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René Magritte: The Revealing Image, Photos and Films

18th August 2017

<http://artguide.com.au/rene-magritte-the-revealing-image-photos-and-films>

Once when asked what he was interested in René Magritte simply answered, “Creating. My only wish is to be enriched by exciting new ideas.” Indeed Magritte’s ‘exciting new ideas’ have given us some of the most resonating images of our time: cloud-filled skies, tobacco pipes, floating apples and hidden faces. Yet *René Magritte: The Revealing Image, Photos and Films* at Latrobe Regional Gallery looks beyond his canonised imagery to unveil the process, spirit and personality behind the paintings.

Staged in collaboration with the Magritte Foundation in Belgium, *The Revealing Image* displays a collection of Magritte’s personal, and largely unseen, photographs and films. Director of Latrobe Regional Gallery Mark Themann says, “It was a great chance for the Magritte Foundation to resurrect these photographs and ideas and to assemble a new body of work that would give a different glimpse into both Magritte’s photos and his larger work.”

Chief curator Xavier Cannone has divided the exhibition into six sections. The first part surveys Magritte’s personal images including photos of his family, parents and his time in military service as well as images of fellow thinkers and artists. Other sections focus on Magritte’s photographs in relation to his paintings. “Magritte used the camera to think and to sketch,” explains Themann. “He wouldn’t have any models. He would use the photograph as a basis upon which to start painting, assembling and juxtaposing objects and ideas.”

The Revealing Image positions Magritte’s photographs as both art objects and documentary images, as well as insights into Magritte’s process.

But as Themann points out, “It would be a stretch to say Magritte made photos as artworks deliberately. That may be the case, but it was such a private, process-based and fun-driven activity.”

In addition to photographs the exhibition features Magritte’s homemade films. These show the artist’s love of silent movies and Hollywood narratives. Often collaborating with friends and family, Magritte used his films as a chance to gain ideas through short works that Themann considers “humorous, absurd and a little bit anarchic... It was to entertain himself, but also to start to think.”

Above all, *The Revealing Image* showcases how photography and film aided Magritte in both seeing and communicating the perpetual strangeness of our world. “With Magritte, I think there is a resonance with contemporary life now in that we all face a similar series of fascinations and a longing for mystery; we respond to that in Magritte,” says Themann.

Latrobe Regional Gallery will be the only Australian venue to show *René Magritte: The Revealing Image, Photos and Films* before the exhibition continues on a world tour.

René Magritte: The Revealing Image, Photos and Films

Latrobe Regional Gallery

19 August – 19 November.

<http://artguide.com.au/rene-magritte-the-revealing-image-photos-and-films>



René Magritte, *René Magritte and The Barbarian (Le Barbare)*, London Gallery, London, 1938. Private collection. Courtesy Brachot Gallery, Brussels. Original photograph, 43.2 x 33.2



cm.

René

Magritte, *Flirtatiousness (La coquetterie)*, 1929. René Magritte at the Jardin des Plantes, photo-booth photo. Private collection. Courtesy Brachot Gallery, Brussels. Original photograph, 43.2 x 33.2 cm.



René Magritte,

Shunk Kender: René Magritte in front of *Le sens de réalité*, 1960. Private collection. Courtesy Brachot Gallery, Brussels. Original photograph, 43.2 x 33.2 cm.



René Magritte, *The Giant (Le Géant)*, 1937. Paul Nougé on the Belgian Coast. Private collection. Courtesy Brachot Gallery, Brussels. Original photograph, 41.2 x 33.2 cm^[1]_{SEP.}



René Magritte, [SEP]The Meeting (Le Rendez-vous), 1938. Brussels, [SEP]Private collection, Courtesy Brachot Gallery, Brussels, Original photograph, 43.2 x 33.2 cm.



René Magritte, *The Bouquet*

(Le Bouquet), 1937. Georgette and René Magritte, Rue Essegheem, Brussels. Collection: Private collection. Courtesy Brachot Gallery, Brussels. Original photograph, 43.2 x 33.2 cm.