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CLAUDE CAHUN, MARCEL MOORE, AND THE COLLAPSE OF “SURREALIST
PHOTOGRAPHY”

By
Elizabeth Ann Driscoll Smith
B.A., University of Louisville, 2010

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of the
College of Arts and Sciences of the University of Louisville
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Arts
in Art History

Department of Fine Arts
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

May 2016

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A Thesis Approved on

April 15, 2016

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Dr. Jongwoo Jeremy Kim
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DEDICATION

To my grandfather

Robert Driscoll

for teaching me to look

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I extend my sincerest gratitude to my mentor and thesis advisor Dr. Jongwoo Jeremy Kim for his compassion, wisdom, kindness, and guidance. His friendship and intellect have helped me to become not only a more informed scholar, but also a more thoughtful individual. It is rare to be able to compare someone to a beloved fictional character, but I consider him the intellectual incarnation of Albus Dumbledore. I also owe heaps of thanks to my committee members, Dr. John Gibson and Dr. Chris Reitz. Their influence and contributions—whether having spanned nine years nine months, respectively—are immeasurable.

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ABSTRACT

CLAUDE CAHUN, MARCEL MOORE, AND THE COLLAPSE OF “SURREALIST PHOTOGRAPHY”

Elizabeth Ann Driscoll Smith

April 15, 2016

This thesis probes the photographic oeuvre of Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore and their interpretation of Freudian fetishism. Cahun and Moore rework Freud’s theory to disrupt and invalidate various symbols conventionally associated with sexual difference, examining social, fictional, and historical dimensions of gendering and the shift that occurs when their parameters disintegrate. The first section examines the lovers’ portraiture and use of clothing—specifically the androgyny of early-twentieth century Paris fashion—in order to demarcate same-sex gaze, desire, and fetish. The second section covers the four years in which Cahun and Moore’s participation in the Paris Surrealist circles can be traced—from 1933 to 1937. During this time, their construction of “irrational objects,” a term frequently evoked in Cahun’s essay “Beware Domestic Objects,” exhumes the tensions between veiled and unveiled eroticism.

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INTRODUCTION

What is implied when art historians use the term “women Surrealists?” I ask this question to situate the issue of gendered difference within a movement often dismissed as “misogynist or anti-feminist.”¹ In the past two decades, scholars have made attempts to include women within Surrealist discourse. These include *The Beribboned Bomb: The Image of Woman in Male Surrealist Art* (1995) and *Angels of Anarchy: Women Artists and Surrealism* (2009). While these texts and exhibition catalogs establish women as contributors to the Surrealist movement, they do so with a distinct emphasis on their status defined only in relation to their male contemporaries—their ideologies are framed as “response,” not action. These texts attempt to categorize the artwork produced by women, relying on mimicry or on the contrary, “feminine difference,” to render distinctions. In *Angels of Anarchy*, for example, Roger Cardinal’s essay concludes with a tired and problematic notion of gender dichotomy: “the female sensibility is more inclined to envisage the sacred as a plenitude, in contrast to a male prospect of tragic yearning and a desperate vacuum.”² I am troubled by these book titles and their hackneyed and uninformed conclusions, as they subscribe to the idea that there is a biological ethos unique to each sex that can be visually deciphered. It posits that sexual

¹ Rosalind E. Krauss, *Bachelors* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1999), 17.

² Cardinal, “The Imaging of Magic,” in *Angels of Anarchy: Women Artists and Surrealism* (Prestel: New York, 2009), 44.

difference must be determinate and coherent, and that any kind of “declassifying” or “destabilization” of gender binaries could challenge the very core of Surrealist practice and its contemporary understanding. For these reasons, this essay probes the photographic oeuvre of Claude Cahun and her interpretation of Freudian fetishism. Cahun reworks Freud’s theory to disrupt and invalidate various symbols conventionally associated with sexual difference, examining social, fictional, and historical dimensions of gendering and the shift that occurs when their parameters disintegrate.

While the collapse of gendered images structures the analytical framework of this essay, I also rely on Cahun’s embracement of same-sex desire to reexamine her portrait photography; this, I argue, can further challenge contemporary understandings of the heterosexual “gaze” in Surrealist photography. Instead of enacting Lacanian gaze theory—wherein desire is intertwined with lack and anxiety—Cahun’s images were staged in collaboration with her female lover, reversing the dynamics of objectified looking into an act of reciprocal empowerment.³ Cahun’s portraits are often described as self-portraits, but recent scholarship in the field, as represented by Tirza True Latimer, offers historical evidence that her partner and stepsister, Suzanne Malherbe (who would later adopt the male pseudonym, Marcel Moore) was the camera’s operator when Cahun posed as subject. Cahun and Moore’s portraits of one another deflect traditions of the Surrealist gaze and the underlying search for the absent maternal phallus and unfulfilled

³ Tirza True Latimer, *Women Together/Women Apart: Portraits of Lesbian Paris* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 95.

desire.⁴ The couple's eschewing of conventions of photographic portraiture and affirmations of identity—as well as their attempt to uproot systems of gender and sexual difference—must be understood in the context of the modernist history of queering: “Queer is by definition whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant. There is nothing in particular to which it necessarily refers. It is an identity without an essence. ‘Queer,’ then, demarcates not a positivity but a positionality vis-à-vis the normative.”⁵

In Cahun's 1921 text “L'Idée-maîtresse,” she describes her sexuality as “the guiding principle” for her life.⁶ Latimer argues that through these portraits, Cahun's same-sex partnership and use of the photographic medium was a non-literary way to “cite, to repeat, to reconstrue” this representational desire into a “more playful and more legible practice that could be shared with a partner or partners.”⁷ I attempt to resituate Moore as a collaborator of equal conceptual and aesthetic magnitude, but her reluctance in identifying herself within Surrealist circles presents unique difficulties.⁸ The first

⁴ See Michael Hatt and Charlotte Klonk's analysis of Lacan in *Art History: A Critical Introduction to its Methods* (New York: Manchester University Press with Palgrave, 2006), 185-193.

⁵ David M. Halperin, *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 169.

⁶ Latimer, *Women Together/Women Apart*, 68.

⁷ Latimer, *Women Together/Women Apart*, 68.

⁸ Latimer, “Entre Nous: Between Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 12:2 (2006): 199.

section of this essay examines the lovers' portraiture and use of clothing—specifically the androgyny of early-twentieth century Paris fashion—in order to demarcate same-sex gaze, desire, and exploration of Freudian fetishism. In the second section, I refer to Cahun's still-life photographs under single authorship, although Moore's influence can be thought of as concealed within the silhouettes of their androgynous and politicized constructions of selfhood.

CRITICAL RECEPTIONS OF THE ARCHIVE

In 1972, local Jersey collector John Wakeham acquired an extensive lot of Surrealist books and miscellaneous photographs for twenty-one pounds at auction—a fortuitous impulse purchase that would lead to the rediscovery of Cahun and Moore’s photographs.⁹ He had entered the salesroom with a modest strategy: to bid on individual boxes that contained pertinent items of interest. Fate, as it often does, revealed alternate plans. Housed within dilapidated tea chests and cartons, the books and related ephemera had been disturbed during the auction preview—their contents rummaged and pillaged by auction attendees in the hopes they might reveal a “diamond in the rough.” Books were snatched up, quickly flipped through, and then hastily tossed back into other boxes, ultimately shuffling their contents—a pandemonium of overeager collectors and deteriorating books. Among the chaos, scraps of paper and photographs fluttered to the floor. Patrons began to express their concerns, seeking assurance that specific books were in specific chests. The auctioneer—agitated and exhausted from the crowds and cacophony—announced that all ten lots would be sold as a single unit. The auction began, and Wakeham raised his hand to signal a bid. He repeated this motion until the auction’s end. When the gavel sounded its final pound, he retrieved the worn boxes and

⁹ Louise Downie, “Introduction,” in *Don’t Kiss Me: The Art of Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore*, ed. Louise Downie (New York: Aperture in association with the Jersey Heritage Trust, 2006), 7.

carefully collected the strewn images from the gallery floor. Among the recovered papers were three signed drawings by Henri Michaux, the Belgian-born poet and artist and close friend of Cahun and Moore.¹⁰ Encouraged, Wakeham attended another auction a few weeks later, this time placing his bids on a timeworn tea chest full of pots and pans. Underneath this metallic nest of domestic vestige laid an androgynous gilded plaster bust—its pursed lips, robust cheeks, and sockets of piercing eyes made an ironic addendum to the kitchenware lot. In many ways, the misplaced bust resisted categorization; through its disruption of everyday banality, it seemed to mock the pots and pans once used in home ritual. The bust comprised both traditionally masculine and feminine features as its cropped hair was then trendy for both men and women.¹¹

Perhaps it is fitting, then, that the bust's subject had authored an essay entitled "Beware Domestic Objects" in 1926, which challenged the received notions of gender constructs and political homogeneity. From the depths of the dusty tea chests, Wakeham uncovered the bust of Cahun, who had been sculpted by her friend Chana Orloff in 1921 (Figure 1). Three decades before Wakeham's purchase, invading Nazi troops had smashed the sculpture's nose, and then left it to gather dust on the floor of Cahun and her partner's Jersey home. The bust, along with the rest of the couple's household contents, was ransacked and nearly destroyed: their photographs, letters, and artworks were deemed a threat to Nazi Germany's quest for racial, sexual, and artistic homogeneity.

¹⁰ Downie, "Introduction," 8.

¹¹ Laura Doan, *Fashioning Sapphism: The Origins of a Modern English Lesbian Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 102.

Figure 1. Claude Cahun. *Bust of Claude Cahun by Chana Orloff*. 1921. Monochrome print. 11 x 8 cm. Jersey Heritage Trust, JHT/1995/00019/u.

Wakeham had acquired only a small component of the collected books, photographs, household objects, and artworks of Lucy Schwob and Suzanne Malherbe, better known by their pseudonyms Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore, respectively. Stepsisters, lovers, and collaborative artists, the couple had consciously amassed an archive of both their time together and their extended network of friends through letters, photographs, books, and sporadic newspaper clippings. They were arrested and imprisoned on July 25th, 1944, and spent nine months within the walls of Gloucester Street Prison; a majority of that time they were separately kept in solitary confinement.¹² When the two were released in May of 1945, Cahun's health was unstable and only continued to deteriorate during the next nine years. In accordance with her written will, Cahun's estate was passed to Moore on her death in 1954.¹³ After Moore's death in 1972, their personal belongings traversed auction houses and estate sales. The material remnants of their lives were broken up into boxes—miniature archives that constituted a larger body of collected material. These small pockets of ephemera and artworks provided only a select few with mere fragments of their shared life. Wakeham received two components of this expansive collection, including the androgynous bust—he, along with other historians and collectors, would later gift parts of their purchases to the Jersey Heritage Trust, which has since amassed the largest and most expansive collection of their remaining artwork and ephemera.

¹² Claire Follain, "Lucy Schwob and Suzanne Malherbe—*Résistantes*," in *Don't Kiss Me*, 86-93.

¹³ Cahun's will lists Moore as her sole benefactor, but if Moore died, it was stated that their collective estate should be passed to Henri Michaux. Second in line was to be Lilette Richter.

But what constitutes this second-hand archive—this recreation of time and intimate history—and can its presentation of Cahun and Moore as lovers and Surrealist photographers be historically reliable? In 2006, the Jersey Heritage Trust produced a large catalog of Cahun and Moore’s documents; their collaborative photographs, collages, collected images, news clippings, and letters were repurposed and categorized according to historical markers and perceived authorship. Although it serves as a valuable resource, I question its impact on how we understand and unconsciously interpret their partnership, artwork, and engagement with the Paris Surrealists. Too frequently, the lives of queer artists have been “de-queered” through the lens of heteronormativity, or their same-sex relationships and collaborative processes ignored. This is not to imply that gender and sexuality should be the only lenses through which we view queer modernists. But addressing issues of gender, sexuality, and modernity in early twentieth-century Europe can shed light on what has been so overlooked throughout historical texts—those on Surrealism, in particular.

Cahun and Moore documented their collaborative ventures, close bond, and associations with the Paris Surrealists through their collected ephemera. Their biographies, however, remain a source of scrutiny. Specifically, I am interested in how Cahun’s oeuvre and related ephemera has been watered down and individualized, placing her as sole creator while ignoring her partnership with Moore. In addition, their involvement with Breton and the political activism of the 1930s frequently infantilizes Cahun’s leftist behavior, compared to what some historians perceive as the “seriousness”

of the Surrealist anti-fascist organizations.¹⁴ Their use of Freud's theories on fetishism, evident in the veiling/unveiling and hyper-sexualized portraits, is also subverted in favor of biographic hyperbole. Indeed, Locating Moore is often difficult, as she occupied the role of creative director rather than active subject.¹⁵ Some of Moore's drawings are presented in the Jersey Heritage Trust's catalog, in addition to photographs she took after Cahun's death.¹⁶ While the catalog attempts to locate Moore within this existing discourse, Latimer's essay is the only that truly solidifies their intimate relationship and conjunct practice. Latimer contends that applying the term lesbian, however, to describe their partnership might be historically inaccurate, although it can remain a placeholder for "non-normative relationships": "if they had employed the term, *faute de mieux*, they would likely have used it to describe a disposition—'noncooperation with God,' Cahun called it—rather than a categorical identity."¹⁷ Indeed, Moore and Cahun were *résistantes*

¹⁴ Durozoi, *History of the Surrealist Movement*, trans. Allison Anderson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 261-262.

¹⁵ Latimer, "Entre Nous": 198-199.

¹⁶ In the Jersey Heritage Trust's catalog, Moore's drawings are dated between c. 1909-1925—perhaps indicating she began to collaborate with Cahun instead of work individually.

¹⁷ Latimer, "Entre Nous": 200. In 1999, Abigail Solomon-Godeau wrote that she hesitates to categorize the work of Cahun and Moore with "lesbian specificity." She notes, however, that the missing scholarship on Moore (both as Cahun's partner and an illustrator) could be due to art history and criticism's bias against collaborative art practice and/or general lack of historical information. See "The Equivocal 'I': Claude

in every spectrum of their artworks and writings. Latimer has helped effectuate their relationship within historical and social contexts, but the most circulated of Cahun's biographies is a prime example of selective history. François Leperlier has provided a detailed index of the photographer's early life and familial history, but *Claude Cahun* (1992) rejects the artist's same-sex relationship, artistic collaboration, and gender fluidity, ignoring Moore's influence and support. At the time of Leperlier's first text, Cahun and Moore's archival material had just entered the doors of the Jersey Heritage Trust. Through subverting Cahun's queer identity and collaborative method of working, he renders her practice a mere extension of Andre Breton's conceptual and material oeuvre. This essay returns to and reconsiders Cahun and Moore's archive, as it provides a visual and written account of their reorganizing of the standard reading of Freudian fetishism and their brief but substantial role in Surrealist politics of the 1930s.

Although Latimer's research and writings have helped reshape the contemporary scholarship on Cahun and Moore, some scholars still adhere to the generalized and heterosexually-rooted Surrealist scholarship from decades before. Three of Cahun's still-life photographs were recently exhibited in the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden's *Marvelous Objects: Surrealist Sculpture from Paris to New York* (2016)—but

Cahun as Lesbian Subject,” in Claude Cahun, *Heroines*, trans. Norman MacAfee, in *Inverted Odysseys: Claude Cahun, Maya Deren, and Cindy Sherman*, ed. Shelley Rice, exh. cat. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1999), 110-125. Monique Wittig has also argued that “a lesbian is not a woman,” proposing that we think of lesbianism as a refusal to be defined through categorization. See *The Straight Mind and Other Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 13.

the catalog frames her work within the tired context of woman-as-object, or as a woman responding and pushing against the misogyny of her Surrealist peers. Indeed, women *were* often placed on the movement's margins (unless in front of the camera lens, usually fragmented or nude)—but contemporary texts on Surrealist photography also default to these paradigms, rather than work against them. The catalog's essay, "Women as Objects and Exhibitions as Environments," connect Cahun's images of objects to those of Hans Bellmer, Man Ray, and Josef Breitenbach, among others, but her work, along with the sculptures and images of Dora Maar, Valentine Hugo, Meret Oppenheim, and Ruth Bernhard, is presented at the essay's conclusion; not in conjunction with the prevailing themes of Surrealism in the 1930s, but as a misconstrued example of difference. Praising their work for what she perceives as a resistance "against the pervasive male bias of the movement," Valerie Fletcher creates distinctions that only repeat and exacerbate contemporary scholarship's infatuation with women's bodies as site of penis envy and castration anxiety.¹⁸ Indeed, this was a point of exploration for some Surrealists, but not a singular lens through which all artworks can be read, especially those who were not heterosexual. Women included in the catalog for *Marvelous Objects* are similarly contextualized through their relationship—sexual or social—with specific male figures: Maar is placed as Picasso's mistress, and Cahun's series is described as "once owned by Andre Breton."¹⁹ Oppenheim's fur-lined saucer and cup, *Object* (1936), is categorized as

¹⁸ See Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Basic Books/Perseus, 2000).

¹⁹ Valerie J. Fletcher, *Marvelous Objects: Surrealist Sculpture from Paris to New York*, exh. cat. (Prestel Verlag: New York, 2015), 97-99.

“sensual,” “an evocation of love,” and a “protest against the domestic role women were expected to fulfill.”²⁰ Like Cardinal’s essay in *Angels of Anarchy*, Fletcher builds on the framework of opposition to explore women who were producing artwork within the Surrealist circles. Instead of relying on this recent exhibition or Cahun’s problematic biography, this essay utilizes the archival book produced from the lovers’ collection to restructure how we contextualize Cahun’s reading of Freud, still-life images, and the portraits she produced in conjunction with Moore.

While aforementioned texts and exhibition catalogs expand on Cahun’s role within Surrealism, few have offered a critical discourse on her photography. Although it does not mention Cahun’s relationship and collaboration with Moore, Rosalind Krauss’s introduction to her book *Bachelors* (1999) helps situate my argument, as her writing helps contextualize—both historically and contemporarily—Cahun’s still lifes and portraits, and their reliance on Freudian fetishism to decay the line between masculine and feminine. I begin with Krauss for her analysis of Surrealism’s misconceptions, as she locates these specific problems and how they can be traced back to an ignorance of “twentieth century’s history of form.”²¹ Using Georges Bataille’s writings on the concept of *bassesse*, Krauss argues for a “horizontal” approach to modernism, or a dissolvent of the vertical (i.e., rational and civilizing) plane, in order to emphasize society’s animalistic urges.²² Committing to the concept of the horizontal as an operation to destabilize, lower,

²⁰ Fletcher, *Marvelous Objects*, 99.

²¹ Krauss, *Bachelors*, 4.

²² See also Krauss and Yve Alain Bois, “Horizontality,” in *Formless: A User’s Guide* (Cambridge: Zone Books, 2000), 89-165.

and challenge categories, Krauss excavates Bataille's *Dictionary* to retrace Surrealist photography's formal and analytical content.

Krauss connects the categorical subversions found in Alberto Giacometti's *Suspended Ball* (1930-31) (Figure 2) to the "trick effects" that occupy the canon of Surrealist photography, as they challenge the very core of the photographic medium. The "trick" Krauss locates is not only applicable to formal analysis, but can be applied to Cahun's photographs, as the bindings that traditionally signify gender difference begin to unravel. Giacometti's *Ball* and its reception coincide with the debates surrounding what constituted "sculpture" in the early 1930s, and this contestation of categorical definitions extend to Cahun's still-life images and her collaborative portraits with Moore.

Like Giacometti's *Ball*, Cahun's still-life images and self-portraits created with Moore employ the same evocative slippages. For example, *Untitled* (c.1930) (Figure 3) presents an elongated, snake-like vase that curves upward toward the ceiling. It appears to chase the bulbous flower protruding from its orifice in attempt to swallow it whole. The overt symbolism, however—the phallic vase merged with the labial white flower—becomes muted through its surrounding. The objects, through their placement within this domestic setting, are at once normal and abnormal. Like Orlaf's bust of Cahun, it seems to challenge constructs of gender through debasing definitions of domesticity and household objects. Similarly, a portrait titled *Untitled* (1927) (Figure 4) portrays Cahun with her arms stretched downward, her hands locked directly in front of her groin.

Figure 2. Alberto Giacometti, *Suspended Ball*, 1930-31. Plaster and metal, 24 x 14 ¼ x 14 inches. Kunsthaus, Zurich, Alberto Giacometti Foundation.

Figure 3. Claude Cahun, *Untitled*, c.1930. 110 x 80 mm. Jersey Heritage Trust, JHT/1995/00027/g.

Figure 4. Claude Cahun/Marcel Moore, *Untitled*, c.1927. 117 x 75 mm. Jersey Heritage Trust, JHT/2003/00001/004.

Although she is fully clothed, she has fashioned prosthetic nipples above what might be considered their standard biological location. These plastic additions to her white shirt are neither male or female organs; while the material covering her right breast gives the illusion of a slight curve—indicating something exists beneath the fabric—the left chest area, through the camera’s blur, is presented as flat and without notable contours. Her hair blends into the dark background, obscuring any gender-coded traits. Much like their still-life images, Cahun and Moore engineer clothing, accessories, and perspectival disruptions in order to contest outward signifiers of gender. The clothing and props within their portraits, similar to the androgynous objects within Cahun’s still life photographs, become signs for the fluidness of gender and the instability of heteronormativity. These slippages can be located in *Ball*, as Krauss states: “For in that object, the sexually suggestive sliding of a cloven ball over a recumbent wedge sets up the activity of a caress between organs whose gender identity is wholly unstable, seeming with each swing of the pendulum to change associations: the wedge altering its ‘state’ from a female-labial to a male-phallic condition...”²³

Cahun’s black-and-white images, like those taken by Man Ray, Jaques-André Boiffard, and others, removed photography from its hierarchical, documentary position in the early twentieth century. Their unstable photographs document a shift in the collective consciousness of artists working in Europe before, during, and after World War I. Reality—as depicted through the lens of a camera – had collapsed on itself. This shift from the “vertical” to the “horizontal” helped destabilize the category of photography, and as Krauss adds, this blurring “constituted a perverse feminization if you will of the

²³ Krauss, *Bachelors*, 7.

masculinist values of straightness itself: clarity, decisiveness, and visual mastery—all of them the source for the photograph's 'authority.'"²⁴ For Surrealist photographers, the image became increasingly self-reflexive; artists sought to prioritize the medium's visual disconnects rather than construct a banal narrative around the image of a static landscape or event.

Using Bataille's *Dictionary*, Krauss unbinds the misogynistic trajectories of Surrealism; she concludes that Surrealist photography, through its "declassing" of medium-specific traditions, located an undoing of binary gender structures. As Giacometti's *Ball* challenged the medium of sculpture through an indeterminately gendered form, Surrealist principles and modes of categorical investigation challenged the category of "photography" itself. This theory ruptures the category of what Krauss describes as "straight photography," or an "aesthetic based on what Edward Weston termed that 'quality of authenticity in the photograph' from which it derives its unimpeachable authority."²⁵

²⁴ Krauss, *Bachelors*, 13.

²⁵ Krauss, *Bachelors*, 8. While Krauss is referring to Weston's remarks on portraiture, but another note from his daybook, dated March 2, 1928, captures the tensions between European Surrealist photography and what Weston considered "straight photography." He states: "'Modern' artists who go back to the primitive, who try and recall, recreate the past, the feeling and technique of simple, artless people, fail absolutely. They way is ahead, not back, no matter how great the past may be." Edward Weston, *On Photography*, ed. Peter Bunnell (Salt Lake City, Gibbs M. Smith, Inc., 1983), 51.

Krauss situates Cahun's images as challenging this authority—not for their reliance on the darkroom's ability to produce after-effects, but for their untouched and un-manipulated editing process and transgression of gender identity.²⁶ Both she and Moore's portraits and still-life images employ props, costumes, and natural lighting (versus artificial) to destabilize the photograph's "straightness."²⁷ Addressing that some feminist writers have accused her of blindness to the Surrealist's misogyny, Krauss writes: "I have seen this practice as one of feminizing the viewing subject in a move that is deeply antipatriarchal. Further, insofar as what occurs at the pole of the object is an experience of the gendered subject—most frequently female—as constructed rather than biologically determined, a process of construction the surrealists understood through the terms of psychoanalysis and from which they minded accounts of fetishization and fantasy to support a transgressive notion of gender, the surrealists must be seen to have opened patriarchy's view of 'woman' up to questioning."²⁸

Krauss's reassessment of Surrealist photography can be visualized through Man Ray's *Érotique voilée (Meret Oppenheim à la presse)* (Figure 5). The image presents Meret Oppenheim's body with a phallic machine-appendage and hidden breasts; although it does not operate with the intimate gaze found between Cahun and Moore in their

²⁶ Krauss, *Bachelors*, 8, 13.

²⁷ See James Stevenson, "Claude Cahun: An Analysis of Her Photographic Technique," in *Don't Kiss Me*, 46-55. According to Stevenson's findings, 412 of Cahun and Moore's photographs were lit by natural lighting, while only twenty-three show evidence of artificial illumination.

²⁸ Krauss, *Bachelors*, 17.

Figure 5. Man Ray, *Érotique voile (Meret Oppenheim à la presse)*, 1933. Photograph. Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris.

portraits of one another, it nonetheless utilizes a slippage of physical signifiers to destabilize gender constructions and reject what some scholars perceive as the misogynist “male gaze” that permeates contemporary understandings of Surrealist discourse. In her discussion of Man Ray’s photograph, Briony Fer misunderstands his view of Oppenheim as a metaphor of difference—specifically, feminine difference.²⁹ Fer quotes Breton: he states that feminine and masculine are at opposition to one another, and that masculinity and patriarchy are repressive—but could be subverted by utilizing the feminine to rectify these structures.³⁰ While Fer’s understanding of difference is historically validated by Breton’s notions of gender structures, her conclusions also stem from a 1980s discourse on Surrealism—a discourse that situated women as prisoners of their male counterparts and their peering lenses, or working in opposition to patriarchal structures. While these scholars have addressed Surrealism’s problematic appropriation of the female body, Krauss’s argument supplements this history by establishing that women not only participated inside and outside of these parameters, occupying space behind or in front of the camera, but also “challenge[d] the interpretive reflex that would label this kind of

²⁹ Fer writes, “One of the ways in which difference was expressed within Surrealism was through the metaphor of the ‘feminine,’ and would go so far as to say that the ‘feminine’ was Surrealism’s central organizing metaphor of difference.” See Briony Fer, “Surrealism, Myth and Psychoanalysis,” in *Realism, Rationalism, Surrealism: Art Between the Wars*, ed. David Batchelor et. al. (New Haven: Yale University Press with The Open University, 1993), 183.

³⁰ Breton quoted in Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art, and Ideology* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 138.

work ... as misogynist.”³¹ Indeed, one could read Man Ray’s photograph an attempt to supplant the castrated penis onto the mother—but does this merely revert to a patriarchal-oriented view of Surrealism—one that has only been addressed and not revised by new scholarship? Instead, drawing on Krauss’s logic, Oppenheim’s mechanical phallus can be seen to operate in two ways: it can utilize the wheel’s handle as sexual organ—the apparatus used to physically induce motion—in lieu of merely covering (and thus not acknowledging) the “lack” of phallus. It can also erase physical connotations of biological sex (breasts/no breasts, or otherwise.) While Oppenheim’s cropped hair was emblematic of Paris fashion in the 1920s, it too removes a component of gender construction that signifies one is masculine or feminine. Ink marks Oppenheim’s raised arm, which posits that some kind of physical connection has been made the wheel’s handle. This masturbatory remnant places her in control of her own body—a body without a construed sex, and thus one that could pertain to all sexes. In this image, gender could be thought of as unformed through the obscuring of signifiers and Oppenheim’s control of the scene, rather than constructed through Man Ray’s lens. Scholars like Fer and Griselda Pollock on the subjects of women within Surrealism’s inner and outer circles have been crucial in helping recognize the role of women within Surrealism. But at the time of their research, little information was accessible on Cahun or her partner and collaborator, Moore, as their photographs and writings were still held in private collections. The rediscovery of Cahun’s writings on gender, Surrealism, photography, politics, sexuality, and same-sex desire can help revise our contemporary understanding of the early avant-garde in Europe.

³¹ Krauss, *Bachelors*, 19.

In the preface to his 1993 book, *Compulsive Beauty*, Hal Foster argues for a revised approach to Surrealism; rather than follow the well-worn trails marked by proponents of “stylistic analysis” or “social history,” he promotes a return to the movement’s wide-ranging theoretical foundations rooted in psychoanalysis.³² In addition, he asserts that these critical underpinnings remain in a state of flux throughout the early twentieth century, as the uncanny manifests through differing and sometimes opposing dimensions.³³ Foster acknowledges the discrepancies within Surrealism’s liberal sexual attitudes, stating that “the heterosexist determinations of this movement are clear,” but not entirely static.³⁴ While I rely on Foster’s extensive research in Freudian psychoanalysis, I also challenge his resistance to “stylistic analysis” and “social history.”³⁵ Foster’s approach may be applicable to the artists he addresses in *Compulsive Beauty*, but his departure from “stylistic analysis” and “social history” subverts Cahun’s works in terms of her same-sex relationship and her writings, which detail her political beliefs and document her interest in history—fictional or recorded. Cahun’s oeuvre requires nuanced calibration: while the overt psychosexual tones in her photographs are in dialogue with Breton, 1930s political revolution, and Freudian psychoanalysis, her work rejects the heterosexual Surrealist framework. Cahun—like her contemporaries—relied on Freud as a critical tool for unlocking the unconscious, but recognized that

³² Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1993), xvi-xvii.

³³ Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, xx-xxi.

³⁴ Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, xxi.

³⁵ *Compulsive Beauty*, xxi.

fetishism could be redefined to destabilize gender binaries and empower her sexual identity.

Although published three decades ago, Foster's review of Krauss and Jane Livingston's exhibition *L'Amour fou*, which included portraits of Cahun and her still life photographs, presents a critical argument against revisionist exhibitions and texts—placing women who participated in Surrealist circles in a “cat's cradle of representation.”³⁶ Foster argues: “As with other tensions within Surrealist photography, these tensions between the antifeminist and the protofeminist ... should be preserved, not elided. For only then can these contractions be seen as generative, and no more so than when they cannot be resolved (for it is then that the fixated representations of Surrealist photography, such as the veiled nudes, emerge.) And only then do the ideological limits of Surrealism become clear (e.g., its relatively *restricted* sexual field of vision, its general innocence regarding the imprecation of desire with representation and power.)”³⁷ His misguided criticality privileges those writing Surrealism's history and the circulation of these histories in the mid-1980s, when Krauss and Livingston's exhibition occurred and when Foster's review was published. These conclusions were cemented before Cahun's *Aveux non avenues* (1930) was considered a seminal text through which to understand her conceptualizations of Surrealist theories, and predate the Jersey Heritage Trust's archive and the development of discourse on queer theory. Just as Foster returns to Surrealism's theoretical foundations in *Compulsive Beauty*, Cahun's oeuvre and her relationship with Moore must be explored in context of her understanding of same-sex attraction and

³⁶ Krauss, *Bachelors*, 17.

³⁷ Foster, “L'Amour faux,” *Art in America* 74 (January 1986): 126-127.

Freudian fetishism. This offers an alternative to the “relatively restricted” sexual field vision, surpassing Krauss and Livingston’s inclusion of Cahun’s images to offer an addendum to heterosexual desire within Surrealist photography.

Freud’s writings on fetishism are interpreted through Tristan Tzara’s 1933 essay “On a Certain Automatism of Taste.”³⁸ Accompanied by Man Ray’s suggestive photographs, it addresses this psychosomatic enigma. Man Ray’s images experiment with unusual angles to distance objects from their familiarized contexts, rendering their significance ambiguous. Through his lens, common fashions—like fedoras—become metaphors for sex organs. Tzara’s essay, along with Man Ray’s uncanny images, helps understand the Surrealist assemblages and assembled costumes in Cahun and Moore’s early twentieth-century photographs. Through obscuring signifiers that are gendered, Cahun’s *mise-en-scène* interiors disturb the parameters between masculine and feminine, ultimately collapsing the visual field of sexual difference into a cacophony of fetishized parts. Cahun and Moore’s photographs problematize Surrealists’ simultaneous oppression of and dependency on women as objects, and emphasize the instability of sexualized perception within the early twentieth century and contemporary Surrealist pedagogy.

The relationship between fetishism and photography is elucidated in Krauss’s chapter “Corpus Delicti” in *L’Amour fou: Photography and Surrealism*. The catalog, in its entirety, is a critical foundation for situating photography within Surrealist practice as it helps establish the inherent contradictions between the “documentary deadpan” of the

³⁸ Tzara, “Concerning a Certain Automatism of Taste,” in *The Surrealists Look at Art*, ed. Pontus Hulten (Venice, CA: The Lapis Press, 1990), 201-213.

camera and the “extravagant productions of the unconscious.”³⁹ The title of Krauss’s chapter, “Corpus Delicti,” holds dual meanings: in legal proceedings it provides testimony for a breach of law, or it can signify a literal corpse—that which is the concrete evidence of a crime—a body of offense.⁴⁰ Specific examples Krauss provides in “Corpus Delicti” signal a “breach” in Surrealist photography, or perhaps an infiltration of the precarious standards that Freudian psychoanalytic operations constructed. Krauss unearths the decaying corpse within Surrealism’s attic—the body of offense—that can indict the prosaic canon that relies on gendered distinctions. Through decomposing the fine line between socially constructed terms for the body’s sexual organs and the abstracted parts captured through the lens of a camera, a site of anxiety emerges. When these bodies or objects no longer represent male or female sexual organs they are rendered unnatural: a symbol of the absent penis.⁴¹ According to Krauss, Man Ray’s fedora photograph, *Untitled* (1933) (Figure 6) and Brassai’s *Untitled* (1933) fragmented nude body (Figure 7) are the only two images within Surrealist photography that fully collapse sexual difference and become sites of fetish; they are images through which “the female body and the male organ have each become the sign for the other.”⁴² Krauss’s observation that Brassai and Man Ray’s photographs collapse sexual difference and

³⁹ Rosalind Krauss, “Preface,” in *L’Amour fou: Photography and Surrealism*, ed. Alan Axelrod, exh. cat. (London: Cross River Press, 1985), 9.

⁴⁰ See Oxford Dictionary, “Corpus Delicti.”

⁴¹ Krauss, “Corpus Delicti,” 95.

⁴² Krauss, “Corpus Delicti,” 95.

Figure 6. Man Ray, *Untitled*, 1933. Photograph. Collection Rosabianca Skira, Geneva.

Figure 7. Brassai, *Untitled*, 1933. Photograph. Collection Rosabianca Skira, Geneva.

dissolve into a site of fetish can be extended to Cahun and Moore's still life photographs and portraits.

FASHIONING IDENTITY

Cahun and Moore's use of both "traditionally" male and "traditionally" female early twentieth-century fashions—and their acts of merging the two perceived gender dichotomies—build on the framework of Sigmund Freud's essay, "Fetishism," originally published in 1927. Freud's explanation of fetishistic behavior is largely reduced from the case studies of his male subjects. To demonstrate the relationship between sexual difference and fetishism, he provides the example of a subject's infatuation with his athletic support belt, an apparatus the subject would also wear during bathing; for Freud, the belt "covered up the genitals entirely and concealed the distinction between them."⁴³ He continues, placing the erasure of such distinctions akin to "the fig leaf on a statue"—hiding the genitals is symptomatic of "two mutually incompatible assertions: 'the woman has still got a penis' and 'my father has castrated the woman.'"⁴⁴ Evidence of sexual ambiguity of the male body is rarely evident in Breton's circle; although they engaged in informal discussions on sexual habits, these erotic conversations remained shrouded in

⁴³ Sigmund Freud, "Fetishism," in *The Future of an Illusion, Civilization and its Discontents, and Other Works*, trans. J. Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1961), 156.

⁴⁴ Freud, "Fetishism," 157.

heterosexual desire.⁴⁵ Even the most “transgressive” Surrealist literature—Louis Aragon’s *Le Con d’Irène* (1928) and Georges Battaille’s *Histoire de l’oeil* (1928)—place woman as central figure: an object to act on, or an entity that will unlock the secrets of their unconscious desires and traumas.⁴⁶ Indeed, Surrealism’s obsession with the “shine on the nose” stands as a metaphor for the absent female phallus—a sexual organ, rooted in fantasy, which presents dual male and female components. Cahun and Moore’s fusion of early-twentieth-century male and female fashions promotes clothing “as the unconscious construction of a changing set of signs for the erogenous zones of the body.”⁴⁷

Cahun and Moore’s portraits extend Freud’s theories on fetishism within Surrealist photography, as his texts are just one of many psychoanalytic influencers on her work. Her deep engagement with the writings of sexologist Havelock Ellis contributes to her reading of “Fetishism.” Cahun knew Ellis’s work on an intimate level; she was the first to translate the two-volume text *Woman in Society* for French publication in 1929.⁴⁸ In a letter to the publisher and book expert Adrienne Monnier, she

⁴⁵ Sue Taylor, “‘A Shine on the Nose’: Sexual Metaphors in Surrealism,” *Annual Review of Sex Research* 16:1 (2005): 92-93.

⁴⁶ Taylor, “‘A Shine on the Nose,’” 93.

⁴⁷ Krauss, “Corpus Delicti,” 91.

⁴⁸ Latimer, *Women Together*, 88-89.

notes the influence of Ellis's writings on the development of her work.⁴⁹ The overlaps between Freud and Ellis appear throughout Cahun's portraits through the figure of Narcissus—a character Cahun not only enacts and Moore photographs, but a fictional individual who is examined through her essays and poetry. Ellis's early essays often categorize the sexuality of "effeminate men" and women under the umbrella of narcissism.⁵⁰ Additionally, Freud's 1914 essay "On Narcissism: An Introduction" states: "We have discovered, especially clearly in people whose libidinal development have suffered some disturbance, such as perverts and homosexuals, that in their later choice of love objects they have taken as a model not their mother but their own selves."⁵¹ For Freud, the woman becomes narcissistic through displacing "the value of the phallus onto her own body, taken as a whole."⁵² Her physical appearance becomes "bound up with the masquerade of femininity."⁵³ The woman, according to Freud, consistently strives to embody the phallus. Cahun and Moore's portraits, through disintegrating boundaries between masculine and feminine characters ("masquerade" and desire), promote each other as being both the possessor of the phallus and the phallus itself. The tensions within

⁴⁹ Whitney Chadwick and Tirza True Latimer, "Becoming Modern," in *The Modern Woman Revisited: Paris Between the Wars*, ed. Chadwick and Latimer (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 12.

⁵⁰ Latimer, *Women Together*, 90.

⁵¹ Freud quoted in Latimer, *Women Together*, 90.

⁵² Elizabeth Grosz, "Lesbian Fetishism?," in *Fetishism as Cultural Discourse*, ed. Emily Apter and William Pietz (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 110-111.

⁵³ Grosz, "Lesbian Fetishism?," 111.

their *Untitled* portrait (1928) (Figure 8) emerge within Cahun's hair, face, and clothing. Cahun's hair is cropped short (a sign of "masculinity") but blond and shiny (a sign of "femininity"), and while her pout is accentuated by lipstick, she wears a man's robe and glances back to into Moore's lens, directly confronting her unwavering gaze.⁵⁴ She seemingly reconstrues Ellis and Freud's theories through engendering both Narcissus and phallus—a conglomerate of the psychoanalytic male and female distinctions made through their texts.

Cahun's reading of psychoanalysts and sexologists is not only a platform for her photography and exploration of unconventional fetishism, but covertly emerges through her writing. Her works absorb early twentieth-century cultural and intellectual shifts while at the same time push against them—they refuse to be a filter for the status quo. Her texts are perhaps literary addendums to her photographs: they stand in as historical informants for the fluctuations within her oeuvre. In her book *Heroines*, she poetically retells the story of Salmacis, a character within Ovid's *Metamorphoses* who merges her body with the character of Hermaphroditus—who essentially becomes both male and female.⁵⁵ The beginning of Cahun's short story "Salmacis the Suffragette" is similar to her retelling of Cinderella—secondary characters within the story downtrodden and unenlightened. Cahun animates Salmacis, placing her as the lover of Hermaphroditus (although Cahun never refers to this character—she merely uses the phrase "the son of Hermes and Aphrodite.") Having no will to procreate, Salmacis removes her ovaries and

⁵⁴ Latimer, *Women Together*, 92.

⁵⁵ M. Robinson, "Salmacis and Hermaphroditus: When Two Become One (Ovid, Met. 4.285-388)," *The Classical Quarterly*, 49 no. 1 (1999): 217-219.

Figure 8. Claude Cahun/Marcel Moore, *Untitled*, 1928. 107 x 82 mm. Jersey Heritage Trust. JHT/1995/0004/n.

they, together as a couple, copulate with both men and women; regarded by those in the story as scandalous, the lovers are placed on trial—their punishment is to switch bodies and go their separate ways, living the rest of their lives in the other's gender.

Although tortured and angry with the gods that enacted their punishment, the two revel in occupying each other's bodies. Cahun states: "one body in tune with one soul is enough to make love," and concludes on the next line with the phrase, "Hermaphrodite can visit the house of Narcissus—and introduce himself there on my behalf."⁵⁶ "Salmacis," unlike "Cinderella," is written from the perspective of Cahun herself, as she occupies the role of narrator and not subject. Her concluding line is a pithy bookend for the story's unconventional retelling. Cahun and Moore's portraits produced from 1925 (the year *Heroines* was authored) to 1928 are similarly "hermaphroditic"; they convey an interest in androgyny through clothing and accessories, which culminate to decay any definite gender signifiers. Through these photographs, the image of Narcissus—and Freud and Ellis's theories on the subject—are merely a collapsing of self-obsession into "self-love"—i.e., no external body is needed to stimulate desire, or another body of the same sex can result in the same pleasures. These collaborative portraits play with Freudian fetishism through humor: they debase heteronormative sexual discourse.

While the portraits of Cahun and Moore engage with fetishism to break down masculine and feminine signals, these images also document the increasingly-androgynous women's fashions of the early twentieth-century. In city centers—most notably Paris—women began to wear traditionally "male" garments and accessories.

⁵⁶ Cahun, *Heroines*, in *Inverted Odysseys: Claude Cahun, Maya Deren, and Cindy Sherman*, exh. cat. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1999), 90.

Once barred, trousers became popular among the upper-middle class, and short-cropped hairstyles became a symbol of style.⁵⁷ In *Fashioning Sapphism*, Laura Doan concludes that androgynous fashions were not only a coded way to signal one's lesbianism, but also a means of visual protest—donning men's clothing was a rejection of a patriarchal society's definition of "woman." (Figure 9).⁵⁸ Indeed, Marjorie Garber succinctly denotes the many reasons women wore trousers, sport coats, monocles, and top hats: "Cross-dressing is about gender confusion. Cross-dressing is about the phallus as constitutively veiled. Cross-dressing is about the power of women. Cross-dressing is about the emergence of gay identity. Cross-dressing is about the anxiety of economic or cultural dislocation, the anticipation or recognition of 'otherness' as loss. All true, all partial truths, all powerful metaphors."⁵⁹ This "veiled phallus"—a rejection of sexual difference through clothing—is enacted throughout the portraits of Cahun and Moore in a theatre-like setting. Early images, like the 1916 portraits of Cahun in cropped trousers, men's dress shirt, and suspenders—in addition to her newly shaved head—reject society's definition of womanliness.

While Brassai's photograph of the nude female body and Man Ray's images of women's hats, according to Krauss, collapse sexual difference and thus become sites of fetish, the portraits Cahun and Moore captured of one another extend this seismic gendered collapse; while their androgynous clothing and theatrical masculine signaling

⁵⁷ Latimer, *Women Together*, 25-26.

⁵⁸ Doan, *Fashioning Sapphism*, 95-125.

⁵⁹ Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (London: Routledge, 1992), 390.

EVE'S TROUSERED BLISS.

She doesn't look very like a girl, this up-to-date holiday-maker, "snapped" at Shoreham, Sussex—but her dainty shoes betray her secret. Obviously she finds masculine attire ideal for summer wear.

Figure 9. Which are Men and Which are Women? *People*, June 12 1927. British Library.

can be read as a disavowal of the category of “woman” and a play off Freud’s theories on fetishism, these images also place same-sex desire within the history of Surrealist photography. Latimer argues that while these portraits play with Ellis and Freud’s theories on female narcissism, they also offer “a metaphor for sexual inversion that may be turned against its own iconographic and discursive traditions to serve emancipatory purposes—to mediate the complex but symmetrical exchange of regards between and among women, to enable recognition and desire within a field of reciprocity.”⁶⁰ Unlike Man Ray’s photograph of Oppenheim behind the wheel, an erotic desire is *exchanged* between the camera operator’s and her subject. Here, the gaze is not merely projected and owned by the viewer but returned with equal regard (Figure 10).⁶¹

Briony Fer’s 1993 essay “The Hat, the Hoax, the Body” provides a succinct addendum for the existing discourse on Tzara’s “On a Certain Automatism of Taste” and Man Ray’s photographs. She posits that while Surrealism is primarily driven by fetish, the fixation on clothing and objects is an obsession that signals the movement’s preoccupation with male desire and the acute anxieties that surround sexual difference.⁶² She states: “Fashion was subject to alternating masculine and feminine phases,

⁶⁰ Latimer, *Women Together/Women Apart*, 93.

⁶¹ Margaret Iversen and Stephen Melville, “The Gaze in Perspective: Merleau-Ponty, Lacan, Damisch,” in *Writing Art History: Disciplinary Departures* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 116-121.

⁶² Briony Fer, “The Hat, the Hoax, the Body,” in *The Body Reimagined: The Human Form and Visual Culture Since the Renaissance*, ed. Kathleen Adler and Marcia Pointon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 172-173.

Figure 10. Claude Cahun/Marcel Moore, *Untitled*, 1928. Jersey Heritage Trust. JHT/1995/0004/n, JHT/1995/00024/h.

suggesting a certain irresolution of conventional categories, a fluctuation between the masculine and feminine tendencies, and an insecurity of sexual identity.”⁶³ Perhaps as outward signs for gender distinctions began to erode, Surrealists like Tzara were anxious of fashion’s “dual signage” as both men and women could present themselves in traditionally masculine styles.

⁶³ Fer, “The Hat,” 169.

BEWARE DOMESTIC OBJECTS: BETWEEN FETISHISM AND REVOLUTION,
1933-37

During the four years in which Cahun's participation in the Paris Surrealist circles can be traced—from 1933 to 1937—there is a notable gap in her portrait photography with Moore. Only few portraits exist, as documented by the Jersey Heritage Trust's archives, and there are even bold attempts by Cahun to erase herself from specific group images. A photograph taken in 1936, whose photographer is unknown, captures an outside gathering of Breton, Roland Penrose, E.L.T. Mesens, and David Gascoyne, and Cahun (Figure 11), but in another version, she has cropped herself from its frame. An additional image, taken at the same convening, contains three of the four men in addition to an unknown woman, whom Cahun has left untouched while removing herself from the photograph (Figure 12). When contextualized by the Jersey Heritage Trust's array of self-assured portraits, Cahun's deliberate editing of this photograph may represent an anxiety of being portrayed in distinctly feminine garb outside the safety of her home, where she and Moore could freely photograph themselves in androgynous fashions and experiment with extending the boundaries of social heterosexual customs. While a sign of the “modern woman” or even an indicator of one's lesbian identity in the 1920s, these

Figure 11. André Breton, Roland Penrose, E.L.T. Mesens, and David Gascoyne, London, 1936. JHT/1995/00044i, JHT/1995/00040/w.

Figure 12. André Breton, Roland Penrose, E.L.T. Mesens, David Gascoyne, unknown woman, and Claude Cahun, London, 1936. JHT/1995/000222/x.

androgynous styles were no longer fashionable for women in the late 1930s.⁶⁴ Through these snapshots, one can discern a distinct distance from Cahun's early collaborative portraits. The emergence of her still-life photographs and recoding of her public wardrobe could be an attempt to assimilate herself within Breton's circle of Surrealists. These *mise-en-scene* images, although more outwardly political than her portraits with Moore, transpose the core principles of Freudian fetishism from subject to object.

Cahun's essay, "Beware Domestic Objects," can be read as both a Marxist diatribe against French capitalism and a statement that lauds sexual freedom. She argues that through the construction of "irrational objects," one can become closer to the "primordial truth"—a truth untouched by society's constraints, definitions, and social formalities.⁶⁵ "Beware" was first published in a special edition of the Surrealist magazine *Cahiers d'Art* titled "L'Objet" in 1936 to accompany the *Exposition surréaliste d'objets* at the Galerie Charles Ratton in Paris.⁶⁶ Cahun's photographs produced during this period extend the discourse on the assemblages of Man Ray, Oppenheim, and Dalí. They are images of objects that incorporate metaphors of both male and female genitalia (as in Man Ray or Dalí), or subvert a patriarchal reading of women's bodies and evoke same-

⁶⁴ Doan, *Fashioning Sapphism*, 125.

⁶⁵ "I insist on a primordial truth: one must oneself discover, manipulate, tame, and construct irrational objects to be able to appreciate the particular of general value of those displayed here." Claude Cahun, "Beware Domestic Objects," in *Surrealist Women: An International Anthology*, ed. Penelope Rosemont (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), 60.

⁶⁶ Penelope Rosemont, ed., *Surrealist Women*, 51.

sex eroticism (as in Oppenheim's fur cup.) Cahun and Moore were familiar with these new sculptural forms and their respective photographs, as documented by their collected ephemera now housed within the Jersey Heritage Trust's archives. Oppenheim's fur-lined teacup, *Le Déjeuner en fourrure* (1936), is one of few images of Surrealist sculpture that appears in the couple's expansive archive. It renders their collecting process as selective, while identifying Oppenheim as a conceptual model for Cahun's assemblages and still-life images.⁶⁷ These photographs include *mise en scenes*, household objects, and *poupées* that invite a Freudian reading similar to *Le Déjeuner*, but also signal Cahun's interest in experimenting with found objects in order to destabilize gender constructs and resist against the growing threat of Nazism in Europe. These assemblages act as an indicator of both she and Moore's growing disdain for social normality outside of their intimate circle of friends, in addition to the escalating tensions in European politics. Cahun and Moore's archive contains a number of Surrealist publications either committed to or containing articles that promote anti-Fascist activism, dream interpretation, and Freudian psychology—three principles that structure “Beware Domestic Objects” and her still-life photography before and during the year 1936.

Unsurprisingly, Cahun was familiar with Giacometti's fetishistic ball-and-pendulum box; *Ball* was once exhibited alongside her *Object* (1935) (Figure 13) in 1936. Her assemblage is comprised of an eye made from a tennis ball, paint, human hair, and a plastic toy hand that extends upward from the object's horizontal yellow base; the eye is

⁶⁷ Picture of a cup, plate and spoon covered with fur and entitled “Dejeuner en fourrure” by Meret Oppenheim, JHT/1995/00045/138.

Figure 13. Claude Cahun, *Object*, 1936. Wood, paint, and hair. 5 3/8 x 6 3/8 x 4 in. (13.7 x 10.7 x 16 cm). The Art Institute of Chicago. Through prior gift of Mrs. Gilbert W. Chapman, 2007.30.

adorned with a cloud-shaped halo, reminiscent of Arp's biomorphic shapes.⁶⁸ *Object* can be read as both eye and orifice, as Cahun has given the shape eyelashes in addition to a small mound of hair at its top.⁶⁹ The plastic hand, whose surface appears to be coated in a shiny resin, seems caught in the act of turning its fingers toward the eye as if to massage its multitudinous array of textures.⁷⁰ Protruding from the eye's hair, the white "orgasmic cloud"⁷¹ interrupts this gendered reading of the eye-turned-horizontal, as it resists being categorized as male or female bodily fluid. Indeed, this "irrational object," a term frequently evoked by Cahun in "Beware Domestic Objects," exhumes the tensions between veiled and unveiled eroticism: seeing and not seeing, touching and not touching. The distinction between masculine and feminine is coded in *Object*—while these perceived binaries are obscured and challenged, the some of her photographs and objects produced during this time signal a direct engagement with Surrealist politics of the mid 1930s.

Cahun joined the organization Contre-Attaque in 1935, one year before "Beware Domestic Objects" was first published.⁷² This intellectual artists organization brought

⁶⁸ Janine Mileaf, *Please Touch: Dada and Surrealist Objects After the Readymade* (Hanover: Dartmouth College Press with University Press of New England, 2010), 142.

⁶⁹ Mileaf, *Please Touch*, 142.

⁷⁰ Mileaf, *Please Touch*, 142.

⁷¹ Mileaf, *Please Touch*, 142.

⁷² The United Struggle of Revolutionary Intellectuals formally took the name Contre-Attaque, according to a pamphlet dating October 7, 1935. See Durozoi's section on the history of Contre-Attaque in *History of the Surrealist Movement*, 299-304.

together former adversaries—Breton and Bataille, among others—to unite against what they perceived as the dominant power of the Popular Front.⁷³ According to Bataille, the Popular front had been formed in response to fascism, when communists and socialists united and marched together in a show of solidarity.⁷⁴ While they acknowledged the Front’s contributions, pamphlets and meeting records incite a return to the “violent radicalism of the years 1924-1925, to the call for Terror in the name of the surrealist revolution” and opposition to society’s fixated proclivity toward moralism.⁷⁵ During this time, Contre-Attaque organized meetings that denounced family, homeland, patriotism, capitalist countries, and the USSR, in addition to debating the social aspect of sexuality.⁷⁶ Cahun vehemently scorned those who claimed allegiance to their countries; in a 1936 Contre-Attaque document, she remarked that while patriotism often operated as a principle of the working class belief system, it was a tool for the government to control its proletariats—they ultimately became “*marionettes des impérialistes*,” or puppets of imperialism.”⁷⁷ The group’s exploration of social and sexual values, in addition to their

⁷³ Simon Baker, *Surrealism, History, and Revolution* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2007), 315. Baker concludes that Breton and Bataille’s participation was more out of necessity than “revolutionary exuberance.”

⁷⁴ Baker, *Surrealism*, 315. See also J. Jackson, *The Popular Front in France, Defending Democracy 1934-38* (Cambridge, 1990).

⁷⁵ Baker, *Surrealism*, 315.

⁷⁶ Durozoi, *History of the Surrealist Movement*, 304.

⁷⁷ Lizzie Thynne, “Indirect Action: Politics and the Subversion of Identity in Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore’s Resistance to the Occupation of Jersey,” *Papers of*

ardent hatred of fascism and Adolf Hitler, culminate to influence Cahun's still-life photographs in 1936. The images retain some semblance of her interest in fetishism and androgyny, but also stand as visual record of her participation with the radical politics of the Surrealist party during the 1930s.

The use of *poupées*—intact or dismembered—is emblemized in the hyper-fetishistic work of Hans Bellmer, but Cahun's *Poupée I* (1936) (Figure 14) images appear to merge the use of constructed dolls with political mockery. Bellmer, too, promoted his artwork as a “liberating struggle against the father, the police, and, ultimately, fascism and the state.”⁷⁸ During the 1930s, his dolls and drawings directly responded to his fear and anxiety of the phallus vis-à-vis patriarchal and heteronormative conformity.⁷⁹ The disjointed and seemingly “damaged” dolls resist the Nazi propaganda that promoted healthy and thriving Aryan bodies.⁸⁰ When Cahun and Moore's library and artworks were auctioned in the mid-1970s, the same tea chests that John Wakeham purchased also contained one of Bellmer's *Poupée* books. Sold separately at auction, this handmade, hardcover volume contained original photographs of his dolls in different

Surrealism 8 (2010): 7. The original document is transcribed in Leperlier, “Réunion de Contre-Attaque du 9 Avril 1936,” in *Claude Cahun: Écrits*, (Paris : J.M. Place, 2002), 563.

⁷⁸ Sue Taylor, *Hans Bellmer: The Anatomy of Anxiety* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2000), 21.

⁷⁹ Taylor, *Hans Bellmer*, 21.

⁸⁰ Lusty, *Surrealism, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 136.

Figure 14. Claude Cahun, *Poupée I*, September 1936. 108 x 82mm, Jersey Heritage Trust, JHT/1995/00042i, JHT/1995/00042/h.

settings, accompanied by brief amounts of text.⁸¹ Cahun and Moore's interest in the merging of male and female binaries was also discernable through a consideration of the objects they chose to collect, as Bellmer's dolls, drawings, and writings betrayed his erotic fascination with the merging of phallic and orphic forms and defied fascist politics.⁸² The dolls and drawings Bellmer produced rejected the notion of a whole, heterosexual, and healthy male (and female) body—a confrontation to the patriotic propaganda (whether promoted by both the French Communist Party (PCF) or Nazi Germany) that promoted this as necessary equipment for going to war.

The two images titled *Poupée I* (1936) respond to Bellmer's rejection of the phallus as societal controller, and also provide tongue-in-cheek visual to Cahun and Moore's participation in the radical political group Contre-Attaque. Rallying against the French Communist Party for its incitement of patriotism within the working class, the collage dolls are carefully constructed from the pages of its daily newspaper, *L'Humanité*

⁸¹ Downie, "Introduction," in *Don't Kiss Me*, 8.

⁸² Taylor, *Hans Bellmer*, 165-66, 181-182. Taylor elaborates: "Similarly, the castration anxiety that accompanies the child's discovery of sexual difference (often in relation to the primal scene) may provoke a defensive response, protecting the cherished fantasy of a maternal phallus: the fetishist creates a substitute for the woman's missing organ, while the transvestite solves the problem by insisting, 'Phallic girls do exist; I myself am one.'" Cahun and Moore's interest in Bellmer's work might be evidenced by their shared opposition to patriarchal and heteronormative moral values. See also the writings of Otto Fenichel, specifically his essay "The Psychology of Transvestitism."

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(Figure 15).⁸³ The puppets' false teeth and wide gaping mouths lack speech, but the placement of such words like *dent* (tooth) on the left foot, left arm, and head signal that it is "toothless," or ineffective at its divisive rhetoric.⁸⁴ While the body of the *poupée* remains the same in both photographs, Cahun and Moore have added a military hat with an indistinguishable symbol to one; this same doll seems to trample a group of flowers beneath its feet. Spears protrude from their paper flesh, while they hold large pointed weapons as if to attack their next victims. Both *Poupée I* images take Bellmer's dolls a step further, as they are also an extension of early Dada collage. This anthropomorphized paper figure relies on many of the same techniques used by Hannah Höch. An early pioneer in the history of modern collage work, Höch's *Cut With the Cake Knife* (1919) (Figure 16) layers political figures, animals, newspaper phrases, and machinery on top of one another, creating a visual cacophony of disjointed photographs.⁸⁵ Each image—physically cut from its original source—implies a violent repositioning of society's detritus. Located at the top left of her montage, Höch layers the pre-typed newspaper phrase "legen Sie Ihr Geld in Dada an!" over what appears to be cloves of garlic, a locomotive, and a pulley mechanism. Similar to the muddled imagery, the phrase "put your money in Dada!" has no structured meaning; its literal and narrative connotations

⁸³ Lizzie Thynne, "Indirect Action: Politics and the Subversion of Identity in Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore's Resistance to the Occupation of Jersey," *Papers of Surrealism* 8 (2010): 9.

⁸⁴ Thynne, "Indirect Action": 8.

⁸⁵ Höch's photomontage is often referred to with the title: *Cut With the Kitchen Knife through the Beer-Belly of the Weimar Republic*.

Figure 16. Hannah Höch, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife through the Beer-Belly of the Weimar Republic*, 1919. Collage of pasted papers, 90 x 144 cm. Staatliche Museen.

are far removed. However, placed in context with its surrounding visuals, the phrase could be rendered an ironic jab at the post-war European economy. Indeed, Höch's *Cut With the Cake Knife* hints at the nonsensical aftermath of World War I. These cut magazine images are imbued with self-referential sarcasm. By removing faces from bodies and buildings from their sites, Höch mocks the modern magazines' portrayal of European society. She has distanced each image and phrase from their original pages, and the dismembered bodies and objects become actors who suggest to their audiences that chimerical post-war newspapers and magazines are untrustworthy façades.

Cahun's still-life photographs also respond to the aesthetic tensions within the Surrealist movement during the 1930s traditional sculpture of the early avant-garde. Cahun relies on the camera to document ephemeral constructions, and she utilizes found objects and clothing to create objects of desire. Her engagement with this debate is evidenced through she and Moore's archive, as a photograph of Dalí's *Aphrodisiac Jacket* (1936) (Figure 17). Few photographic reproductions of Surrealist objects appear in their archive, thus the couple's collecting of Dalí's photograph could be considered deliberate, and ultimately influential on Cahun's assemblages and images. This jacket-sculpture was also included in the *Exposition surréaliste*. Dalí's bizarre assemblage consists of a man's smoking jacket embellished with shot glasses. During the exhibition, viewers were invited to consume crème de menthe from the jacket's protruding orifices.⁸⁶ Dalí's essay for *Cahiers d'Art*, "Honneur à l'object!," refers to his jacket as a metaphor for Saint Sebastian's arrows; he concludes that the sharp points penetrating Sebastian's body become anthropomorphic in that they demarcate "the physical location of the

⁸⁶ Mileaf, *Please Touch*, 145.

Figure 17. Salvador Dalí, *Aphrodisiac Jacket*, 1936. Jersey Heritage Trust. JHT/1995/00045/137.

wearer's feelings" and further allude to the "fetishization and eroticization of Christ's cross."⁸⁷ His essay concludes by marking the anxiety accompanied by signs with dual meanings—images that can be read simultaneously to one another.⁸⁸ Cahun's preoccupation with Dalí's coat signals her interest in the precariousness of signs, or perhaps the instability of clothing and household objects' perceived impassiveness. Indeed, Cahun's still-life photographs are seemingly anthropomorphic through their embodiment of male and female organs; they become uncanny through their instability as domestic objects, and instead rendered a revolutionary tool.

That same year, Cahun also provided the still-life photographs-turned-illustrations for Lisa Deharme's *Le Coeur de pic*; a children's book of short poems and accompanying images that promotes sinister undercurrents of deviancy and harm. Cahun's images for *Le Coeur de pic* are unsettling assemblages of disparate objects that symbolize animal and organ—they humor Dalí's "Honneur à l'objet!" by anthropomorphizing household objects into manipulated constructions of detritus, decay, fantasy, and fetish. The original photographs have been accentuated for the book through Cahun's layering of graphite. They appear as *mise-en-scène* images of violence and parody, as each combines the polarities of Apollonian and Dionysian theatre. In *Untitled* (1936) (Figure 18) three shoes are haphazardly strewn on a staircase accompanied by discarded flower petals and a long fragment of fabric that extends downward into darkness. Cahun's elevated camera angle accentuates the stairs' haunting depth and unknown end location, as they wind to

⁸⁷ Mileaf, *Please Touch*, 145.

⁸⁸ Dalí uses the example of the swastika and its dual status as fascist and religious symbol.

Figure 18. Claude Cahun, *Untitled*, 1936. 178 x 128 mm. Tate Brittan.

the right and disappear into the photograph's frame. Cahun has carefully composed the shoes to achieve a heightened sense of dream-like status; the shoe to the far right appears to attempt a dialogue with the other two, perhaps mid-sentence when interrupted by the viewer's peering gaze. The shoe's carnival-like features are almost monstrous and exaggerated, accentuated by the flowers protruding from its opening. Each shoe has been manipulated through Cahun's addition of an extra appendage: while two are adorned with flowers, the center shoe births two smaller versions of itself from its titled opening. To the left lies a glass slipper, precariously positioned on the wilted floral fabric—the translucent shoe seems in the act of being drug downward, hunted by the black mass that lies below. Cahun's image might reference Freud's remark concerning the practice and ensuing fetishism of Chinese foot binding, where the extremity is broken and recast into a smaller, more "feminine" form—it similarly prevents the subject from walking long distances, thus committing its victim to a lifetime of subservience. Freud states that social customs can revert to a fetish in this way: "mutilating the female foot and then revering it like a fetish after it has been mutilated" is the man attempting "to thank the woman for having submitted to being castrated."⁸⁹ Indeed, Cahun's glass slipper is a metaphor of pre-mutilation—it looms on the edge of the staircase, but has yet to fall and shatter—it awaits and yet resists its castration, much like the female phallus.

This proclivity toward shoe fetishism is documented in Cahun's book, *Heroines* (1925), which includes a short chapter titled "Cinderella, Humble, Haughty Child." The short story colloquially perverts the relationship between Prince and shoe through a first-person account. In Cahun's retelling, Cinderella, imprisoned by her evil stepmother and

⁸⁹ Freud, "Fetishism," 157.

abusive stepsisters, is miserable and unfulfilled. Her small gestures to hail the Prince's attention have gone largely unnoticed until her fairy godmother advises her of "his passion for women's shoes." She advises Cinderella that the Prince yearns "to touch them; to kiss them; to let himself be trampled underneath their charming heels (pointed heels painted scarlet to look like splashes of blood)." ⁹⁰ Their plan succeeds, as Cinderella taunts the Prince with her newly adorned slippers and receives a confession of his deep transgression. Although she becomes Princess, Cinderella uses the title to undermine her bourgeois role through engaging in sexual acts with strangers. She laments her position in the monarchy, wishing she and the Prince could "switch roles." ⁹¹ Cahun's story of Cinderella places the "heroine" as a wielder of power (through her possession and ability to wear women's shoes) but also a captive. Although she uses the Prince's fetish to her advantage, he "mutilates" her foot by perverting it—her feet, not her sexual organs, are his source of pleasure. While Cahun's original photograph of similarly "mutilated" shoes depicts a single angle, the image used for *Le Coeur de pic* (Figure 19) presents two perspectives: while the top looks downward into the stairs' abyss, the bottom quarter of the image seems to look upward. The shoes' linear placements have been flipped to reveal their other sides—parallel to Cahun's retelling of Cinderella wherein the shoe is a site of harm and possessor of power.

While Cahun's images within *Le Coeur de pic* portray anthropomorphized household objects—they often merge "traditional" masculine and feminine forms to humor Freudian fetishism and her male contemporaries' photographs of "Surrealist

⁹⁰ Claude Cahun, *Heroines*, 69-70.

⁹¹ Cahun, *Heroines*, 70.

Figure 19. Claude Cahun, *Untitled*, 1936. *Le Coeur de Pic* (1936).

objects.” *Je Donnerais ma vie (I Would Give My Life)* (1936) (Figure 20) captures two flower-assemblages in conversation, comparable to her photograph of the three shoes. Forever cemented in a pre-embrace stance, the left figure extends a right hand upward toward the encroaching white blooms. According to the image’s corresponding poem, the figure states: “Beauty of the night/Lord Jehan says/I would give my life/For you to live one hour.”⁹² The leaf-and-hand assemblage on the left appears to utter these words to the figure on the right, as it gestures in a contrived Shakespearean stance: its right leg stabilizes the forward-gesture of its hands and body. While the left figure is fashioned from dried leaves, miniature plastic hands, and a round, spiked bulb for a head (perhaps the center of a flower with petals removed), the right figure exhibits little manipulation. With its four blooms as eyes, the flower branch peers downward onto its desperate suitor. The presence of both coded feminine and masculine signs is illustrated through the removal of the flower’s petals (left) and the intact petals (right).

The still-life photographs Cahun continues to produce during 1936 are short stories contained within a single snapshot, yet are bound within a body of work that toys with fantasy and fetish, much like her book *Heroines. Untitled* (1936) (Figure 21) is a stage for Cahun’s props to act—the sword, gloves, and flowers within its foreground seem to have been in motion, but suddenly de-animated. Within its historical setting, and given Cahun’s social circle, *Untitled* could be a direct reference to Breton’s *Nadja* (1928). Breton’s text is imbued with found and lost love, and “displaced objects of desire, those objects—be they Nadja’s glove, her clothes, or the city itself—on which he focuses

⁹² My translation. See Lisa Deharme, *Le Coeur de pic: Trente-duex poems pour les enfants* (1937; repr. Bordeaux: Éditions MeMo, 2004).

Figure 20. Claude Cahun, *Je Donnerais ma vie* (I Would Give My Life), 1936. 108 x 170 mm. Jersey Heritage Trust. JHT/1995/00035/z.

Figure 21. Claude Cahun, *Untitled* (gloves and sword), 1936. 130 x 183 mm. Jersey Heritage Trust. JHT/1995/00040/p.

Figure 22. Anonymous, *Gant de femme aussi* (*A Woman's Glove as well*, 1928. From Andre Breton, *Nadja*, Paris, Editions Gallimard, 1928.

attention.”⁹³ The deflated appearance of the gloves within Cahun’s photograph mimics the image that accompanies Breton’s story: *Gant de femme aussi (A Woman’s Glove as well)* (1928) (Figure 22). *Nadja* concludes with its female subject entering a mental asylum—she is a metaphor for the “mad” woman—primitive and irrational—a standing symbol of desire throughout the Surrealist movement.⁹⁴ While Breton’s book imprisons its protagonist, Cahun’s image perhaps arms Nadja’s accessories with a sword; a glove—the symbol for lack, an object without an appendage to fill it—is coupled with a phallic object of danger. Cahun’s *Untitled* builds on Breton’s character of Nadja to render her heroine—she is fantasy coupled with death.

⁹³ Fer, “Surrealism, Myth and Psychoanalysis,” 183.

⁹⁴ Fer, “Surrealism, Myth and Psychoanalysis,” 185.

CONCLUSION

Cahun and Moore's resistance efforts are the focus of recent scholarship, but little research is devoted to their post-war photographs. In comparison to their earlier political entrenchments, perhaps the couple's images produced after 1945 are perceived as an arcadian appendix. The partners refused the opportunity to evacuate Jersey in 1940—although Nazi soldiers were encroaching on the small island, Cahun and Moore made the decision to stay and resist. They carefully distributed anti-Nazi propaganda and kept informed of resistance efforts through their “illegal” radio.⁹⁵ Moore retrospectively explained their decision to stay to a local newspaper reporter: “We always listened to the BBC and any other news we could get which was not tainted by Boche propaganda, and it made us perfectly sick to hear the ‘news’ put out by Radio Paris, so we decided to run a news service of our own for the benefit of the German troops.”⁹⁶ After their arrest in 1944, Cahun and Moore's Jersey home became a pillaging site for Nazi soldiers; their photographs and belongings (including paintings by Joan Miró, Pablo Picasso, and Dalí, in addition to Orlaf's bust of Cahun) were confiscated or destroyed.⁹⁷ Their floors were strewn with what occupiers judged as books and papers of little consequence—perhaps an ironic foreshadowing of the 1972 Jersey auction, when Wakeham collected the lovers'

⁹⁵ Follain, “Lucy Schwob and Suzanne Malherbe—*Résistantes*,” 84.

⁹⁶ Follain, “Lucy Schwob and Suzanne Malherbe—*Résistantes*,” 83.

⁹⁷ Follain, “Lucy Schwob and Suzanne Malherbe—*Résistantes*,” 95.

scattered remnants from the auction house floor. When liberation finally arrived in May of 1945, the sisters returned to their homestead and began to sort through the discarded papers, in addition to scouring the island for their furniture, books, and artworks.⁹⁸ They considered returning to Paris, but Cahun's already unstable health had been further exacerbated through her prison suicide attempts, thus traveling was frivolous. Instead, the sisters acquired another camera; the landscapes, cats, and gardens they photographed are layered with covert references death and same-sex desire—perhaps engendered by the recent war and frequent threat of losing one another to suicide or Nazi violence while confined in the Gloucester Street Prison.

Around 1948, Cahun and Moore began the series *Le chemin des chats*; an early photograph (dated c.1948) (Figure 23) depicts a blindfolded Cahun attached to a feline through a short leash. Cats—when reduced to semiotic signs—can stand as a rejection of societal values and hierarchical structures in addition to referencing female sexuality.⁹⁹ This image establishes Cahun's body as connected—physically and mentally—to the cat, for it precariously guides a blinded Cahun along a large rock wall overlooking the Jersey beach. Cahun and her feline companion are positioned in front of a stone cemetery and

⁹⁸ Follain, "Lucy Schwob and Suzanne Malherbe—*Résistantes*," 95. Some of Moore's drawings were found dispersed across the island, but most of their belongings were never found (some were located through the Government House.) Follain also posits that the couple's housekeeper espied the girlfriend of a Nazi interrogator in Cahun's clothes during the last few months of the German Occupation.

⁹⁹ Maria Nikolajeva, "Devils, Demons, Familiars, Friends: Toward a Semiotics of Literary Cats," *Marvels & Tales* 23:2 (2009): 251, 253.

Figure 23. Claude Cahun, *Le chemin des chats V*, c. 1948. 201 x 152 mm. Jersey Heritage Trust, JHT/1995/00035/w.

large church—a symbol of hegemony contrasted with wartime death and dissolution. In what may be misconstrued as a humorous precursor to contemporary performance, Cahun and Moore's series documents a shift in post-war consciousness: Freudian psychology is camouflaged through a coupling of death and desire—*décès et la chatte*.¹⁰⁰

While the understanding of Surrealist photography in the field still relies on the binary logic of gender and sexuality, Cahun and Moore's oeuvre challenges this approach. Their portraits and still-life images illuminate the parameters of Surrealist discourse—strategic confines that both ignore and subvert a queering of early twentieth-century European photography. The gender polarizations within Surrealism's history can be partially attributed to Freud, who is considered the analytical nexus for the populous cohort of Bretonian photographers. Their texts, in conjunction with Surrealist photography, frequently deduce women to a psychological accessory—the object versus the subject—the periphery to the center. Neither Cahun or Moore were strangers to Freud's work, or the expansive social circle of Breton. The lovers' poems, radical essays, written correspondence and archived ephemera demonstrate her knowledge of those considered integral to the early avant-garde.¹⁰¹ But rather than accepting Freud and

¹⁰⁰ Jacqueline Rose, *Why War?* (Cambridge, MA, 1993), 15-39.

¹⁰¹ Gen Doy has been a primary proponent of Cahun's literary influences. See "Another Side of the Picture: Looking Differently at Claude Cahun," in *Don't Kiss Me: The Art of Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore*, ed. Louise Downie (New York: Aperture in association with the Jersey Heritage Trust, 2006), 72-81. Doy's more expansive text, *Claude Cahun: A Sensual Politics of Photography* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008) lists her influences: Freud, Karl Marx, Havelock Ellis, Friedrich Engels, Leon Trotsky, and

Breton's works as defining paradigms, both women have chosen to mine and mold Freudian fetishism to fit their own political and aesthetic ideologies.¹⁰² Their photographs not only reflect on Surrealism's engagement with the camera and psychoanalysis, but also provide an example of how photography can mock, subvert, and queer the patriarchal logic of the woman as object.

Jacques Lacan (with whom she frequently corresponded.) Cahun's documents within the Jersey Heritage Trust corroborate Doy's findings.

¹⁰² Lusty, *Surrealism, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*, 7.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

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Education

- MA 2016 University of Louisville
Thesis: "Claude Cahun, Marcel Moore, and the Collapse of
'Surrealist Photography'"
- BA 2010 University of Louisville
Areas of Specialization: Modern and Contemporary Art; Twentieth-
Century Philosophy

Professional Experience

- 2015 — Present Research Assistant, The Speed Art Museum, Louisville, KY
- 2015 — 2016 Graduate Teaching Assistant, University of Louisville, Louisville,
KY
- 2014 Development Assistant, The Kentucky School of Art at Spalding
University, Louisville, KY
- 2012 — 2014 Admissions Counselor, The Kentucky School of Art at Spalding
University, Louisville, KY
- 2007 — 2011 Fundraising Administration Intern and Visitor Services Associate,
The Speed Art Museum, Louisville, KY

Grants/Fellowships/Awards

- 2016 Outstanding Graduate Student, University of Louisville Hite Art
Institute
- 2015 University of Louisville Hite Art Institute Graduate Student Travel
Grant
- 2015 — 2016 Don Payton Fellowship, University of Louisville
- Summer 2015 Hite-Speed Fellowship, University of Louisville, Speed Art
Museum

Publications

Catalogues, Reviews, Websites

“Stephen Irwin: When Less is More.” UnderMain.
(<http://www.undermain.com>), March 2016.

“FORMLESS: Abjections of the Self.” In *2015 Art Graduate Catalog*. SUNY: University at Buffalo, August 2015.

“All About The Alloy.” UnderMain.
(<http://www.undermain.com>), August 2015.

“Uncanny Nanny: The Intrigue of Vivian Maier.” UnderMain.
(<http://www.undermain.com>), June 2015.

“Making Time.” In *The Beauty of a Block: Women Printmakers of the WPA Era*, 16-17. University of Louisville: Hite Art Institute, 2015.

Review of *Great Meadows: The Making of Here*, edited by Julien Robson. UnderMain (<http://www.under-main.com>), May 2015.

“Preservation as Presence: Michael Ratterman’s Absorption.” In *Defining Installation*, edited by Susan Jarosi, 10-11. University of Louisville: Hite Art Institute, 2014.

Exhibitions

2015 *The Beauty of a Block: Women Printmakers of the WPA Era*,
Schneider Hall Galleries, Hite Art Institute.

2014 *Defining Installation*, Zephyr Gallery

2009 *Transformation of Images: The Incredible Likeness of Seeing*,
Cressman Center, Hite Art Institute

Conferences, Presentations, Papers

2015 Critical Mass: Exhibitions in Review Panel
Lexington, University of Kentucky

2015 South Eastern Museums Conference Spotlight on Student
Research Jacksonville, Florida

“The Beauty of a Block: Women Printmakers of the WPA Era”

Professional Service

2015	Jury Panel, Madison Art Club, Regional Fall Exhibition
2014 — 2015	Speaker Coordinator, TEDxUofL2015
2014 — 2015	Editorial and Review Board, <i>Parnassus</i> , Aegis Graduate Student Organization
2010 — 2013	Volunteer Coordinator, New Year’s Dinner and Auction, Asia Institute-Crane House

Professional Affiliations

College Art Association

Southeastern Museums Conference

Languages Read

German, French