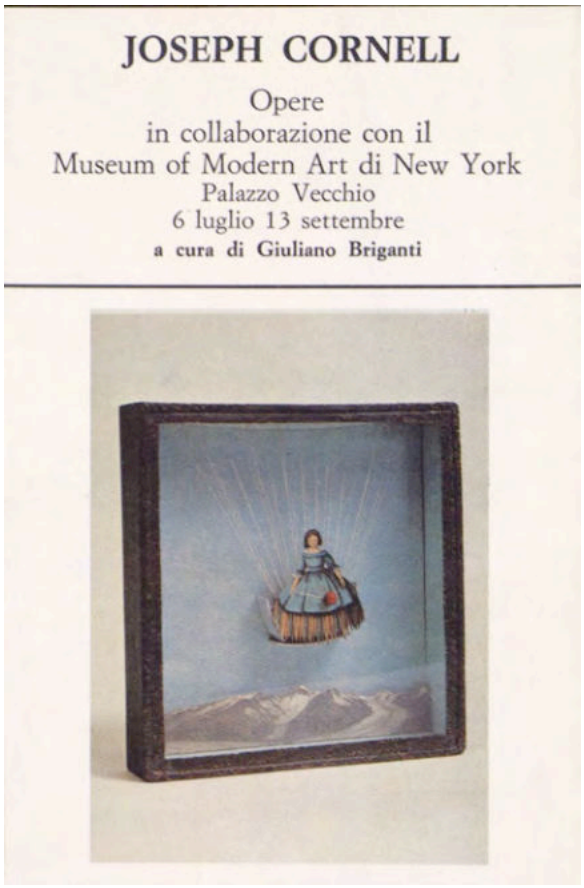
MÉLUSINE

NUMÉRIQUE

n°3



GEOGRAPHIES OF SURREALISM

THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE MOVEMENT: UNITED STATES AND ITALY

ÉDITIONS MÉLUSINE 2021

GEOGRAPHIES OF SURREALISM

THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE MOVEMENT: UNITED STATES AND ITALY

Articles edited by
Alessandro Nigro and Ilaria Schiaffini

Editorial Coordination by
Camilla Froio and Giulia Tulino

MÉLUSINE NUMÉRIQUE

REVUE DE L'APRES
ASSOCIATION POUR LA RECHERCHE ET L'ÉTUDE DU SURRÉALISME
http://melusine-surrealisme.fr/wp/

EDITOR : HENRI BÉHAR
DESIGN : COLOPHON

Cover Illustration : Detail of the brochure of the Joseph Cornell exhibition in Florence (Palazzo Vecchio, 1981).

Table of Contents

Geographies of Surrealism: Introductory Notes
Alessandro NIGRO and Ilaria SCHIAFFINI . . . 7

Part One: Aspects of the American Reception of Surrealism in the Interwar Period

From Dadaism to Surrealism and Back: Hans Richter's Experimental Films between Berlin (1926) and New York (1947)
Carlotta CASTELLANI 11

'Mr. Barr dropped by: he bought F2000 worth of paintings. Fantastic'. The Breton/Éluard/Barr/Matisse Affair of the Summer of 1935
Alice ENSABELLA 25

The Critical Reception of Surrealism in the Anglo-American Little Magazines in Europe: among Elective Affinities, Cultural Misunderstandings and Art Market Issues
Serena TRINCHERO 37

Surrealist Artists at Monroe Wheeler's MoMA '20th Century Portraits' Exhibition (1942-1943)
Valeria ROMANO 51

Clement Greenberg and the Surrealist Question: Politics, Eccentricities, and Misconceptions
Camilla FROIO 61

New York in the Forties: Milton Gendel among the Surrealists in Exile
Barbara DRUDI 75

PART TWO: ASPECTS OF THE ITALIAN RECEPTION OF SURREALISM AND FANTASTIC ART AFTER 1945

SURREALISM IN VENICE AND MILAN. THE CAVALLINO AND NAVIGLIO GALLERIES IN THE 1940S AND 50S: EXHIBITIONS AND PUBLICATIONS
Caterina CAPUTO 87

ENRICO DONATI IN 1950: THREE ITALIAN EXHIBITIONS
Claudio ZAMBIANCHI 101

NEO-ROMANTICISM, FANTASTIC ART AND SURREALISM BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND ITALY: PAVEL TCHELITCHEW IN ROME
Giulia TULINO 111

EGGHEADS: CARLYLE BROWN, PAVEL TCHELITCHEW AND MUTATIONS OF SURREALISM IN POSTWAR ROME
Peter Benson MILLER 123

FROM NEW YORK TO ROME: EUGÈNE BERMAN'S 'JOURNEY TO ITALY' BETWEEN REALITY AND IMAGINATION
Ilaria SCHIAFFINI 141

COLLECTING LEONOR FINI IN 1950S AND 1960S ITALY: NOTES FOR A PORTRAIT OF RENATO WILD
Alessandro NIGRO 153

A FEW NOTES ON JOSEPH CORNELL'S EXHIBITION IN FLORENCE AND HIS CRITICAL RECEPTION IN ITALY
Eva FRANCIOLI 186

AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHIES 197

CLEMENT GREENBERG and the SURREALIST QUESTION: POLITICS, ECCENTRICITIES, and MISCONCEPTIONS

Camilla FROIO

Demythologizing Clement Greenberg

In 1984, Mark Tansey gave birth to one of his most esteemed pictures, an oil on canvas called *The Triumph of the New York School*.[1] Set against the backdrop of an unknown battle, two military divisions are signing a peace treaty: it immediately becomes clear that the group on the right represents the vanquisher, while the one on the left, the vanquished. In his 1992 volume dedicated to Tansey's art works, Arthur Danto praised the 'simple photographic honesty' and the 'flat, descriptive didactic style, suited to communicating visual information' that characterized the painter's production, especially the aforementioned masterpiece.[2] At the same time, as stated by Danto, Tansey has given form to a sort of historical puzzle: the painter's mimetic style and his craftsmanship challenge the viewer, intent on understanding when and where this battle actually took place and, most importantly, who was the enemy.

Yet, as the title highlights, the painting is not what it might seem, i.e. the visual reportage of a historical peace treaty: instead, it is the depiction of the victory of an art movement against another, the success of a critical stance, namely the triumph of 'an idiom'. Guided by a smiling Clement Greenberg, the New York School defeated its enemies, the militia standing on the opposite side, commanded by the signatory of the surrender, André Breton. Beside the two leaders, Tansey carefully portrays the members of each contingent: on the right, close to Greenberg, stands Harold Rosenberg, pleased with the outcome of the battle, and, slightly apart from the group, Jackson Pollock, with a cigarette in his mouth, observes the scene. On the opposite side, near Breton, we can identify Pablo Picasso, portrayed as a fighter pilot in a fur coat, as well as an unsmiling Henri Matisse; on the far left, Salvador Dalí, wearing a flashy uniform, is talking with the other commanders.[3]

The Triumph of the New York School may be interpreted as the triumph of the American art over the European pictorial tradition, seen as the triumph of the 'new' over the 'old': the New Yorkers are equipped with a modern tank while the surrealist contingent still relies on the mounted troops. Clement Greenberg's privileged position remains unquestionable: namely the head of the winning contingent, he doesn't share his pedestal with André Breton. As a matter of fact, the surrealist leader, whose face is hidden, potentially becomes an anonymous figure: it is difficult for the viewer to identify him without the support of a caption or a clue.

[1] See Mark Tansey, *Triumph of the New York School*, oil on canvas, 1984, The Whitney Museum of American Art. Promised gift by Robert M. Kaye. For the reproduction, see Https://bombmagazine.org/articles/two-paintings-39/.

[2] Danto, Arthur (ed.) and Tansey, Mark. *Mark Tansey: Visions and Revisions*, New York: Harry N. Abrams Publishers, 1992, pp. 12-14. The painting is cited as well as reproduced in Jones, Caroline A. *Eyesight Alone. Clement Greenberg's Modernism and the Bureaucratization of the Senses*, Chicago-London: University of Chicago Press, 2005, pp. 354-355.

[3] For the identification of each artist portrayed in the picture, see Danto, *Mark Tansey*, p. 136.

And yet, the painting is far from being a celebration of Greenberg's eminence: instead it represents 'an act of disobedience' and a visual rejection of the critic's pictorial commandments. Still according to Danto, Tansey's work actually is 'a kind of refutation of Greenberghian propositions',[4] as the painter challenges Greenberg's main assumptions about the necessary flatness of the medium by giving the illusion of a tridimensional space, inhabited by the critic himself and his group. In a sort of way, Tansey managed to create a sort of visual paradox: he chose to represent the triumph of the Modernist idiom but, at the same time, he contradicted the content of his painting by using those pictorial devices (i.e. the optical illusion of pictorial depth and the mimetic representation) extraneous to Greenberg's aesthetic vocabulary.

Tansey's painting is particularly successful in addressing a specific issue, that is the question of the notorious, almost legendary, antagonism between Greenberg and the Surrealist art movement, its former representatives and its further legacy. As a matter of fact, one of the most intriguing aspects of *The Triumph of the New York School* is the literal identification of one of the 'sites of the conflict' that would lead to the final isolation (or defeat?) of Greenberg's authoritarian voice during the 1970s and the 1980s.[5]

As a matter of fact, Tansey's picture can be seen as an exemplary representation of the tone and rhetoric of the type of writings addressed to Greenberg between those decades. For instance, the following paragraph of the widely known article by Barbara Cavaliere and Robert C. Hobbs, 'Against a Newer Laocoon' (1977), may be taken as a fitting caption for the painting:

> [m]ost of Greenberg's criticism is prescriptive. He assumes the role of coach. Standing on the sidelines, he urges his favorites on to further feats. Rather than dealing with each painter individually and assessing their paintings in light of their intentions, he programmatically evaluates them according to his own standards and tries to persuade them to follow his own theories.[6]

Around the same years, Annette Cox's volume, *Art-As-Politics: The Abstract Expressionist Avant-Garde and Society* (1982), reinvigorated the critics' debate around Greenberg's supposed prescriptive role. The book addressed what was to become a common topic among the art critics throughout these decades, that is the weight of Greenberg's involvement in 'the strategical promotion' of the New York School during the Cold War era. In the aftermath of the Second World War, by advocating Abstract Expressionism as the symbol of a democratic nation, America's new cultural flag, Greenberg was contributing to the creation of an international image of the U.S. by implicitly differentiating the country from its political and cultural antithesis, Soviet Russia.[7]

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

[5] On this later phase of Greenberg's life, see Rubenfeld, Florence. *Clement Greenberg: A Life*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, pp. 299-306; Jones, *Eyesight Alone*, pp. 347-386; Goldfarb Marquis, Alice. *Art Czar. The Rise and Fall of Clement Greenberg*, Boston: MFA Publications, 2006, pp. 205-233, 234-259.

[6] Cavaliere, Barbara and Hobbs, Robert C. 'Against a Newer Laocoon', *Arts Magazine* 51 (April 1977): p. 115.

[7] See Genter, Robert. *Late Modernism. Art, Culture, and Politics in Cold War America*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010; Fox, Claire F. *Making Art Panamerican. Cultural Policy and the Cold War*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013; Barnishel, Greg. *Cold War Modernists. Art, Literature, and American Cultural Diplomacy*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2015.

During these crucial years, the process of historical revaluation of Greenberg's aesthetics reached its apex. Influenced by the troubled political climate of the 1970s and 1980s, the critics have tended to interpret Greenberg's aesthetic stances mainly through the lens of politics and propaganda. The acknowledgment of the ideological and political ramifications of the critic's later essays soon became one of the primary interests of this new cultural era.[8] Following the leading example of Serge Guilbaut's *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art* (1983), the common tendency had been to consider Greenberg's articles as part of a wider project aimed to support and then to celebrate the new cultural superiority of New York over Paris, the former capital of the avant-garde - in this regard, Greenberg's 'American Type Painting' (1955) naturally became a key essay for the skillful rhetoric here displayed.

In this wide discourse around Greenberg's evolving perspective, the critic's well-known attitude towards Surrealism played a pivotal role. The aforementioned article by Cavaliere-Hobbs particularly emphasized Greenberg's resistance to acknowledge the direct/indirect influence played by the surrealist *émigrés* on the birth of the New York School. The reason of this long-standing attitude was to be found in Greenberg's aims and personal interests: the critic's main concern, according to Cavaliere-Hobbs, had been to trace and then define the peculiar characteristics of a 'purely' American art. According to this view, Rosalind Krauss and Michael Leja stressed Greenberg's seeming reluctance to recognize the residues of primitivism, subjectivity and automatism that characterized the main representatives of the Abstract Expressionism avant-garde.[9] Both Krauss and Leja highlighted how painters as Adolph Gottlieb, Mark Rothko and Jackson Pollock, gradually became the legitimate heirs of the surrealist school abroad, while laying the foundations of the very first American vanguard movement.[10] Acknowledging and outlining the *fil rouge* of a surrealist legacy was far from Greenberg's interests: as Krauss remarked on several occasions, the critic's eye was trained to focus on other qualities that were unrelated to the surrealist agenda, as the painting's optical flatness and its literaliness.[11]

Throughout the decades, what we may define as a 'battleground' mentality of disputation was gradually surrounding the birth and the later developments of Greenberg's aesthetic. Yet, in order to move beyond the limits of one-sided interpretations and standard

[8] About the link between art, criticism and politics in the 1970s and the 1980s, see Frascina, Francis. 'Looking Forward, Looking Back: 1985-1999', in *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate*, (ed.) Francis Frascina, London-New York: Routledge, 2000, pp. 5-9.

[9] About Krauss' reading of Surrealism, see Krauss, Rosalind. ' Photographic Conditions of Surrealism', in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985, pp. 87-118. In addition, see Leja, Michael. *Reframing Abstract Expressionism. Subjectivity and Painting in the 1940s*, New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 1993; Sawin, Martica. *Surrealism in Exile and the Beginning of the New York School*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995; Javault, Patrick and Parsy, Paul Hervé (eds.), *Les Surréalistes en exil et les débuts de l'école de New York* [exhibition catalogue], Strasbourg: Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, 2000.

[10] It is difficult to give account of the vast literature concerning this particular aspect of the New York School. The following essays offer a preliminary but still consistent outlook: Gibson, Ann. 'The Rhetoric of Abstract Expressionism', in *Reading Abstract Expressionism. Context and Critiqu*e, (ed.) Ellen G. Landau, New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 2005, pp. 442-486; Kuspit, Donald B. 'Symbolic Pregnance in Mark Rothko and Clyfford Still', *Ibid*., pp. 361-380; Wolfe, Judith. 'Jungian Aspects of Jackson Pollock's Imagery', *Ibid*., pp. 293-312.

[11] In this regard see Krauss, Rosalind. 'Greenberg on Pollock', in *Pollock and After*, pp. 361-366.

rhetoric, it is necessary to demythologize Greenberg's criticism of Surrealism and to open the way for further reflection: as we have gained distance from the 1970s-1980s critical milieu, the aim of the present paper is to complement existing studies on this particular subject by proposing a contextual interpretation starting from two of Greenberg's most renowned essays, 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch' (fall 1939) and 'Towards a Newer Laocoon' (summer 1940).[12] A major part of Greenberg's assumptions and considerations was deeply rooted in the context of the American reception of Surrealism between the end of the 1930s and the beginning of the 1940s. Both essays are usually related to the political circumstances that surrounded the outbreak of the Second World War: it is impossible to undervalue the influence, albeit indirect, of these events on Greenberg's ideas and general perspective. However, an overview of the critic's relationship with the surrealist painters, and, as we will see, poets, requires to explore the issue from a different angle, which happens to be, in some ways, more personal and biographical.

Between April and May 1939, a young and inexperienced Clement Greenberg was in the throes of his first European experience. His new life abroad, especially the days spent in Paris, here retraced on the basis of archival materials, might offer a different take on the critic's personal attitude towards the French cultural milieu, that native soil that years before had given birth to the surrealist movement.

Greenberg's Journey Across Europe (April-May 1939): the Parisian Days

As the majority of young American intellectuals, Greenberg longed to visit Europe. For several years, the future art critic devoted himself to a kind of 'self-feeding' habit which involved reading essays and novels of the most prominent European writers. The occasion to leave was given by the *Partisan Review*'s editorial board: since winter 1939, with the publication of his very first piece on Bertolt Brecht, Greenberg was acknowledged to be one of the most promising young intellectuals of his generation.[13] A few months later, the editorial board offered him the opportunity to interview Ignazio Silone in person in Switzerland, where the Italian writer had retired in exile.

On April 20th 1939, Greenberg boarded a ship for Plymouth, England, and officially began his journey. A little information comes from the critic's personal correspondence with his dear friend Harold Lazarus: Greenberg sent him one handwritten letter and five postcards from the various cities he visited during the trip - Tintern Abbey, Paris, Avignon then Genoa and finally Rome.[14] Despite its conciseness, the postcard sent from Paris is quite revealing: 'Paris is yes – but there is also a no therein. J'ai rencontré Arp, Éluard,

[12] Greenberg, Clement. 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch', *Partisan Review* 6 (fall 1939): pp. 34-49; *Id*. 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', *Partisan Review* 7 (July-August 1940): pp. 296-310. Reference edition: *Id*. 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch', in *Clement Greenberg. The Collected Essays and Criticism*, (ed.) John O'Brian, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988, I, pp. 5-22; *Id*. 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', *Ibid.*, pp. 23-38. For the French translation: *Id*. 'Avant-garde et kitsch', in *Clement Greenberg. Écrits choisis des années 1940. Art et Culture*, (ed.) Katia Schneller, Paris: Éditions Macula, 2017, pp. 211-229; *Id*. 'Pour un Laocoon plus actuel', *Ibid.*, pp. 64-80.

[13] Greenberg, Clement. 'The Beggar's Opera: After Marx', *Partisan Review* 6 (winter 1939): pp. 120-122.

[14] The postcards are reproduced in Van Horne, Janice (ed.), *Clement Greenberg. The Harold Letters: 1928-1943. The Making of An American Intellectual*, New York: Counterpoint, 2003, p. 202.

Hugnet, Man Ray, Virgil Thomson, etc'.[15] As we may presume, once arrived in Paris, Greenberg had the opportunity to spend time with the Franco-American clique of artists and writers living in the capital. It might be possible that Greenberg made their acquaintance through Sherry Mangan: as he writes in his letter to Lazarus, the young intellectual had become friendly with the well-known Trotskyist journalist during the long crossing of the Atlantic.[16]

Quite surprisingly, Greenberg's personal correspondence with his family is quite rich: the long hand-written letters describe in detail the critic's first journey abroad, his several stop-offs and general impressions.[17] Once arrived in France, Greenberg gave copious details of his very first meeting with an aunt he had never met, and who hosted him in Paris. Unfortunately, the critic reserved very few space to describe his encounters with the Franco-American intellectuals, possibly because he knew his father wouldn't care much about someone named 'Hans Arp' or 'Man Ray'. A second source of information gives more details about Greenberg's stay. During the whole journey through Europe, the young intellectual kept a travel diary, where he took note of the addresses, occasionally phone numbers and hours of departures.[18] Despite its conciseness, the notebook is an invaluable source: it sheds light on this short period of time of Greenberg's life, only a few months before the conclusion and then the publication of 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch'.

In his travel diary, Greenberg took note of his meetings. Except a traditional touristic excursion (one trip to Versailles, a visit to the Tour Eiffel etc.), Greenberg seems to have spent more time with the Franco-American intellectual clique. On Monday he had lunch with Hugnet and the following day an informal *rendezvous* with Jean-Paul Sartre and Man Ray, partly dedicated to the purchase of books. Then, still according to the diary, Greenberg had a second dinner at Mangan's end with other guests including Virgil Thomson. On Friday he left Paris for the countryside: he was invited to Paul Éluard's house, where he spent the whole day with Mangan, Georges Hugnet, Hans Bellmer, Arp and his wife, Sophie Taeuber Arp. After a few days, Greenberg left Paris: he continued his European tour and, before meeting Silone in Switzerland, he visited Avignon and then Italy (Genoa, Florence, Rome and Milan). According to the diary, once he interviewed Silone, he came back to Paris and had lunch with Mangan and Hugnet.

Despite the recurring meetings and dinners, Greenberg's first impressions of the Parisian intellectuals were quite negative. In a postcard sent to his family, he dismissed them with the unflattering epithet of 'crackpots', depicting the group as 'a bunch of eccentrics'. The vitriolic comment accentuated the sense of unfamiliarity and incompatibility between the young American and the French intellectual community. Greenberg immediately found himself uncomfortable with the strangeness and eccentricity of those writers, poets and artists, all gathered together in the French capital. Not even the gift of the volume *Donner à voir,* sent by Éluard himself with the affectionate dedication

[15] Postcard from Clement Greenberg to Harold Lazarus, May 11, 1939, *Ibid*., p. 202.

[16] Letter from Greenberg to Lazarus, April 26, 1939, *Ibid*., p. 201.

[17] Greenberg's letters from Europe are preserved at the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, as part of the critic's personal archive. The folder consists of five letters and nine postcards addressed to Greenberg's family (Brooklyn, New York City). See Clement Greenberg, Letters from Europe, Series I, box 4, folder 2, in Clement Greenberg Papers (1928-1995), GRI. The funding aid is available on line: http://archives2.getty.edu:8082/xtf/view?docId=ead/950085/950085.xml;chunk.id=headerlink;brand=default.

[18] The notebook is a 1935 agenda, still part of the Clement Greenberg Papers: Series II, box 14, folder 7.

'fraternellement', could change Greenberg's opinion: '[i]t's a dull book, however, full of the usual surrealist song and dance'.[19]

Given his opinions on the French group, Greenberg's lack of nostalgia for his Parisian days is not surprising: and in fact, once back in New York, his thoughts turned not to France but to England, with which he had been immediately in tune. 'My heart longs for England more than for France - he wrote in a missive - It's curious: there were in France things too resistant, too inexplicable, diet, logic, lighting, which in England were not. Therefore, while England is much drearier and emptier, its sense is more my own and I'm more comfortable'.[20] With these last words, Greenberg closed a short but still essential chapter of his life, which left him unexpectedly dissatisfied and profoundly disillusioned.

Reframing Greenberg's View of Surrealism: the Birth of a Canonical Narrative

As evidenced by a letter to his family, Greenberg brought the first draft of 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch' with himself and found some time to work on it during his long journey abroad. Actually, he was encouraged to do so by Macdonald: the editor reviewed the paper just a few days before Greenberg's departure, finding it quite promising but still incomplete.[21]

The renowned essay may be regarded as the exemplary product of a particular historical moment: the Second World War was about to break out and, in this particular context, the ideological character of art was constantly reinvigorated by both American and European critics, two simultaneous conditions that gave to the essay its 'militant' overtone. However, 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch' was also enriched by Greenberg's invaluable experience in Paris: the paper was literally written crossing both a geographical and a cultural frontier. As we may presume, in the aftermath of this European parenthesis, some of the young critic's convictions and prejudices were reinforced, others were dismissed – in both ways, Greenberg was in the midst of a process of creation and then formalization of a distinguished aesthetic paradigm, soon to be crystallized as the Modernist idiom.

According to one page of the aforementioned travel diary, Greenberg concentrated his efforts on the proper definition of *kitsch*: he was meditating on the strict connection between *kitsch* commodities and the international market system, especially on how the two affected each other and gave form to such a pervasive counterculture. The rhetorical efficacy of 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch' laid on Greenberg's capacity of entwining two main strands: the political and sociological survey with the analysis of modern cultural representations. The essay interrogated the new conditions of the practices of art and evaluated the influence of the capitalist system on the development of Western culture. Here Greenberg provided a historical explanation to the birth and progression of the avant-garde beginning from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. According to Greenberg's thesis, along with the advancement of capitalism, an antagonistic cultural expression gradually arose and soon began to question the social and political role of the avant-garde. Greenberg chose to name it *kitsch*: the German word identified a new counterculture originated from the confluence of capitalism's representations with the very first forms of

[19] Letter from Greenberg to Lazarus, June 27, 1939, in *Clement Greenberg. The Harold Letters*, p. 203.
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 204.
[21] Letter from Greenberg to Lazarus, April 18, 1939, *Ibid*., p. 200.

populism.[22] Since its beginnings, *kitsch* managed to ride the changing conditions of the modern working class: the first urban drifts and the consequent spread of literacy offered to the masses the illusion of a new era of prosperity and advancement. Under the spell of this delusion, the ex-peasants, now urban citizens, tried to emulate the bourgeois customs and traditions: they began to yearn for amusement and joy fit for their living conditions and economic possibilities – hence the proliferation of *kitsch* commodities, the only form of culture that could satisfy their needs.[23]

Further in the essay, Greenberg made a sharp distinction: he isolated the phenomenon of abstraction in the ivory tower of formalism by separating it from any other visual model of representation. According to the critic, abstract art was defined by its adherence to an aesthetic rule, that is the adherence to the bidimensionality of the medium. Abstract art had always showed a lack of interest in what wasn't directly implicated in the relationship between the plastic elements (i.e. space, color and line). The other non-formal qualities, as mimesis and narration, were extraneous to the abstract artist.

In this early phase of his argument, Greenberg had already developed a systemic framework: if abstract art represented the only idiom that could be regarded as modern and innovative, its counterpart, figuration, instantaneously becomes a synonym for cultural conservatism. Accordingly, Surrealism, considered as one of the epigones of Romanticism, was denied the capacity for formal innovation and self-exploration. Greenberg regarded it as a tendency difficult to categorize not only for its predilection for figuration, but also for its general indifference to the medium's identity, two elements that strictly linked the movement to the context of XIXth century painting. From Greenberg's point of view, the surrealist inclinations towards subject matter had to be interpreted as the clear symptom of a threatening diehard tendency that was paving the way to a renewed form of academicism.[24] One of Surrealism's primary aims was to counterbalance the aesthetic achievements of abstract art:[25] instead of taking inspiration from the organic structure of the medium, a painter like Salvador Dalí was clearly hostile to any idea of flatness and literalness. Cut loose from the physical bi-dimensionality of the canvas, the painter was buoyed by nothing else than the multiple ramifications of his subconscious.

In his very first essay, Greenberg already outlined a set of basic and consequential polarities that would continue to influence his perspective: the juxtaposition of abstract art and Surrealism, which is parallel to a second polarity between avant-garde and *kitsch*. What was suggested by Greenberg was the similarity between the figurative inclination of one side of the surrealist movement, clearly represented by Dalí's pictorial manner, and *kitsch* itself.[26] As carefully emphasized by Katia Schneller, Greenberg's interpretation of the art of the Spanish painter was evidently influenced by a widespread trend shared by the

[22] A comparison between Greenberg's notion of *kitsch* and Walter Benjamin's concept of reproduction is suggested by Jones, *Eyesight Alone*, pp. 364-374.

[23] See T.J. Clark's definition of *kitsch*: Clark, T.J. 'Clement Greenberg's Theory of Art', in *Pollock and After*, p. 77.

[24] '[A] reactionary tendency'. Greenberg, 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch', in *Clement Greenberg. The Collected Essays*, I, p. 9, note 2.

[25] *Ibid*.

[26] A few years later, Greenberg will condemn the surrealist proclivity to the popularization and then to the commercialization of its representations and images, soon to become iconic, in a further essay, 'Surrealist Painting', published in 1944: Greenberg, Clement. 'Surrealist Painting', in *Clement Greenberg. The Collected Essays*, vol. I, pp. 225-231. The essay will be cited again further on.

American critics in the second half of the 1930s. As a matter of fact, it is impossible to undervalue the loud echo of Dalí's majestic pavilion made for the 1939 World Fair in New York: the so-called *Dream of Venus* was described by the American press more as a source of popular and extravagant entertainment rather than as the display of a genuine avant-garde creation.[27] This characterization, which emphasised the eccentricity of Dalí's artworks, was the natural extension of Dalí's persona: since his very first arrival on the U.S. shores, the painter gained a celebrity status, as attested by the renowned 1936 *Time*'s cover. The association of Dalí's art and lifestyle with extravagance, ostentation and fame, was soon to become more than immediate, almost mechanical.

The sideshow that surrounded the new American life of the Spanish painter inevitably informed the collective perception and general expectations of the French movement. In a recent study (2015), Sandra Zalman has dwelt on the natural or prearranged disposition that encouraged the American audience to relate surrealist art to modern popular culture.[28] Alfred H. Barr's landmark exhibition, 'Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism' (9 December 1936 - 17 January 1937), had already strenghtened the simplistic association by making confrontations between the chosen art works and an array of comparative objects of 'Surrealist character', as the famous Walt Disney's cartoon drawings.[29] These miscellaneous representations were addressed to the collective imagination as they embodied popular forms of entertainment and commonly shared visual symbols.[30]

[27] Schneller, Katia. 'Notice à *La peinture surrealiste*', in *Clement Greenberg. Écrits choisis*, p. 122. Apropos of Dalí's 1939 pavillion, see Kachur, Lewis. *Displaying the Marvelous. Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dalí, and Surrealist Exhibition Installations*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001, pp. 104-163; Schaffner, Ingrid. *Salvador Dalí's Dream of Venus. The Surrealist Funhouse from the 1939 World's Fair*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002. About Dalí's experience in the U.S., especially around the articulated debate on the painter's controversial self-promotion abroad, see Lubar, Robert. 'Salvador Dalí in America: The Rise and Fall of an Arch-Surrealist', in *Surrealism USA* [exhibition catalogue], New York: National Academy Museum, 2004, pp. 20-29; Schieder, Martin. 'Surrealist Socialite: Dalí's Portrait Exhibition at the Knoedler Galleries in 1943', in *Networking Surrealism in the USA. Agents, Artists, and the Market*, (eds.) Julia Drost, Fabrice Flahutez, Anne Helmreich *et alii*, Paris: German Center for Art History in Paris, 2019, pp. 195-219.

[28] See Zalman, Sandra. *Consuming Surrealism in American Culture. Dissident Modernism*, Farnham-Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2015, pp. 11-46.

[29] Barr, Alfred H. 'Preface to the Catalogue of the Exhibition', in *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* [exhibition catalogue], (ed.) Alfred H. Barr, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1937, p. 7.

[30] In the same way, the broader category chosen by Barr, 'fantastic', accentuated the false connection between surrealist art and lowbrow culture, seen in a pejorative sense (i.e. strangeness and ridiculousness), which led to a general misinterpretation of the movement in the U.S. As an example, Holger Cahill, in his essay for the 1939 *American Art Today* exhibition catalogue, stressed the 'warmth of fantasy' that distinguished surrealist art. Cahill, Holger. 'American Art Today', in *American Art Today. New York's World Fair 1939* [exhibition catalogue], New York: National Art Society, 1939, p. 27. About how the U.S. commercial culture assimilated the surrealist visual aesthetic by accentuating its more popular aspects, rapidly absorbed by the American media system, see Zalman, *Consuming Surrealism*. A detailed account of the 1936 exhibition, its planning and installation, as well as the reason why it was regarded as a 'serious affair', is provided by Umland, Anne and Kwartler, Talia. 'Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism: 'A Serious Affair'', in *Networking Surrealism in the USA*, pp. 40-76.

Miró and Dalí, or the Surrealist Polarity

Just one year after the publication of 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch', a new essay, 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', made its appearance on the pages of the 1940 summer issue of *Partisan Review*.[31] With this new paper, Greenberg resumed his former considerations around the development of the avant-garde throughout the centuries: he traced its historical trajectory from its very beginnings, passing through the Romantic Revolution, till the advent of abstract art. As Greenberg implied, the advancement of the avant-garde had always been obstructed by a cultural menace, older than *kitsch* itself, namely the tendency to hybridize the visual arts with their verbal counterparts, i.e. poetry and literature. The Romantic movement reinvigorated this long-lived practice: the painter indulged in giving visual form to his imagination and dreams; thus the bi-dimensionality of the medium soon became an obstacle: the artist perceived the flatness of the canvas as a limit to the free expression of his inner self. In order to communicate his genuine feelings to the audience, the Romantic painter concealed the medium and pretended to create a surrogate of reality, filled with delusions and visions. He emulated the poet and the novelist, who had always tried to go beyond the limits dictated by the written page guiding the reader to a non-physical dimension and pretending the nonexistence of the medium. 'Towards a Newer Laocoon' argues already for what was to become the critic's primary concern: the strict separation of the domains of each art according to their mediums of craft. Given this rule, painting is defined by the flatness of the canvas, therefore the artist's aim is to emphasise the bidimensionality of the medium by avoiding the illusion of pictorial depth.

It is from these early essays that Greenberg began to advocate abstract art and to underestimate figurative art: the practice of realism and the involvement of a distinguishable subject matter were to be interpreted as the recognizable symptoms of cultural decadence. As Greenberg states, since the times of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's *Laokoon* (1766), the hybridity between the arts had always represented a rooted tendency, whose birth could be traced back to Horace's ancient simile, known as the motto *ut pictura poësis* (as is painting so is poetry).[32] In modern times, a new art movement was following this path, producing 'a confusion of literature with painting as extreme as any of the past'. Near the end of his 'Laocoon', Greenberg gives voice to his contempt for those art practices of some unnamed 'young orthodox surrealists':

> [b]y 1939 the center of abstract painting had shifted to London, while in Paris the younger generation of French and Spanish painters had reacted against abstract purity and turned back to a confusion of literature with painting as extreme as any of the past. These young orthodox surrealists are not to be identified, however, with such pseudo- or mock surrealists of the previous generation, as Miró, Klee and Arp, whose work, despite its apparent intention, has only contributed to the further deployment of abstract painting pure and simple.[33]

[31] About the essay's main sources, its genesis and editing process, see Froio, Camilla. *Verso un* Laocoonte *modernista: temi, immagini e contesti del* Laocoonte *di Clement Greenberg*, Florence: Angelo Pontecorboli Editore, 2020, pp. 205-300, 301-391.

[32] About the critical reception of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's *Laokoon* in America, see Froio, Camilla. 'La cultura nord-americana e il *Laokoon* di G.E. Lessing: premesse di una fortunata ricezione critica (1840-1874)', *Studi di Memofonte* 24 (2020): pp. 23-44.

[33] Greenberg, Clement. 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', in *Clement Greenberg. The Collected Essays*, I, pp. 36-37.

Only a few months after the publication of the new American 'Laocoon', a careful reader, the Greek poet Nicolas Calas, publicly challenged Greenberg's definition of Surrealism.[34] On the pages of a newly born American magazine inspired by Breton's *Manifesto* and called *View: Through the Eyes of Poets* (then known only as *View*),[35] Calas was openly scathing Greenberg's 'Laocoon'. The poet remembered a meeting where a fellow artist, Kurt Seligmann, tried to educate an unaware and young Greenberg on the various and heterogeneous ramifications of the surrealist movement.

> In Mr. Greenberg's article on art we read that Arp, Klee and Miró are pseudo-surrealists. I would like you readers to know that before my friend the surrealist painter, Kurt Seligmann, told Mr. Greenberg that these three artists used to take part in Surrealist exhibitions, he did not seem to be aware of the fact that the Surrealists could admire any of these painters. By calling them pseudo-surrealists Mr. Greenberg only proves his weakness as a critic of modern art and his total ignorance of the various tendencies in surrealism.[36]

As a matter of fact, Greenberg seemed to have followed Seligman's advice. In the conclusive statement of his 'Laocoon', he implicitly distinguished two main directions: the one represented by Hans Arp, Paul Klee and Joan Miró, and the second one by the so-called 'younger generation of French and Spanish painters'.[37] It is quite unmistakable that in Greenberg's mind the leading artist of this latter group was Dalí. As Martica Sawin stressed in her essay 'Surrealism without Surrealists' (1999), at that time '[f]or most Americans, Surrealism was personified by Salvador Dalí thanks to his visits to the United States in 1936 and 1939 […]. It mattered little to the American public that by 1939 Dalí had been excommunicated by Breton'.[38] It took a while for a part of the American critics to become more aware of the coexistence of heterogeneous tendencies within the surrealist universe. In other words, the idea of the impossibility to reduce the movement to a simple formula was gradually taking hold. On one hand, this renewed familiarity with the surrealist aesthetic brought forth a less one-sided perspective, but on the other, it gave rise to a new and yet still conventional narrative. It rested on the simplistic idea of the existence

[34] On the life and works of Nicolas Calas (born Nikos Kalamaris), see Hoff, Lena. *Nicolas Calas and the Challenge of Surrealism*, Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2014, in part. pp. 169-223.

[35] See Latimer, Tirza True. *Eccentric Modernisms. Making Differences in the History of American Art*, Oakland: University of California Press, 2017, pp. 78-110. For an introduction to the history of *View* as well as a selection of the most notable articles, see Ford, Charles Henri (ed.), *View. Parade of the Avant-Garde, 1940-1947*, New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1992; Dimakopoulou, Stamatina. 'Europe in America. Remapping Broken Cultural Lines: *View* (1940-7) and *VVV* (1942-4)', in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, (eds.) Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, II, pp. 737-758. About those American reviews that, in the 20s and 30s, paved the way to the creation of *View*, see Trinchero, Serena. *Alla ricerca di una nuova identità americana: modernismo e primitivismo nelle riviste statunitensi in Europa (1921-1932*), Florence: Angelo Pontecorboli Editore, 2020.

[36] Calas, Nicolas. 'View Listens', *View: Through the Eyes of Poets* 1 (October 1940): p. 1. On Calas' criticism of Greenberg's essay, including a wider account of the difficult relationship between *View*'s editorial board and *Partisan Review*'s editors, see Froio, *Verso un* Laocoonte *modernista*, pp. 291-300.

[37] Greenberg, 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', p. 36. In his volume dedicated to Miró (1948), Greenberg finally acknowledged the importance of the influence of Surrealism on the painter's move toward abstract art. See Greenberg, Clement. *Joan Miró*, New York: The Quadrangle Press, 1948, pp. 23-28.

[38] See Sawin, Martica. 'Surrealism without Surrealists', in *Surrealism in America During the 1930s and 1940s: Selections from the Penny and Elton Yasuna Collection*, (ed.) William Jeffet, St. Petersberg: Salvador Dalí Museum, 1999, p. 12.

of a polarity which reduced the ramifications of the surrealist art practices to two main directions: the first one generally exemplified by Dalí and the second one by Miró.[39] The two artists were chosen as the leaders of two opposed pictorial schools: the first one known as figurative or illustrational, the second one as abstract; the first one focused on the submerged foundations of the human unconscious, the second one on the formal qualities of the pigment, the line and the canvas.

Greenberg's position seems to reflect a common mindset shared among the majority of the New York art critics of the time. As the 'Laocoon' implies, by 1940 this model of thinking, based on a oversimplified juxtaposition, not only had already entered the American critical vocabulary, but had finally become effective.[40] As an example, in the October 1939 issue of *Parnassus*, John G. Frey made a distinction between two aesthetic directions, both regarded as equal parts of the surrealist discourse on art. He distinguished a first type of Surrealism, whose aesthetic orientation was defined by the 'literary manner' of Dalí, in other words a technique 'of pure literalism, of exact transcription of the personal hallucination'.[41] Its antithesis was represented by a second school, which developed a different type of painting given the label 'plastic lyricism'.[42] Artists such as Arp and Miró successfully exemplified this pictorial tendency: diverging from the first group of surrealists, indifferent to the special qualities of the canvas, they aimed to emphasize its peculiar materiality and physical dimension.

This form of aesthetic discrimination was deeply grounded in Alfred H. Barr's well-known introduction to the 'Fantistic Art, Dada, Surrealism' exhibition catalogue. As already mentioned, the 1936 exhibit provided the basis for the interpretation of Surrealism overseas, setting a standard that had been partly followed by critics as Frey and Greenberg. Barr's introduction did affirm the necessity of distinguishing two main pictorial expressions within the surrealist domain: the first one, characterized by the tendency of creating 'hand-painted dream photographs' with extreme precision, was preferred by painters such as Dalí, Tanguy and Magritte.[43] On the contrary, the second one belonged to 'the tradition of automatic drawing and painting', whose source could be traced back to the pictorial manner of Kandinskij, Klee, and Arp. While Dalí's art was defined by an insistent and rigorous realism, Miró and Masson pointed to a 'complete spontaneity of *technique*', suggesting naturalness and immediacy.[44] This second group, as Barr seems to suggest between the lines, performed a process of creation which was more 'raw' and authentic than the first one, which tended to veil the pictorial surface with fine layers of illusory artifices.

Notwithstanding this general acknowledgment of the innate fluidity of the surrealist art practices, a number of American critics were still considering Surrealism and abstract art as two radically opposed categories. Holger Cahill, the national director of the Federal Art Project, was a representative voice in this regard. On his introductory essay to the

[39] Apropos of the critical reception of Miró in America, see Rose, Barbara (ed.), *Miró in America* [exhibition catalogue], Houston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1982.

[40] About this peculiar aspect of the critical reception of Surrealism in America, see Froio, *Verso un* Laocoonte *modernista*, pp. 283-290, particularly in relation to Greenberg's 'Laocoon'.

[41] Frey, John G. 'Miró and the Surrealists', *Parnassus* 8 (October 1936): p. 13.

[42] *Ibid*.

[43] Barr, Alfred H. 'Introduction to the Catalogue of the Exhibition', in *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism*, p. 11.

[44] *Ibid*., p. 12.

exhibition 'American Art Today' (30 April 1939 – 31 October 1940), Cahill clearly relied on an oversimplified paradigm which was gradually taking shape and significance. According to the critic, if the surrealist painter was implicated in the literal depiction of 'everyday actuality, dream, hallucination, and the unconscious' using 'the driest and the most deliberate academic technique',[45] the abstract artist followed a completely different path. He was concerned with 'the immediate, physical material of art, the painted surface, the carved stone', giving form and substance to the very idea of a 'concrete art expression'.[46]

Towards a New Model of the Avant-Garde

Before 1944, Greenberg hadn't written anything about Surrealism *per se*: all we have are footnotes and brief considerations - in a way, merely fragments. Those are filled with skepticism and several misreadings, following the general attitude that accompanied the American reception of the French movement through the 1930s and the beginning of the 1940s. However, between 1939 and 1944, Greenberg's growing awareness of Surrealism provided the basis for a more open and mature view of its principles and ideas. With a new essay called 'Surrealist Painting', published on the 1944 August issue of *The Nation*,[47] the author left behind the facile generalizations and stereotypical views that characterized the aforementioned remarks.[48] Nevertheless, between 1939 and 1940, Greenberg's criticism was still in the making, but by March 1942 he was already appointed regular art critic for *The Nation*, which guaranteed him a position of influence over the New York art world. In other words, he was no more the young and inexperienced intellectual who visited Paris for the first time in his life and came back with disillusionment and resentment.

In his new 1944 essay, Greenberg distinguished two groups of surrealists according to their respective interpretations of automatism. If the second group, which included Max Ernst, Yves Tanguy, Pierre Roy, René Magritte, Richard Oelze, Leonor Fini and Dalí, regarded automatism only as 'a secondary factor' because the illusory depiction of identifiable figures and scenes was its primary aim;[49] the first one, represented by Arp, Miró, Klee, André Masson and Pablo Picasso, looked at automatism as a formal rule but not as an end in itself. They relied on the effects of automatism but with the avant-gardist intent of abandoning those formal and physical limits 'that prevent the artist from surrendering […] to his medium'.[50] Here the signs of an unprecedented negotiation are clear and detectable: Greenberg not only abandoned his former clichés but also tried to reconcile his idea of the avant-garde, seen as a phenomenon that led the painter to

[45] Cahill, 'American Art Today', p. 27.

[46] *Ibid*.

[47] For a detailed critical analysis of the essay, see Schneller's comment and notes: Schneller, 'Notice à *La peinture surréaliste*', pp. 122-126.

[48] Part of the reason for this changing of perspective was the new political and cultural conditions brought about by the arrivals of Breton and other surrealists by 1941. Apropos of the exile of the surrealist artists and intellectuals in the U.S., see Tashjian, Dickran. *A Boatload of Madmen: Surrealism and the American Avant-Garde, 1920-1950*, New York: Thames and Hudson, 1995; Sawin, *Surrealism in Exile*; Loyer, Emmanuelle. *Paris à New York. Intellectuels et artistes français en exil*, Paris: Hachette-Littératures, 2007; Flahutez, Fabrice. *Nouveau Monde et nouveau mythe. Mutations du surréalisme, de l'exil américain à l' 'Écart Absolu', 1941-1964*, Paris: Les Presses du réel, 2007.

[49] See Greenberg, 'Surrealist Painting', p. 228.

[50] *Ibid*.

emphasize the medium of his own craft, with one of the most representative elements of the surrealist aesthetic horizon, the one that allowed the artists to leave behind the restrictions of the conscious mind. At the base of this partial counter-revision lay a different interpretation of automatism: instead of considering it as a psychic device, Greenberg regarded it as a plastic technique that could open new possibilities in terms of plastic creation alone.[51]

In running its course, Greenberg's view of Surrealism went beyond the Manichean polarity of abstract art-figurativism and overshadowed the simplistic interpretations of the beginnings. Greenberg finally accounted for the impossibility of considering Surrealism as a compact and homogeneous movement: he eventually elaborated new parameters for the definition of the avant-garde, based upon progress instead of conflict.

[51] Greenberg's late reflections on Miró's automatism and the painter's 'exploitation of accidents', are part of the same discourse on the general development of the critic's positions about Surrealism and its conditioning effect on the course of abstract art. In this regard, see Greenberg, *Joan Miró*, p. 26. These observations on Miró, included in the aforementioned 1948 monograph by Greenberg, were partly inspired by the display of one of the painter's latest works, the mural for the Terrace Plaza Hotel in Cincinnati, an oil on canvas shown at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in the same year. Further on, Robert Motherwell and other American artists promoted a formalistic interpretation of automatism which was mostly conditioned by Greenberg's late positions. See Sawin, 'Surrealism without Surrealists', p. 12.

AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHIES

Peter Benson Miller
Independent scholar
peterbensonmiller@gmail.com

An art historian and curator, Peter Benson Miller serves on the advisory board for the Master of Art Program at LUISS Business School and develops international relations for La Quadriennale di Roma. He curated the exhibition *Philip Guston, Roma* and edited *Go Figure! New Perspectives on Philip Guston*. At the American Academy in Rome, where he was Arts Director from 2013-2019, he organized exhibitions with, among others, Yto Barrada, Paolo Gioli, Julie Mehretu, Prabhavathi Meppayil, and Charles Ray.

Caterina Caputo
Università degli Studi di Firenze
caputo.caterina@gmail.com

Caterina Caputo obtained her Art History PhD in a joint programme of the Universities of Florence, Pisa, and Siena. Her research focuses on 20th century art with special emphasis on Surrealist art collecting and market issues. She has been the recipient of various fellowships and awards including a Frick Collection postdoc scholarship (2018) and the Jacqueline Delcourt–Nonkels Prize (2021) for her research on E.L.T. Mesens. Since 2019 she has been External Assistant at the University of Florence, where she also collaborates with the Research-Lab "Gradiva - Centro di studi e ricerche sul surrealismo e sul modernismo".

Carlotta Castellani
Università degli Studi di Firenze
carlotta.castellani@unifi.it

Carlotta Castellani received her PhD in Art History, Literature, and Cultural Studies in a joint programme of the Universities of Florence and Paris IV Sorbonne in 2016. In 2020 she was awarded a fellowship for the research programme "4A Lab: Art Histories, Archaeologies, Anthropologies, Aesthetics", a joint project of Florence Kunsthistorisches Institut and Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz Berlin. Her most recent book is *Una rivista costruttivista nella Berlino anni Venti: "G" di Hans Richter* (2018). She is currently Adjunct Lecturer of Contemporary Art History at the University of Florence.

Barbara Drudi
Accademia di Belle Arti L'Aquila
b.drudi@abaq.it

Barbara Drudi (PhD Università della Tuscia, Viterbo 2014) teaches Contemporary Art at the Accademia di Belle Arti in L'Aquila. Her recent books include: *Afro da Roma a New York,* 2008 (Gli Ori editori Contemporanei); *Arti Visive. La rivista di Ettore Colla 1952-1958,* 2011 (Gli Ori editori Contemporanei); *Milton Gendel Uno scatto lungo un secolo*, 2017 (Quodlibet). She is Advisor to the American Academy in Rome; Advisor to Fondazione Primoli for Gendel Archive, Rome; Member of the Board of Fondazione Toti Scialoja, Roma (1999-2012). She lives and works in Rome.

Alice Ensabella
Université Grenoble Alpes
alice.ensabella@univ-grenoble-alpes.fr

Alice Ensabella is Lecturer of Contemporary Art History at the University of Grenoble. She received her PhD in 2017 (a double degree from Sapienza Università di Roma and Université de Grenoble). Her research and publications focus on the Parisian and American art market in the interwar years with emphasis on Surrealist and Metaphysical art. As an independent curator she recently organized the exhibitions *Giorgio de Chirico, Alberto Savinio. Una mitologia moderna* (Fondazione Magnani-Rocca, 2019) and *Giorgio Morandi. La Collection Magnani-Rocca* (Musée de Grenoble, 2021).

Eva Francioli
Mus.e – Museo Novecento, Firenze
evafrancioli@gmail.com

Eva Francioli earned a PhD in Contemporary Art History from the University of Florence in 2013. Since 2014 she has been working at the Museo Novecento in Florence, where she co-curates and coordinates collective and monographic exhibitions on international and Italian art of the 20th-21st centuries. She has collaborated as an Art History Lecturer with the Marist College – Istituto Lorenzo de' Medici in Florence and is currently External Assistant of History of Art Criticism at the University of Florence. Her publications include the book *Tra arte e utopia. Le riviste costruttiviste «Vešč'/Objet/Gegenstand» e «7 Arts» nell'Europa degli anni Venti* (2019).

Camilla Froio
Università degli Studi di Firenze
camilla.froio@unifi.it

Camilla Froio earned her PhD in Art Criticism in 2020 in a joint program of the Universities of Florence, Pisa, and Siena. In 2018 she was the recipient of the Getty Library Grant from the Getty Research Institute for her doctoral research. Her most recent publications include two books on Clement Greenberg (Pontecorboli, 2018 and 2020) and an essay on the critical reception of G.E. Lessing's *Laokoon* in North America (*Studi di Memofonte*, 2020). She is currently External Assistant of History of Art Criticism at the University of Florence, where she also collaborates with the Research-Lab "Gradiva - Centro di studi e ricerche sul surrealismo e sul modernismo".

Alessandro Nigro
Università degli Studi di Firenze
alessandro.nigro@unifi.it

Alessandro Nigro is Associate Professor of History of Art Criticism at Florence University. His research focuses on the history of art criticism from 18th to 20th century, the avant-gardes, and the genre of portraiture. He was Directeur d'études associé at the Fondation Maison des sciences de l'homme in Paris in 2018. His several publications on Surrealism include «"Au carrefour de la poésie et de la révolution: la critica militante di René Crevel nella Parigi degli anni Venti» (2017) and «"Le muse inquietanti. Maestri del surrealismo" (Turin, 1967): histoire d'une exposition surréaliste mémorable» (in *Le Surréalisme et l'argent*, Heidelberg 2021).

Valeria Romano
Independent scholar
valeria.romano88@gmail.com

After earning a bachelor's degree in Visual Arts (Painting) at Florence Accademia di Belle Arti di Firenze, Valeria Romano continued her art history studies at Florence University where she obtained a Master's degree in 2020. Her research interests focus on 20th century American art. She lives and works in Florence.

Ilaria Schiaffini
Sapienza Università di Roma
ilaria.schiaffini@uniroma1.it

Ilaria Schiaffini earned her PhD at the University of Padua and is Associate Professor of History of Contemporary Art at Sapienza University of Rome, where she is actually director of the Museo Laboratorio di Arte Contemporanea. Her research and publications focus on symbolism and modernism, with special emphasis on Surrealism and Futurism; on the relationships between painting and photography and on photographic archives (see *La Fototeca di Adolfo Venturi alla Sapienza*, Campisano, 2018). She has written extensively on the Roman art gallery L'Obelisco and she recently coedited the book *Irene Brin, Gaspero del Corso e la Galleria l'Obelisco* (Drago, 2018).

Serena Trinchero
Università degli Studi di Firenze
serena.trinchero@unifi.it

Serena Trinchero earned her PhD in Contemporary Art History in a joint programme of the Universities of Florence, Pisa, and Siena in 2020. She has researched extensively on American art magazines and her publications on the subject include the 2020 book *Alla ricerca di una nuova identità americana: modernismo e primitivismo nelle riviste statunitensi in Europa (1921-1932)*. In 2017 she was Visiting Scholar at Syracuse University (NY). Since 2011 she has been collaborating with the main contemporary art centres in Tuscany. She also collaborates with the Research-Lab "Gradiva - Centro di studi e ricerche sul surrealismo e sul modernismo" at Florence University.

Giulia Tulino
Sapienza Università di Roma
tulinogiulia@gmail.com

Giulia Tulino earned her PhD in Contemporary Art History at Sapienza Università di Roma where she is currently External Assistant. Her publications include several essays and articles on 20th century art with emphasis on Surrealism, post-metafisica and Neo-Romanticism between Italy and the United States. Her awards include a 2017 New York CIMA scholarship and the Sapienza University *Premio Esordi* for her book *La Galleria L'Obelisco. Surrealismo e Arte Fantastica (1943-1954)* (2020). From 2015 to 2020 she was in charge of the Jacorossi Collection in Rome, where she lives and works.

Claudio Zambianchi
Sapienza Università di Roma
claudio.zambianchi@uniroma1.it

Claudio Zambianchi (born 1958) earned his PhD at Sapienza University of Rome in 1992 and is Full Professor of 19th to 21st century art at the same university. He has lectured and published extensively

on topics of American, French, British, and Italian art and art criticism of the 19th and 20th century. In 2000 he published a book on Claude Monet's *Water Lilies* (Turin, Masoero), in 2011 he wrote *Arte contemporanea: Dall'Espressionismo Astratto all'arte Pop* (Rome, Carocci), and in 2012 he edited and introduced the Italian edition of Clive Bell's *Art* (Palermo, Aesthetica). He recently coedited the book *Irene Brin, Gaspero del Corso e la Galleria l'Obelisco* (Drago, 2018).

ISBN : 978-2-9568290-0-3