or of Surrealism: he accused the Beat poets of deriving their hipster methods from Black art forms, while Surrealism, with its pioneering political positions, came off better. However, Ted Joans also had some remarks to make here too: For example, he emphasized the historical achievements of little-known Black surrealists and insisted on the enormous importance of women for the movement. He encouraged the active surrealists in their fight against Eurocentrism and integrated ideas from Malcolm X and the Black Power movement. Thus he further developed Surrealism's inherent potential for transatlantic communication.

He avoided didactic jargon: He recognized authoritarian forms of communication—in art history, in politics and in everyday life—as a crucial problem that could be solved through Surrealism. In his own writing, he took the undogmatic form of the surrealist manifestos

even further by using multiple languages within individual texts (or even sentences). In his *Dies und Das* magazine, created during a DAAD scholarship in Berlin in the early 1980s, he noted the absence of a surrealist attitude in Germany: »Cet magazine a pour but de montrer new points of view and keine Faschismus und Herrenrasse [sic].«

Ted Joans pursued an intensive policy of alliances. He appeared on stage as a jazz poet in many places (with or without musical accompaniment), in Algiers, Tangier, Timbuktu, Amsterdam, Paris, Berlin, and he variously collaborated with the Chicago Surrealist Group, with surrealists and musicians from different generations. He published volumes of poetry, collage novels and magazines, he painted, made films and collages. He can probably boast the longest list of signatories to a cadavre exquis in the movement.

He attributed his ability to make connections to both Surrealism and jazz, which is why he understood them as related. In both, he saw the limitations of isolated lives lifted in favor of shared improvisation.

New Paris by China Miéville

The Last Days of New Paris (2016) by the British writer China Miéville is a novel that focuses on anti-fascist Surrealism and the poetry and resistance group La Main à plume.

The plot unfolds in an alternative, war-torn and Nazioccupied Paris in 1950. After the explosion of a special bomb, the destroyed city is haunted by surrealist manifestations, so-called "Manifs." These are based on a wide variety of surrealist artworks and literary ideas, from Leonora Carrington's bicycle woman to Victor Brauner's wolf tables to a giant cadavre exquis by André Breton, Jacqueline Lamba and Yves Tanguy.

China Miéville has provided us with unpublished chapters from his novel for this fictional episode of the exhibition.

China Miéville himself describes his literary work as weird fiction. According to him, his writing encompasses "elements of Surrealism, an aesthetic of alienation (and strangeness), an interest in political and social backgrounds, and a pleasure in the texture of prose itself." He is also the author of non-fiction books about the October Revolution of 1917 and the *Communist Manifesto*. Since 2015, he has been co-editor of *Salvage*, a "journal of revolutionary art and literature."

The adaptation for the exhibition space was conceived and programmed by media artist Jakob Penca and visual artist Jonathan Penca. The real-time animation is based on the simulation of a network which serves as a structure for images and texts that simultaneously give space to and take space from each other.

Tausend Dank! Thanks a Million!

Paula Anke Kristýna Bejšovcová Heribert Becker Hendrick Berinson Yvonne Brandt

Patrycja de Bieberstein Ilgner

Juliane Bischoff

Jean-Philippe Bourgeno

Victoria Branly Aube Elléouët Breton

Ralf Burmeister
Bernadette Caille

Anna Cairns Melanie Cameron Klaus Ceynowa Ronald H. Cordover Laura Corsiglia

Leslie Curtis
Stephan Dillemuth
Dorota Dolega-Ritter
Stephanie Düsterhöft
Elena Engelbrechter

Kodwo Eshun Krzysztof Fijałkowski

Marcel Fleiss
Simone Förster
Lydia Fuchs
Flo Gaertner

Àngel Garcia Palacios Annabelle Görgen-Lammers

Robin Greeley
Lucas Haberkorn
Cécile Haekens
Florence Half
Dorothe Hamm
Steven Harris

Ariane Herms Veronika Hulíková Christine Hult-Lewis

Lana Hum Rose-Hélène Iché Stephan Janitzky Abdul Kader El Janabi

Michael Kellner

Lena Kiessler
Susanne Klengel
Annette Köppe
Constance Krebs
Eskil Lam
Lilian Landes
Annie Le Brun
Juliette Laffon

Jean-Jacques Lebel
Gregory Leroy
Justin Lieberman
Nadia von Maltzahn
Cara Manes

Anne und Vincent Marbacher

Marie-Pauline Martin Sonia Masson Jordana Mendelson Ara H. Merjian Anne Mierisch China Miéville Ida Morán

Ulrike Mühlschlegel
Sandra Nagel
Léa Nicolas-Teboul
Selima Niggl
Tamara Noir
Galerie Wendi Norris,
San Francisco

Michel Otayek
Didier Ottinger
Sophie Pechhacker
Jakob Penca
Jonathan Penca
Ulrich Pohlmann
Johan Popelard
Lourdes Prades Artigas

Anna Pravdová
Jean-François Rabain
Stephan Rath
Maja Reischl
Michael Richardson

Anja Ritter
Luisa Röhrig
Sylvain Rouillon
Karin Schatke
Martha Schwindling
Farida Selim (Farida Falafel)

Barry Shefner
Ilka Stern
Andreas Strobl
Przemysław Strożek
Charles Stuckey

Silke und Raimund Thomas

Barbara Tlusty

Tocotronic: Rick McPhail, Jan Müller, Dirk von Lowtzow, Arne Zank

Marie-José van de Loo Viktorie Varvařovská Joan Vitòria i Codina Aurélie Voltz Nicola von Velsen Rosa Weis Cécile Zoonens

Impressum Imprint

AUSSTELLUNG / EXHIBITION

Aber hier leben? Nein danke.

Surrealismus + Antifaschismus

Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus und Kunstbau München,
15. Oktober 2024–2. März 2025

But Live Here? No Thanks: Surrealism and Anti-fascism Lenbachhaus Munich, October 15, 2024–March 2, 2025

Kurator*innen / Curators: Stephanie Weber, Adrian Djukić, Karin Althaus

Kuratorischer Mitarbeiter / Assistant Curator: Johannes Michael Stanislaus

Direktor / Director: Matthias Mühling

Geschäftsleiter / Administrative Director: Hans-Peter Schuster

Registrar: Stefan Kaltenbach

Restaurierung / Conservation: Daniel Oggenfuss, Isa Päffgen, Franziska Motz, Chantal Wiertzoch, Franzisca Huber

Fotoatelier / Photography: Simone Gänsheimer, Ernst Jank, Lukas Schramm

Vermittlung / Education: Mona Feyrer, Annabell Lachner, Wen-Ling Chung, Kevin Krykon

Kommunikation / Communication: Claudia Weber, Laura Diel, Beate Lanzinger, Clara Sachs, Jacqueline Seeliger, Lioba Zangenfeind, Malika Ounssi

Museumsdienste / Technical Supervision: Andreas Hofstett, Stefan Terhorst, Ronny Hausmann, Sabine Winzenhöler

Verwaltung: Sabine Kippes, Carmen Weymann, Hayal Cakal, Siegfried Häusler, Birgit Kammerer, Judith Kellermann, Thomas Staska, Zuzana Thuille

Gestaltung / Exhibition Design: Anna Cairns, Flo Gaertner, Marcel Strauß – magma design studio

Gestaltung Wandvitrinen / Design wall showcases: Martha Schwindling

China Miéville's »Manifs«: Jakob Penca, Jonathan Penca

Übersetzung »Leichte Sprache« / Translation "Leichte Sprache": Marie-Lotti Challier

Lektorat / Copy Editing: Susanne Böller, Mona Feyrer, Eva Huttenlauch, Nicholas Maniu

Medienpartner / Media Partner:

arte

Mit freundlicher Unterstützung des Förderverein Lenbachhaus e. V. / With the generous support of Förderverein Lenbachhaus e. V.

TEAM LENBACHHAUS

Direktor / Director: Matthias Mühling

Geschäftsleiter / Administrative Director: Hans-Peter Schuster

Sammlungsleiterinnen / Heads of Collections: Karin Althaus, Eva Huttenlauch, Melanie Vietmeier

Kuratorin für Gegenwartskunst / Curator Contemporary Art: Stephanie Weber

Kuratorin Diskurs und Outreach / Curator Discourse and Outreach: Samira Yildirim

Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin / Associate Curator: Susanne Böller

Provenienzforschung, Sammlungsarchiv / Provenance Research, Collections Archive: Sarah Bock, Franziska Eschenbach, Lisa Kern

Wissenschaftliches Volontariat / Assistant Curators: Nicholas Maniu, Johannes Michael Stanislaus

Bibliothek / Library: Adrian Djukić

Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin, Assistentin des Direktors / Associate Curator, Assistant to the Director: Elisabeth Giers

Bildung und Vermittlung / Education: Mona Feyrer, Annabell Lachner, N.N., Kevin Krykon

Volontariat Bildung und Vermittlung / Trainee Education: Wen-Ling Chung

Registrar*innen / Registrars: Stefan Kaltenbach, Susanne Nolting, Karola Rattner

Restaurierung / Conservation: N.N., Franziska Motz, Daniel Oggenfuss, Isa Päffgen, Franzisca Huber

Volontariat Restaurierung / Trainee Conservation: Chantal Wiertzoch

Kommunikation / Communication: Claudia Weber, Beate Lanzinger, Clara Sachs, Jacqueline Seeliger, Lioba Zangenfeind, Malika Ounssi

Volontariat Kommunikation / Trainee Communication: Laura Diel

Fotoatelier / Photo Studio: Simone Gänsheimer, Ernst Jank, Lukas Schramm

Verwaltung / Administration: Sabine Kippes, Carmen Weymann, Siegfried Häusler, Birgit Kammerer, Judith Kellermann, Thomas Staska, Zuzana Thuille

Nachwuchskraft Verwaltung / Trainee Administration: Hayal Cakal

Museumsdienste / Technical Services: Andreas Hofstett, Ronny Hausmann, Stefan Terhorst, Sabine Winzenhöler