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978-0-521-82387-6 - Surrealist Art and Thought in the 1930s: Art, Politics, and the Psyche

Steven Harris

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# Surrealist Art and Thought in the 1930s

*Art, Politics, and the Psyche*

*Surrealist Art and Thought in the 1930s* examines the intersection of Hegelian aesthetics, experimental art and poetry, Marxism, and psychoanalysis in the theory and practice of the surrealist movement. Locating surrealist art and thought between modernist art and revolutionary politics, Steven Harris investigates the consequences of the surrealists' efforts to synthesize these diverse concerns through the invention, in 1931, of the surrealist object and in the recasting of their activities as a mode of revolutionary science. Providing a context for the cultural and political debates in France and the Soviet Union during the 1930s, he also analyzes the debate on proletarian literature, the surrealists' reaction to the Popular Front, and their eventual defence of an experimental modern art following their break with the French Communist Party in 1935.



Steven Harris is an assistant professor of art history at the University of Alberta, Edmonton. A scholar of modern art, he has contributed to the *Oxford Art Journal* and *Art History*.

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*I dedicate this first book  
to Ann Rosenberg  
and Pierre Coupey,  
first teachers.*



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#### NOTE ON THE TRANSLATIONS

Concerning translations from the French, I have followed the rule of thumb established by David Lomas in his *The Haunted Self* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), where quotations are given in English only where existing translations and/or their French sources are easily accessible. Otherwise, the French text follows the translation. I generally cite translations of texts where they exist, though there are occasions where I have silently modified existing translations; I see this not as a sign of disrespect for the work of previous translators, but as part of a continuing dialogue towards a better understanding of the source texts. There is also one case where I quote from different translations of the same text, if I think that one passage is translated more successfully by its interpreters than another. My own translations, achieved with the indispensable help of Alice Cotton, are no more definitive than any others, and I welcome improvements to the versions given here. Please note as well that in every case, emphases in quotations are the authors’ own, rather than mine.