

RENÉ MAGRITTE

THE GUEST ARTWORK

The guest artwork exhibition program aims to bring artworks loaned by other institutions/museums closer to the public. These artworks acquire a brand new significance when exhibited in the MACA .

Here, they are unveiled as a single artwork exhibition within the context of the permanent collection.

RENÉ MAGRITTE

La Belle Société, 1965-1966

81 x 65 cm.

Telefonica Collection

FROM JANUARY 11TH TO MAY 22TH 2017

The Contemporary Art Museum of Alicante (MACA) unveils **La Belle Société** by René Magritte, a work owned by The Telefonica Collection which will be displayed at the Museum from January 11th to May 22th 2017.

This innovative and Avant-Garde artwork joins the 20th Century Art Collection's exhibition and it is exhibited alongside MACA's most relevant artworks, such as Kiki de Montparnasse by Pablo Gargallo, paintings on canvas and sculptures by Julio Gonzalez or sharing the Avant-Garde space with Miró, Juan Gris, Calder and Angel Ferrant among others.



"I want to breathe new life into the way we look at the ordinary things around us. But how should one look? Like a child, the first time it encounters a reality outside itself. I live in the same state of innocence as a child, who believes he can reach out from his cot and grasp a bird in the sky".

RENÉ MAGRITTE



In 1927, **René Magritte** (Lessines, Hainaut, 1898-Brussels, 1967) moved to Paris where he made friends with **André Bretón** and became one of the most outstanding members of the French Surrealist group. His paintings are characterised by his juxtaposition of elegantly-painted everyday objects in clear colours against flat backgrounds. This particular work of art represents one of the artist's more celebrated themes: that of a man with no face wearing a bowler hat. This painting has often been thought to represent Magritte's own alter ego. Here, the figure is duplicated and silhouetted against luxuriant foliage and a landscape with a sky in which clouds are the main protagonists. This unusual combination of reality and fiction results in a disconcerting image characteristic of the Belgian maestro.

A Belgian artist born in 1898, Magritte studied at the Brussels Fine Art Academy. There the budding artist experimented with Constructivism and created his first works of art for the field of publicity that was incipient back then. In the '20's, Magritte showed interest in photomontage and collage, two techniques at the service of play and the irrational. These were the years of splendour for Surrealism and this one solitary painter among a group of writers became a member of the Belgian Surrealist group along with **Camille Goemans**, **Mesens** and **Paul Nougé**. In 1927, he moved to Paris and came into contact with **André Breton**, **Paul Éluard** and the French Surrealist group. It was the Italian painter, **Giorgio de Chirico**, however, who most influenced the way the artist was to look at painting: unreal spaces in which objects acquired the mysterious presence of the metaphysical, a movement that was so close to the school of Surrealism.

His relationship with Surrealism grew stronger in the '30's and he discovered metamorphosis as a visual play as disturbing as it is poetic as a tool for transforming objects. His interest for language also led him to explore the relationship between the content of a word and its meaning and visual reference: Magritte questions conventional associations, thus causing a sense of oddity where none normally exists. He questions logical common sense and breathes new content into shapes since objects no longer represent what they previously represented. A clear example of this is his well-known work of 1928-1929 **La trahison des images** ("The Treachery of Images") in which the painting depicts a now-famous pipe together with the phrase: "Ceci n'est pas une pipe" ("This is not a pipe") written below it. Magritte appeals to the imagination of the spectator to discover the game that is being played. He also changes the relationship of objects between themselves, the names by which they are known, the space in which they find themselves and the perspective and size of the chosen subject matter.

In **La Belle Société**, painted by the artist shortly before his death, Magritte superimposes two silhouettes of the same person, but replaces the image of a man with surroundings containing natural and landscaped subjects: we see one profile of luxuriant vegetation in front of which we see another, identical profile of beach and horizon. Far from immersing himself in the automatism of the unshackled movement of Surrealism, without abandoning his taste for the oneiric and the psychoanalytic, Magritte traces simple shapes in his quest for freedom and free-spirited expression with a firm, uncluttered, almost simple hand.

Magritte explained his concept of painting as follows: "A painted image is, on one hand, the description of a visible world that has been modified by a way of thinking. On the other hand, a painted image is the description of a visible world understood in a spontaneous fashion".

Text: The Telefonica Foundation.

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MACA. MUSEO DE ARTE CONTEMPORÁNEO DE ALICANTE. Plaza Santa María 3 - 03002 Alicante
info@maca-alicante.es - www.maca-alicante.es

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