

Maruja Mallo: Lost at Sea



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Maruja Mallo's life and work are shrouded in mystery. Her family history is unknown, and her life and death are shrouded in mystery. She was a member of the Surrealist movement, but her work has not been fully explored. This thesis aims to shed light on her life and work, and to help to bring her story to the fore.

On my honor, I have neither given nor received any unauthorized aid on this thesis.

Danah H. Stroh

I found few accounts of Mallo's work and life, so I relied heavily on secondary sources for this thesis.

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Introduction

The Reina Sofia houses works executed by some of the best known Spanish artists of the 20th century. The museum guide, however, mentions only one female Spanish artist, vanguard painter Maruja Mallo. This implies that she made a great contribution to the art of her time, yet finding information on her is difficult.

Like many female artists, Maruja Mallo has been “written out of history.” Standard texts treating Surrealism generally exclude female Surrealist artists, and Mallo is no exception. However, she is also seldom included even in books dealing with female Surrealists. Even though Mallo’s work extends over seventy years of steady artistic production, her paintings are displayed in important museums such as the Reina Sofía, and she was highly praised in her day, public information regarding her artistic development is limited. Most of it provides a very narrow point of view of her work, and is in Spanish or the even more inaccessible Gallego language of her native region, making her unfamiliar to English speaking Westerners. Only within the past twenty years has Mallo been recognized for her relationship with the Spanish vanguard of the 1920s and 30s.

I found few accounts of Mallo’s work and what I did find treated her oeuvre in formalist terms. Nonetheless, what I found implied that she was celebrated and admired in her day. Mallo’s case calls more for investigation than argument. Given the scant availability of information, I decided to treat not just one question, but several. Who is she? Does she qualify as a Surrealist painter and why? What methodologies best suit the study of her work? How is it that an artist who was respected, admired, and embraced in

her own time was so lost to history? Mallo's love of the ocean and her exclusion from history led me to my thesis title, "Maruja Mallo: Lost at Sea."

The Biography of Maruja Mallo

she participated in the Spanish revolution as a poet and writer. She died later in the country at great age. Her life and literary work have not been well-documented during these years, except by Ms. Inés de la Jara, who includes short references that reflect her interest that she had learned from her mother's experiences. An educated and courageous femininity was called her "style of respect" within the Spanish Vanguard of the 1920s and 30s.¹² One friend described her as a "charming artist, as inventive as one is lets persuade, an irreverent spirit."¹³ Interestingly, in Spain at that time women were beginning to expand beyond traditional roles. And their desperation to be extreme, to undergo, to withstand and to create.¹⁴¹⁵

She died in 1962, in La Jara by her side¹⁶ and given the name Apa María Gómez. Gómez, however, is the name which was eventually replaced with Maruja Mallo.¹⁷ Her birth place, though overlooked in the literature, was in the small town of Gádor, in the north coast of Spain (Figure 1). She was born in 1902, the second child of her mother, María del Pilar Gómez, and her father, Juan Gómez, both came from the lower-middle class. They were like most other working-class parents' back then, a large family of fifteen children. "A few years ago, in Madrid where I now live, I explained myself as self-educated, socially active,"¹⁸ she said. "I had no formal education but was held in awe

Chapter I: The Biography of Maruja Mallo

Maruja Mallo was born in Gádor, in the province of Almería, in 1902.¹⁹ Her mother, María Gómez, was a domestic worker and her father, Juan Gómez, a middle-class man who worked in the local textile mill. Her mother, María del Pilar Gómez, was the daughter of a weaver and a widow. Her father, Juan Gómez, was the son of a weaver and a widow. They were both from the lower-middle class. They were like most other working-class parents' back then, a large family of fifteen children. "A few years ago, in Madrid where I now live, I explained myself as self-educated, socially active,"¹⁸ she said. "I had no formal education but was held in awe

¹² Victoria Ceballos, "Maruja Mallo: Esposa, fotógrafa y escritora en la Guerra Civil" (1998).

¹³ Interview, Fernández Magaña, María, Taller de fotografía y artes visuales, Espacio Cultural, Madrid, 1998; Marta Vela, 1998, 191. There are two versions on the date of birth: 1902 and 1903. However, biographer Ceballos lists 1902, while María Gómez, her mother, lists 1903.

¹⁴ She would have gone by the name "Ana María Gómez," but she chose to use her mother's last name. She became Maruja, a nickname the friends "used to call her," "Mangua" is unclear but probably by the time she was 19, as papers when her work appeared in art reviews as "Mangua" were a common practice for her contemporaries. "Mangua" was a popular name that very quickly became Maruja, and Maruja was not one to hide it. As she wrote:

"...y yo, en el taller de fotografía, me presenté con mi nombre de soltera, María Gómez, y

Goya painted aristocrats with peasant faces; Picasso stated that “Good taste is the enemy of creativity;” and Maruja Mallo rode her bicycle through a cathedral during Mass. The story of Mallo’s life is infused with anecdotes about her boldness that oftentimes matched that of her famous male contemporaries. An exuberant and eccentric personality earned her a place of respect within the Spanish vanguard of the 1920s and 30s. One friend described her as “a beautiful artist, as inventive as she is tempestuous, an indomitable spirit.”¹ Maruja Mallo lived in Spain at time when women were beginning to expand beyond traditional roles. She took this liberation to an extreme, to audacity, in painting and in everyday life.

The artist was born January 5, 1902² and given the name Ana María Gómez González (*figure 1.1*), a name which she eventually replaced with ‘‘Maruja Mallo.’’³ Her birth place, Lugo, is situated in the autonomous region of Galicia, on the northwest coast of Spain (*figure 1.2*).⁴ Her father, Justo Gómez Mallo from Madrid, and mother, María del Pilar González Lorenzo from Galicia, both came from the Spanish upper-middle class. They were able to provide a comfortable economic situation for their family of fourteen children. Within this large family environment, Mallo established herself as self-sufficient, socially adept, and witty, but this would eventually become bold insolence

¹ Victoria Combalia, “Maruja Mallo: Esprit Indomptable,” *Art Press*, no.88 (1985): 54.

² Fundación Cultural Mapfre Vida, *Fuera de Orden: Mujeres de la Vanguardia Española* (Madrid: Fundación Cultural Mapfre Vida, 1999), 191. There are discrepancies in the date of Mallo’s birth. Most sources give it as 1902; however, biographer Consuelo de la Gándara claims it to be 1909.

³ She would have gone by the name “Ana María Gómez” for everyday use. As for the name she chose to call herself later in life, the name “Maruja” is a nickname for “María.” When Mallo chose to call herself “Maruja” is unclear but certainly by the time she was 19, as this is when her name appears in art reviews as such. I could not locate a definitive reason for her name change. Perhaps because her birth name was very common in Spain and Mallo was certainly not one to blend in with the crowd.

⁴ Fundación Cultural Mapfre Vida, 191.

and 1900, after fulfilling his obligation, "Dona" turned the family in more seriously.

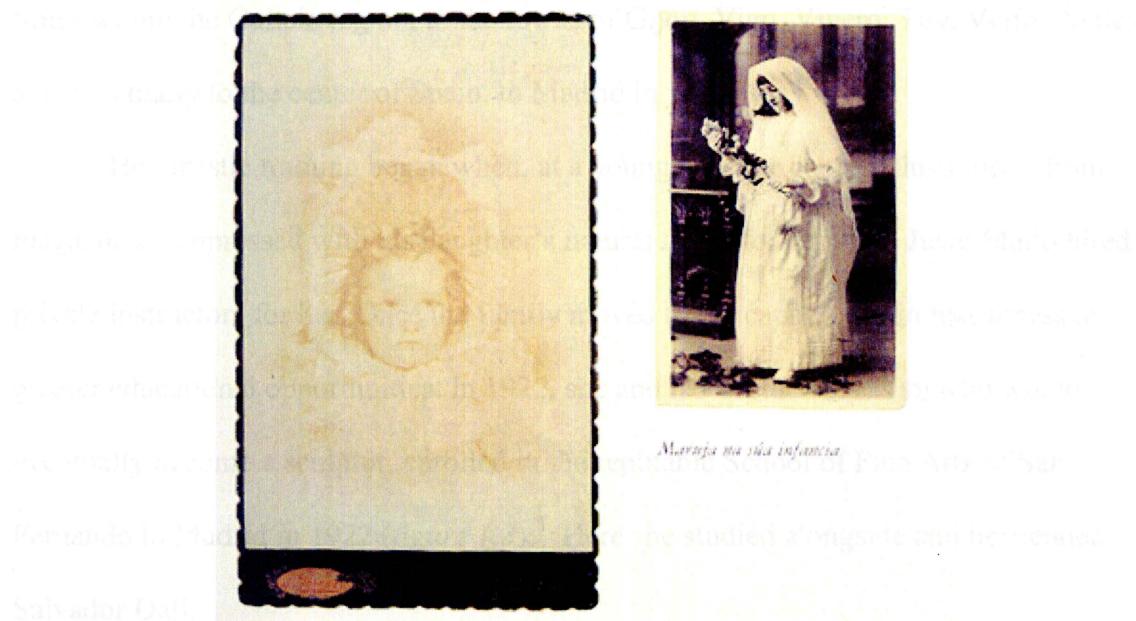


Fig. 1.1 Photographs of Mallo in infancy and at her first communion, c.1902 and 1910, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).

plum despite the new *Brochures* unacceptable to women. However, Mallo's parents seem to



Fig. 1.2 Map of Spanish autonomous regions. Galicia is region 1, rpt. online at <http://www.map-of-spain.co.uk> (Map of Spain: 2003), accessed March 27, 2004.

later in life.⁵ Her father's job as a customs official⁶ forced the family to move several times within the Galicia region, to the towns of Gijón, Vigo, Vivero, Tuy, Verín, Áviles, and eventually to the center of Spain, to Madrid in 1922.⁷

Her artistic training began when, at a young age, she copied illustrations from magazines. Impressed with his daughter's natural talent for drawing, Justo Mallo hired private instructors for her. Once the family moved to the capital, Mallo had access to greater educational opportunities. In 1922, she and her brother Cristino, who would eventually become a sculptor, enrolled in the reputable School of Fine Arts of San Fernando in Madrid in 1922 (*figure 1.3*).⁸ Here she studied alongside and befriended Salvador Dalí.

As mentioned before, during this time in Spain women were venturing into new social spheres. Members of the older generation, would have been dubious of this artistic pursuit despite the new freedoms accessible to women. However, Mallo's parents seem to have been supportive of her career. This may be verified by the facts that they provided her with art lessons at a young age, paid for her university education, and also had a son who was an artist. Aside from being prohibited to take anatomy classes at the Academy of San Fernando, Mallo received quality artistic training there.

After finishing her studies in 1926, Maruja remained in Madrid for the next two years, during which time she became part of Spanish avant-garde discussion groups

⁵ Consuelo de la Gándara, *Maruja Mallo* (Madrid: Servicio de Publicaciones del Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 1978), 15.

⁶ Susan Kirkpatrick, Ph.D., e-mail message to author, March 10, 2004.

⁷ Fundación Cultural Mapfre Vida, 191.

⁸ Fundación Cultural Mapfre Vida, 191. In Spanish, "La Escuela de Bellas Arte de San Fernando."



Fig. 1.3 An example of Mallo's academic training. Notice she signs the portrait "Ana Maria Gomez."

Maruja Mallo, *untitled portrait*, 1927, charcoal on paper, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, [Maruja Mallo](#) (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).

through her older brother Justo's connections. The most famous circle, known as the Generation of '27, included: Luis Buñel, Salvador Dalí, Federico García Lorca, Rafael Alberti, Benjamín Palencia, Pablo Neruda, Hernández, and Caballero.⁹ Mallo became particularly active in one group which extended beyond the Madrid vanguard, the Escuela de Vallecas, led by sculptor Alberto Sanchez and painter Benjamín Palencia.¹⁰ These groups partook in audacious acts, such as holding blasphemy contests or bursting into a Cathedral during a service on bicycles, an idea which was more than likely Mallo's, as she loved to ride bicycles (*figure 1.4*).¹¹

The Escuela de Vallecas formed in 1926 under the leadership of Sanchez and Palencia, who noticed that after an "Exposition of Iberian Artists" many successful Spanish artists left for Paris to join the more renowned Surrealist group. The two hoped to create a competitive Spanish vanguard that would parallel other artistic schools, such as the Florecillas de San Francisco and the Barbizon. Members included Mallo, García Lorca, Alberti, Bergamín and Juan Manuel Caneja.¹²

Their purpose, aside from creating a movement to rival the French, was rooted in the idea of creating a new order, a new conception of reality to be reflected in art.¹³ In one of her lectures, Mallo concisely explains this search for a new vision: "The true sense that makes an art new and integral is, more than a solid scientific understanding or a

⁹ de la Gádara, 8.

¹⁰ Francisco Calvo Serraller, "Escuela de Vallecas: Una Vanguardia Artística," Escuela de Vallecas [book chapter online] (1984-1985); available from <http://www.vadevallecas.org/cabecera/HISTORIA/escuela.htm>; Internet; accessed 6 November 2003.

¹¹ Susan Kirkpatrick, PhD, e-mail message to author, March 10, 2004.

¹² Serraller, Internet.

¹³ de Ayala and Rivas, 21.

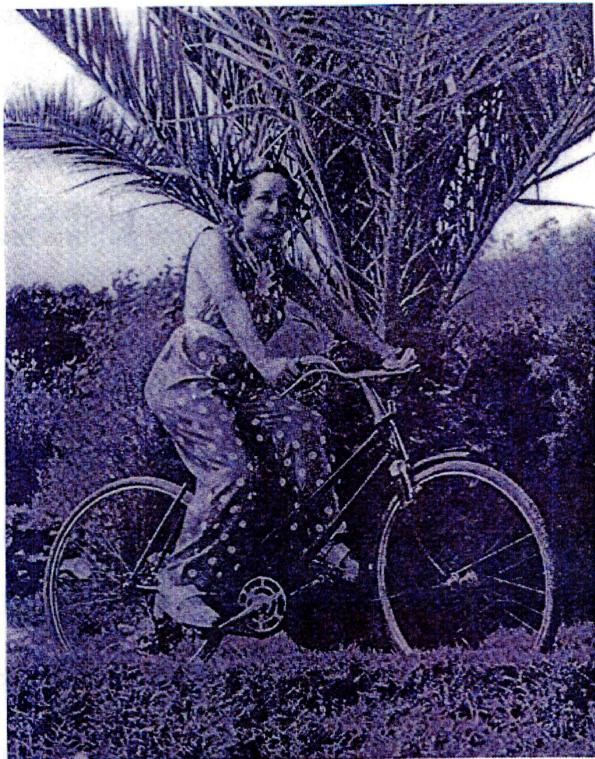


Fig. 1.4 Photograph of Mallo partaking in one of her favorite hobbies, bicycling, c. 1937, rpt. in Juan Perez de Ayala and Francisco Rivas, eds. Maruja Mallo (Madrid: Guillermo de Osma Galeria, 1992).

everyday, such as *Desnudos, Fármacos y Cuentos*.

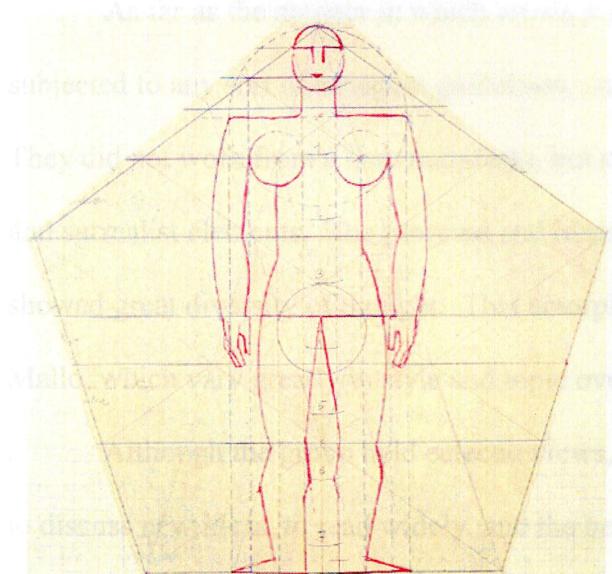


Fig. 1.5 The use of strict proportion. Maruja Mallo, preparatory drawing of a figure, no year, pencil on paper, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).

steady manual skill, the creation of an iconography, for a living religion, for a new order.”¹⁴ With thoughts such as these guiding their creativity, the artists established a new vision of the Castilian countryside as magical and sensual, quite a change from the sad and fatalistic view of the Spanish countryside held by the country’s poets and artists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.¹⁵

To create this new vision of Spanish life, the group met in Madrid and often visited the Prado Museum, where they would admire the works of great Spanish artists of the past, particularly El Greco. They also traveled to the countryside town of Vallecas, the namesake of the group, located outside Madrid. Here the group explored the countryside surrounding the town and found topics for their work. Palencia encouraged members, while exploring, to look for references to famous Spanish literature in the everyday, such as *Lazarillo de Tormes* and *Don Quijote*.

As far as the manner in which artists painted was concerned, members were not subjected to any sort of stringent guidelines, unlike Breton’s Surrealist group in Paris. They did not work from a firm manifesto, but rather from a mélange of fauvist, cubist, and surrealist elements. The program and ideas changed with their discussions and showed great diversity of thought. This amorphous doctrine is reflected in the works of Mallo, which vary greatly in style and topic over her seventy-year career.

Although the group held eclectic views, members did hold in common the desire to discuss new ideas, to read widely, and the belief that painting and life were the same thing. All claimed to find inspiration in Franciscan poetry, the philosophy of Plato and Pythagoras, and the baroque poetry of Luis de Góngora. One text revered by the group

¹⁴ de Ayala and Rivas, 23.

¹⁵ Serraller, Internet.

became very influential in Mallo's work, the *Divine Proportion* by Italian Renaissance mathematician Luca Pacioli. After her friend Luis Castellanos translated the text to Spanish, Mallo utilized Pacioli's "golden number" in many works, as can be seen in her preparatory sketches (*figure 1.5*).¹⁶

The Escuela de Vallecas emerged as the only art circle to survive the Civil War. Young painters joined the group post-war, however with a new spirit under the oppressive Franco government and without the presence of Mallo, who went into exile.¹⁷ However, prior to this departure, in the late 1920s, between the Madrid vanguard and the Escuela de Vallecas, Mallo found herself in a milieu of intellectual energy and surrounded by the stimulus of influential people who helped fuel her artistic inspiration.¹⁸

In 1928 philosopher Jose Ortega y Gasset, creator and editor of *Revista de Occidente* (*Magazine of the Occident*), recognized Mallo's talent and provided her with an individual exhibition, sponsored by the publication.¹⁹ Mallo had her first solo exhibition in the salon of the *Revista de Occidente*. The show included 10 oil paintings and 30 colored prints, and received adulatory reviews. Her most successful works in this exhibition are from the series entitled *Las Verbenas* (*The Festivals*, 1927-28), which consists of four oil paintings.²⁰

Mallo's exploration of Spanish communities is revealed here in scenes of people celebrating religious holidays (*figures 1.6-1.7*). Her choice of subject echoes that of

¹⁶ Combalia, 59. See Chapter IV for an application of Pacioli's theories to Mallo's work.

¹⁷ Serraller, Internet.

¹⁸ de la Gádara, 9.

¹⁹ de la Gádara, 53.

²⁰ de la Gádara, 17. These carnival-like festivals are held on certain Catholic holidays in Spain.



Fig. 1.6 Maruja Mallo, *Verbena*, 1928, oil on canvas, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).



Fig. 1.7 Maruja Mallo, *Verbena*, 1928, oil on canvas, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).

Goya, who also painted scenes of Spanish festivals. She commented upon the Spanish master in her essay “The Science of Measurement and Other Topics:” “Goya is the revolutionary revelation for the Spanish people. For the Spanish, spirit, truth, and the humane are primary. For the Spaniard, it is not to know, but to feel.”²¹ In this series, Mallo conveys that energy and feeling in panoramic scenes.

She uses brilliant, varied colors and a dynamic cubist collage style to depict the colloquial spirit. Larger than life, volumetric figures fill stage-like settings. Each painting contains familiar Spanish elements, such as women wearing mantillas, Catholic religious figures, and members from various socio-economic classes.²² Mallo conducts an anthropological study of her country by packing her paintings with the minutiae of Spanish celebrations, in a “synchronistic vision of the world and a deformed treatment of space.”²³

After this first exhibition, Mallo was called an expert painter, a careful observer of mathematical proportion, humorous, and ironic.²⁴ Renowned Spanish poet Federico García Lorca commented upon her work: “These paintings are the paintings which I have seen painted with the most imagination, with the most grace, with the most tenderness and with the most sensuality . . . ”.²⁵

²¹ Maruja Mallo, “La Ciencia de la Medida y Otros Temas,” in *Maruja Mallo*, ed. by Juan Pérez de Ayala and Rivas (Madrid: Guillermo de Osma Galería, 1992), 116.

²² de la Gádara, 17-20.

²³ Combalia, 56. ²⁴ The painting has unfortunately disappeared.

²⁵ de la Gádara, 8.

²⁵ de Ayala and Rivas, 108.

The artist's success helped to garner a grant in 1932 from the Amplicación de Estudios to help her travel to Paris. Here, she met the French Surrealists, and was recognized as a Surrealist painter. André Breton was quite taken with her work, as noted by one of Mallo's biographers, Ramon Gómez de la Serna: "André Breton, leader of the surrealists, appears in his braid and his epaulettes in the painter's studio and buys a picture called *Espantapajaros* (*Scarecrow*)."²⁶ In France, she exhibited at the Galerie Pierre, a salon in which Miró and Picasso had previously displayed their work.²⁷ Sixteen paintings from her *Cloacas y Campanarios* (*Cesspools and Belfries*) series were chosen for exhibition.

This series contains Mallo's darkest and most pessimistic work (*figures 1.8-1.9*). She visited the surrounding slums and suburbs of Madrid, viewing them as centers of decay. Incongruous objects of human refuse are placed side by side in apocalyptic settings. For example, in *Espantapeces* (*Scarefish*, 1932) (*figure 1.9*),²⁸ the traditional scarecrow has been decapitated and replaced by stakes bearing donkey skulls, pants, shirts, the debris of the stuffed dummy exploded across the canvas. In a murky setting, these ghastly stakes now serve to ward off fish remains rather than birds. They rise from the breached floor and impale various objects: pants, donkey skulls, and shirts. Decrepit wheels and other decaying objects seem to swirl around the stakes. Fish skeletons float between the larger objects and butchers' knives wedge into the scorched ground. The

²⁶ Ramon Gomez de la Serna, *Maruja Mallo: 59 Grabados en Negro y 9 Laminas en Color, 1928-1942* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 1942), 20. Victoria Combalia notes in her article "Maruja Mallo: Esprit Indomptable" that the painting has unfortunately disappeared.

²⁷ de la Gádara, 53.

²⁸ de la Gádara, 24.



Fig. 1.8 Maruja Mallo, *Grajo y excrementos* (*Rook and Excrement*), 1931, oil on canvas, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).

gardening, fashion, and cooking. This might serve as sufficient explanation for her abrupt departure, as de la Sierra notes, “she had no desire to bind herself ...” After returning briefly to Madrid in 1931, she took odd jobs—working as a stage set designer, ceramic

designer, and drawing instructor at secondary institutions. During this time, Mallo experimented with various artistic styles.

1932: *Construcción rural* (*Rural Construction*)

Fig. 1.9 Maruja Mallo, *Espantapeces* (*Scarefish*), 1932, oil on canvas, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).



destructive and organic sense of this series reminds one of the desolate landscapes of such male Surrealist painters as Dalí and Yves Tanguy.

Picasso's dealer, Paul Rosenberg offered Mallo a two year contract, but she declined.²⁹ Despite her success, her stay in Paris was quite brief. Perhaps Breton's overbearing personality, or the fact that she had been labeled a Surrealist hastened her departure. It is also likely that her dedication to the goal of the Escuela de Vallecas, to keep Spanish artists in Spain, guided her in making the decision to leave Paris and its offerings. Her general tendency to contradict expectations, "her extreme independence regarding fashions and cliques,"³⁰ might serve as sufficient explanation for her abrupt departure, as de la Serna notes: "she had no desire to bind herself. . .".³¹ After returning to Madrid in 1933, she held several jobs, working as a stage set designer, ceramic designer, and drawing instructor at secondary institutions. During this time, Mallo experimented with various artistic styles.

Her *Construcciones Rurales* (*Rural Constructions*, 1933-34) reveal a use of abstraction and geometry (*figures 1.10-1.11*). Buildings and animals of the countryside are reduced to minimum geometric composition, yet are depicted in such a way to suggest what they are, giving them an appearance similar to Joan Miró's abstract objects. Mallo also experiments with abstraction in her *Arquitecturas* (*Architectures*, 1933-1934) series (*figures 1.12-1.13*). Paint is applied heavily with a palette knife to form suggestions of fruits, vegetables, or rocks. A strict mathematical order underlies these

*Fig. 1.11 María Mallo, *Construcciones Rurales**

²⁹ de la Serna, 18.

³⁰ Combalia, 55.

³¹ de la Serna, 21.

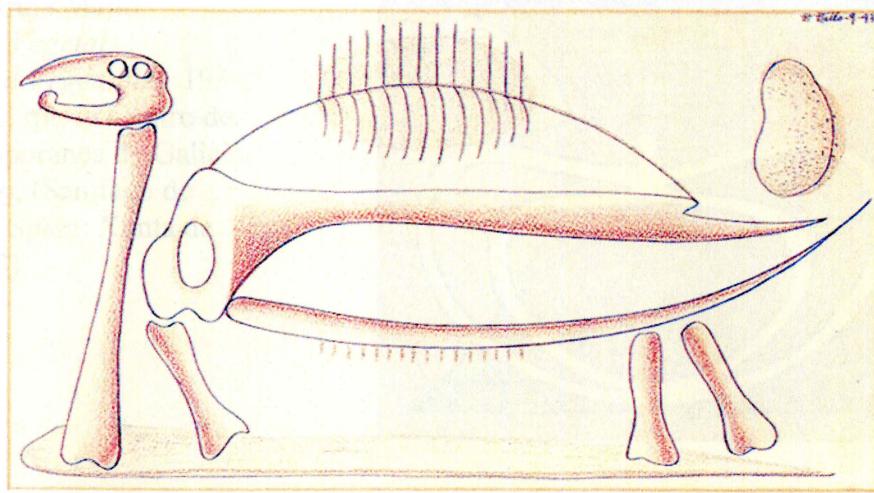


Fig. 1.10 Maruja Mallo, *Arquitectura (Architectural Form)*, 1933, oil on canvas, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).

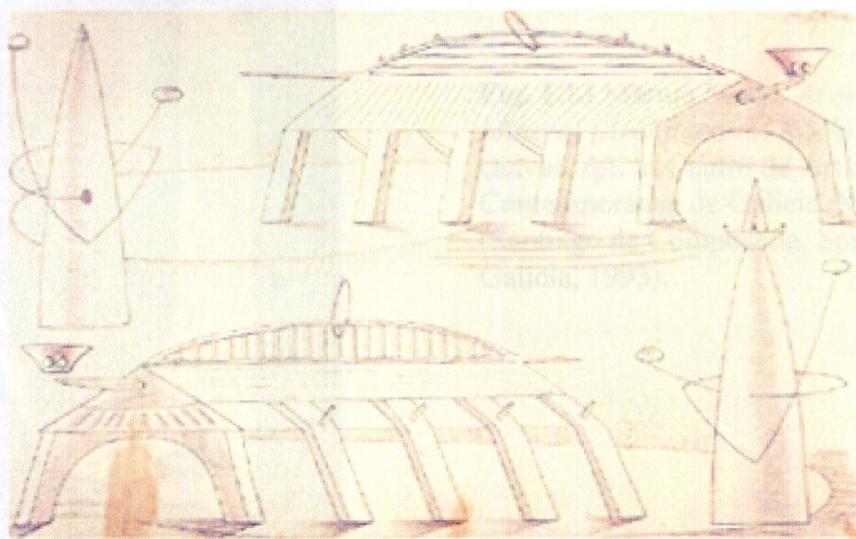
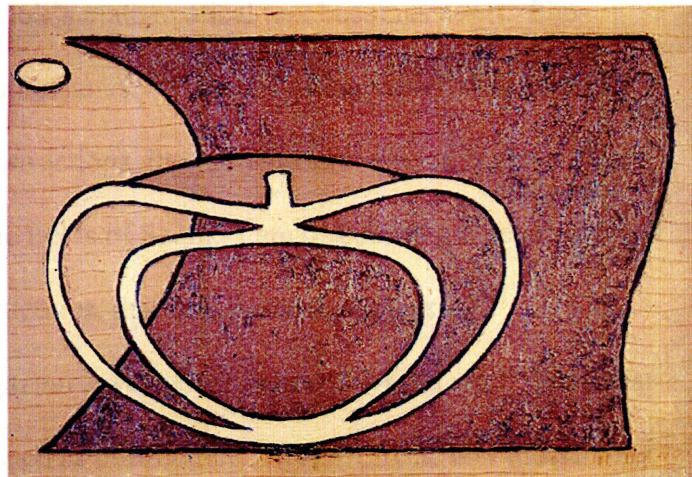


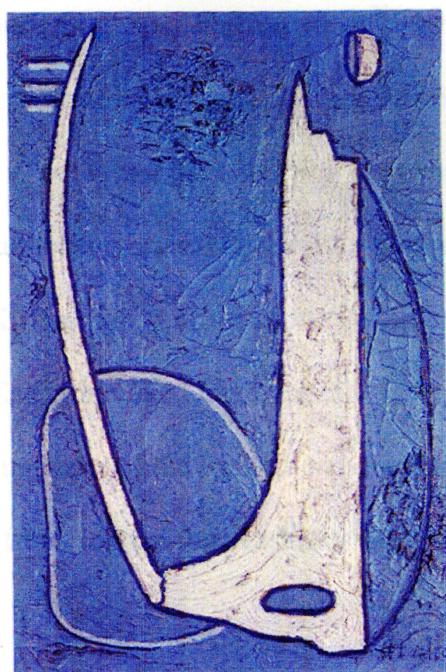
Fig. 1.11 Maruja Mallo, *Construcciones Rurales (Rural Constructions)*, 1933, pencil drawing, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).

Fig. 1.12 Maruja Mallo,
Arquitectura Vegetal
(*Architectural Vegetable*), 1934,
oil on canvas, rpt. in Centro de
Arte Contemporanea de Galicia,
Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de
Compostela, Spain: Xunta de
Galicia, 1993).



Designs for ceramics and glassware also reflected her interest in demedieval traditional Spanish ornamentation.

ceramic dinnerware (figure 1.14). Her interest in folk themes places her in that vein of avant-garde artists, such as Kandinsky or Goncharova, who also treated folkloric themes of their respective countries. Unfortunately, most ceramics bearing her designs were lost during the civil war.



Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, 1993.

Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, 1993.

Fig. 1.13 Maruja Mallo, *Arquitectura Mineral* (*Architectural Rock*), 1934, oil on canvas, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).

¹ This military uprising was led by Francisco Franco, the future dictator of Spain. He led the conservative and monarchist forces against the recently elected progressive Popular Front, which newly elected democratic government had reforms which would have improved the lives of most citizens, workers, and the lands. The Catholic Church, which was more conservative, aligned itself with the wealthy landowners, and opposed this government. This involves attempted to overthrow the government beginning on July 18, 1936. After their surprise, the people reacted by fighting back. The war ended on April 1, 1939.

natural forms and the influence of Pacioli's mathematical text becomes overt. She expressed this interest in "natural" mathematics: "I am observing snowflakes under a microscope. I am observing rural constructions, the intimate structure of fruits and ears of grain, the structure of animals in the fields of Spain. I am discovering a geometric and numerical order that rules all these structures, that dominates the universe."³²

Designs for ceramics and magazine covers entered her oeuvre as well. The artist depicted traditional Spanish objects, such as bullfighters, priests, olives, and roosters for ceramic dinnerware (*figure 1.14*). This interest in folk themes places here in that vein of avant-garde artists, such as Kandinsky or Goncharova, who also treated folkloric themes of their respective countries. Unfortunately, most ceramics bearing her designs were lost during the Spanish Civil War.³³ Her sketches appeared regularly on the covers of the magazines *Revista del Occidente* and *Gaceta Literaria*.

When the Civil War began in 1936, Mallo was teaching in Galicia. Most authorities state that she was "visiting" Galicia at this time; however, I asked Susan Kirkpatrick, a professor of Spanish with a research interest in Mallo at the University of California San Diego, exactly what Mallo was doing in this region: "She was a strong supporter of the Republic and was actually in Galicia teaching in the Republican outreach efforts toward the peasantry when the military rebellion began. The attempted coup"³⁴

³² Combalia, 59.

³³ Combalia, 59.

³⁴ This military uprising was led by Francisco Franco, the future dictator of Spain. He led the conservative-fascist Nationalist forces against the recently elected progressive Popular Front. This newly elected Republic promised land reform, which would have improved the lives of many impoverished, landless Spaniards. The Catholic Church, which was more conservative, aligned itself with the wealthy landowners, and opposed this government. Conservatives attempted to overthrow the Republic beginning on July 18, 1936. Much to their surprise, the people reacted by fighting back. Civil War ensued until April 1, 1939,



Fig. 1.14 Maruja Mallo, ceramic design, c.1933, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).

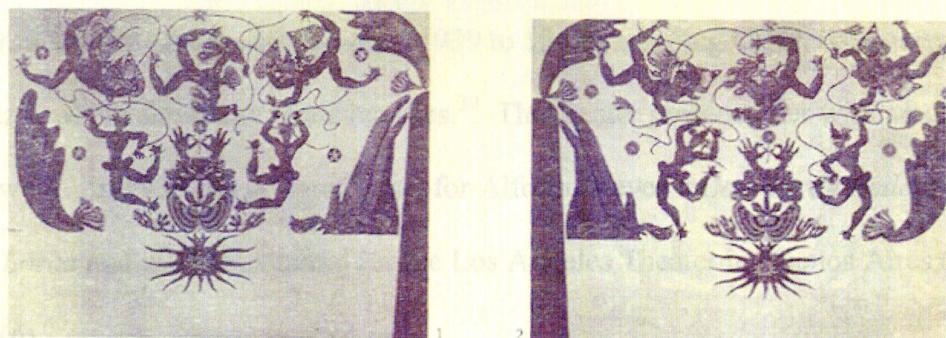
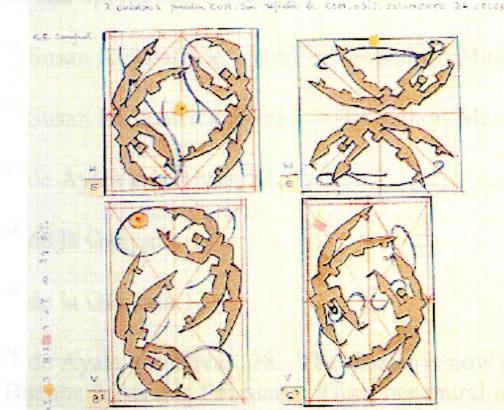


Fig. 1.15 & 1.16 Maruja Mallo, Photograph of mural for Los Angeles Theater in Buenos Aires (above), Preparatory sketch for mural figures (left), c.1938, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).



succeeded and she couldn't get back to Madrid."³⁵ The fascist Nationalist forces soon controlled Galicia, and Mallo would have been viewed as an enemy. She received a telegram from the Association of Friends of Art in Buenos Aires inviting her to lecture. Spanish poet Gabriela Mistral, a friend of Mallo's, and fortunately a diplomat in Portugal, aided her in crossing the border and then fleeing to Argentina.³⁶ Mallo arrived in South America in 1937 as a Spanish Republican exile.³⁷ Soon after establishing herself in Buenos Aires, she gave a lecture in which she presented a personal interpretation of art history and discussed the influences of everyday Spain in her work.³⁸

South America zealously embraced Mallo and she immediately was presented with ample work opportunities. While there, she participated in diverse activities, such as giving lectures on art, designing for the theater, and holding exhibitions. Her lectures took her to several other countries from 1939 to 1948, including Chile, Uruguay, Bolivia and Brazil, where she spoke at universities.³⁹ The theater provided her with ample artistic work. In 1939 she designed a set for Alfonso Reyes's *Contata de Federico García Lorca* and in 1945, a mural for the Los Angeles Theater in Buenos Aires (*figures 1.15-1.16*).⁴⁰

when Franco's forces finally conquered and began his reign of terror upon dissidents. The regime came to an end upon Franco's death in 1975.

³⁵ Susan Kirkpatrick, e-mail to the author, March 10, 2004.

³⁶ Susan Kirkpatrick, e-mail to the author, March 10, 2004.

³⁷ de Ayala and Rivas, 22.

³⁸ de la Gándara, 11.

³⁹ de la Gándara, 12.

⁴⁰ de Ayala and Rivas, 28. The theater is now defunct, destroyed in fact, as I discovered during a visit to Buenos Aires this February. Thus, her mural is lost, but sketches and photographs remain.

While in South America, Mallo created what some biographers consider to be her masterpiece series, *La Religion del Trabajo* (*The Religion of Labor*, 1936-1938). Inspired by Marxist literature, Mallo painted six large paintings treating the labor of agricultural and maritime occupations (*figures 1.17-1.20*). The artist employs shades of gold in the depiction of the fieldworkers and silver for the sea occupations. The figures and the tools of their labor, such as scythes and nets, contribute to forming a solid geometric composition. It is in this series that her highest expression of geometry and iconography is seen. The possibilities for interpretation of these paintings will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Exhibitions devoted to her paintings and drawings were held yearly during her last years of exile from 1945 to 1948. During this time, her work was shown at the Hotel O'Higgins in Viña del Mar, Chile, the Copa Cabana Hotel in Rio de Janeiro, and the Plaza Hotel and Carroll Carstairs Gallery, both in New York.⁴¹ Reviews praised her and her work following all her exhibitions, as seen in one quote from Museum of Modern Art Director Jean Cassou after her exhibition in New York: “[Mallo is] an exuberant creator, always with a disposition for invention and poetry, in a constant lyrical state.”⁴²

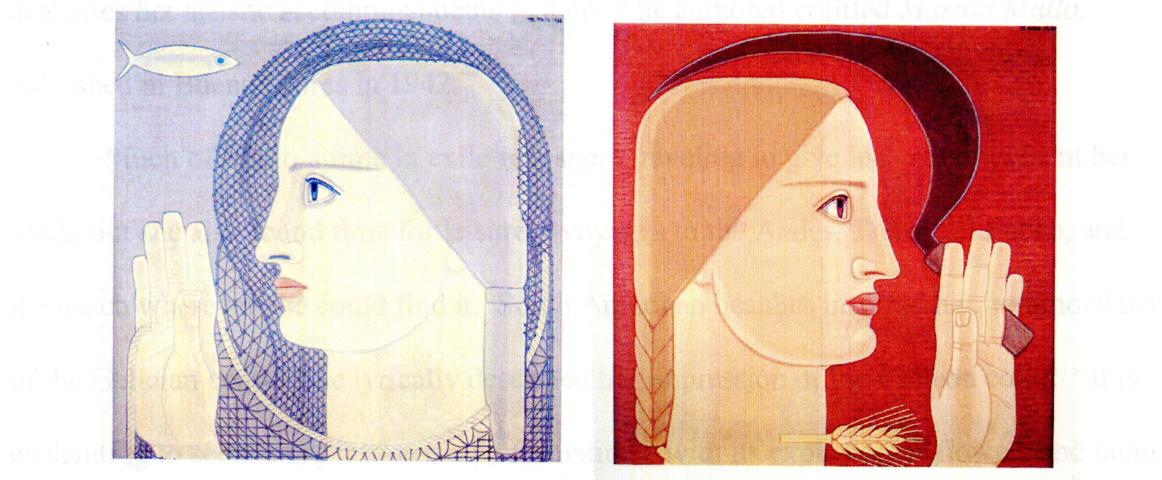
In 1939 La Editorial Losada dedicated a book to her, *Maruja Mallo*, which reprinted her lecture for the Association of Friends of Art in Buenos Aires in 1936, “The Everyday of Spanish Plasticity in My Work.”⁴³ Her friend Ramon Gómez de la Serna

Fig. 1.21 Maruja Mallo, *El Canto de los Pueblos*, (The Song of the People), c. 1939, rpt. in *Centro de*

⁴¹ de Ayala and Rivas, 28.

⁴² de la Gádara, 13.

⁴³ de la Gádara, 54.



pieces, situated between the Pacific and the Andes, the violence of the profoundly rural.

Fig. 1.17 & 1.18 Maruja Mallo, *El Mar (The Sea)*, and *La Tierra (The Land)*, 1938, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).



Fig. 1.19 Maruja Mallo, *Mensaje del Mar (Message from the Sea)*, 1937, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).

orchids, starfish, coral, algae, shells, and anemones are arranged in strict geometry and

painted with brilliant color. The arrangement of the natural objects conveys a message of

male-female sexuality and union. This

Fig. 1.20 Maruja Mallo, *El Canto de las Espigas* (*The Song of the Wheat*), 1939, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).



discusses her artistic accomplishments in a book he authored entitled *Maruja Mallo*, published in Buenos Aires in 1942.⁴⁴

Much of Mallo's time in exile was spent traveling to give lectures or present her work, but she also found time for leisurely voyages to the Andes, Tierra del Fuego, and the beach wherever she could find it. South American beaches inspired her, reminded her of the Galician coast. She lyrically described her impression of the Chilean coast: "It is enchanting to see the organic seascape formations, with its explosion of flowers and palm trees, intertwined between the Pacific and the Andes, the violence of the profoundly blue sea and the fire of the volcanoes."⁴⁵ A trip to Easter Island with her good friend (and probable lover), poet Pablo Neruda, provided her with inspiration for what would become an important sea life series in her oeuvre. Photographs taken during the trip show Mallo draped in seaweed from head to toe and examining sea life with Neruda (*figures 1.21-1.22*).⁴⁶

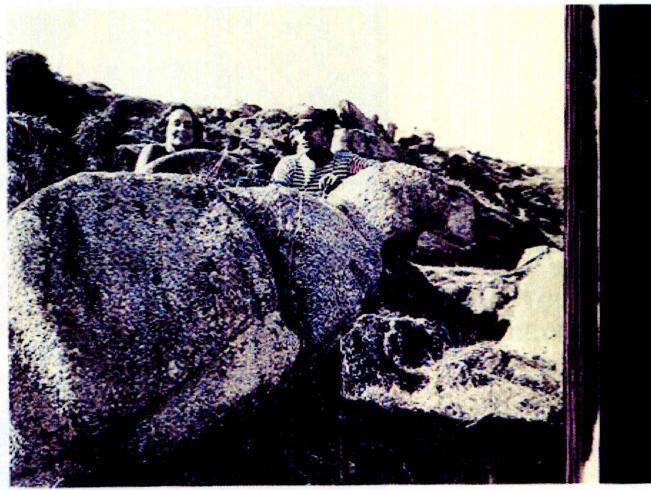
The result of these trips was another series of paintings, entitled *Naturalezas Vivas (Lively Lifes*, 1942-1944).⁴⁷ Mallo juxtaposes objects found on the beach and in gardens to create active organic scenes (*figures 1.23-1.24*). Shells, roses, conchs, orchids, starfish, coral, algae, jellyfish, and anemones are arranged in strict geometry and painted with brilliant color. The arrangement of the natural objects conveys a message of male-female sexuality and union. This series reflects a great personal interest, as Mallo

⁴⁴ de Ayala and Rivas, 28.

⁴⁵ de Ayala and Rivas, 84.

⁴⁶ de Ayala and Rivas, 24-27.

⁴⁷ de la Gándara, 31. This is a play on the Spanish word for still life painting, "naturaleza muerta." In English, this literally translates to "dead life."



Maruja Mallo, *Naturaleza viva*, 1942, oil on canvas, rpt. in
Contemporánea de
Maruja Mallo, obituary, de
parte Guillermo de Osma.

Fig. 1.21 Photograph of Maruja Mallo and Pablo Neruda on the beach of Easter Island, early 1940s, rpt. in Juan Perez de Ayala and Francisco Rivas, eds. Maruja Mallo (Madrid: Guillermo de Osma Galeria, 1992).



Maruja Mallo, *Naturaleza viva*,
oil on canvas
(1942, collection), rpt. in
Contemporánea de
Maruja Mallo, obituary, de
parte Guillermo de Osma.

Fig. 1.22 Photograph of Maruja Mallo on the beach of Easter Island, early 1940s, rpt. in Juan Perez de Ayala and Francisco Rivas, eds. Maruja Mallo (Madrid: Guillermo de Osma Galeria, 1992).

with shells and other materials to her house, where she then began to paint.

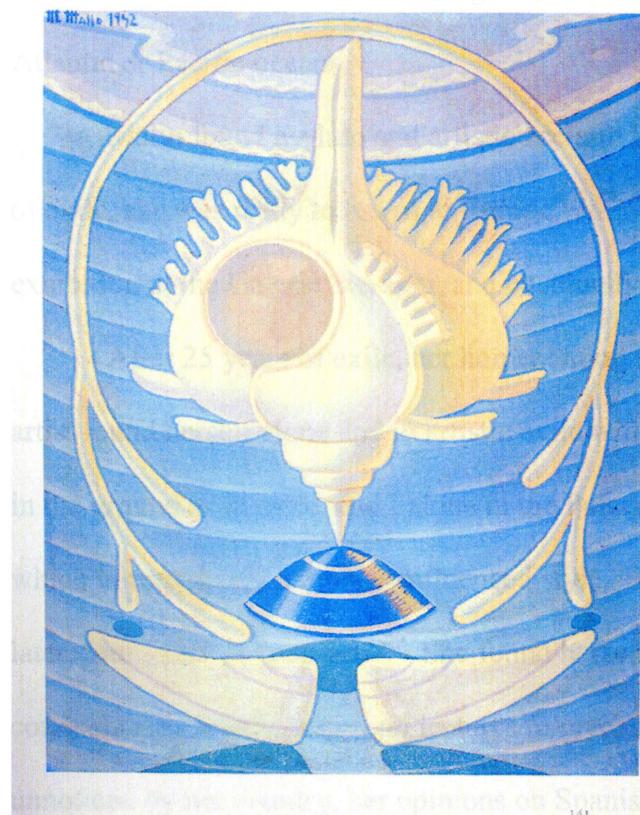


Fig. 1.23 Maruja Mallo, *Naturaleza viva* (*Lively Life*), 1942, oil on canvas, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).

Despite the galleries' lack of art informal, following that two years of "open" and "closed" work within the context of exchanges to attend. Her return event

continued to paint, especially during the next eleven years.⁷⁹

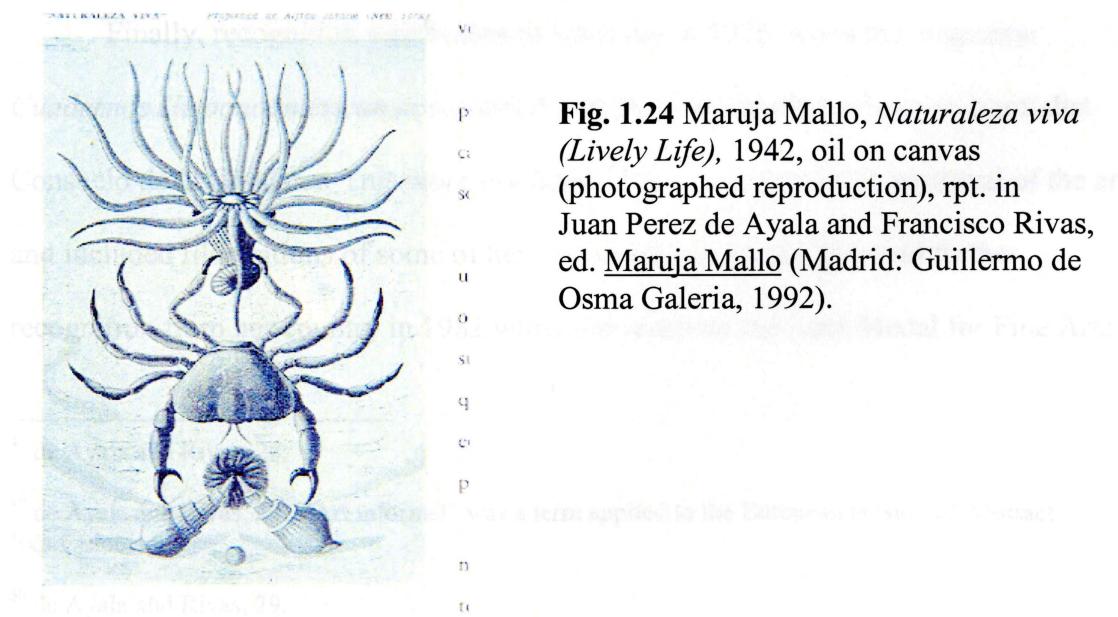


Fig. 1.24 Maruja Mallo, *Naturaleza viva* (*Lively Life*), 1942, oil on canvas (photographed reproduction), rpt. in Juan Perez de Ayala and Francisco Rivas, ed. Maruja Mallo (Madrid: Guillermo de Osma Galeria, 1992).

⁷⁹ I could not locate works from the 1950s to 70s. There were numerous small works in exhibition catalogues, but there was no way for me to determine their date of creation from the texts.

collected sea shells and often made guests to her home guess which shells were from the Atlantic or Pacific oceans.

Mallo found asylum and artistic acclaim in South America, but after twelve years of exile, she was ready to return to Europe. In 1950 she traveled to Paris for an exhibition at the Galerie Silvagni, and eventually made her way to Spain.⁴⁸

After 25 years of exile, her homecoming to Madrid in 1962 was a lonely one. The artist found herself alone and in artistic exile within her own country: "My friends were in the ground or in exile, and I alone in the Palace Hotel, the galleries full of *art informal*, which is completely a Franco-influenced style. Following that, two years of "op-art" and later, four years of "pop-art."⁴⁹ She found herself without work within the context of contemporary artistic tastes, no lectures to give, no exhibitions to attend. Her return went unnoticed by her country, her opinions on Spanish art were completely disregarded.⁵⁰ Despite this alienation, Mallo settled in Madrid permanently in 1965, where she continued to paint, unobserved for the next eleven years.⁵¹

Finally, recognition was bestowed upon her in 1976, when the magazine *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos* published a study about Mallo by Spanish journalist Consuelo de la Gándara. This work provided mainly a biographical portrayal of the artist and included illustrations of some of her earlier works. Mallo garnered further recognition from her country in 1982 when she received the Gold Medal for Fine Arts

⁴⁸ de Ayala and Rivas, 28.

⁴⁹ de Ayala and Rivas, 28. "Art informal" was a term applied to the European version of Abstract Expressionism.

⁵⁰ de Ayala and Rivas, 29.

⁵¹ I could not locate works from the 1950s to 70s. There were multiple undated works in exhibition catalogues, but there was no way for me to determine their time of execution from the texts.

from the Cultural Ministry for her participation in the Spanish vanguard of the 1920s and 30s.⁵² Just when she was gaining recognition, Mallo was hospitalized in 1984 for a fractured hip from a fall. Following this accident, she lived bedridden for eight years and rarely received visitors. Many people thought she had passed away.⁵³

Despite her confinement, she continued to produce art, and entered her most idiosyncratic phase, with *Viajeros del eter* (*Ether Voyagers*, 1981-1982). These colored pencil drawings depict strange, space-like machinery (*figures 1.25-1.26*) flying through the cosmos. The concern with mechanical forms and assembly echoes her study of agricultural machinery and livestock from her *Construcciones Rurales* series from the early 1930s.

She received several other awards in the next decade, such as the Gold Medal from the community of Madrid in 1990 and the same award from the Xunta de Galicia in 1991. For her ninetieth birthday in 1992, an anthological exposition was held in the Guillermo de Osma gallery in Madrid (*figure 1.27*). Mallo attended, though she could barely walk. After seventy years of artistic creation, which included approximately one hundred paintings, Maruja Mallo died in 1995 at the age of 93. Upon her death, an exhibition was presented in her memory. Today her elder brother Emilio takes charge of her estate and resides in Spain.

Mallo exhibited a dynamic, vivacious personality, often commented upon in reviews of her work.⁵⁴ Even in her elderly years, in her late 70s, she put on mischievous

⁵² Fundación Cultural Mapfre Vida, 192.

⁵³ de Ayala and Rivas, 28.

⁵⁴ de la Gándara, 8.

Fig. 1.25 Maruja Mallo, *Viajeros del Eter* (*Ether Voyagers*), 1982, colored pencil on paper, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).



Fig. 1.26 Maruja Mallo, *Viajeros del Eter* (*Ether Voyagers*), 1982, colored pencil on paper, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).

displays at public events by wearing heavy make-up and a large fur coat, which she would



marry; she did prefer the friendship of women to marriage. Male intellectuals, artists, poets,

Fig. 1.27 Maruja Mallo at her 1992 exhibition, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporánea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).

She was not very reticent of the details of her private life to later biographers. An incisive journalist once received a bold answer with regard to such matters. "Look, señora, I have fucked around so much and have known so many people that it's a mix-up in my memory."¹⁶ While this implies that no single affair stands out prominently in Maruja Mallo's sexual experiences, she had love affairs with several men at different points in her life.

¹⁶ Quoted in María del Pilar Vázquez, *Maruja Mallo. Una vida en imágenes* (Santiago de Compostela: Galaxia, 1993), 16.

¹⁷ See *Arte y feminismo. La obra de Maruja Mallo* (Santiago de Compostela: Galaxia, 1993), 18-19.

displays at public events by wearing heavy makeup and a large fur coat, which she would impishly open to reveal that she was wearing nothing underneath. A cavalier attitude marked her persona as seen in her love of life and freedom and was demonstrated in her rebellion against social and artistic conventions. Her independent curiosity led her to behave in ways often unexpected for the newly emerging liberated Spanish woman of her time. She wore pants in the 30s and later designed her own clothing and jewelry. The rules of “masculine sanctuaries” never hindered her from exploring the streets of Madrid alone and frequenting places prohibited to women, such as the “Residency of Students,” a place where male intellectuals gathered.⁵⁵

With regards to men, Mallo often behaved flirtatiously, but she never married, a reflection of her firm independence. She in no way wanted to be defined by a husband or even an artistic movement, and thus remained single for life.⁵⁶ Although she refused to marry, she did prefer the friendship of men to women. Male intellectuals, artists, poets, and philosophers of the Spanish vanguard were her good friends. Not surprisingly, this earned her a suspicious reputation that led her to keep a close guard over her privacy. She was not very revealing of the details of her private life to later biographers. An inquiring journalist once received a bold answer with regard to such matters: “Look, señorita, I have fucked around so much and have known so many people that it’s all mixed up a bit in my memory.”⁵⁷ While this implies that no single man was particularly important in Mallo’s sexual experiences, she had love affairs with Spanish Surrealist poet

⁵⁵ de Ayala and Rivas, 16.

⁵⁶ de Ayala and Rivas, 16.

⁵⁷ de Ayala and Rivas, 18-19.

Rafael Alberti and Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, relationships that will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 3.

The biography of Maruja Mallo reveals an extraordinary life, but her work is also extraordinary and deserving of more attention than it has yet received. To understand it, it is necessary to put it in the context of the history of Surrealism.

CHAPTER
The Surrealist Movement

"when we think of Surrealism today, images of the red rocks, bizarre landscapes, distorted human forms, and the names "Dali" and "Tatlin" come to mind. The modern movement has a definite concept in latent imagery. But if one were to live up to early writers' statements,² such it is not at all greatly. Surrealism, in truth, is not a style, but rather a way of knowing and a kind of effect."³ The movement began as a literary effort to uncover a new, more truthful reality that was eventually translated into a visual medium. This chapter will examine the background for Surrealism in its visual forms in order to place Maflio's work in its appropriate context. It also serves as a testament to women's inclusion as subject matter and exclusion intellectually.

French poet Guillaume Apollinaire first used the word "surrealist" in 1917 as a reference to a "surrealist drama" he had written. He had no intention of forming any sort

Chapter II:

The Surrealism Movement

shortly before his death in 1918. His friends and admirers began a literary magazine in Paris called *Littérature*, led by Louis Aragon,

André Breton, and Philippe Soupaud (who were all in their twenties), the magazine

provided eclectic literary critiques and examples of contemporary poetry and prose.

Soon after its inception, André Breton, Paul Éluard, and Tzara established the Dada group and liaison between various Dada groups, exchange ideas, and exchanged the course of this literary venture.

Tzara's arrival in Paris in 1920, after World War I, where he was disillusioned with the older literary crowd and had popularized the new means of finding truth.

Under Tzara's influence, the members engaged in Dada acts in Paris, with the intent to

² See the notes on the Surrealist Manifesto.

³ T. S. Eliot, *Writings on Surrealism* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1965), 7.

When we think of Surrealism today, images of flaccid clocks, bizarre landscapes, mutilated human forms, and the names “Dalí” and “Miró” come to mind. The modern mindset has a definite concept of bizarre imagery, but if one were to line up works by various “surrealists,” each would differ greatly. Surrealism, in truth, is not a style, but rather “a way of knowing and a kind of ethics.”⁵⁸ The movement began as a literary quest to uncover a new, more truthful reality that was eventually translated into a visual medium. This chapter will examine the background for Surrealism in its visual forms in order to place Mallo’s work in its appropriate context. It also serves as a testament to women’s inclusion as subject matter and exclusion intellectually.

French poet Guillaume Apollinaire first used the word “surrealist” in 1917 in reference to a “surrealist drama” he had written. He had no intention of forming any sort of movement;⁵⁹ however, some years later, in 1919, several of the poet’s friends and admirers began a literary magazine in Paris called *Littérature*. Led by Louis Aragon, André Breton, and Philippe Soupault (who were all in their twenties), the magazine provided eclectic literary critiques and examples of contemporary poetry and prose. Soon after its inception, however, Tristan Tzara, leader of the Zürich Dada group and liaison between various European avant-garde groups, arrived in Paris and changed the course of this literary review.

Tzara’s arrival in Paris was timely. The leaders of *Littérature* were disillusioned with the older literati crowd and had begun to search for new means of finding truth. Under Tzara’s influence, the members engaged in Dada acts in Paris, with the intent to

⁵⁸ Patrick Waldberg, *Surrealism* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1965), 7.

⁵⁹ Waldberg, 11.

demonstrate “distaste for the inertia of the bourgeoisie, whom even the atrocities of war . . . had not succeeded in arousing.”⁶⁰ Public reaction to these “nonsensical” acts reflected hostility and outrage, which only served to draw the group closer together.⁶¹ The magazine demonstrated the Dada themes of irreverence and difficult comprehension and elicited similar responses from readers. Breton revised the goals of the publication, transforming it from a review of literature to something that would help “To escape, as much as possible, from the human species to which we all belong—that is all that seems worthwhile to me. To try to break the psychological rules even to a minor degree is the equivalent of inventing new ways of feeling. . .”⁶² A highly energetic and galvanizing individual, Breton by 1922 no longer need Tzara’s guidance. He took the leadership of the movement that included: Aragon, Robert Desnos, Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray, Paul Eluard, Max Ernst, Benjamin Peret, Francis Picabia, and Soupault (*figure 2.1*). By 1924, the group had not only appropriated Apollinaire’s word “surrealist,” they also set out to define it.⁶³

Breton’s “First Surrealist Manifesto” was published in October of 1924 as a preface to his essay *Poisson Soluble*. The manifesto defined the goals and challenges of surrealism⁶⁴ (*figure 2.2*):

Surrealism n. (masc.) pure psychic automatism with which one proposes to

⁶⁰ Waldberg, 13.

⁶¹ Gerard Durozoi, translated by Alison Anderson, *History of the Surrealist Movement* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 11.

⁶² Durozoi, 53.

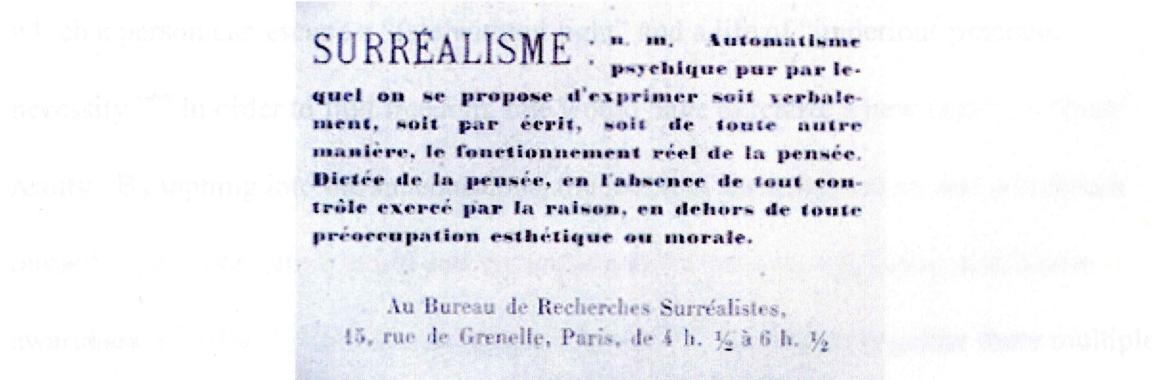
⁶³ Durozoi, 63.

⁶⁴ Durozoi, 67.



Fig. 2.1 Photograph of the members of the Bureau of Surrealist Research, 1927, rpt. in Gerard Durozoi, History of the Surrealist Movement, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 64.

According to Breton, the working of the imagination are the only means by which a person can come to know the world.



levels of awareness, imagination, and reason, and the need to break and arrive at a new level of understanding.

Fig. 2.2 Flyer with definition of Surrealism, c. 1925, rpt. in Gerard Durozoi, History of the Surrealist Movement, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 64.

express the real process of thought, either orally or in writing, or in any other manner. Thought's dictation, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, outside any esthetic or moral concerns.

Encyl. philos. Surrealism is based on the belief in the superior reality of certain forms of association heretofore neglected, in the omnipotence of the dream, and in the disinterested play of thought. It leads to the permanent destruction of all other psychic mechanisms and to its substitution for them in the solution of the principal problems of life.⁶⁵

Breton and his followers felt that modern society and all preceding Western societies were stifled by aesthetic and moral constrictions. Freedom was the goal, and the best way to obtain it was provided by the imagination.

According to Breton, the workings of the imagination are the only means by which a person can escape a "fate without light" and a life of "imperious practical necessity."⁶⁶ In order to find freedom, one would have to realize a new reality, a "truer" reality. By tapping into the subconscious, the realm of the imagination, one can detach oneself in this alternative world and then return to the constructed reality with a new awareness of "what it lacks to satisfy one's desires."⁶⁷ By linking together these multiple levels of awareness, one "minimize[s] the fragmentation of consciousness and arrive[s] at

⁶⁵ Waldberg, 11.

⁶⁶ Waldberg, 16. (*The Foundations and First Draft, Manifesto, Readings and Writings from the Hours of the Surrealist Year*, trans. Philip Morris, 1983), 162. (Waldberg, 16) (also included in *The Foundations and First Draft, Manifesto, Readings and Writings from the Hours of the Surrealist Year*, trans. Philip Morris, 1983), 162.)

⁶⁷ Waldberg, 16. (*The Foundations and First Draft, Manifesto, Readings and Writings from the Hours of the Surrealist Year*, trans. Philip Morris, 1983), 162.)

a totality of the human being . . .". Through the linking and resolution of these two realities, Breton arrived at what he called "a kind of absolute reality, of surreality . . .".⁶⁸

Breton called upon artists of all mediums to assist in revolutionizing society, to reject the contemporary realistic, positivist attitude through the use of the imagination: "Painters share responsibility with all others to whose formidable lot it has fallen to make full use of their particular means of expression . . .".⁶⁹ Artists who subscribed to his theory would no longer have to be restricted by politeness or convention. Images would be expressed spontaneously without the hindrance of bourgeois moral codes, which Breton called, "the cause of all evil."⁷⁰ Breton suggested that one of the most functional ways for writers, orators, and other artists to tap into the imagination was through the dream. Here he was very influenced by the ideas of Austrian psychiatrist Sigmund Freud.

Breton became interested in the studies of Freud during the First World War when he worked as a medical auxiliary. Many of Freud's works, though written at the beginning of the century, were published in French around the time of the Surrealist group's formation in the early 1920's.⁷¹ His ideas appealed to the Surrealists because he confirmed their intuitive belief that beneath exterior reality lay another reality. Dreams,

⁶⁸ Waldberg, 16-17.

⁶⁹ Andre Breton, *Surrealism and Painting* (London: Macdonald and Company, 1972), 8.

⁷⁰ Waldberg, 70.

⁷¹ Briony Fer, David Batchelor, and Paul Wood, *Realism, Rationalism, Surrealism: Art between the Wars* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 182. Translated works at this time included *The Interpretation of Dreams* (pub. 1900) and *Three Essays in the Theory of Sexuality* (pub. 1905).

daydreams, slips of the tongue, and memory lapses, could reveal the unconscious.⁷² The Dadaists had sensed this in their spontaneous experiments with accident and chance.

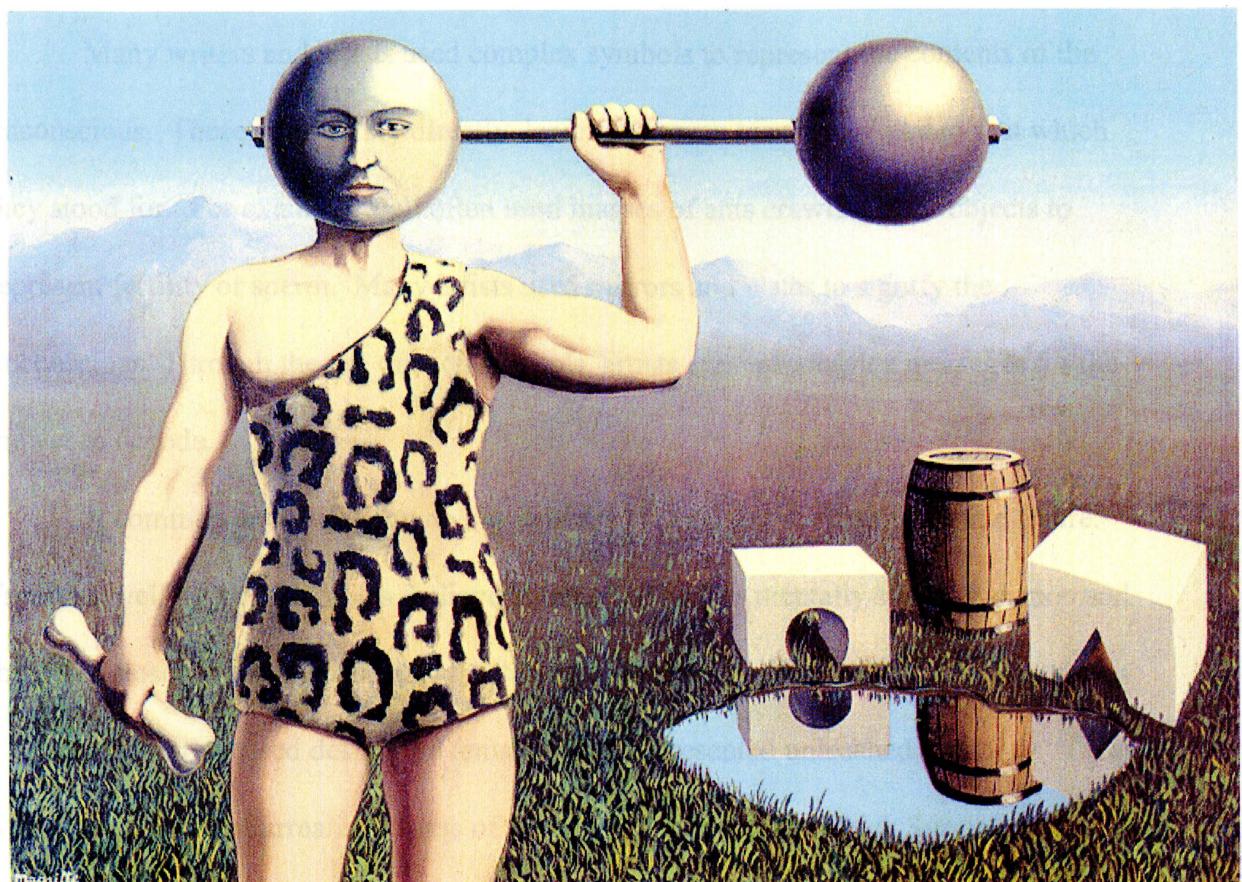
Freud's theory on dreams was most influential. He defined two components of dream content: the manifest and the latent. The former represented that which is actually seen in the dream and the latter, the unconscious meaning of the image. The unconscious represented the infantile, or repressed childhood memories. For Surrealists, the latent represented all that was repressed by society, sexuality, desire, and the ambiguity of sexual difference between the sexes. While Freud analyzed this repression in individuals, Surrealists applied it to culture itself. They looked to the past and to myths "to question the present and imagine their way out of present conditions—as means to transgress established boundaries of representation."⁷³

The Surrealists focused on the latent, which in artistic forms, showed itself as juxtaposed incongruous objects, which in actuality are omnipresent in the unconscious. René Magritte's *Perpetual Motion* (1935) (figure 2.3) illustrates the use of latent material. A man dressed in caveman garb lifts a barbell overhead, one end of which becomes his "head." In the field behind him sits a barrel and two white geometric "blocks," all situated around a puddle. The unrelated objects arranged in this vast and vague landscape baffle a conscious intelligence. Breton considered the element of surprise as central to creating beauty, as in his famous statement: "beautiful as the

⁷² Fer, Batchelor, and Wood, 180-181.

⁷³ Fer, Batchelor, and Wood, 181-182.

the optical illusion of a woman with a moving machine and in motion, ¹⁹ among the Surrealist artists, beauty was synonymous with incongruity and the absurd.



Was perceived.

Fig. 2.3 René Magritte, *Perpetual Motion*, 1935, Oil on canvas, 24¹/₄ x 29in., rpt. in Robert Short, Dada and Surrealism (London: John Calmann & Cooper, 1980), 134.

poetry,²⁰ provided a companion to pain, agitation and desire and allowed her to become a little more detached from her own body.²¹ The woman-child figure (figure 2.4) – the enchanting female's "youth, naivety, innocence, or woman-child figure" (figure 2.4) – was the enchanter in his quest to know the unconscious.²² This focus on the "youth, innocence, or woman-child figure" (figure 2.4) links to expressed sexual desire as reflected in an advertisement created by the surrealist artist

²⁰ Wharton Chack, "The Muse of Art: Women in the Surrealist Movement," *Surrealist Women* (1985), 122.

²¹ See, Batchelder and Wood, 176.

²² Wharton Chack, "The Muse of Art: Women in the Surrealist Movement," *Surrealist Women* (1985), 122.

²³ Wharton Chack, *Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement* (Boston: Twayne, 1985), 19.

unexpected meeting, on a dissection table, of a sewing machine and an umbrella.”⁷⁴ In the Surrealist context, beauty was synonymous with incongruity of the unconscious.

Many writers and artists used complex symbols to represent the contents of the unconscious. These signs rarely directly depicted or even visually related to that which they stood for. For example, Dalí often used masses of ants crawling over objects to represent fertility or sperm. Many artists used mirrors and water to signify the unconscious. Through the use of such symbols, artists created complex messages for the viewer to decode.

A common device for conveying repressed sexual desire was the female figure. Freud, as well as the Surrealists, believed women to be less mentally stable than men and therefore closer to the unconscious, the “place of madness.” Since the unconscious forms a direct link to repressed desire, the female figure represented unleashed sexuality. These women became the Surrealist objects of desire, the “model upon which Surrealist fantasy was projected.”⁷⁵

Not just any woman could serve as a Surrealist muse, but specifically the *femme enfant*, or woman-child (*figure 2.4*). This enchanting female’s “youth, naiveté, and purity,”⁷⁶ provided a connection to her imagination and desire and allowed her to lead the male surrealist in his quest to interpret the unconscious.⁷⁷ This focus on the female as the link to repressed sexual desire is illustrated in an advertisement created by the group in

⁷⁴ Waldberg, 24-25.

⁷⁵ Fer, Batchelor, and Wood, 176.

⁷⁶ Whitney Chadwick, “The Muse as Artist: Women in the Surrealist Movement,” *Art in America*, no. 73, (1985): 122.

⁷⁷ Whitney Chadwick, *Women Artists and the Surrealism Movement* (Boston: Little and Brown, 1985), 19.

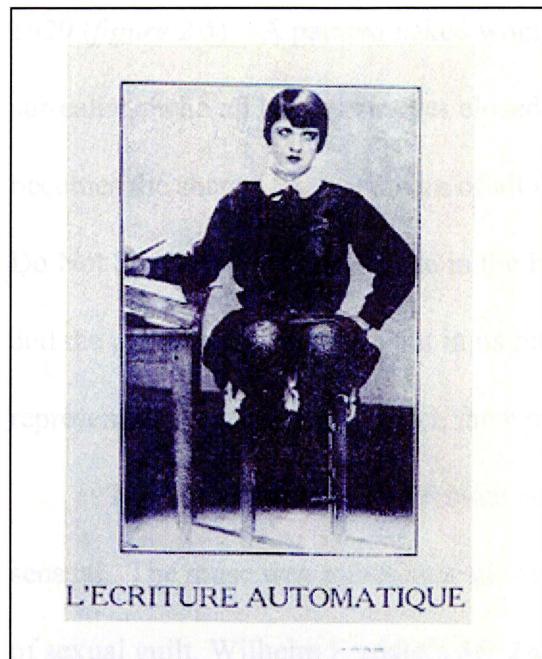


Fig. 2.4 Photograph of the *femme-enfant* partaking in automatic writing, 1927, rpt. in Whitney Chadwick, Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement (Boston: Little and Brown, 1985), 33.

of tortured women. Though a common trope during the period, women who inhabit the scene are tormented with the desire of being loved, yet unable to find such wells



Fig. 2.5 René Magritte, Photomontage with portraits of sixteen Surrealists around the painting *I do not see the Woman in the Forest*, 1929, rpt. in Gerard Durozoi, History of the Surrealist Movement (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 160.

1929 (*figure 2.5*). A painted naked woman is surrounded by the photographs of the male surrealists, who all have their eyes closed, implying a dream state. The naked woman becomes the shared fantasy/dream of all the men. She is also surrounded by the text, “I Do Not See the (Woman) Hidden in the Forest.” The word “Woman” has been removed and the painted female figure put in its place as a symbol of desire. The “forest” represents the unconscious, which the woman/desire inhabits.⁷⁸

The Surrealists used the female body as means of violent expression as well as sensual. The muse was sometimes shown in a helpless, mutilated state as an expression of sexual guilt. Wilhelm Freddie’s *My Two Sisters* (1938) (*figure 2.6*) portrays the image of tortured women. Though a calm beach forms the setting, the women who inhabit the scene are tormented with the devices of the painter. One woman precariously walks across a type of balance beam while her face is wrapped in gauze bandages and her bulky dress tangles around her body. To further complicate her task, a large prehistoric bird skull has been adhered atop her skull. The body of another woman has been cut by the frame, as only her lower back and legs enter the scene. She hangs upside down from her bound ankles on a wooden wall. Two infant “echoes” walk atop the ocean in the background, ready to sink into the sea at any moment. The title calls for a Freudian interpretation; if this scene does indeed show the artist’s “two sisters,” then it also reveals the artist’s repressed sexual attraction to his siblings, a sexual obstacle to be overcome in childhood. If woman represents desire, then the scene must be interpreted as expressing a

⁷⁸ Fer, Batchelor, and Wood, 178.



Fig. 2.6 Wilhelm Freddie, *My Two Sisters*, 1938, Oil on canvas, rpt. in Robert Short, *Dada and Surrealism* (London: John Calmann and Cooper), 149.

"tortured desire" theme, as illustrated through the women's physical impediments and the title.

Aside from visual representation of the female figure, the Surrealists also used other objects to refer to the female, particularly the mannequin. The clothing display device further objectified the woman as a repository of desire. The mannequin figure was shocking and had an air of mystery, as metaphysical painter Giorgio de Chirico had discovered in the 1910s. When mutilated and set in bleak surroundings, they provided a sensation of isolation and alienation. This reinforced the idea of woman as "other," as possessing different "psychic powers."⁷⁹

Mental disorders, especially those articulated by Freud, became another Surrealist fascination. Breton hailed hysteria as "the greatest poetic discovery of the 19th century"⁸⁰

and wrote an essay in conjunction with Aragon in celebration of the disorder, "The Quinquagenary of Hysteria: 1897-1928." In florid language, the two extol the creative

nature of the disorder:

Hysteria is a more or less irreducible mental condition

characterized by the subversion of the relations which are

established between the subject and the moral world. . . . Hysteria

is not a pathological phenomenon and can be considered

in every respect a supreme means of expression.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Fer, Batchelor, and Wood, 191.

⁸⁰ Fer, Batchelor, and Wood, 209.

⁸¹ Waldberg, 62.

Photographs of women in mental hospitals were included to supplement the essay (*figure 2.7 & 2.8*). Their bodies contort in odd, convulsive positions, or what the writers called “postures of passion.”⁸² The glazed, open-mouthed expressions appear similar to El Greco’s religious paintings of people experiencing holy “ecstasy.” The Surrealists viewed individuals who exhibited this abnormal behavior as having superior imaginative powers, and therefore closer contact with the unconscious.

Hysteria represented the rejection of the established laws of society and furthermore appealed to the Surrealist fascination with sexuality. Freud characterized the mental affliction as “exaggerated sexual craving and excessive aversion to sexuality.”⁸³ The afflicted individual circumvents this contradiction by converting these “libidinal impulses” into hysterical behavior.⁸⁴ The hysterical patient was often viewed as female, because, as mentioned before, women were considered less mentally stable and therefore closer to unconscious desires. Dali’s *The Roses Bleed* (1930) (*figure 2.9*) illustrates the image of the hysterical woman. Wrapping herself around a column placed in an ambiguous setting, a nude woman stands in a position similar to those “postures of passion” revered by Breton and Aragon. With eyes closed, she extends her neck and head skyward and arches her back against the column, thrusting her exposed breasts forward. The artist further sexualizes the imagery by painting a bouquet of bleeding red roses on her torso, suggesting the uterus/menstruation and therefore fertility and sexuality. The woman is so enraptured in her hysterical state that she fails to notice the

⁸² Waldberg, 212.

⁸³ Fer, Batchelor, and Word, 212.

⁸⁴ Fer, Batchelor, and Word, 212-213.

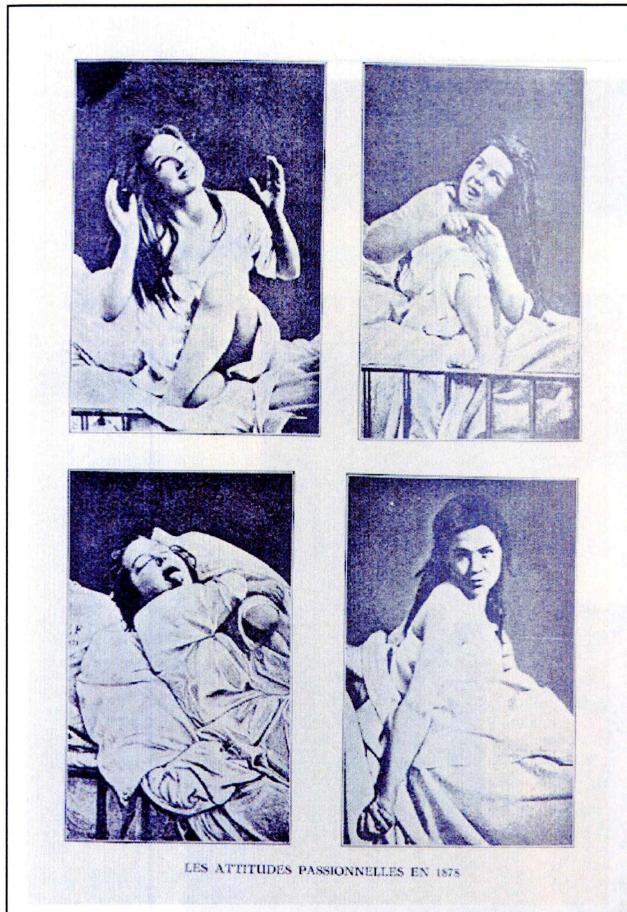


Fig. 2.7 Photographs used in ““The Quinquagenary of Hysteria: 1897-1928,” rpt. in Briony Fer, David Batchelor, and Paul Wood, Realism, Rationalism, Surrealism: Art between the Wars (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 215.

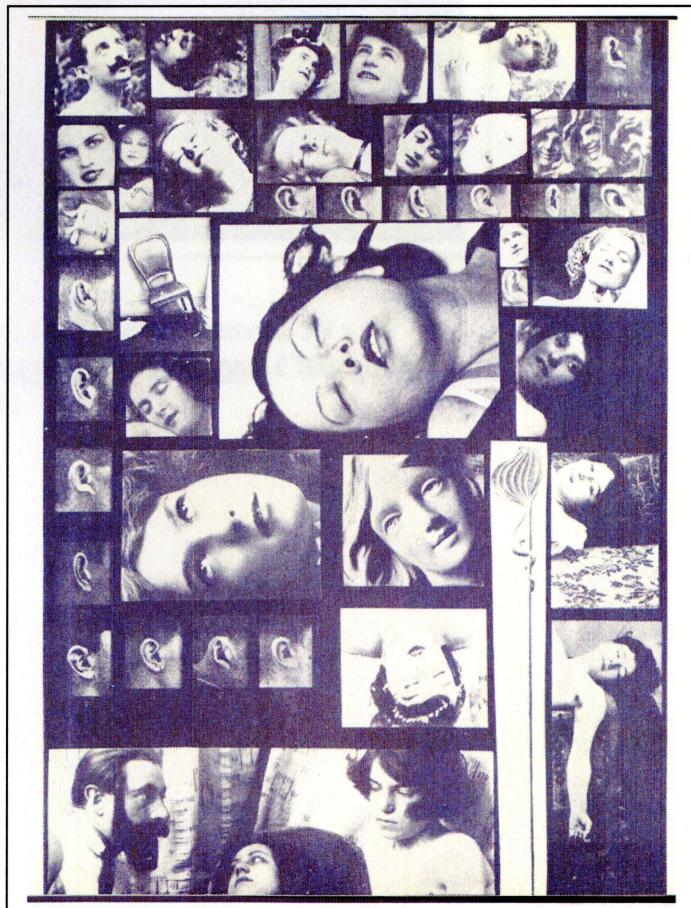


Fig. 2.8 Salvador Dalí, photomontage with images from an insane asylum, 1933, rpt. in Briony Fer, David Batchelor, and Paul Wood, Realism, Rationalism, Surrealism: Art between the Wars (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 214.

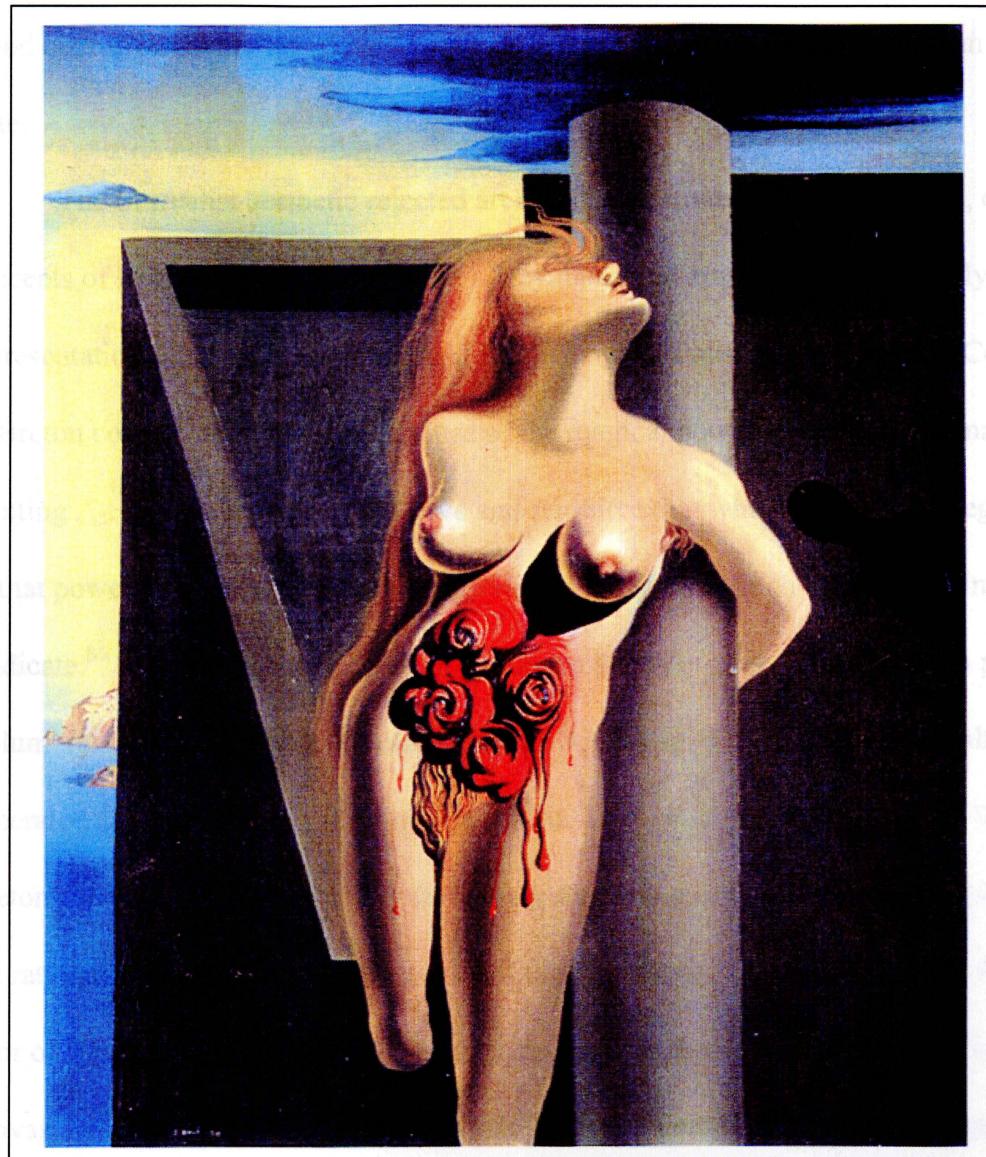


Fig. 2.9 Salvador Dalí, *The Roses Bleed*, 1930, Oil on canvas, 30 x 25^{3/5}in., rpt. in Gerard Durozoi, History of the Surrealist Movement (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 206.

blood oozing down her legs, or perhaps it is this sensation that sends her into an ecstatic state.

The Surrealist aesthetic rejected art that demonstrated logic, rationality, or concepts of harmony with the universe. They despised any sort of traditionally “great” representational art, such as the work of Michelangelo, Poussin, Chardin, and Cezanne, as Breton commented: “It is a paltry use of the magical power of representational painting . . . to have it serve to preserve and reinforce that which would exist regardless of that power.”⁸⁵ Imitative painting legitimized the reality which Surrealists aimed to eradicate.⁸⁶ Instead, archaic periods of European art and any primitive art from pre-Columbian America, Africa, Oceania, and the American Indian and Eskimo cultures was venerated and looked upon for inspiration.⁸⁷ In his *Surrealism and Painting* (1925), Breton calls upon painters to offer the viewer something other than a mere imitation of the rational world: “. . . it must be admitted that the blame should doubtless be laid at the door of whoever first enclosed a landscape or a human figure within the boundaries of a canvas, had the idea of saying ‘This is mine’ . . . and found people simple enough, or corrupt enough to let him get away with it.”⁸⁸ If the painter was to present a “truer” reality, then the visible world had to be presented in a new way.⁸⁹ Artists strove to

⁸⁵Durozoi, 94.

⁸⁶Durozoi, 94.

⁸⁷ Waldberg, 23.

⁸⁸ Breton, 20.

⁸⁹ Durozoi, 93-94.

bewilder viewers with their works by presenting objects in an unanticipated manner, therefore forcing them to think of “natural” concepts in different ways.

To arrive at a final work, Surrealist painters employed various techniques. Breton prescribed that they try to enchant the viewer through “magical” processes.⁹⁰ Since the early 1920’s members of the group had experimented with various methods to glean material from the unconscious (*figure 2.10*). One of the most popular devices was automatism, which was a manner of writing in which the author recorded thoughts spontaneously, in a stream of unconsciousness. Painters applied this method to visual means through rapid drawing; images were not pre-meditated, but rather came spontaneously to the creator. In this way, the image was pure of any influence from the conscious mind. After making automatic sketches, artists would then pick and choose objects to juxtapose in a painting.⁹¹ Artists used methods of chance as another means to unearth the latent. Collages were created by cutting up newspapers or other materials, dropping them onto a canvas, and then gluing them as they fell. Other artists used decalcomania to create prints; a piece of paper coated in ink was pressed against a clean canvas. The smears garnered from this composed the “painting.” The artist then searched for images in the ink blots and titled the work.

Fig. 2.10 Photograph of a Surrealist dream session, during which members dictated and record the content of their dreams, esp. in Gerard Durozoi, *Artists of the Surrealist Movement* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), p. 21.

⁹⁰ Waldberg, 27.

⁹¹ Durozoi, 9.



Fig. 2.10 Photograph of a Surrealist dream session, during which members describe and record the content of their dreams, rpt. in Gerard Durozoi, History of the Surrealist Movement (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 73.

Surrealist artists divided into two distinct genres of painting: the “emblematics” and the “naturalists.” Both groups juxtapose objects in unexpected and unnatural ways to give them new meaning and shock the viewer.⁹²

The emblematics, also referred to as “animatives,” conveyed ideas without showing exact representation. Through the use of calligraphy, animation, and movement, artists presented images which used inventive emblems to construct everyday objects in a new manner. Followers of the emblematic style included Max Ernst, Joan Miró, and Sebastian Matta.⁹³

An examination of Miró’s *Maternity* (1924) (*figure 2.11*) demonstrates the use of an animative technique. The artist uses minimal line and two-dimensional figures to convey the objects he wishes to depict. For example, a sort of undulating “sperm,” worm-like figure moves toward an “egg,” which has been reduced to a bulls-eye figure in the upper right portion of the painting. Below this egg floats a stick figure which can be assumed to be a woman by its longer “hair.” Opposite this woman hovers a “man,” or perhaps “infant” figure, also painted with minimal, animated line. A breast is suggested by the geometric dome form in the lower left corner. Everything appears to float and move due to the lack of setting and use of line. This more organic and biological expression of motherhood has replaced the traditional “Madonna and Child” scenario often used to illustrate maternity. Miró succeeds in illustrating the concept without painting a volumetric figure grounded in a defined setting.

⁹²Waldberg, 8.

⁹³ Waldberg, 7.

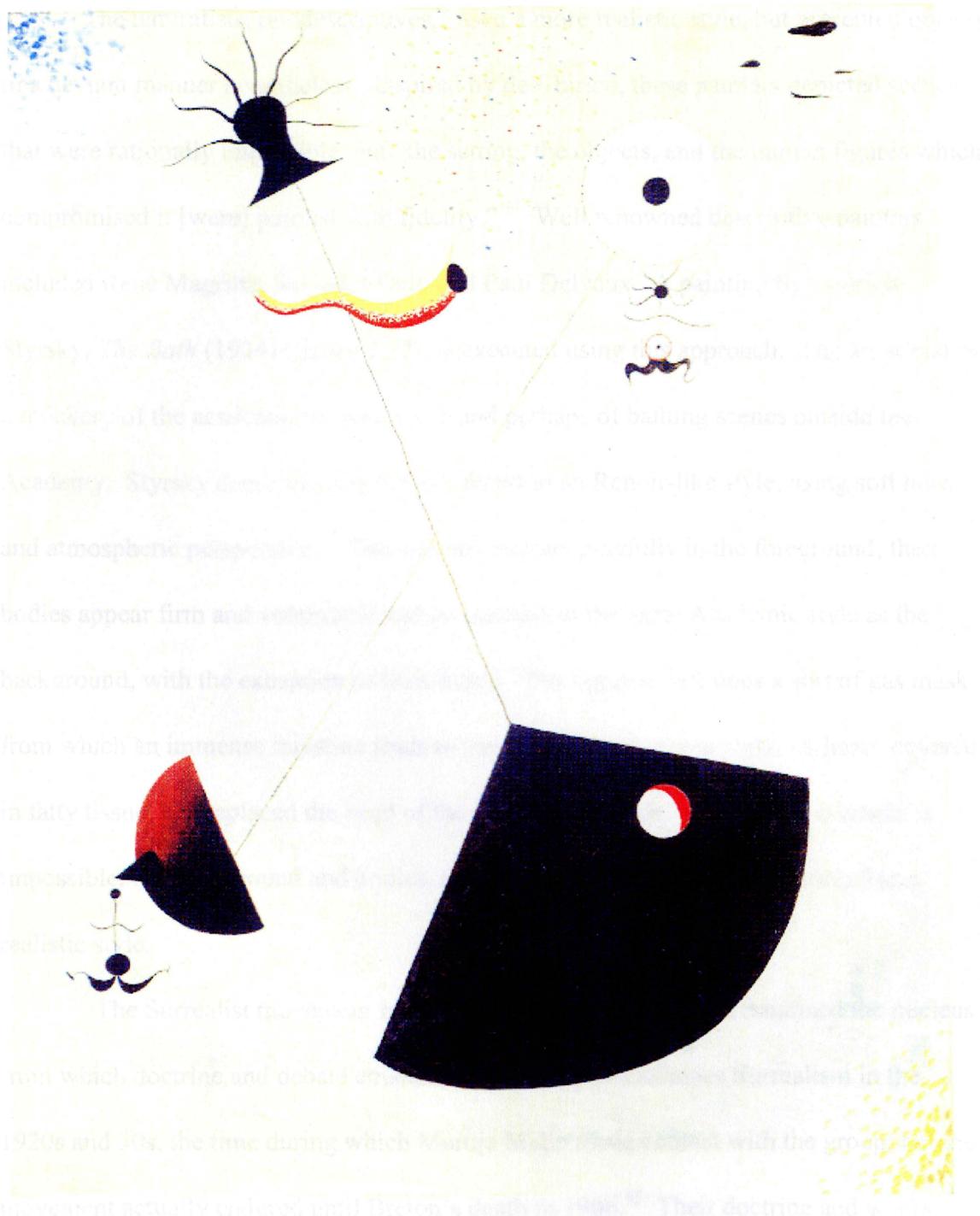


Fig. 2.11 Joan Miró, *Maternity*, 1934, Oil on canvas, 91 x 74cm, rpt. in Briony Fer, David Batchelor, and Paul Wood, Realism, Rationalism, Surrealism: Art between the Wars (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 79.

the most successful example of the surrealist movement in Britain was the group around the magazine *391*.

The Surrealist movement in Britain had its roots in the Dada movement, which was a reaction against the horrors of World War I. It was a movement that emphasized the irrational and the absurd, and it was influenced by the work of artists such as Joan Miró, Salvador Dalí, and René Magritte.

Surrealism was a movement that rejected traditional art forms and sought to explore the hidden depths of the human psyche. It was a movement that emphasized the importance of dreams and the subconscious, and it was a movement that rejected rationality and logic.

The Surrealist movement in Britain was a movement that rejected traditional art forms and sought to explore the hidden depths of the human psyche. It was a movement that emphasized the importance of dreams and the subconscious, and it was a movement that rejected rationality and logic.

The naturalists, or “descriptives,” used a more realistic style, but presented objects in a deviant manner nonetheless. Inspired by de Chirico, these painters depicted scenes that were rationally impossible, but “the setting, the objects, and the human figures which compromised it [were] painted with fidelity.”⁹⁴ Well renowned descriptive painters included René Magritte, Salvador Dalí, and Paul Delvaux. A painting by Jindrich Styrsky, *The Bath* (1934) (figure 2.12), is executed using this approach. The artist makes a mockery of the academic bathing scene and perhaps of bathing scenes outside the Academy. Styrsky depicts a river set in a forest in an Renoir-like style, using soft hues and atmospheric perspective. Two women interact playfully in the foreground; their bodies appear firm and volumetric and are painted in the same Academic style as the background, with the exception of their heads. The figure at left dons a sort of gas mask from which an immense intestine leads to the face of the figure at right. A heart, covered in fatty tissue, has replaced the head of the splashing maiden. Though the scenario is impossible, the background and bodies, as well as the internal parts, are painted in a realistic style.

The Surrealist movement reached across Europe, but Paris remained the nucleus from which doctrine and debate emanated. This chapter examines Surrealism in the 1920s and 30s, the time during which Maruja Mallo made contact with the group, but the movement actually endured until Breton’s death in 1966.⁹⁵ Their doctrine and works influenced many contemporary artists and writers. However, though Surrealists aimed to revolutionize thought and society, they did not succeed in accomplishing this from a

⁹⁴ Waldberg, 7.

⁹⁵ Durozoi, 635.

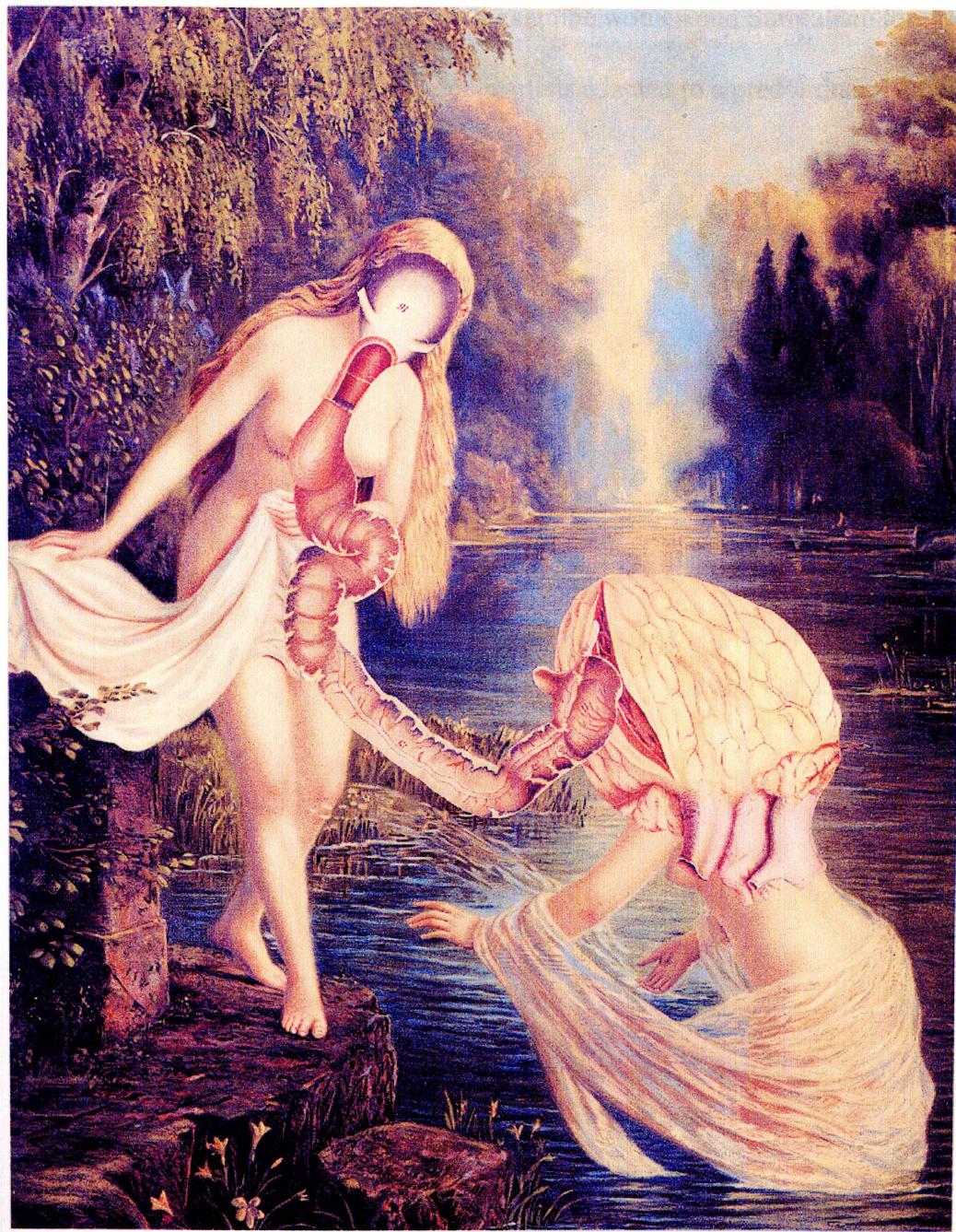


Fig. 2.12 Jindrich Styrsky, *The Bath*, 1934, Oil on canvas, $16\frac{2}{5} \times 12\frac{1}{5}$ in., rpt. in Gerard Durozoi, History of the Surrealist Movement (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 281.

feminist point of view. The next chapter will examine women and Surrealism to highlight this failure and examine how female artists adapted to a predominantly male artistic circle.

Chapter 10: The Female Surrealist Experience

It was evident in my previous chapter on Surrealism, which looks at the writings of Breton and the post-WWII history of the movement, it is inevitable that the story is male dominated. I have noted the work and experience of a female artist such as Malleo can not be accounted for by simply reading the standard histories. They do not include her. In fact, they hardly mention artists in all. Though Surrealism would be cited by many as the first major movement concerned with female sexuality, its texts have scarcely addressed the lives and work of women. Any effort to see Surrealism from a female perspective quickly reveals the misogynistic, patriarchal views of the leaders of the movement who founded and participated in the surrealism movement and many derived inspiration from the past. Discovering their histories adds a new perspective to the entire field. This is one of several recent art historical explorations of Surrealism.

Chapter III:

The Female Surrealist Experience

long-ignored female Surrealists. The authors of these two books on the subject do not agree on how to approach the history of women in Surrealism. They agreed that the history of women in Surrealism must be included in the history of male history. An ostracized group of women who were excluded from the history of Chadwick and Mary Ann Caws, the two leading historians of the movement, take different approaches to the problem. In her book *Women and Surrealist Movement*, Chadwick uses a biographical approach to show "the defining female artists as "Surrealist" by their association with the Surrealists or their response to Breton's criteria." Thus, Chadwick is viewing as a significant presence of Surrealism. Internally Marian Caws agrees that women were an important and major group. "R

As was evident in the preceding chapter on Surrealism, when one looks at the writings of Breton and the published history of the movement, it is inevitable that the story is male dominated. Understanding the work and experiences of a female artist such as Mallo can not be accomplished by merely reading the standard histories. They do not include her. In fact, they include few female artists at all. Though Surrealism would be cited by many as the 20th century movement most concerned with female sexuality, its texts have somehow excluded the lives and work of women. Any effort to see Surrealism from a female perspective quickly reveals the misogynistic, patriarchal views of the leaders of the movement. Yet women did participate in the Surrealism movement and many derived inspiration from its theories. Discovering their histories adds a new perspective to the movement. This has been the goal of several recent art historical explorations of Surrealism.

Feminist art historians over the past thirty years have brought attention to the long-ignored female Surrealists. Yet the two leading historians who have written on the subject do not agree on how to go about “rewriting” the Surrealist story. They would agree that the history of women Surrealists cannot simply be written between the lines of male history. An ostracized group needs intense, individual attention. Whitney Chadwick and Mary Ann Caws, the two best known historians of the movement, take different approaches to the problem. In her *Women Artists and the Surrealism Movement*, Chadwick uses a biographical and formalist approach. She defines female artists as “Surrealist” by their association with the group, not by their adherence to Breton’s criteria. Thus, their work is viewed as a specialized sub-genre of Surrealism. Literary historian Caws agrees that women were not part of the original inner group: “It

was not that the original generation of male Surrealists had ignored women. In fact, among twentieth century artistic movements, the Surrealists undoubtedly had been most concerned with women . . . No women, though, had been listed as official members of the original surrealist movement, nor had they signed the manifestoes.”⁹⁶ Caws, however, calls for complete revisionism, electing to look at fundamental issues of theory and criticism. The essays included in her *Surrealism and Women* treat problems, specifically the discrepancies between the male and female experience, rather than the women themselves and their work. I prefer Chadwick’s less proselytizing, if more traditional approach: She identifies the women associated with the group, gives them attention and credit, and examines the contradictions between the male doctrine and female practice. Above all, she looks at what the artists themselves thought about the label “surrealist.” Her model provides parallels for looking at the work of Maruja Mallo.

Chadwick opens with a summary of the difficulties encountered in writing a female history of the movement. The actions and works of male Surrealists are carefully chronicled in textbooks, collections of essays, historical tomes, and other “mainstream” literary sources. The men are “official.” Trying to discover the lives of women Surrealists, on the other hand, presents a challenge. Their history often seems to be a form of gossip, or casual anecdotes that eventually lead back to the overshadowing male. Locating coherent stories, even from living sources, is difficult. This loose historical information hardly provides the firm evidence for a coherent history. In traditional art historical writing, female Surrealists are uniformly discussed as associated with the

⁹⁶ Mary Ann Caws, Rudolf E. Kuenzli, and Gwen Raaberg, eds., *Surrealism and Women* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1991), 1-2.

movement rather than defining it.⁹⁷ Thus Kay Sage for example, is known as Yves Tanguy's wife and her deep perspective studies are often related to his paintings. Though she exhibited with the group and her paintings were admired by Breton, she is rarely included in mainstream histories of the movement. This is also true for Mallo: she is rarely mentioned in histories of Surrealism though she was admired during her time, and when she is mentioned, it is perfunctorily, and normally relates to her "discovery" by male leaders or her relationship with well-known Spanish Surrealist poet Rafael Alberti. Even basic biographical facts, such as her birth date and original name, vary from source to source, as noted in Chapter 1.

Accounts of female artists being "discovered" by their male counterparts also present a historical bias. The accounts of their discovery can be likened to Columbus' "discovery" of the New World. It was a discovery to Europeans, but the native peoples certainly knew of their own existence. "Discovery" presumes the point of view of a dominant group. The discovery stories among the Surrealists often follow a certain pattern. The male Surrealist finds a charming young girl who wants to be an artist, becomes her chivalrous patron, and then provides a means for her to express her otherwise latent creativity.⁹⁸ "Discovery" implies the idea that the female artist would have been incapable of creative acts if it were not for the aid of the male Surrealist. It implies the power of the discoverer to extract the art from the female. Surrealist art critic Roland Penrose, for example, commented on "discovering" British expatriate Eileen Agar: "I was at once enchanted by the rare quality of her talent, the product of a highly

⁹⁷ Whitney Chadwick, *Women Artists and the Surrealism Movement* (Boston: Little and Brown, 1985), 7-9.

⁹⁸ Chadwick, *Women Artists*, 9.

sensitive imagination and feminine clairvoyance.”⁹⁹ He selected several of her paintings to be shown in the 1936 Surrealist international exhibition in London and overnight, Agar went from being a “nameless” to a “celebrated” artist. Mexican painter Frida Kahlo was similarly “discovered” when Breton visited her home. He became enchanted by her and wrote in a gallery brochure: “My surprise and joy were unbounded when I discovered on my arrival in Mexico, that her work had blossomed forth, in her latest paintings, into pure surrealism. . .”¹⁰⁰ In flattering and patronizing language, the male Surrealists laid claim to their “discoveries.” The female’s work was a confirmation of the concept of “the marvelous in the everyday” as espoused by Surrealist doctrine. There was no assumption that the women were informed and intentional within their creations.¹⁰¹ Most women labeled as Surrealists, however, found their styles before their affiliation with the group.¹⁰² Chadwick makes this point repeatedly in discussing the biographies of female Surrealists. All of them showed their avant-garde attitudes well before they met their male “discoverers.”

Mallo was “discovered” in 1928 at the tender age of 19 by Jose Ortega y Gasset, owner and editor of the *Revista de Occidente* (*Magazine of the Occident*). She was then “discovered” again, in Paris, by the omnipotent conquistador himself, André Breton. Yet prior to her encounters with either, Mallo had already demonstrated her artistic adeptness, creativity, and a flamboyant and eccentric social persona. It is true that women often benefited from male patrons and gained access to exhibitions with their help, but

⁹⁹ Chadwick, *Women Artists*, 69.

¹⁰⁰ Chadwick, *Women Artists*, 87-90.

¹⁰¹ Chadwick, *Women Artists*, 90.

¹⁰² Chadwick, *Women Artists*, 67.

historians can surely find a way to discuss their coming to light in terms other than "discovery."

The inaccessibility of the women's creations poses another difficulty in research. Much of their work resides in private collections and is internationally dispersed. The lack of English texts adds to the problem. This is also true of Mallo. A great number of her paintings are in private hands. Because she began her artistic career in Spain, spent her exile in Argentina, and exhibited all over South America, her paintings are scattered from Madrid, to Buenos Aires, to Santiago, to California. Furthermore, all of the literary sources for her life and work are printed in Spanish or Gallego,¹⁰³ the native dialect of her home autonomous region, Galicia. I had to translate all of this material in the course of my research. There was very little on Mallo in English.

The difficulties in researching female Surrealists can easily be identified, but the differences between the male story of Surrealism and the experiments of its female artists present a more complex problem. Chadwick reviews the contradictions between male jargon and the position of the female artist. Caws does the same, but ends her investigation at this point, exclaiming that there are too many problems for women to even be identified as Surrealists. The identities of specific Surrealist women are lost to arguments about gender issues in her method. Chadwick goes on to analyze the solutions women artists created in response to these contradictions.

The idea and image of the *femme-enfant* as stated by Breton's writings and illustrated in male artists' works presented the most salient problem for female

¹⁰³ This language is based upon pre Pre-Indoeuropean and Celtic dialects. The Roman invasion of the Galicia region in 3BC greatly latinized the language. It shares many similarities with Spanish in spelling and verb conjugation, but certain words are purely "Gallego." Gallego is still widely spoken and written in the region, as demonstrated by Galician sources used in this investigation.

Surrealists. Because men perceived the opposite sex as naïve, intellectually feeble, and volatile in mental stability, women were hindered from garnering respect as mature artists.¹⁰⁴ While male artists needed to tap into the chaos of the unconscious, they viewed their acts of lunacy as a theatrical act rather than reality. A quip from Dali illustrates this: “The only difference between myself and a madman is that I am not mad.”¹⁰⁵ Lunacy as demonstrated by a male was controlled by the individual and used as a creative tool. However, according to male Surrealists, female hysteria manifested uncontrollably in the passive woman.¹⁰⁶ Women accepted by the group, whether as wives or lovers, were often believed to possess this close and untamable relationship with the unconscious.

Playing the part of the *femme-enfant* clearly presented a dilemma for the Surrealist woman seeking a serious artistic career. Robert Belton suggests that Surrealist women often adopted the social role of the *femme-enfant*, at least superficially.¹⁰⁷ Many women exhibited airs of grace and seduction through playacting behavior. This theatrical performance, accompanied by a vivid imagination, ensured acceptance by Surrealist men.¹⁰⁸ Belton claims that at the time, these women, even if they were conscious of their performance, were unaware of the implications of the roles they were playing. He interviewed Meret Oppenheim at the end of her life, in 1984. In reference to her *Object* (1936) (*figure 3.1*) Belton suggests that Breton’s urgings and influence outweighed

¹⁰⁴ Chadwick, *Women Artists*, 74.

¹⁰⁵ Chadwick, *Women Artists*, 66.

¹⁰⁶ Chadwick, *Women Artists*, 74.

¹⁰⁷ Robert Belton, “Speaking with Forked Tongues: ‘Male’ Discourse in ‘Female Surrealism’,” in *Surrealism and Women*, ed. Mary Ann Caws, Rudolf E. Kuenzli, and Gwen Raaberg (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1991), 50-61.

¹⁰⁸ Chadwick, *Women Artists*, 90.



Fig. 3.1 Meret Oppenheim, *Object: Luncheon in Fur*, 1936, rpt. in Fer Briony, David Batchelor, and Paul Wood, Realism, Rationalism, Surrealism: Art between the Wars (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 175.

Oppenheim's creative input in its creation: ". . .we are justified in asking whether the work is truly Oppenheim's at all, for in a conversation that took place only shortly before she died, she *implied* [italics mine] to me that it was not her 'creation' apart from the actual manufacture. Clearly, then, some of the works of women involved in Surrealism were simply overcome by association with male meanings."¹⁰⁹ He also cites examples in the work of Leonora Carrington, Dorothea Tanning, and Valentine Hugo. In picking apart the works of female artists in such a way, he argues for a male dominance in all female Surrealist art. Belton has a point, many of these women played a social role in order to maintain artistic support, but many of them rejected this character in their work and showed such independent personalities that they overcame the male discourse in many inventive ways. Clearly then, much of their work cannot merely be viewed as a creation conceived with the sole intent of playing the part.

Female Surrealists overcame the image of the *femme-enfant* and the stereotype of being hysterical. Chadwick identifies multiple ways in which women achieved intelligent individual expression while working loosely within the parameters of Surrealism. Because they could not empathize with the image of the *femme-enfant*, and were prohibited from altering the patriarchal aspects of Surrealist doctrine, female artists employed their own realities in their works.¹¹⁰ They conveyed their experiences through self-portraiture, visual dialogue with male partners, and personal iconographic systems.

¹⁰⁹ Caws, Kuenzli, and Raaberg, 53.

¹¹⁰ Chadwick, *Women Artists*, 74.

Many women painted self-portraits, something male Surrealists rarely did.¹¹¹ Self depiction provided a means of rejecting the abstract *femme-enfant* and replacing it with a real, intelligent being.¹¹² It gave women self-affirmation and a tool with which to assert themselves. They did not paint themselves as enraptured, childlike Surrealist archetypes, but rather unique women with specific identities. The work of Italian painter Léonor Fini illustrates the use of self-portraiture to make a statement of independence. Images of her are not conceived through a dream, but rather show what she called “the mechanism of the dream.”¹¹³ In her *Figures on a Terrace* (1939) (figure 3.2), she illustrates herself surrounded by suggestions of male-female sexual confrontation on an outdoor stage. Fini often set her paintings in stage-like settings and used theatrical props as themes. A high heel and sword in the background suggest male-female, as do the various items of clothing flung about the outdoor stage. Garbed in a dramatic striped skirt, her poised figure presides over the composition. Her composure contrasts sharply to the objectified and erotically charged images of women painted by male Surrealists. Although her painting contains erotic suggestions, they are dispersed throughout the scene rather than serving as subject. Chadwick summarizes the effect of using the non-objectified self as the subject: “By placing woman at the center of these compositions, and making her experience of the world paramount, she asserts a female consciousness that has no need of manifestos, theories, or proselytizing.”¹¹⁴ Here, Fini serves as the center of the painting, orbited by her interest in theater and human sexuality.

¹¹¹ Chadwick, *Women Artists*, 67.

¹¹² Chadwick, *Women Artists*, 74.

¹¹³ Chadwick, *Women Artists*, 87.

¹¹⁴ Chadwick, *Women Artists*, 87.



Fig. 3.2 Leonor Fini, *Figures on a Terrace*, 1939, oil on canvas, rpt. In Whitney Chadwick, Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement (Boston: Little and Brown, 1985), 113.

Mallo also created self-portraits to reveal her reality as well, not in painted form, but in photographs. Two photographic series serve as her testament of self. One of the most interesting aspects of these photographs is that they reflect her painted themes. The first series, taken by her brother in the late 1920s and early 30s, serves as a complement to her painted series, *Cloacas y campanarios (Cesspools and Belfries)* (figures 3.3-3.6).¹¹⁵ Mallo visited the slums and suburbs of Madrid for artistic inspiration and while there, arranged photographs of herself in her subject matter. In this way, she incorporates herself into her art. The photographs, like her paintings, capture the gritty details that fascinated her: "At this time I was impressed by the sight of nature culminating waste, the scorched and pockmarked earth. Drains stirred up by the breezes, belfries buffeted by the winds. The world of things in formation which I frequently came up against on the outskirts is the fundamental basis of my work of that time."¹¹⁶ The paintings reveal apocalyptic landscapes full of crevices, skeletons, compost, and the urban refuse of the *bourgeoisie*. The photographs show her standing in barrels accompanied by scrap wood and animal skulls, walking along railroad tracks lined with trash, always surrounded by the trash of the slums. Her eyes gaze at the camera intently, or remain closed, or avert looking at the camera altogether, and her lips are expressionless in all shots.

The serious, intense mood, her poised posture, and her odd accoutrements, such as walking sticks and donkey skulls, give her the aura of a seer. Her erect, white form seems to rise from the refuse, as if she were a prophet surrounded by the apocalypse.

¹¹⁵ Juan Pérez de Ayala and Francisco Rivas, eds., *Maruja Mallo* (Madrid: Guillermo de Osma Galería, 1992), 21.

¹¹⁶ Maruja Mallo, "Lo popular en la plástica Española," in *Maruja Mallo: 59 Grabados en Negro y 9 Láminas en Color, 1928-1942*, Ramón Gómez de la Serna, 45 (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 1942).

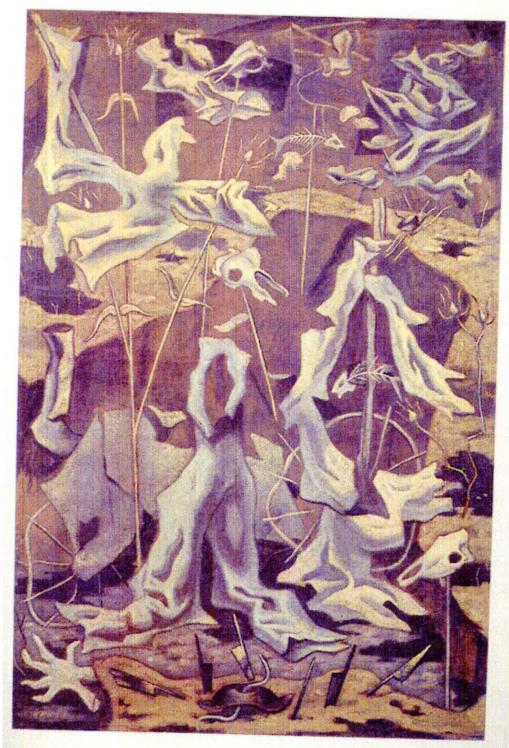


Fig. 3.3-3.5 Justo Mallo, Photographed Self-Portraits of Maruja Mallo, 1930, and **Fig. 3.6** Maruja Mallo, *Espantapeces*, 1931, oil on canvas, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).

Mallo, like many artists, viewed art as “an omen and a revolutionary harbinger. It does not follow nor incorporate political movements. Rather, it is politics that enlist the arts.”¹¹⁷ The paintings from *Sewers and Belfries* and the photographs of Mallo as “seer” seem to predict the wreckage that was to come with the Spanish Civil War and World War II in the following years. In each photograph, she has painted her signature in large letters on a prop, such as part of a wooden crate, or the wall of a lean-to, making it clear that even though her brother snapped the shutter, she staged the photograph. Mallo presents herself as a prophet, and definitely not an object of desire.

The next series of photographs, from the early 1940s, contrasts greatly to the scenes of decay and foreboding from the late 20s. These pictures show Mallo during the time of her exile in South America on a vacation to the Easter Islands with her friend and probable lover,¹¹⁸ poet Pablo Neruda (*figures 3.7-3.8*). Some images show Mallo and Neruda standing on the beach together, examining sea life that has washed ashore. Other photographs are clearly self-staged and present her most dramatic examples of self-portraiture, and evoke her love of nature.

In Figure 3.7, Mallo stands upon a rock with her arms spread and looks coquettishly at the camera. She has her trademark dramatic eyelashes and dark painted lips. Long strands of seaweed drape over the entirety of her body, over her head, arms, bathing suit, and legs. The image of the apocalyptic seer has been replaced with that of sea goddess. Just as she had earlier felt a connection to the city and used all of its

¹¹⁷ de Ayala and Rivas, 21.

¹¹⁸ Though it is not stated in texts, I have made the assumption that Neruda was her lover. Given her open attitude toward sex and tendency to be attracted to artistic intellectuals and given that he was on his third marriage at the time, I feel it is safe to assume that they had some kind of non-platonic relationship. It is also suspicious that she made a trip with him, alone, and not with his wife or family.

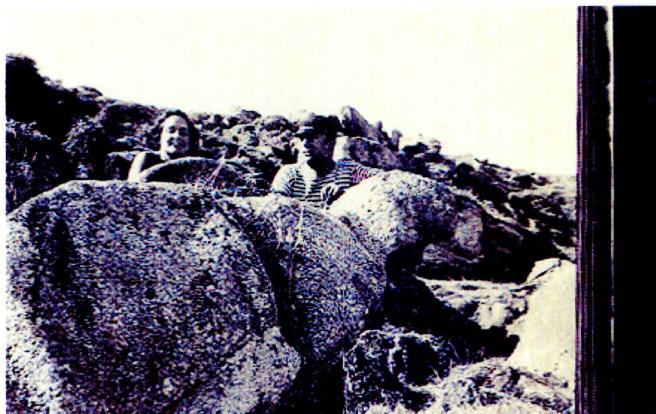
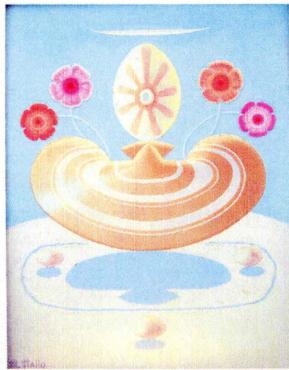


Fig. 3.7 Mallo and Pablo Neruda on Easter Island, early 1940s, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).

Fig. 3.8 Photographed self-portrait of Mallo on Easter Island, early 1940s, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).



Fig. 3.9 Maruja Mallo, *Naturaleza Viva*, 1942, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).



aspects, festive and gritty, in her work, so she now felt a connection to the sea. After she returned from the vacation, Mallo entered into a phase in which she repeatedly painted objects from the sea. In her *Naturaleza Viva (Lively Lives)* series, shells, anemones, starfish, and seaweed fill the canvases in geometric compositions (*figure 3.9*). As quoted in Chapter 1, Mallo described the beaches of South America in exuberant language. The curvilinear lines and bright colors convey joy and vibrancy.

These visions of Mallo as a mythical figure are reinforced by comments from her contemporaries. In his review of her work from 1928 to 1942, Spanish novelist and critic Ramón Gómez de la Serna describes meeting Mallo and viewing her work for the first time: “. . . I then christened her, ‘the young witch.’ There was a witchery in her work, as if a new enchantress had descended from the north after having mixed her colors in the earthenware pots of her mysterious village kitchen. Her secret was her own, and very different from others were her pictures, those pictures in which the commonplace and the exotic emerged in visible tumult.”¹¹⁹ Other accounts likewise make mention of her eccentric and vibrant personality, which had an enchanting effect on those who surrounded her.

Artistic dialogue between lovers provided another means for women to avoid male biases. Surrealist partners often carried on “conversations” through their creations, whether in the form of writing or painting. This provided a means for many Surrealist women, and men as well, to express their affection without objectifying their partner. The work of Kay Sage and Yves Tanguy illustrates this. Both shared a great admiration for Giorgio de Chirico’s work and emulated his style in many of their paintings. They

¹¹⁹ Ramón Gómez de la Serna, *Maruja Mallo: 59 Grabados en Negro y 9 Laminas en Color, 1928-1942* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 1942), 16-17.

each adapted the style to suit their own tastes, but similarities can be drawn between certain paintings (*figures 3.10-3.11*).¹²⁰ For example, Sage's *Danger Construction Ahead* (1940) uses a barren landscape leading to a hazy horizon and odd geological formations similar to Tanguy's earlier painting *Tomorrow* (1938). Both paintings produce "an uncanny sense of estrangement."¹²¹

The relationship between Maruja Mallo and Surrealist poet Rafael Alberti (*figure 3.12*), a fellow member of the Escuela de Vallecas, provides an interesting case of partner dialogue. Alberti wrote several poems directed to Mallo which specifically described scenes from her paintings. Spanish Surrealist historian Cyril B. Morris summarizes this artistic parley: "In the canvases of Maruja Mallo and the poems of Rafael Alberti, painting and poetry combine to denounce through their deliberate focus on filth, decay and death the mindlessly apathetic civilization that was so ferociously attacked by the surrealists."¹²² The following poem contains allusions to Mallo's ominous *Cloacas y Campanarios (Cesspools and Belfries)* (*figures 3.13-3.14*) series:

The False Angel

To Maruja Mallo

So I could walk among the knots of roots,
and bony dwellings of the worms,
So I could listen to the decomposed rustlings
of the world
and bite the petrified light of the stars,
to the west of my dream you pitched your tent, false angel.

You who united through the same current of water
see me,
those who bound through a betrayal and the fall of
a star listen to me,
take shelter in the abandoned voices of the ruins.
Hear the slowness of a rock that

¹²⁰ Renée Riese Hubert, *Magnifying Mirrors: Women Surrealism, and Partnership* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 173.

¹²¹ Hubert, 188.

¹²² Cyril B. Morris, *Surrealism and Spain: 1920-1936* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 48.

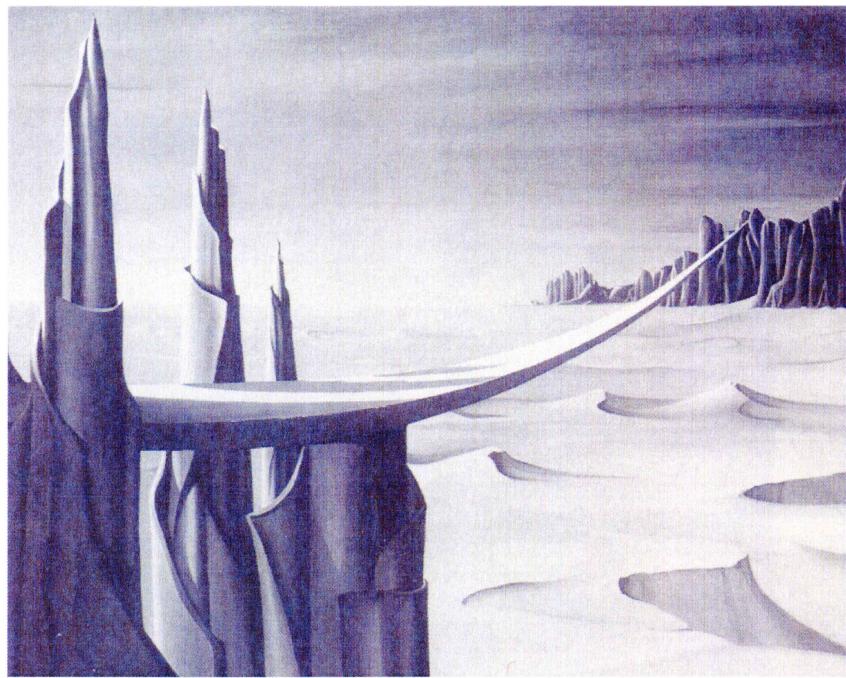


Fig. 3.10 Kay Sage, *Danger Construction Ahead*, 1940, oil on canvas rpt. in Renee Riese Hubert, Magnifying Mirrors: Women, Surrealism, and Partnership, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 189.

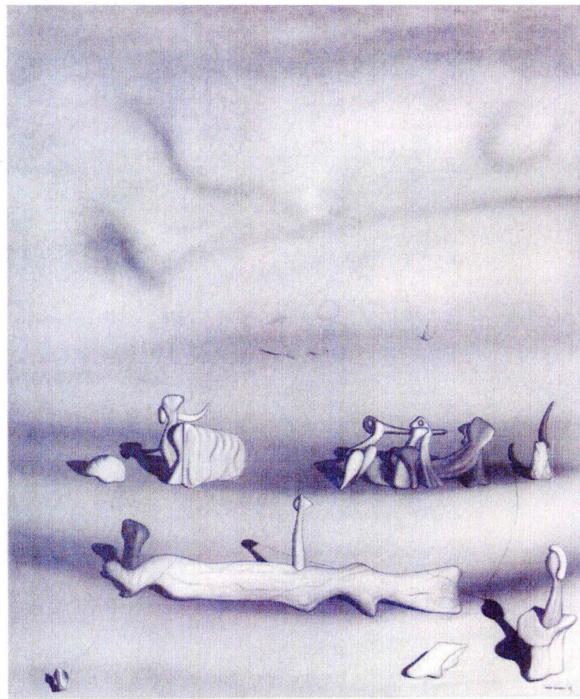


Fig. 3.11 Yves Tanguy, *Tomorrow*, 1938, oil on canvas rpt. in Renee Riese Hubert, Magnifying Mirrors: Women, Surrealism, and Partnership, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 190.

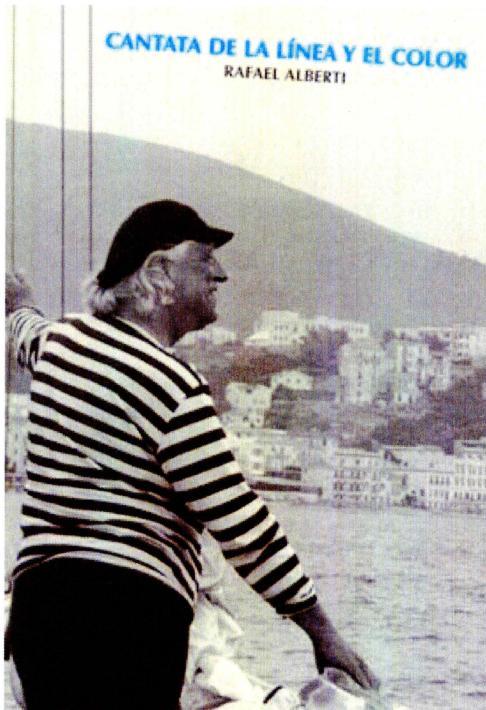


Fig. 3.12 Cover of a volume of poetry by Rafael Alberti, c.1970, rpt online at <http://www.dpm-cultura.org>, accessed on March 30, 2003.

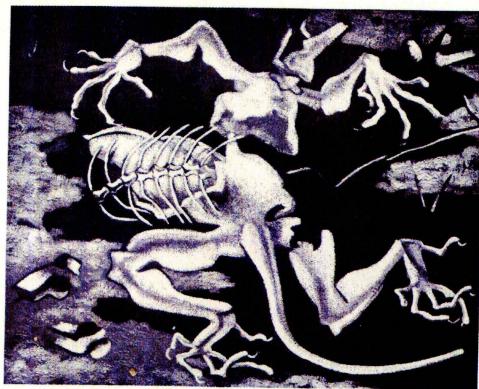


Fig. 3.13-3.14 Maruja Mallo, *Grajo y excrementos* (*Rook and Excrement*), 1930, oil on canvas, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, [Maruja Mallo](#), (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993) and *Largato y Cenizas* (*Lizard and Ashes*), 1928, oil on canvas, rpt. in Ramon Gomez de la Serna, [Maruja Mallo: 59 Grabados en Negro y 9 Laminas en Color, 1928-1942](#) (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 1942).

tolls the death knell.

Don't let go of each other's hands.

There are spiders that die without a nest
and tendrils that upon contact with a shoulder,
catch fire and rain blood.

The moon shines through the lizards' skeletons,
If you remember the sky,
the choler of the cold will stand erect in the thistles,
or in the deceit of the trenches that strangle
the only rest of the dawns: the birds.
Ye who believe in the living will see casts of clay
inhabited by unfaithful, indefatigable angels:
the sleepwalking angels who adjust the orbits
of fatigue.

Why go on?
Dampness is the friend of the glass shards,
and after a bad dream the frost awakens
 the nails
or scissors, capable of freezing the mourning
 of the ravens.

All has come to an end.
You grow conceited, in the withered fall
 of the sinking comets,
because you killed a dead person,
because you gave a shadow the sleepless length
 of weeping
because you smothered the death rattle of
 atmospheric strata.¹²³

Alberti presents descriptions that seem to rise in the conscious for a moment and then give way to the next, unrelated image. However, his images are not procured from automatic writing or chance, but rather by looking at Mallo's works. The poem provides a scene of destruction and decay, relayed in a pessimistic tone, the same pessimism of Mallo's paintings. His descriptions point directly to objects in her paintings with words such as "ruins," "rock," "pits," "birds," and "dead." Some phrases help to pinpoint which painting he had in mind when he wrote the poem. "The moon reveals the lizards' skeletons . . ." offers a conspicuous reference to Mallo's painting *Largato y Cenizas*

¹²³ Rafael Alberti, *Sobre los angeles*, ed. Cyril B. Morris (Madrid: Catedra, 1992), 149-150. Translated by Sarah Grigg and Professor Troy Prinkey.

(*Lizard and Ashes*) (figure 3.14), in which a decomposing reptilian figure sprawls across singed ground.

Morris also notes that “. . . Alberti seemed to put into words what Maruja Mallo expressed with paint.”¹²⁴ This perspective highlights what is perhaps the most interesting aspect of this relationship: the male response to a female creation. Mallo did not paint with the intention of echoing Alberti’s poetic style. It was her painting that inspired Alberti to write the poem. Susan Kirkpatrick, a professor of Spanish and Women’s Studies at the University of California San Diego, agrees that their case is unusual in the Surrealist circle:

“. . . I see the *Cloacas y Campanarias*’ [Cesspools and Belfries] series that was so well received in Paris as growing out of an aesthetic direction that Alberti and Maruja Mallo developed and explored together during their affair. . . I think this may be a case in which a famous male surrealist was actually following the lead of a woman artist whose work has been less acknowledged.”¹²⁵

The reason why Alberti referred to Mallo as a “false angel” remains to be discovered. This epithet implies her betrayal of him as a lover, which is possible, given Mallo’s open attitude towards sex. Several words reinforce the idea of infidelity, such as “betrayal,” “deceit,” and “unfaithful.” Unfortunately, I could not locate a text that describes the course of their relationship in any detail to support this theory of infidelity. Soon after their relationship came to an end in 1930, he married writer María Teresa Leon. I asked Professor Kirkpatrick if she knew how Mallo responded to the end of what is recorded as one of her more remarkable relationships. Her response: “. . . as much as I can tell from the timing, he seems to have started his relationship with his future wife just

¹²⁴ Morris, 47.

¹²⁵ Susan Kirkpatrick, Ph.D., e-mail message to author, March 10, 2004.

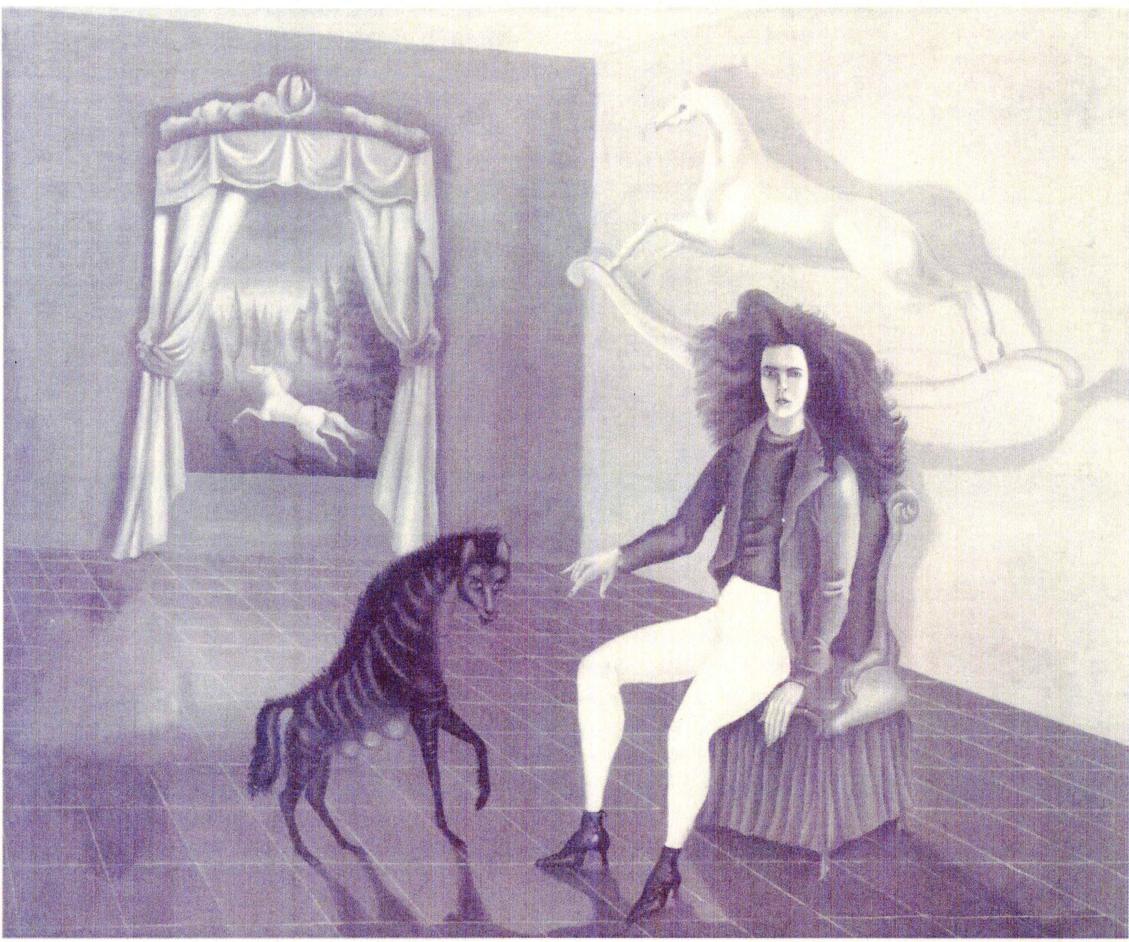
at the end of his relationship with Maruja Mallo. . . . I have the impression (from my sources) that she went through a time of being depressed."¹²⁶ One would think Mallo would have entered a period of work in which she expressed this melancholy. The next paintings I could locate are dated 1933, and they are certainly not despondent in content or appearance. Rather than enter a new phase of painting, perhaps Mallo stopped painting as a grief response, something that other artists have been known to do during periods of depression.

Personal iconography provided another means for female Surrealists to avoid male discourse. Through the use of images with powerful personal association, women found a way to eliminate the Freudian symbols of virility used by male Surrealists. Leonora Carrington's *Self-Portrait* (1938) (*figure 3.15*) is loaded with personal symbolism.¹²⁷ The hyena figure points to a short story she authored, "The Debutante," which was published in Breton's *Anthology of Black Humour*. In this humorous story, a hyena serves as a representation of escape from female expectations, specifically, attending a debutante's ball. Another published story, "The House of Fear," contains the white horse "... as a psychic guide, a friendly animal who conducts the young heroine into a world marked by mysterious ceremonies. . . ."¹²⁸ Carrington grew up in a wealthy English home in which she passed many hours alone in the nursery, where she developed an imaginary friendship with a rocking horse. The rocking horse and the looming walls of the room seem to point to the lonely nursery. However, the presence of the hyena and

¹²⁶ Susan Kirkpatrick, Ph.D., e-mail message to author, March 10, 2004.

¹²⁷ Chadwick, *Women Artists*, 78.

¹²⁸ Chadwick, *Women Artists*, 79.



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Fig. 3.15 Leonora Carrington, *Self-Portrait*, 1938, oil on canvas, rpt. in Whitney Chadwick, Women Artists and the Surrealism Movement (Boston: Little and Brown, 1985), 175.

white horse point to escape, imaginative, or physical, through the open window in the background. Carrington places herself between “confinement,” the rocking horse, and “escape,” the hyena.

A dissertation recently completed by Emilia Garofalo, The Female Temper of a Spanish Generation: Cultural Images of Women in the Second Republic (1931-1939), reviews Maruja Mallo’s work from the 1920s to the late 1930s. Her research reveals that Mallo developed a unique way of avoiding male artistic conventions. She claims Mallo resolves the “problematic representation of the female in male Surrealist art”¹²⁹ by evolving her early female figures of the 20’s to completely androgynous beings by the late 30’s. This method serves as a kind of personal iconography. Mallo’s depictions of the human figure during this period supports Garofalo’s argument.

The paintings from the series *Las Verbenas (The Fairs)*, for example, demonstrate Mallo’s early experimentations with androgyny. In vibrant colors and chaotic, cubist composition, the religious festivals of Madrid fill the canvases. One painting, *Verbena (Fair, 1927) (figure 3.16)*, shows two large women wearing wings striding through the middle of the carnival with their arms open, while the other figures appear to stand still, parted by the “angels’” massive arms. The two initially appear feminine, but further inspection reveals masculine traits. Their thick torsos, arms, and necks suggest virile strength and rigid jaw-lines reinforce their determined movement.¹³⁰ The theme of the carnival supports an androgynous persona: a place in which one can shed the everyday identity that covers the inner self, a place in which everyday social norms can be

¹²⁹ Emilia Garofalo, *The Female Temper of a Spanish Generation* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 2002), 71.

¹³⁰ Garofalo, 72.



Fig. 3.16 Maruja Mallo, *Verbena*, 1927, oil on canvas, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).



Fig. 3.17 Maruja Mallo, *La Sorpresa del Trigo* (*Surprise of the Wheat*), 1936, oil on canvas, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).



Fig. 3.18 Maruja Mallo, *Estrellas del Mar* (*Starfish*), 1937, oil on canvas, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).

disregarded.¹³¹ The strict roles of male-female, or in the Surrealist case, male *femme-enfant*, are discarded for a more asexual identity.

A work from 1936, *La Sorpresa del Trigo* (*The Surprise of Wheat*) (figure 3.17), in which the face and hands of a massive figure inhabit the pictorial space, demonstrates the next phase of androgynous evolution. The long hair and wheat, a traditional symbol of fertility, serve as indications of femininity. However, the voluminous neck and hands indicate an individual of ambiguous gender. This image challenges the usual depictions of female field workers with slumped backs and tired demeanors. Here, the labor of the land is viewed in terms of regeneration and strength, characteristics of female and male.¹³²

Garofalo ends her examination with Mallo's work *Estrellas del mar* (*Starfish*, 1937) (figure 3.18). Two figures use one of their hands to hold a fishing net overhead. With their free hands they hold items from the sea, a fish and a sea star. It is in this painting, claims Garofalo, that Mallo has finally achieved full androgyny: the figures share the same height, body size, and facial characteristics and each carries male and female attributes. The body to the left is shown with a male upper body; however, a light line drawn between the legs suggests a vulva. On the right-side figure, a female chest—faded curved lines suggest breasts—is contradicted by a strong, male lower body.

Garofalo's dissertation is convincing in arguing for the androgynous evolution of human figures in Mallo's work. The use of asexual figures certainly contradicts depictions of women as reflections of man's sexual desire in male Surrealist art.

¹³¹ Garofalo, 74.

¹³² Garofalo, 88.

However, this interpretation only examines works depicting the human figure. Mallo's themes expand beyond the human figure and an asexual point of view, as reflected in her tremendous oeuvre of approximately sixty years of artistic creation. Garofalo's interpretation ignores the artist's work outside the human figure and outside a twenty-year time period. Her conclusions give the impression that Mallo was always striving for androgynous expression in the sexist Surrealist movement. I strongly disagree with her closing comments:

"Until her death, it seems as though the artist sought to find a thread that connected the expressed work with her inner self and with her universe. . . But through all these experiments and explorations, I believe that she never succeeded in producing one definitive self-image."¹³³

Garofalo concludes that Mallo never finds a common theme to unite her works and herself, but has failed to take note of a persistent leitmotif in Mallo's work: her personal interests. Mallo, like many other female Surrealists, created a highly personal iconography to circumvent the male discourse. And, like many of her contemporaries, she wove themes from the natural world into her work. I have found her iconography to be so complex, that the following chapter is dedicated to it.

The most extreme way to avoid male Surrealist jargon was to reject the Surrealist title. Frida Kahlo provides the best example, as she despised Breton and was outraged when he labeled her as a member of the group: "Breton. . . thought I was a Surrealist, but I wasn't. I never painted dreams. I painted my own reality."¹³⁴ Leonor Fini mocked Breton to his face (which he unfortunately interpreted as theatrically charming). With her

¹³³ Garofalo, 92.

¹³⁴ Chadwick, *Women Artists*, 66.

strong sense of personal identity she opposed Surrealism's effort to achieve collective goals.¹³⁵ Mallo appears to have done the same by rejecting the contract that was offered to her in Paris and leaving the Surrealist capital soon after her arrival. Some female artists associated with the Surrealists maintained only social connections to the group, viewing themselves as listeners rather than participants, and only exhibiting on occasion with male Surrealists.¹³⁶ Many women came to the group as a means of personal revolt, not because of an affinity for Freudian theory. Carrington and Eileen Agar had to flee wealthy, controlling families (who eventually alienated them) to pursue their artistic goals.¹³⁷ In Mallo's case, it seems she was determined to do that which was not expected of her in Spanish society. Whether they accept the title "Surrealist" or not, however, most of the women artists associated with the male movement are still historically viewed as such.

The final question becomes then, is Maruja Mallo a Surrealist in this historical context? An essay written by the artist herself in 1981, entitled "Surrealism in My Work" provided a valuable resource in my research. Her essay does not rephrase Breton's manifestoes or even use the word "Surrealism" aside from the title. Rather, she describes her view of the world and how it translates to art in Surrealist language. Mallo saw the world as a whirlwind of different objects to be arranged on the canvas. She lists inventories of the things she sees in the everyday in difficult language and a tone filled with a sense of vertigo, as seen here in her description of her *Las Verbenas (The Fairs)* series: "We see in these rites, or popular manifestations, how authentic inventions in

¹³⁵ Chadwick, *Women Artists*, 81.

¹³⁶ Chadwick, *Women Artists*, 93.

¹³⁷ Chadwick, *Women Artists*, 69.

simultaneous movements in all directions , making curves, ellipses, or parabolas cross the space panoramically. . .”¹³⁸ Her elevated, ecstatic language and lists of incongruous objects resonate with Surrealist imagery. Though she does not quote Breton or point to Surrealist elements of her paintings, the style of her language and the title of her essay point to Surrealism.

Not only does Mallo identify herself as Surrealist, but she also matches the qualifications as listed by Whitney Chadwick. Her artistic methods of creating female Surrealist language parallel those of other women artists: she created self-portraits, carried on artistic dialogue with a Surrealist lover, and developed a highly personal iconographic system. Mallo is indeed a Surrealist artist.

As illustrated in this chapter, histories of women in Surrealism have been established, but they are still outside of the mainstream patriarchal accounts. However, the focus of even these texts falls upon the same select women, all of whom were associated with Surrealist “heroes.” Despite her relationship with Rafael Alberti and praise from Breton, Mallo is rarely mentioned. Her contemporary, Remedios Varo, seems to fill the slot for the token female Spanish Surrealist in texts.

For now, separate accounts for women artists seem appropriate; they better highlight their personal histories and the gender controversy within the genre itself. Hopefully, future historians will weave the research of Chadwick and Caws into general texts treating Surrealism. Hopefully these feminist historians will also include Maruja Mallo.

¹³⁸ Maruja Mallo, “El Surrealismo a Traves Mi Obra,” in *Maruja Mallo*, Juan Perez de Ayala and Francisco Rivas, eds. (Madrid: Guillermo de Osma Galeria, 1992), 117.

Chapter IV:
An Interpretation of Mallo's Work

So little work has been done on Mallo, and what has been done is so biographical, her art is ripe for interpretation. To conclude this study, I offer one example of how this might be done. I would like to look closely at one painting, *Estrellas de Mar (Starfish, 1937)* (figure 4.1) from her series *La Religión del Trabajo (The Religion of Labor, 1936-1938)* (figures 4.1- 4.8) to consider how a modern, feminist, iconographical reading might be applied.

Mallo's *La Religión del Trabajo* series is an unusual subject for a painter who was vehemently anticlerical. However, in this series, Mallo has made an exception by juxtaposing traditional Christian symbols with her own artistic language to create an inversion of traditional Biblical and Surrealist iconography.

Most critics analyze Mallo's work through a formalist approach. A formalist reading of *Starfish*, one of the paintings in this series, reveals two statuesque female figures surrounded with sea imagery. In varying shades of gray-blue, Mallo depicts two broadly built women, similar in appearance, who lift a fishing net overhead. The crisscrossing strings form a backdrop. Each woman wears a short, tight fitting, sleeveless bathing suit-type costume and has a neck-length haircut. They both seem serene, though their expressionless mouths and cold gazes also lend them an unearthly solemnity. Neither makes eye contact with the viewer. This sense of ethereal peacefulness is reinforced by the cool tones of the painting. The woman on the right raises her left hand at a rigid right angle as she holds the net. Her right arm bends upward to the middle of the composition, where she holds a small starfish between her thumb and index finger. As her face and upper body look directly at the viewer, her legs turn inward, toward the opposite figure. The woman standing on the left reflects this action, but in reverse,



Fig. 4.1 Maruja Mallo, *Estrellas de Mar* (Starfish), 1937, oil on canvas, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).



Fig. 4.2 Maruja Mallo, *Mensaje del Mar* (*Message from the Sea*), 1937, oil on canvas, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).

Fig. 4.3 Maruja Mallo, *El Canto de las Espigas* (*Song of the Wheat*), 1939, oil on canvas, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).



Fig. 4.4 Maruja Mallo, *La Sorpresa del Trigo* (*The Surprise of Wheat*), 1936, oil on canvas, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).

Fig. 4.5 Maruja Mallo, *Arquitectura Humana* (*Human Architecture*), 1937, oil on canvas, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).

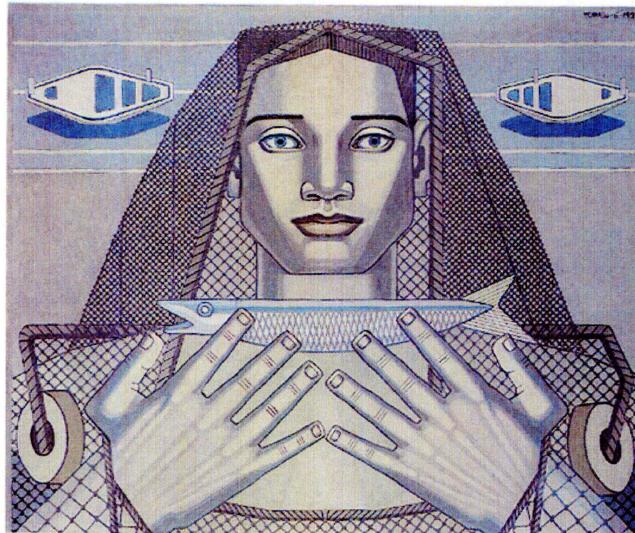




Fig. 4.6 Maruja Mallo, *El Mar (The Sea)*, 1938, oil on canvas, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).



Fig. 4.7 Maruja Mallo, *La Tierra (The Land)*, 1938, oil on canvas, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).

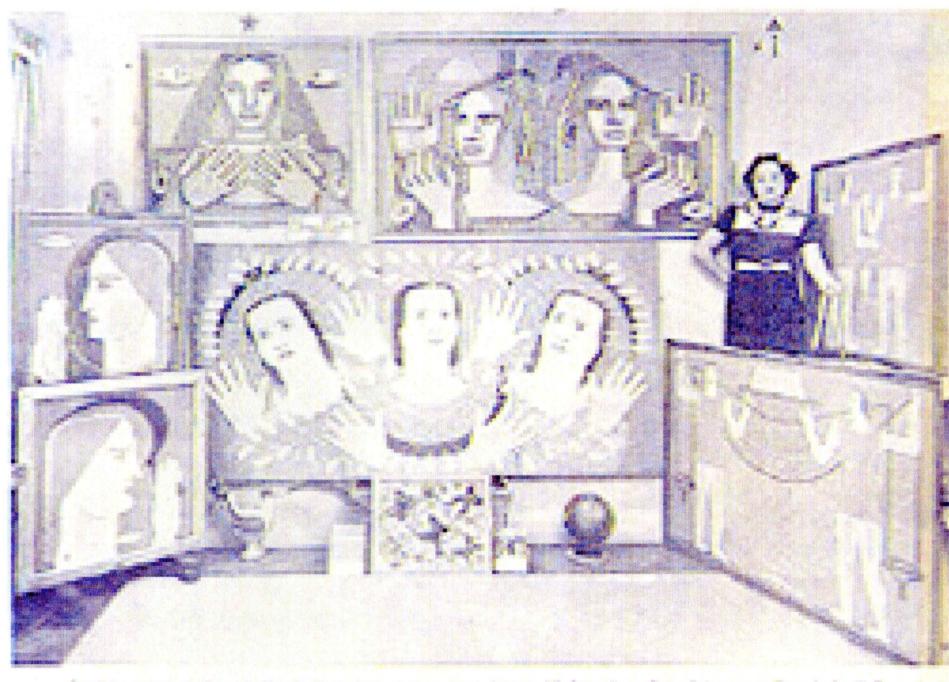


Fig. 4.8 Photograph of Maruja Mallo with the entire *Religión del Trabajo* series, 1939, oil on canvas, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporánea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).

turning her feet toward her twin, and her back to the viewer. Her arms form two right angles, one upholding the net and the other angled toward the center of the composition. A fish hangs from her arm in a center alignment with the star. The weave of the net forms a backdrop of intricate triangles and semi-circles. At each edge, the net hangs in a rectangular shape and ends in a tasseled rope. Its bottom forms a semi-circle above the ground and also has a sort of tassel dangling from its middle. The strict use of geometry is evident in the matching outside arms, the alignment of the starfish and fish, the similar body positioning, and the shapes formed by the net.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the vanguard in which Mallo participated, the Escuela de Vallecas, looked to various literary sources for artistic guidance, including Luca Pacioli's Renaissance text, *The Divine Proportion* (1497).¹³⁹ Pacioli believed that mathematical proportion underlay the entire natural world. These proportions could be uncovered and applied to art and architecture to achieve aesthetic perfection. The preparatory drawings Mallo made for the works in this series are hardly "sketches;" they are more like blueprints (*figures 4.9-4.11*). She used a strict grid, stenciled within a polygonal shape, to map out the human body. For example, in Figure 4.9 concentric circles emanate from the navel of the central figure and the bodies of the other figures are tailored to fit proportionately. The plans for the heads of the figures in *Starfish* (*figure 4.10*) show parallel lines running through the faces to align each feature. This use of a mathematical proportional system extends beyond the figures and into the composition as well. In *Starfish*, Mallo divides the canvas, using the aligned star and fish as the center.

¹³⁹ Maria Dolores Arroyo, "La Divina Proporción," *Goya*, no.208 (1989): 256. Unfortunately, I could not obtain a copy of this text in English, or Spanish for that matter. Mallo's good friend Juan Calatrava was the first to translate the text from Italian to Spanish in the 1930s. I e-mailed *Goya*'s library and requested this article, which briefly outlines the text, but doesn't get into specifics as far as "golden" mathematical proportions go.



Fig. 4.9 Maruja Mallo, Preparatory “sketch” for *El Canto de las Espigas*, 1939, oil on canvas and pencil on paper, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia,

Fig. 4.10 Maruja Mallo, Preparatory “sketch” for heads, 1937, pencil on graph paper, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).

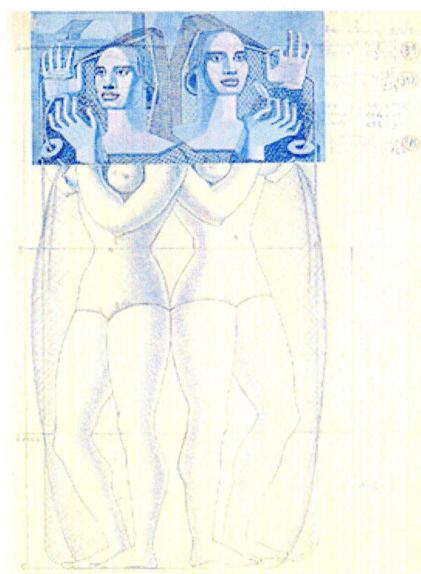
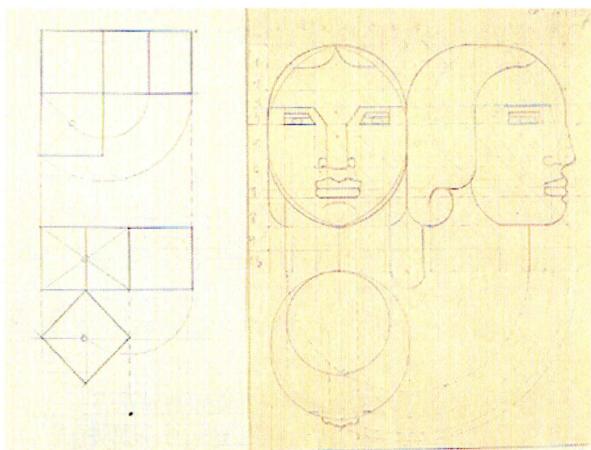
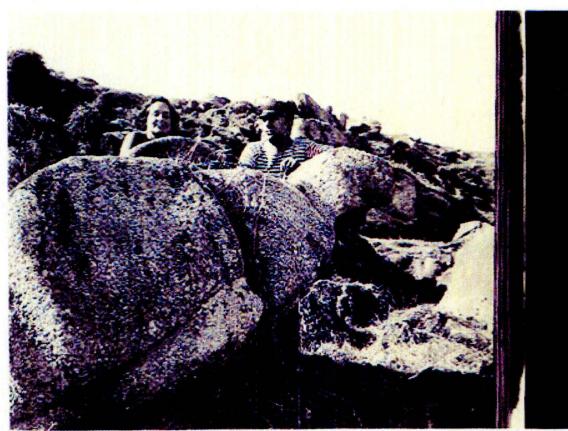


Fig. 4.11 Maruja Mallo, Preparatory “sketch” for *Mensaje del Mar*, 1937, oil on canvas and pencil on paper, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).

The figures are the same size and their bodies are in nearly a mirrored position. Mallo has created a bifurcated composition with a human architecture.

At another level of reading, the artist's biography provides clues to a deeper understanding of the painting. Photographs capture Mallo in scenes by the seaside, wearing bathing suits and examining life-forms washed ashore by the waves (*figures 4.12-4.13*). The artist was born and raised in a coastal town in Galicia, a region where culture revolved around the sea and fishing. The fishing and water-related items—fish, starfish, bathing suits, fishing net, and the color blue—can be interpreted as evidence of her close ties to the ocean. As disclosed in Chapter 1, the artist firmly believed in the independence of women in the 20th century. In her personal choices, she repeatedly demonstrated her own independence by visiting metropolitan places traditionally prohibited to women, by refusing to marry, but willingly taking lovers. In *Starfish*, the women are strong, pillar-like beings. They partake in the labor of harvesting fish, an occupation typically done by men.

At still another level of interpretation, a highly intricate iconography intertwines conventions of Surrealism, traditional Christianity, and Mallo's personal artistic language. Male surrealist art had typically used objects to symbolize male desire and sexuality, such as the *femme-enfant*, or Dali's use of ants to represent sperm. Like many female members of the surrealist movement, Mallo altered the phallocentric language of the male surrealists to avoid creating purely objectified females and to meet her own artistic ends. She focused on the female figure not as the *femme-enfant*, but as an Amazon, a woman to be admired for composure and strength. Overt sexual symbols appear, such as the phallic symbols formed on both sides by the net, as well as the



Maruja Mallo e Pablo Neruda na illa de Panmea

Fig. 4.12 Photograph of Maruja Mallo and Pablo Neruda on the beach, early 1940s, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).



Maruja Mallo na illa de Panmea

Fig. 4.13 Photographed self-portrait of Mallo on Easter Island, early 1940s, rpt. in Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia, Maruja Mallo, (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Xunta de Galicia, 1993).

suggestion of a breast formed at the bottom of the net. However, these sexual suggestions do not seem erotic. Instead, they imply a solemn universality.

There are many classical Biblical references in the image. First, fishing and its related accoutrements point to Christian texts and traditional icons. The image of two “fisherwomen” seems to refer to the calling of Saints Peter and Andrew by Christ: “Come after Me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:18). By replacing the two male apostles with a pair of women, Mallo seems to be portraying them as female apostles, or holy women. Holding a net laden with phallic symbols perhaps relates to “fishers of men.” Images of nets traditionally imply the gathering of souls to bring to Heaven; ensnaring spiritual power parallels harvesting fish from the sea.¹⁴⁰ Fish are universally associated with water, life and fertility. In the Christian tradition, fish represent Christ and baptism: as a fish can only live in water, so a Christian can only spiritually “live” through the water of baptism.¹⁴¹ The act of fishing itself parallels the idea that “souls for conversion are the fish to be caught.” From a Surrealist point of view, fishing reflects the process of psychoanalysis, dipping into the “sea” or “unconscious,” allowing “spontaneous forces to operate, and then collecting their chance results.”¹⁴² Mallo has chosen a Biblical theme that ties in neatly with her life experiences with the sea and the Surrealist movement.

¹⁴⁰ Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant, *A Dictionary of Symbols* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), 699.

¹⁴¹ George Wells Ferguson, *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 6.

¹⁴² Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 385.

The phallic symbol and breast are also used in traditional iconography, but here take on new meaning. Conventionally the phallus represents procreative power and in Western culture is viewed as the foundation of life, the erect pillar that supports mankind.¹⁴³ Here Amazonian women hold up the phallic symbols and become pillars themselves, as examples of strength. The tradition of the phallus is also challenged by the depictions of breasts. Historically in Christian art, breasts symbolize motherhood and its associated characteristics of “love, nourishment, and protection.”¹⁴⁴ Along with the traditional symbol of the “fertile fish,” the breast formed in the net and the overt breasts of the right-side figure illustrate the fecundity of women, who produce and support life.

Mallo further expands upon the concept of “woman as divine” through the hand gestures used by the figure on the right. In traditional Christian art, grasping an object with three fingers extended expresses the Trinity and a raised palm facing outward is a blessing of God.¹⁴⁵ This figure displays both of these traditional hand gestures, as she holds the starfish while extending three fingers and raises her palm outward, suggesting divine status.

The artist takes another liberty with traditional Biblical interpretation, by how she represents divinity. Many Christian paintings show a white dove descending from the sky in the center of the composition to illustrate the presence of the Holy Ghost.¹⁴⁶ In *Starfish*, she replaced the dove, a creature of flight related to the sky, with a holy starfish from the depths of the sea. Stars are a source of light and a reference to heaven.

¹⁴³ Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 751.

¹⁴⁴ Ferguson, 26.

¹⁴⁵ Ferguson, 27.

¹⁴⁶ Ferguson, 56.

In Mallo's case, the use of a starfish in place of a dove has an even greater significance. At this point in her artistic career she studied esoteric cults, pagan religions, and "witchery," all of which fascinated her. Influences from various pagan sources can be seen in *Starfish*, specifically Celtic and Egyptian sources.

As mentioned previously, Galicia was originally a Celtic region. The Celts worshipped a goddess called "Star," or in the Celtic language, "Sirona," a primeval Great Goddess.¹⁴⁷ Sirona represented fertility and regeneration. It seems likely that Mallo, who was so tied to her native region and who rejected traditional Christianity, would use her region's folkloric pagan theology.

The influence of ancient Egyptian art is much more overt. The mirrored body positioning of the figures with their torsos facing outward and feet sideways, as well as the profile and frontal facial views recall Egyptian tomb painting and bas relief (*figure 4.14*). This use of bifurcated symmetry reflects the Egyptian notion of duality and unity in all aspects of the universe. The number two held great significance, as it represented opposing and complementary forces. These figures were arranged antithetically in paintings: ". . . often, a pair of deities—especially goddesses—are depicted identically in dress and appearance and differ only in name. . ."¹⁴⁸ Aside from a symmetrical composition, Egyptian figures were laid out using very specific proportions. As seen in her preparatory sketches, Mallo does the same; all body parts are ruled by strict formulae: the legs are so long in comparison to the torso, the width of the face is so wide in relation to its length, and so on.

¹⁴⁷ Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 924-925. Sirona is very difficult to find in texts treating Celtic paganism. Her myths apparently were not as central to the religion as others. Chevalier and Gheerbrant's text provided the best information on this deity.

¹⁴⁸ Richard H. Wilkinson, *Symbol and Magic in Egyptian Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994), 130.

The objects the women extend, the star and the fish, parallel the offering of the funereal objects by Egyptian figures (*figure 4.15*). These symbols carried significance similar to the Christian connotations. The star again represented the heavens, but the meaning of the fertile fish was slightly different. In Egyptian art, water and anything related to it represented female sexuality. The fish was interpreted as a sign of fecundity and reproduction. One of the primary goddesses in Egyptian religion, Isis, was represented allegorically as a body of water.¹⁴⁹

The iconography of Egyptian art would have appealed to Mallo on many levels. Its use of symmetry and proportion resonated with her interest in complex mathematical-based compositions. Water-related imagery tied into her fascination with the sea. The sexual undertones resonated with Mallo's own personal interests, as well as her Surrealist mindset. The use of female goddesses reflects her independent beliefs.

Still another way to interpret the painting is to consider her Marxist beliefs. Along with her interest in paganism, Mallo also investigated Marxism.¹⁵⁰ In Chapter I, it was noted that prior to her exile, Mallo was a strong proponent of and worked as a teacher for the Popular Front, the progressive party. Although it was a democratic government, its goal to create an egalitarian society was essentially Communist. Mallo began this series upon her arrival in South America and her political ideals were still intact.

The theme of this series, *The Religion of Labor*, suggests the glorification of manual work. In all the paintings of this series, Mallo depicts women working in

¹⁴⁹ Wilkinson, 94-95.

¹⁵⁰ Combalia, 60.

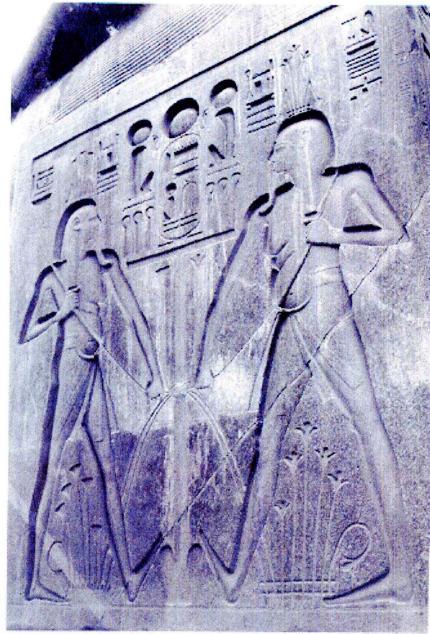


Fig. 4.14 Sculptural relief illustrating theme of duality-unity and mirrored images. Detail from the throne of a colossus of Ramesses II, Luxor Temple, Dynasty 19, rpt. in Richard H. Wilkinson, *Symbol and Magic in Egyptian Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994), 141

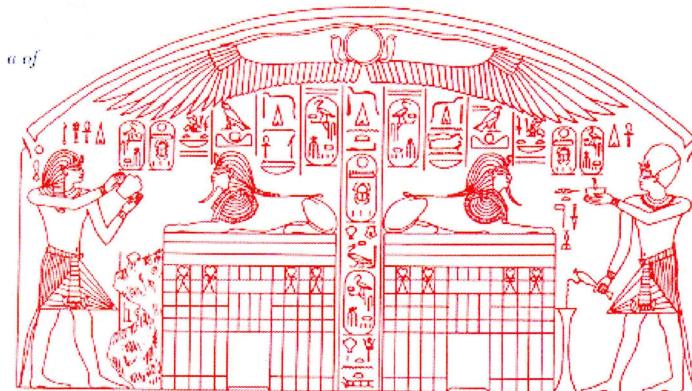


Fig. 4.15 Diagram illustrating theme of duality-unity and mirrored images, as well as the action of making offerings to a deity. Detail of Sphinx Stela of Thutmose IV of Giza, rpt. in Richard H. Wilkinson, *Symbol and Magic in Egyptian Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994), 153.

traditional male contexts, fishing and harvesting the land, a reflection of the idea that all members of society should contribute to the common good. The language she used to describe this series parallels Marxist doctrine: “The function of abstract art is to seize a new reality. . . . Its revolutionary thrust resides in the construction of a new order and the contribution of a living mythology. Throughout history, art has never had order or completeness. It is only when it has represented the collective thought of a civilization that art has been complete.”¹⁵¹ The manner in which she has overlapped Christian and pagan symbols that have very similar meaning certainly reflects the concept of a collective, universal conscience.

The complicated layers of iconography in *Starfish* reveal influences from Surrealism, Christian art, her own experiences, pagan religion, and Marxism. She tailors the sexually objectified female of male Surrealism to illustrate instead capable, serene, allegorical women. The presentation of divinity counters the phallocentric traditions by enhancing pagan references. By inverting traditional iconography to suit her artistic goal, the deification of women, Mallo creates her own religion in painting, one in which she is creator, and female apostles serve as the pillars of her realm.

This is just a preliminary attempt to interpret Mallo’s work. Space and time are too limited to do more at present, but the richness of possibilities revealed in this painting suggest a direction for future work.

¹⁵¹ Combalia: 60.

APPENDIX A*Individual Exhibitions**1928**

Gallery of the *Revista de Occidente*.
Madrid: July.

1932

Galerie Pierre.
Paris: May.

1936

Showrooms of the
Amigos de Las Artes
Nuevas.
Madrid: May.

1945

Hotel O'Higgins.
Vina del Mar, Chile.

1946

Hotel Copacabana.
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

1947

Plaza Hotel.
New York.

1948

Carroll Carstairs
Gallery.
New York: October.

1950

Galerie Silvagni.
Paris: March.

1952

Galeria del Este.
Punta del Este, Uruguay.

1955

Galeria Compte.
Buenos Aires.

1957

Galeria Bonino.
Buenos Aires.

1959

Social Club "Las
Heras."
Buenos Aires.

1961

Galeria Mediterraneo.
Madrid: October.

1967

College of Architecture.
Barcelona.

1979

Galeria Ruiz Castillo.
Madrid: October-
November.

1980

"Homenaje a Maruja
Mallo," Showrooms of
the Diputacion.
Malaga: Spain.

1982

ARCO 82 (Gallery).
Madrid: February.

1992

"Maruja Mallo:
Complete Graphic
Work," Galeria Pardo
Bazan.
La Coruna, Spain:
March.

Collective Exhibitions**1930**

"Exposition of
Contemporary
Architecture and Art."

(Gallery of Ateneo
Guipuzcoano)
San Sebastian, Spain:
September.

1931

"Second Exposition of
the Society of Iberian
Artists." (Gallery of
Ateneo Guipuzcoano)
San Sebastian, Spain:
October.

1932

"Exposition of the
Society of the Society of
Iberian Artists," Galeria
Charlottenborg.
Copenhagen:
September. Berlin:
December.

1933

"Constructive Group,"
showroom XVI of the
Salon de Otono.
Madrid: October.

1936

"Contemporary Spanish
Art," Jeu de Paume
Museum.
Paris: February.
"Exposicion
Logicofobista," Galeria
D'Art.
Barcelona: May.

1948

"Contemporary Spanish
Art," Museo de Bellas
Artes.
Buenos Aires.

1951 “First Biennial Hispanic-American Art,” Modern Museum, Archaeological Museum, and the Retiro Palace. Madrid.	“Chronicle of Spanish Painting of the Post-War Era: 1940-1960,” Galeria Multitud. Madrid. “Spaniards of the Vanguard,” Galeria Bargeria. Colon and Munich, Germany. “Escuela de Vallecas,” Galeria Orfila. Madrid.	“Origins of Contemporary Art,” Galeria Skira. Madrid: June. “Spanish Painting of the 20 th Century,” Museum of Art. Taiwan. Formosa, Spain: June. “Spanish Painting of the 20 th Century,” Museum of Modern Art. Mexico: October-November.
1964 Spanish Pavilion, World Fair. New York.		
1967 “Bienal Internacional de Arte.” Barcelona. “9 Gallego Painters,” Galeria Quixote. Madrid: November 16-30.	1977 “Verse and Prose,” Galeria Chys and Galeria Turner. Murcia and Madrid. “Origins of the Vanguard,” Galeria Windsor. Balboa, Spain. “The Spanish Vanguard,” Galeria Theo. Madrid.	1980 “Masters of Drawing,” Galeria Bozenna. Barcelona: April-May.
1968 “Salon de Arte Actual.” Barcelona.		
1974 “Exhibition in Homage to Theodore Rousseau,” Palamos, Spain. “Origins of the Spanish Vanguard,” Galeria Multitud. Madrid.	1978 “The Generation of '27,” The Spanish Museum of Contemporary Art. Madrid: January. “Homage to Miguel Hernandez,” Galeria Multitud. Madrid: March. “15 Marginalized Painters,” Galeria Ponce. Madrid: June.	1981 “Ramon Gomez de la Serna,” Municipal Museum. Madrid. “Surrealist Exposition,” Galeria Vegueta. Las Palmas, Canary Islands, Spain; Galeria Rodian. Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Spain: April-May. “Fifty Years of Gallego Life,” Galeria Altex. Madrid.
1975 “Surrealism in Spain,” Galeria Multitud. Madrid.	“Homage to Joan Miro,” Galeria Theo. Madrid.	
1976 “About the Sea,” Galeria Biosca. Madrid.	“Fifth International Biennial of Art.”	1982 “One Hundred Years of Gallego Painting,” Bank of Bilbao. Madrid. “Surrealism and Its Evolution,” Galeria Theo. Madrid: May-June.

Pontevedra, Spain:
August.

1983

“Ortega and His Time,”
Palacio de Velazquez.
Madrid.

1984

“Escuela de Vallecas:
1927-1936/1939-1942,”
Centro Cultural Alberto
Sanchez.
Madrid.
“Alfar and His Epoch.”
La Coruna, Bilbao,
Madrid.

1992

Retrospective
Exhibition,
Madrid

1995

Memorial Exhibition,
Madrid

*Note: Appendix from
de Ayala, Juan Perez,
ed. Maruja Mallo.
Madrid: Guillermo de
Osma Gallery, 1992.

Works Cited

Alberti, Rafael. *Sobre los Angeles*. Edited by Cyril B. Morris. Madrid: Ediciones Catedra, 1992.

A volume of poetry by Maruja Mallo's poet lover, Rafael Alberti. One poem, "El angel falso" is about Mallo. Useful in illustrating the dialogue between the two as seen in their artistic creations. Illustrates a Surrealist male responding to the work of a female artist, an unusual case.

Arroyo, María Dolores. "La Divina Proporción." *Goya* 208 (1989): 256-257.

One of the only sources I could find on the topic of Luca Pacioli's text *The Divine Proportion*. Translated to Spanish by one of Mallo's good friends. A text which heavily influenced the work of the Escuela de Vallecas. Helpful in making formal analysis of Mallo's work. *Goya* is a renowned Spanish art journal.

Breton, André. *Surrealism and Painting*. Translated by Simon W. Taylor. Boston: Museum of Fine Arts (Publications), 2002.

Guidelines in painting for surrealist artists from the voice of the leader of the movement himself. In egotistical, Surrealist language, Breton defines what is and isn't Surrealist and uses various male artists as examples. His essays begin in 1928 and end in 1961, providing a broad time span.

Caws, Mary Ann, Rudof E. Kuenzli, and Gwen Raaberg, eds. *Surrealism and Women*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991.

Provides essays ranging in coverage of the position of women within the surrealist movement. Useful essays include "The Problematics of Women and Surrealism" by Gwen Raaberg and "Speaking with Forked Tongues," by Robert J. Belton. All writers are well-respected for their authorship on 20th century literary and art criticism.

Chadwick, Whitney. *Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement*. Boston: Little and Brown, 1985.

In-depth examination of women artists in the surrealist movement, from a female perspective. Though Mallo is not mentioned, many of her contemporaries are and a comparison can be made to their artistic careers. Chadwick examines unusual topics, such as "nature and the imagination," "the hermetic tradition," and "narrative fantasy." The author has written extensively on women artists and is more than qualified to discuss female surrealists.

_____. "The Muse as Artist: Women in the Surrealist Movement" *Art in America* 73, 1985.

This article, published in the renowned journal, *Art in America*, compresses the information from Chadwick's book, *Women Artists in the Surrealist Movement*, also published in 1985. It essentially provides a copy of Chadwick's second chapter of the larger publication. As mentioned before, Chadwick has written extensively on women in art.

Chevalier, Jean and Alain Gheerbrant. *A Dictionary of Symbols*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1994.

Contains vast inventory of cultural symbols. Very useful in decoding Mallo's iconography. Provided information on an obscure Celtic goddess to whom Mallo possibly refers in her art. This text is recommended to many art history majors.

Combalia, Victoria. "Maruja Mallo: Esprit Indomptable" *Art Press* 88, 1985.

Combalia, a native Spaniard, writes a summary article on the works of Mallo. Her point of view, however, provides many anecdotes from the artist's life that are otherwise left out of similar texts. Includes quotes from the artist and good illustrations of her work.

de Ayala, Juan Perez, and Francisco Rivas, eds. *Maruja Mallo*. Madrid: Guillermo de Osma Galeria, 1992.

An exhibition catalogue covering a show which was held in Madrid 21 October-20 December, 1992. Provides personal information about the artist that is otherwise not in other works covering her life. Includes illustrations from the exhibition, writings by the artist, and a chronology of her life and art shows.

de la Gándara, Consuelo. *Maruja Mallo*. Madrid: Servicio de Publicaciones del Ministerio de Educacion y Ciencia, 1978.

A detailed examination of the artist's life and artistic phases. De la Gandara met and spoke with the artist to write this biographical account. Contains a very neatly laid out chronology of the artist's life and style changes.

de la Serna, Ramon Gomez. *Maruja Mallo: 59 Grabados en Negro y 9 Laminas en Color, 1928-1942*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 1942.

Book written about the artist by her vanguard friend, critic and writer Ramon Gomez de la Serna. Discusses his observations of her artistic development and life. Includes a conference lecture given by Mallo and critical reviews of her work from European and South American newspapers.

Durozoi, Gerard. *History of the Surrealist Movement*. Translated by Alison Anderson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

An enormous tome covering the progression of the surrealist movement worldwide. Intensive coverage of the movement from 1919-1960. Includes manifestos, illustrations, and extensive text coverage, as well as an index of notes on key surrealist figures and followers.

Fer, Briony, David Batchelor, and Paul Wood. *Realism, Rationalism, Surrealism: Art between the Wars*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993.

The section on Surrealism was useful in providing information on the psychological aspects of the movement. Commentary on Freudian theory, hysteria, and Breton's perception of mental disorder often provided explicit detail rather than a skimming glance.

Ferguson, George Wells. *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1959.

This volume aided in decoding the iconography in Mallo's painting *Starfish*. Covers the complex and vast language of all Christian art. Provides excellent explanations of the origins of these symbols and illustrations of symbols in art.

Fundación Cultural Mapfre Vida. *Fuera de Orden: Mujeres de la Vanguardia Española*. Madrid: Fundación Cultural Mapfre Vida, 1999.

An exhibition book with a brief discussion of the surrealist movement and many images of women artists of the Spanish vanguard, including Maria Blanchard, Norah Borges, Maruja Mallo, Olga Sancharoff, Angeles Santos, and Remedios Varo. Exhibition held 10 February-18 April in Madrid. The appendix contains invaluable timeline information on the life of Mallo.

Garofalo, Emilia. "The Female Temper of a Spanish Generation: Cultural Images of Women in the Second Republic (1931-1939)." PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2002.

A recently published dissertation examining the conception and work of women in visual art, literature, and public figures in Spain before and during the Civil War. Garofalo's chapter "Iconography of Women in Visual Art" mentions Mallo and gives great insight into her work. The author provides an extensive and legitimate bibliography and her curriculum vitae reveals adequate academic achievement to be an authority on the subject.

Hubert, Renée Riese. *Magnifying Mirrors: Women Surrealism, and Partnership*
Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1994.

An intriguing resource for its focus on a specific and obscure subject, male-female Surrealist couples. Looks at the different ways couples influenced and echoed each other. Examples provided here helped me to draw parallels between the works of Surrealist poet Rafael Alberti and Mallo's paintings.

Morris, Cyril B. *Surrealism and Spain, 1920-1936*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1972.

An investigation of the exact movement, time period, and location in which Mallo lived and painted. Morris has published several texts on the movement and individual surrealists.

Serraller, Francisco Calvo. "Escuela de Vallecas: Una Vanguardia Artística," *Escuela de Vallecas*. [book chapter online] (1984-1985); available from <http://www.vadevallecas.org/cabecera/HISTORIA/escuela.htm>; Internet; accessed 6 November 2003.

One of the few sources accessible on the Escuela de Vallecas, the pre-Civil War artistic group which influenced much of Mallo's work while she lived in Spain. Articles describe the members, artistic styles, and activities of the group. This site is maintained by the Cultural Group of Vallecas, an organization whose focus is to provide cultural information regarding the history, celebrations, and points of interest of the town of Vallecas.

Waldberg, Patrick. *Surrealism*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1965.

A small, compact volume on the Surrealism movement. Provides all the essential details of the movement concisely, unlike some of the larger volumes I used. Good for finding Surrealist vocabulary definitions. Examines primarily the movement during the 1920s and 30s, the time with which I was concerned.

Wilkinson, Richard H. *Symbol and Magic in Egyptian Art*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1994.

Useful in uncovering Mallo's personal iconography. One of her painted series is obviously influenced by Egyptian art. This volume provides extensive discussion on many Egyptian symbols that appear in Mallo's work.

