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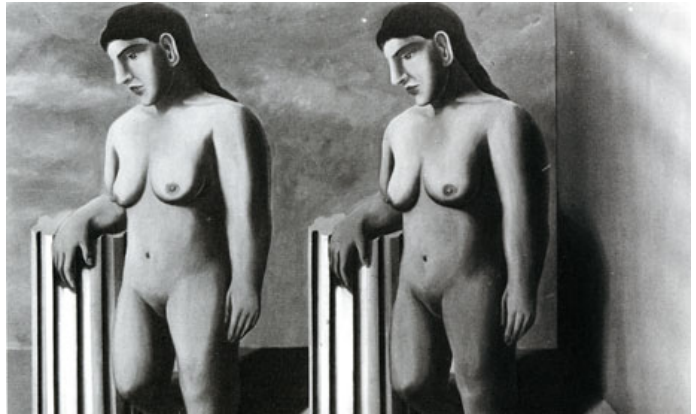
October 3, 2013

## Magritte's missing nudes found hidden under paintings after 80 years

*X-rays reveal parts of The Enchanted Pose, which was thought to have been destroyed, beneath two of the artist's other works*

For more than 80 years, a famous painting by the surrealist master René Magritte was presumed lost or even destroyed. Now it has emerged that the artist himself cut up the canvas and painted over the pieces.

The Enchanted Pose – which depicted two identical female nudes standing side by side – disappeared without trace having received critical acclaim in 1927, shortly before Magritte created his painting of a pipe with the sentence "Ceci n'est pas une pipe." (This is not a pipe).



Photograph of René Magritte's *The Enchanted Pose*, which was listed as 'probably destroyed' in a 1992 study of the artist.

A black-and-white photograph of the "lost" painting from the 1992 definitive study on Magritte – the catalogue raisonné – listed it as "probably destroyed". To the excitement of art experts, x-rays and other imaging techniques have revealed two sections of the painting beneath two other Magrittes.

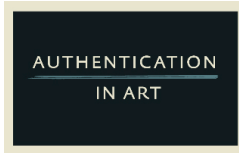
A head and torso from the composition have been found beneath *The Portrait* of 1935, a painting of an eye on a slice of prosciutto, which is part of a collection at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA).

The feet of the nude figures were discovered beneath *The Red Model* of 1935, in which Magritte depicted a pair of feet – from toes to ankles – as surrealist boots. The painting, which is owned by the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, inspired Magritte to paint a second version two years later for Edward James, the eccentric British poet, arts patron and collector of surrealist art, during his five-week stay in London. The other two quarters of *The Enchanted Pose* are now presumed to lie beneath two other Magritte paintings yet to be x-rayed.

The discovery was made while researching paintings for *The Mystery of the Ordinary, 1926-1938*, an important Magritte exhibition which opened this month at MoMA, alongside an accompanying book.

The exhibition and book focus on Magritte's breakthrough surrealist years, beginning in 1926, when he set out to create paintings that would "challenge the real world".

Anne Umland, a MoMA curator, said: "It's very exciting. Here is this Magritte that's been believed to be missing, that was clearly a large and important work for him at one point in time."



Magritte (1898-1967) was a Belgian painter who created some of the 20th century's most extraordinary images, enigmatic compositions that juxtapose unlikely objects, such as bowler hats and apples, in settings that play with the idea of reality and illusion.

It was at his first one-man exhibition at the Galerie Le Centaure in Brussels in 1927 that he showed *The Enchanted Pose*, recalling in 1966 that it was "my first exhibition that truly represented what I consider valuable ... in my work".

It was dramatically different from work he had produced until then as a graphic artist and painter of stylised post-Cubist paintings. Although one critic recorded his pleasure of looking at the painting, it did not sell.

A 1932 letter from the Palais des Beaux-Arts in the city asked Magritte to collect the painting, following its submission for selection.

Michael Duffy, a conservator at MoMA, said it was unusual for such a large painting to have gone missing. It was believed to have measured 114cm by 162cm.

Why Magritte destroyed the painting is unclear. Neo-classical in style, reminiscent of Picasso's nudes of the 1920s, it is not as avant garde as his other paintings.

Umland said: "Maybe he was no longer satisfied with it. Maybe he needed the canvas. Maybe something happened to it while it was stored ... [In] the missing two pieces, it may be that there's another clue to his motivation."

*Magritte: The Mystery of the Ordinary 1926-1938*, edited by Anne Umland, is published by MoMA and distributed in the UK by Thames & Hudson