

SURREALISM AND THE EXPLORATION OF THE SUBCONSCIOUS

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Figure 1. André Masson. **Automatic Drawing**. 1924.

Surrealism was an artistic movement created by André Breton, in 1924, influenced by the writings of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, based on the idea that the key to creativity and mental liberation was located in the subconscious and the only way to access it would be by creating without the limits imposed by rationality and moral control. This work aims to explore the procedures that the surrealist painters used to approach the subconscious.

The surrealists borrowed many of the techniques used in psychoanalysis to bring the subconscious to the surface, so they could produce more authentic and powerful art.

The methods they used included:

- **Automatism** - involuntary actions and processes not under the control of the conscious mind used as strategies to access the unconscious mind. The surrealists experimented with automatist techniques like automatic painting and free association of images. [figure 1]
- **Collaborative creation through games such as Exquisite Corpse** - A game in which each participant takes turns writing or drawing on a sheet of paper, folding it to conceal his or her contribution, and then passing it to the next player for a further contribution. [figure 2]
- **Dictating dream sequences and dream depicting** - the Surrealists saw dreams as visual representations of unconscious thoughts and desires. [figure 3]
- **Intuitive walking** - for the surrealists walking was about chance encounters and irrational meetings, an inspiration for their experimental writing and painting.
- **Hypnosis** – the surrealists used hypnosis as a way to become more familiar with the unconscious, sometimes taking part in spiritualistic sessions at which the members would speak, write or draw while under hypnosis.



Figure 2. **Cadavre Exquis**, Yves Tanguy, Joan Miró, Max Morise, Man Ray (Emmanuel Radnitzky). **Nude**. 1926–27.

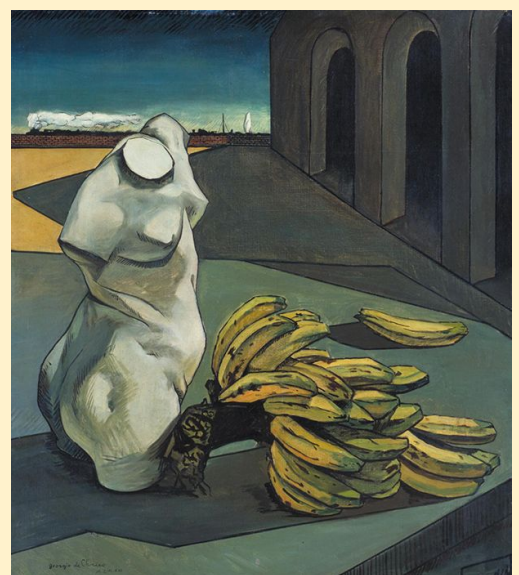


Figure 3. Giorgio de Chirico. **The Uncertainty of the Poet**. 1913.

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