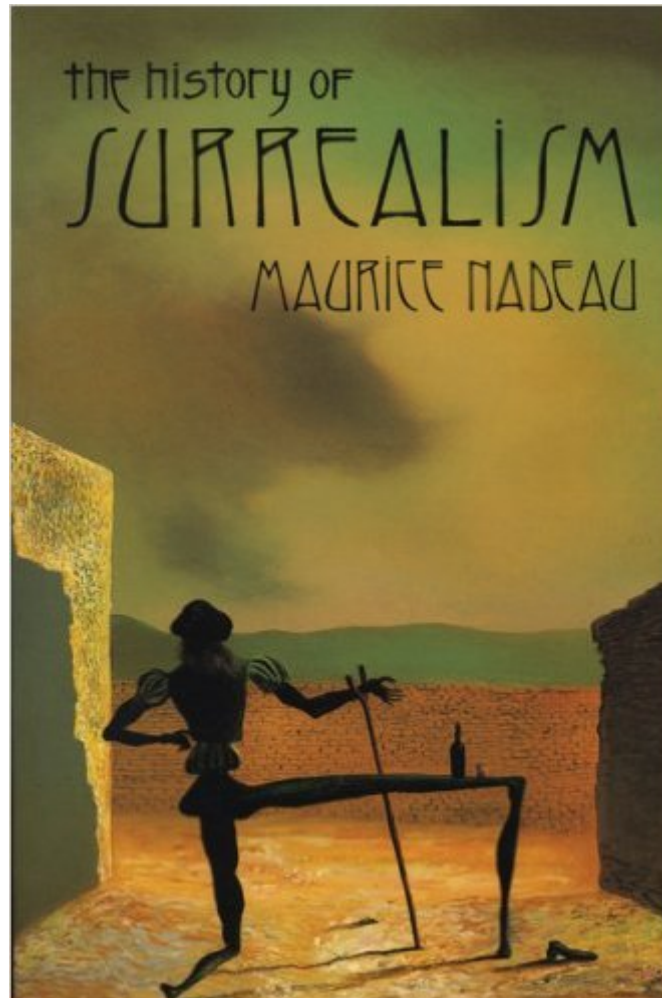


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The History Of Surrealism



Synopsis

"I believe," André Breton said, "in the future resolution of the states of dream and reality--in appearance so contradictory--in a sort of absolute reality, or surrealism." The Surrealist movement, born in the 1920s out of the ferment of Dada, committed to revolution against bourgeois rationalism, and inspired by Freudian exploration of the unconscious, has reverberated more widely and deeply than perhaps any other art movement in our century. Its automatism, biomorphic shapes, visionary mode, and manipulation of found objects mark the work of artists as different as Ernst, Miró, Magritte, and Dalí. Maurice Nadeau's *History of Surrealism*, first published in French in 1944 and in English in 1965, has become a classic. It is both lucid and authoritative--by far the best overall account of this complex movement. Nadeau traces the evolution of Surrealism, bringing to life its many internal debates about politics and art. He relates the movement to its intellectual and artistic environment. And he provides the statements and manifestos of Breton, Aragon, Tzara, and others.

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Customer Reviews

The first chapter in Part One is called *The War*, and next is *The Poets in the War*. The index has the names of some famous authors: Antonin Artaud, Charles Baudelaire, Henri Bergson, Ambrose Bierce, Albert Camus, E. E. Cummings, Albert Einstein, Friedrich Engels, E. M. Forster, Sigmund Freud, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, G. W. F. Hegel, Heraclitus, James Joyce, Franz Kafka, Karl Marx, Henry Miller, Edgar Allan Poe, Ezra Pound, Arthur Rimbaud, Marquis de Sade, Jean-Paul Sartre, Wallace Stevens, Emanuel Swedenborg, Leon Trotsky, Oscar Wilde and William Carlos

Williams. That such people existed was important to the creative thinking that was sorting out what people were up to. I am a fan of Geroges Bataille, the last name at the end of a footnote at the bottom of page 155. Near the beginning of Chapter 12, The Crisis of 1929, which quotes a timely question: What could men still concerned with their status in the world hope for from the surrealist experiment? A letter was sent out asking about activity limited to an individual form, and: to what degree do you believe that a common activity can be continued; of what nature would it be and with whom . . . ? The footnote which mentions Bataille declares: Let us list the names of the persons to whom this letter was sent. Artaud was listed as an expelled surrealist. Leon Trotsky had been exiled. The major sentiment was: "it was the duty of the men who worked for the Revolution to be concerned with the fate of Lenin's comrade." Georges Bataille stated opposition to common action. A meeting turned to "the degree of individual moral qualification." These were people deeply moved by a splendid occasion for scandal.

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