Week 2 – **Formalizing the Unconscious: Surrealism**

I. Roots and Routes of Surrealism: out of the “Unconscious”

   key decade: *1930s*

   A) Surrealism emerges after WW1
      1) in the wake of Dadaism (Euro-American, 1918-1920s)
      2) formally organized under Int’l Surrealist Manifesto (Breton), 1924
      3) early influences: Picasso, Duchamp (Freud, Jung)

   B) Exiled by fascism:
      1) André Masson (French, to NY 1940)
      2) Roberto Matta y Echaurren, “Matta” (Chilean, to NY 1939)
      3) Yves Tanguy (French, to NY in 30s)
      4) Max Ernst (German, to France in ‘20s, then to NY in 1941)

II. Formal Issues in Surrealism, continuities with postwar art

   A) Two types of Surrealism (formal characteristics, not named as such)
      - Landscape/ dreamscape (Matta, Tanguy, Dali) versus
      - Automatism *(automatisme)* and “all-over” painting (Masson, Miró)

   B) In the background (literally): the Cubist Grid
      Cubism’s key years were:
      - 1910-1911 for Analytic Cubism, largely monochrome and characterized by an implied grid that organized the paintings’ brushstrokes and lines
      - 1913-1920 for Synthetic Cubism with bigger shapes and colors, “biomorphic” curves, more expressive and decorative

   C) Commonalities for both landscape and all-over surrealism: Sex and psyche

   D) What US didn’t embrace were erotic themes (a lingering Puritanism?) or programmatic and clubby tendencies. Brief overview of American take:

      1. source of imagery in unconscious
      2. tendency towards abstraction rather than representation
      3. automatism (drawing or painting generated “automatically” as if by trance)
      4. all-overness (forms distributed equally over the canvas, no “horizon line”)

III. Surrealist Sculpture:

   1. Precursors: Arp, Miro, Giacometti
   2. Alexander Calder (1898-1976)
   3. Henry Moore (1898 -1986)
   4. Isamu Noguchi (1904 -1988)
   5. Joseph Cornell (1903 -1972)

IV. “Hidden Surrealists” Frida Kahlo (German-Mexican 1907-1954), Louise Bourgeois (French-American, 1911-2010), Louise Nevelson (Russian-American, 1899 - 1988)

*see verso for image list*
(key images only)

Picasso, *Woman in Slip* 1913
Picasso, *Guernica* 1937
Duchamp *Nude Descending Staircase #2* 1912
Duchamp *Mariee (Bride)* 1912
Ernst *Elephant von Celebes* 1921
Ernst (exile painting) *Europe After the Rain* 1940-42
Masson *Automatic Drawing* 1924*
Masson (exile painting) *Iroquois Landscape* 1943
Matta inscape (Psychological morphology) 39
Matta *The Earth is a Man* 1942
Tanguy, *Through birds, through fire, but not through glass* 1943
Miró, *Harlequin’s Carneval* 1924*
Miró, *Beautiful Bird Reveals the Unknown to a Pair of Lovers...* 1941
Calder, *Standing Mobile*, 1937
Moore, *Recumbent Figure*, (wood) 1935-38
Giacometti, *Woman with her Throat Cut*, 1932
Noguchi, *Kouro*, 1944
Dali, *Soft Construction with Baked Beans (Premonition of Civil War)*, 1936
Cornell, *Hotel Eden*, 1945
Miró, *Poetic Object*, 1936
Kahlo, *Frida and Diego Rivera* 1931
Kahlo, *Henry Ford Hospital* 1932
Bourgeois, *Quarantania*, 1941

* same date as Surrealist Manifesto