

Narcissus Reflected

**The myth of Narcissus in surrealist and contemporary art
Exhibition 22 April – 26 June 2011**

The Fruitmarket Gallery **Media Release**

Curated by David Lomas and Dawn Ades.
Conceived by The Fruitmarket Gallery
in collaboration with the Centre for
the Study of Surrealism and its Legacies

Narcissus Reflected is the latest in The Fruitmarket Gallery's series of group exhibitions made by invited scholars, writers and artists. Its prime mover and chief curator is David Lomas, an academic and exhibition-maker known for his work in the fields of surrealism and contemporary art. Artists in the exhibition include: Cecil Beaton, Bill Brandt, Claude Cahun, Jean Cocteau, Salvador Dalí, Charles Henri Ford, Florence Henri, Jess, Yayoi Kusama, George Minne, Pierre Molinier, George Platt Lynes, Willard Maas, Paul Nash and Pipilotti Rist.

Narcissus Reflected explores both Narcissus and narcissism. Narcissus is the beautiful youth from Greek mythology, turned by the gods into a narcissus flower as punishment for his self-obsession and inability to love anyone other than his own reflection. Narcissism was identified by Sigmund Freud as an early stage in his account of the formation of an individual's ego, at which they begin to be aware of their sexual drives and desires and seek a love object. The first love object they choose is their own body. In a 'normal' individual, according to Freudian psychoanalysis, narcissism should be only a passing phase.

In the developing tradition of Fruitmarket Gallery group exhibitions, *Narcissus Reflected* is a scholarly yet also personal, passionate, speculative and eclectic journey into the realm of Narcissus. At its appropriately doubled heart lies Salvador Dalí's painting *Metamorphosis of Narcissus* (1937) and *Narkissos* (1976–91) the masterwork of the San-Franciscan artist Jess. Dalí's painting is one of the most famous, most well-travelled and most often reproduced works of modern art, although this exhibition offers a rare chance to see the painting alongside the poem Dalí wrote to accompany it, and a wealth of preparatory sketches and other material.

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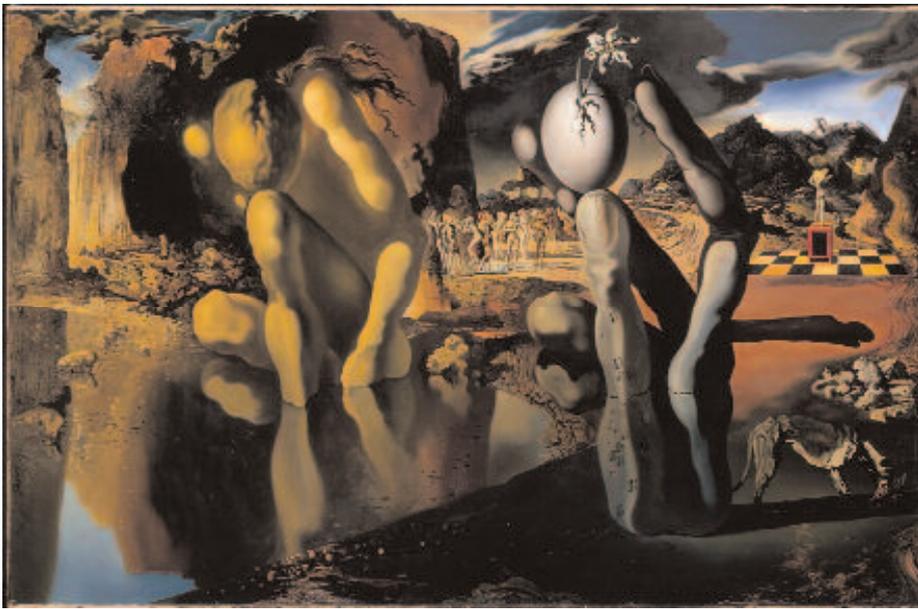
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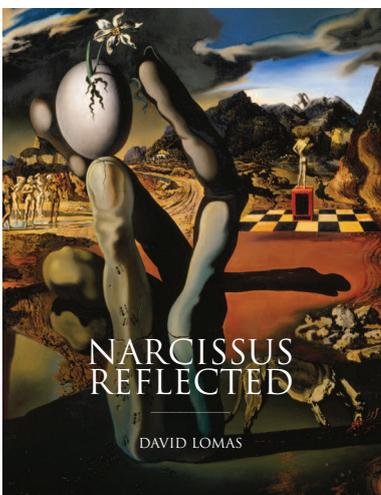


Salvador Dalí, *Metamorphosis of Narcissus*, 1937
oil on canvas. © Tate, London, 2011
© ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2011.

Cecil Beaton, *Paula Gellibrand*, 1928
modern silver gelatin print, 25.4 x 20.3 cm
Courtesy of the Cecil Beaton Studio
Archive at Sotheby's

Jess's large, hand-drawn collage, by contrast, rarely leaves the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and has never before traveled outside America. This exhibition presents it together with all the material of its making – sketches, a pin board with all the collage's sources, and a preparatory notebook.

Narcissus Reflected weaves a web of connections around these two great pictures, following the thread of Narcissus through experimental film and photography in the 1920s and 1930s and in America in the 1940s and 1950s, winding up in the big, immersive contemporary environments of Yayoi Kusama's *Narcissus Garden* (1966) and Pipilotti Rist's *Sip My Ocean* (1996). The works in the exhibition keep in play the full variety of meanings of the myth of Narcissus, the exhibition exploring, and seeking to explain, the enduring appeal of the Narcissus subject in art.



New publication, *Narcissus Reflected* by David Lomas, £17.95

This major book explores the potency of the Narcissus myth in art through a text by curator, David Lomas, which includes painting, drawing, photography, installation, film and video. Featuring illustrations of all the works in the exhibition, the book explores the theme further through the work of a range of artists including Max Ernst, André Masson, Mat Collishaw and Bill Viola, investigating the many meanings and interpretations of the myth, and demonstrating the enduring appeal of the Narcissus theme in art. Distributed by Reaktion Press. ISBN 978-0-947912-99-4

Notes to Editors

The Fruitmarket Gallery aims to make art accessible without compromising art or underestimating audiences. It presents world-class, thought-provoking and challenging exhibitions of modern and contemporary art made by both Scottish and international artists in an environment that is welcoming, engaging, informative and always free.

The Centre for the Study of Surrealism and its Legacies is a unique three-way institutional partnership between the University of Essex and the University of Manchester, and Tate. Between them, the three institutions comprise a highly significant concentration of expertise in the field of surrealist studies in the UK; additionally, Tate has one of the pre-eminent collections of surrealist and contemporary art in the world. The Centre's collaborative ethos offers the benefits of an expanded critical mass of researchers in this important subject area and a strengthening of links between academics, artists and the museum world. The Centre looks outwards, and through its collaboration with other individuals and institutions in the UK aims to reflect the strength of interest in surrealism across the academy, in galleries, and among practising artists.

David Lomas was born and brought up in Australia where he did his first degree leading to a qualification as a medical doctor. He moved into art history with a Master's degree, and subsequently a PhD, at the Courtauld Institute. Lomas was Associate Director of the AHRC Research Centre for Studies of Surrealism and its Legacies until 2007. He co-edits the Centre's online journal, *Papers of Surrealism*, and has organised a number of conferences and other events under the auspices of the Centre, including a conference on the theme of experimentalism in science and avant-garde culture.

Dawn Ades is a Fellow of the British Academy, a trustee of Tate and was awarded an OBE in 2002 for her services to art history. She has been responsible for some of the most important exhibitions in London and overseas over the past thirty years, including *Dada and Surrealism Reviewed*, *Art in Latin America* and *Francis Bacon*. She co-curated the popular Fruitmarket Gallery exhibition *Close-Up, Proximity and defamiliarisation in art, film and photography*. She organised the highly successful exhibition to celebrate the centenary of Salvador Dalí shown in Venice and Philadelphia in 2004. She has published standard works on photomontage, Dada, Surrealism, women artists and Mexican muralists.

The Terra Foundation for American Art is dedicated to fostering exploration, understanding, and enjoyment of the visual arts of the United States for national and international audiences. Recognising the importance of experiencing original works of art, the foundation provides opportunities for interaction and study, beginning with the presentation and growth of its own art collection in Chicago. To further cross-cultural dialogue on American art, the foundation supports and collaborates on innovative exhibitions, research and educational programs. Implicit in such activities is the belief that art has the potential both to distinguish cultures and to unite them.