

A Saturday Symposium, Free and Open to the Public

MAGRITTE: BEYOND THE IMAGE, BENEATH THE PAINT

Scholars and Experts Share Startling New Insights Into the Art
of Rene Magritte, Responding to a Question as Vexing as the Artist's Iconic Images:
"How in the World Did He Manage to Do That?"

When: Saturday, March 1, 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Where: Brown Foundation Performing Arts Theatre, Asia Society Texas Center, Houston



HOUSTON, TX, January 9, 2014—In the course of researching *Magritte: The Mystery of the Ordinary, 1926–1938* (the major traveling exhibition opening at the Menil Collection on February 14) curators, conservators, and art historians made many discoveries about the artist and how he created images that are among the most haunting of the modern era.

Designed to enhance the experience of the exhibition (on view through June 1), the Menil has invited these experts to share their findings in a full-day symposium, whose title conveys its probing nature. ***Magritte: Beyond the Image, Beneath the Paint*** indeed promises to challenge conventional wisdom and deepen our understanding of an artist we think we know.

Held from 10:00 am to 5:30 pm on Saturday, March 1, 2013, at the Brown Foundation Performing Arts Theater of the Asia Society Texas Center, the symposium is free of charge and reservations are not required.

Menil Director Josef Helfenstein – one of three curators of the exhibition, with colleagues from the Museum of Modern Art, New York (MoMA) and the Art Institute of Chicago (AIC) – will introduce the symposium. “In this remarkable exhibition and exciting symposium,” said Helfenstein, “we are proposing an idea that may seem counterintuitive: In order to understand Magritte, it is necessary to look beyond the

striking, memorable images, exploring instead the process of their creation. Once you understand Magritte's painting techniques and his experimental use of materials, you see that for him, how is as important as what. And this leads to a fuller understanding of the artist and his work."

Sarah Whitfield, an independent scholar who edited the seven-volume Magritte catalogue raisonné, will provide a primer to the interdisciplinary group, with conservators, curators, scientists, and engineers venturing beyond the pictorial images. Scientists will reveal Magritte's methods, as revealed through x-radiography and other techniques. Concise lectures will explore Magritte's reputation, connections between the artist and the Menil, and—in recognition of the symposium's host institution—Magritte in Japan.

Among the speakers gathering to share their findings are the conservators who have prepared the paintings for this highly anticipated exhibition: The Menil's Chief Conservator Brad Epley and Assistant Paintings Conservator Katrina Bartlett Rush; MoMA Conservator Michael Duffy; and the AIC's Associate Conservator of Paintings, Allison Langley. They affirm that Magritte's paintings executed between the years 1926-1938 were varied in terms of technical execution. Said Katrina Bartlett Rush: "We were eager for the opportunity to explore this variation alongside our conservation and curatorial colleagues from other intuitions. This type of collaborative study can lead to interesting discoveries, and in the case of Magritte, we were certainly not disappointed."

Joining the conservators is the trio of curators who organized the exhibition: MoMa's Blanchette Hooker Rockefeller Curator of Painting and Sculpture, Anne Umland, and Curatorial Assistant Danielle Johnson; AIC's Gary C. and Frances Comer Curator of Modern Art, Stephanie D'Alessandro; and Menil Assistant Curator Clare Elliott. Two scientists will also shed light, citing parallel research: Maria Kokkori, AIC Conservation Science Fellow, and Don Johnson, J.S. Abercrombie Professor Emeritus of the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department at Rice University.

Janet Yoon of MoMA will speak on Magritte in Japan, an examination of the Japanese Surrealist Movement.

Along with the exhibition that inspired it, the symposium promises to enhance our understanding of an artist whose visions "challenge the real world," as Magritte described his mission.

The Menil Collection gratefully acknowledges the generosity of the Asia Society Texas Center for the use of the Brown Foundation Performing Arts Theater.

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Brown Foundation Performing Arts Theatre, Asia Society Texas Center

1370 Southmore Boulevard, Houston, TX 77003

713-496-9901

Parking and Directions: The Asia Society Texas Center is a five-minute walk from the Museum District METRO Rail Station. [Click here](#) to download a printer-friendly map with directions and parking information or get directions on [Google Maps](#).

Asia Society Texas Center Parking Lot Rates: 1-24 hours: \$4.00

During a 90-minute midday break, symposium guests are welcome to purchase lunch in the Jade Stone Café located inside the Asia Society Texas Center.



**Bank of America is the National Sponsor of
*Magritte: The Mystery of the Ordinary, 1926–1938.***

Image: René Magritte, *La reproduction interdite (Not to be Reproduced)*, 1937. Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam / © Charly Herscovici – ADAGP – ARS, 2014 / Photograph: Studio Tromp, Rotterdam

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