

M.M. Dupuy, *Drawing on the Past (where Face and Fiction Meet)*, collage, 10 7/8" x 11 7/8", 2000.

The most famous surrealist game is "The Exquisite Corpse," which involves two or more people; a pen or pencil, and a sheet of paper. The game's purpose is to create a collaborative drawing in which, while the work is in progress, the participating artists are aware only of their own individual contributions. The paper is folded into sections based on the number of artists and rotated to the players, who are instructed to draw on one folded section, slightly extending the lines out beyond the folds so that the next artist—after the most recently created section is turned under—can continue the drawing. Oftentimes, the subject will be a figure or an animal of some sort, with the paper folded into sections, like the head, torso, legs, and so forth. Once the paper makes a complete rotation, the work is unfolded, and a unique collaborative artwork is born.

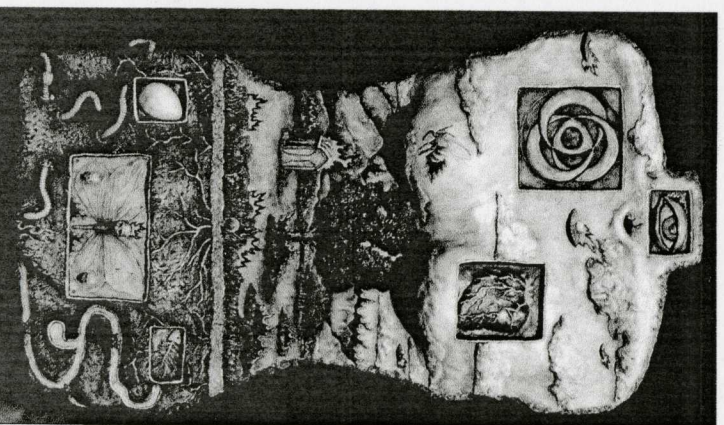
Surrealism's influence extended well beyond the 1940s in both general and specific cases. The mid-century American art movement abstract expressionism owes a good deal to automatism, most notably in artists

like Jackson Pollock, whose very manner of painting emphasizes the intuitive and the unconscious over the rational. The work of Salvador Dali, arguably the most famous surrealist, at least from the level of mass popularity, has been said to eerily predate American pop art of the 1960s with his habit of embedding elements of pop culture, like Coke bottles, in his work. Dali, prolific past the primary period of surrealism, incorporated a super-realistic painting style with depictions of everyday objects and recognizable religious content, in contrast, and perhaps in defiance of, the "pure" formalistic painting of abstract expressionism and minimalism that was in vogue during the mid-20th century. In artists like James Rosenquist and Jeff Koons, you see the influence of Dali; both artists, among others, have recently attested to the prominence of Dali's effect on contemporary artists like themselves.

Artists are returning to a surrealist style, often as a means of constructing figurative representations. An artist leading the renaissance continues to be Cindy Sherman, who

became infamous in the late 1970s and 1980s for her "film still" photographs and whose more recent work, which features mannequin parts collaged into grotesque figurations, refers quite pointedly to surrealism. Matthew Barney, creator of the *Cremaster* film series, also employs elements of the surreal in his films, which combine performance art, costume design, and animal-cum-human creatures enacting the mythic. The current pop art aesthetic of West Coast artists like Robert Williams and Mark Ryden, often featured in the magazine *Juxtapoz*, contains more than a nod to the surrealism of the past.

*Question Reality: Surrealism in Contemporary Art*, on display at the Claypool-Young Art Gallery at Morehead State University, August 31–September 30, showcases 11 national artists whose work features elements of the surreal. The works are executed in a range of media, including ones favored by the original surrealists, like collage and painting, as well as other materials, such as ceramics and metals. The exhibiting artists are Les Barta (Nevada), Dianne Bugash



Valerie & Jonathan Nicklow, *Her Body Given for You*, oil on hand-built low-relief ceramic slab, 32" x 20", 2002.