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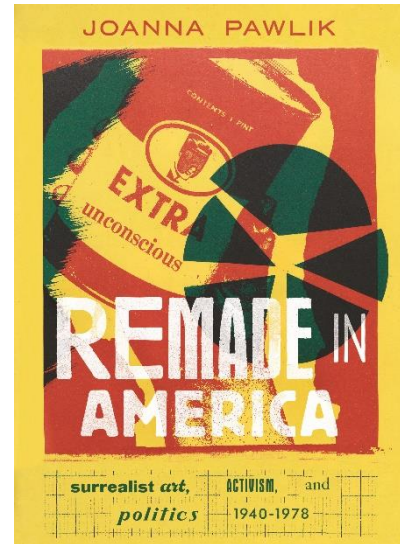
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Joanna Pawlick, *Remade in America: Surrealist Art, Activism, and Politics, 1940-1978*



Wen Yao

Joanna Pawlick's book *Remade in America: Surrealist Art, Activism, and Politics, 1940-1978* begins with a poignant quotation from André Breton's speech in 1942: "That which in the theses of surrealism can go beyond this war is for you, gentlemen, rather than me to decide".¹ Throughout the book, Pawlick advocates for the intriguing concept of going 'beyond' the narrow framework of studying Surrealism. She offers an alternative perspective to unpack the diverse patterns of Surrealism's reception in post-war America, moving beyond the institutional historiography of Surrealism, which considered it moribund in the mid-twentieth century.

Using case studies on artists, writers, and activists such as Charles Henri Ford, Ted Joans, Brion Gysin, Marie Wilson, and Franklin and Penelope Rosemont, this book expounds on their connection with broader art, literature, and social movements, including Pop art, the Black Arts Movement, the Beat Generation, the New Left, and the counterculture. By identifying the changing vehicles of publication, exhibition, popular culture, and media, it charts a new picture of how Surrealism was reinvented to challenge the dominant discourses and to negotiate their cultural, social, and political demands in the 1960s and 1970s.

Recent scholarly trends in the study of Surrealism have shifted away from a Eurocentric focus on the historical Surrealist movement in Paris toward a post-war global perspective, in the wake of feminist, postcolonial, queer and trans studies of Surrealism. The Surrealist movement is not only renowned for its subversive impulse of challenging bourgeois morality and values, but it also faces accusations of being subordinate to patriarchal, heteronormative and primitivist discourses. In this book, the most innovative response to the study of Surrealism is Pawlick's argument for a redefinition of the disruptive capabilities of Surrealism in the US by calling into question an essentialised historiography of Surrealism and demonstrating that 'interstices and alternatives' of a subversive political agenda transpired not only outside of the West but also within modernity in post-war America.²

¹ Joanna Pawlick, *Remade in America: Surrealist Art, Activism, and Politics, 1940-1978* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2021), 1.

² *Ibid.*, 11.

This book is firmly embedded in Pawlik's extensive research in many archives and collections in both the UK and the US. The first chapter and some portions of the fifth chapter have appeared in earlier publications.³ Pawlik's new findings in her long-term research interests in global Surrealism and their linkage with literature, queer theories, and social and political movements add value to this book.

The first chapter provides a detailed account of how Charles Henri Ford explored his relations to Surrealism and post-war American culture, particularly queer culture and Pop Art, through his *Poem Posters* (1964–65) and exhibitions in the 1960s and 1970s. Pawlik contends that Ford's anachronistic appropriation of images of Surrealist figures to collage with fragments from newspapers, magazines, and advertisements registered his intervention in the historiography of a heteronormative and homophobic Surrealism and rewrote the sexual politics of the Surrealist movement.

The second chapter explores how Beat and San Francisco writers such as Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Charles Henri Ford, Philip Lamantia, Ted Joans, and Richard Howard were influenced by André Breton's novel *Nadja* (1928), which celebrates the writing techniques of automatism and autobiographical encounters on the streets of Paris. Furthermore, it explicates the manner in which these writers retold their thoughts on subjectivities, identities, and sexualities by negotiating with the strategies that they found in *Nadja* in responding to socio-political situations shaped by the Cold War.

The third chapter considers Ted Joans's interventions in the critique of imperialism, racism, and capitalism by reinventing ethnographic Surrealism in his poems, articles, short plays, and collages. Pawlik argues that as a writer from the Beat generation, a participant in the Black Arts Movement, and a long-term member of the Chicago Surrealist Group, Joans tested the ability of Surrealist strategies to not only perform a radical and satirical ethnographic enquiry, but also to deconstruct the conventional categories of ethnicity, race, identity, and privilege.

Taking Brion Gysin's *Dream Machine* (1961) and Marie Wilson's drawings as case studies, the fourth chapter explores how artists mobilised Surrealism's interests in madness, sexuality, and automatism into the countercultural politics of 'Queer Psychedelia'.⁴ By adopting queer theories such as queer phenomenology and queer formalism, Pawlik underscores the significance of exploring Gysin and Wilson's localised reception of Surrealism through artworks and publications, which departed from the Eurocentric and masculinist models of Modernism and offered an antidote to the prevailing forms of social control from technology to consumerism.

Focusing on the Chicago Surrealist group's exhibition dedicated to *Surrealism in 1978* and the *100th Anniversary of Hysteria*, the fifth chapter revisits the history of the group's formation and its relationship with Chicago's radical political agenda. Pawlik points out that the group's approach to popular culture (comics, cartoon, film, music, and performance), as well as hysteria and Surrealist strategies, was to destabilise visual and verbal conventions, to rethink

³ Ibid., ix. The first chapter was published in Joanna Pawlik, "Re-membering Surrealism in Charles Henri Ford's *Poem Posters* 1964–5," *Art History* 41:1 (2018): 154–191; parts of the fifth chapter appeared in Joanna Pawlik, "Cartooning the Marvelous: Word and Image in Chicago Surrealism," in *Mixed Messages: American Correspondences in Visual and Verbal Practices*, ed. Catherine Gander and Sarah Garland (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), and Joanna Pawlik, "The Comic Book Conditions of Chicago Surrealism," in *Surrealism, Science Fiction and Comics*, ed. Gavin Parkinson (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015).

⁴ Pawlik, *Remade in America*, 16.

the class and gender politics, and to encode a particular model of the historiography of Surrealism in the US by soliciting hysterical language.

This well-researched book is aimed at an academic audience. The five core chapters are organised thematically. Depending on their need, readers may consult with a particular chapter, but the five chapters collectively encourage readers to revisit Surrealism from its post-war profile in the US. Pawlik provides a detailed account of the figures mentioned in the book and the most updated lens of studying Surrealism. As a result, any audience interested in the study of Surrealism may find this book informative and engaging. In addition, the publication of this book coincides with an upcoming major exhibition, *Surrealism Beyond Borders*, at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and Tate Modern in London from 2021 to 2022. It is worth rethinking the trajectory of understanding Surrealism at this point, by using the levers that this book has provided us.