



A Book of Surrealist Games

Mel Gooding (Editor) , Alastair Brotchie (Compiler) , Alexis Lykiard (Translator) , Jennifer Batchelor (Translator)

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This delightful collection allows everyone to enjoy firsthand the provocative methods used by the artists and poets of the Surrealist school to break through conventional thought and behavior to a deeper truth. Invented and played by such artists as André Breton, Rene Magritte, and Max Ernst, these gems still produce results ranging from the hilarious to the mysterious and profound.

A Book of Surrealist Games Details

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From Reader Review A Book of Surrealist Games for online ebook

Vivienne DiFiore says

rituals of letting things happen of creative potentiality and encounter

dated bigotries present to be sure

a good grounding for a sort method tho

Anjan says

Provides a general orientation to the surrealist mindset as well as some games to help you get started with alternative modes of perception.

This book helped remind me how much surrealism relied upon group effort to explore and create ways perceiving and creating. Surrealist as action oriented and not academically contemplative.

Ex: the pseudo-scientific dali instruction - everyone gets a watch set to the same hidden alarm, when the alarm goes off the participants make note of what they see what how they feel their attention is being directed. Later, get together and compare notes... perhaps you all pay more attention to shadows at 5pm and your thoughts are tinged green at 10am.

Surrealism isn't random, and this book provides a guide for getting started. Consider it a book of incantations and rituals to lift you or your group out of the milquetoast and into the sublime.

There is an extensive and well fleshed out bibliography in the back for further research.

The surrealist dictionary excerpt at the end was a nice Easter egg.

Would have liked a less compact and better organized edition, but if the choice was this publication or none, i'm glad they went with the former.

Dan says

Uncommon Exercises For the Mind.

In this handy reference guide you'll find symbolic fish, sensual beaches, and the digits of chance. While away hours over drinks at the bar with "The Exquisite Corpse." Invite friends to the salon for a soiree of "Questions and Answers." Write a Dadaist poem for yourself and post it to your neighborhood grocer. Or revisit scenes from Surrealist history with transcripts of moments from games among such early luminaries as Breton, Aragon, Peret. Pictures too, most tastefully selected, some illustrative of possible outcomes of play, others included for their salubrity, and yet others with no discernible relation to anything, but which

clearly belong in this text because of their intuitive appeal. Accompanying the book is the pamphlet “Little Surrealist Dictionary: A Game of Re-definitions” in which you may read, for example, that an “aquarium” is a “Humid square of requiems.” As well, there is a folded sheet of glossy paper on which is printed the playing area for “The Goose Game,” incomparable for diverting your nonplussed boss or for passing the time as you wait for the one after 9:09. The works, book and all, come in a handsome box printed with picture and instructive quote by the Comte de Lautreamont (if your local bookstalls should be displaying these goods *sans leurs boite-a-porter*, demand that the bookseller produce the article in question, present contents of which are to be included in the transaction, or the deal is off; consider sending a report by lobster notifying constabulary of the thwarted misappropriation).

Hesper says

So what DO surrealists do at parties?
Black wells of Acherontic fear.*

Really.

This was fun, in a stumbled-across-a-time-capsule sort of way. Also it has phrases like "magisterial insouciance" and "playful procedures"*** scattered throughout the introduction, and how often is anything described in those terms?

Fans of surprises and non sequiturs will probably enjoy this a great deal.

*Thank you, H.P. Lovecraft.

**Conveys an image of a prostate exam where both parties are blasted out of their minds on nitrous oxide. Very apropos to the book, actually.

Matias Selzer says

Interesting book about surrealist techniques to writting and drawing, among others.
Technically, it is not what i thought.
It has a lot of stories and examples about the games and it is not what i expected.

Sarah Wizemann says

Though at first glance this book seems pretentious and elitist, it's actually quite the opposite - comprised of such banal exercises as truth or dare and role playing games, it's important to note that these were fresh and innovative ways of looking at the world in the 20s.

Muath Aziz says

It was venusy in the taste but when I walked under the umbrella I found out that my lost medicine was back home so I knew back will pack tomorrow 9 am therefore I think.

It's not a dot that seals my lips, it's my light that clicked God's doorbell asking him in Hebrew what's the date. Only to find that clouds were on vacation that day so to the beach I went, then I drowned, going back to the clouds again who were so old that I forgot hi my name is Muath and I know that I told you my name is Muath but I forgot to tell that my name I do not know whether the reviews do get gene mutations and become myths for the fish to see in the sea side Kafka KFC KKK HELP MY KEYBOARD IS HAVING A STROKE PARTY POLICE NOT PERMITTED TO PEE ON THE POOL'S BELLY OR THE SUN WILL GO ON FIRE THEN MY SHIELD WILL FEEL SAD AND NOT EAT HIS PIZZA.

The book lists many surreal Writing and Drawing games that can be enjoyed individually or in a group. Also many examples, the final product of the games by the surreal-artists inventors of these games, are included.

100 years ago they didn't have internet or TVs, so they were really bored that they invented many surreal games that produce text and drawings. I believe there are two main categories:

Automation (individual): letting your subconscious taking control. So how can you provoke you subconscious to take control and paint and write prose and poetry while you are being a passive observer? Remember that Surrealism is all about Freudian psychology, subconscious, dreams, oppressed sexuality, and so on. One way is just write anything that comes to your mind, no processing what so ever, and this is what I did to write the beginning of this review. As for drawing, it's basically taking doodling to the next level.

Collective Creativity (group, and can employ Automation easily): I don't know how does this relates to the thoughts behind Surrealism, but surrealists sure enjoyed it a lot. It's basically taking Chinese Whispers to the next level (engineers will call it Human Factor/Error, but isn't being human is all about having a subconscious?? or maybe it's just that but the surrealist are just being too poetic about it). Translating a poem to another language many times and in the end going back to the first one and compare, you'll be shocked of how different the result is. One really fun game is similar to automatic writing but doing it with a friend in turns. As for drawing, I would doodle in the top of the page then hide most of what I drew, only revealing the bottom of it for friend to start doodling from their, doing this with four friends in one paper will sure results a trippy drawing.

One interesting technique: "According to Dali, by simulating paranoia one can systematically undermine one's rational view of the world, which becomes continually subjected to associative transformations. 'For instance, one can see, or persuade others to see, all sorts of shapes in a cloud.'"

Elfreeman says

Recently recieved this as a gift from a friend who visited the Dali museum in Fla. this made me want to re-read the surrealist poems of Benjamin Peret:

Dustin Reade says

anyone interested in breaking free of the rules of literature, art, or life in general should give this book a once over. Then, if you so desire, cover yourself in black paint and stand out in the backyard watching for UFO's. It will definitely give you a new perspective.

Madeleine Morales says

occasionally racist or sexist but mostly full of gems

Mark Bondurant says

The best damn explanation of Surrealism I've ever encountered, and how best to describe it than through the games that defined the movement. Forget the paintings, the poetry, the art, and all the other stuff rich people pass back and forth. This is the stuff that comes straight from their day to day existence. It's how they passed their evenings. I guarantee you'll be wanting to be a surrealist after you read this.

Si Barron says

Excellent toilet shelf read.

All the techniques employed by the Surrealists to systematically disorder the senses without drugs are listed in this compendium including sections on both the written word and the visual image. Following these methods can unlock your hidden artistic potential, or, if you are already creative, can send you down unexpected paths that may inspire and provoke.

It is a delightful little tome, every page offering some new example to ponder- thoroughly recommended

Chris says

A little pocket-sized compilation of quotes from surrealists, descriptions of games and exercises that they used, and examples of the outcomes of these exercises.

Worth checking out. The endnotes are quality and I hope to be able to follow some of the references to learn more.

Not exactly what I was expecting, hoping for more of a structured game book, but was more free flowing light reference. The quotes and history that were included were fascinating.

If you are interested in theory of play, surrealism, creativity, Brian Eno's Oblique Strategies (which seems to

derive somewhat from the practices chronicled herein) this is a good place to start!

Aydin Mohseni says

I thoroughly enjoyed the book, and have been having great fun trying out the games, particularly: the exquisite corpse, the game of definitions, and new superstitions. Having said that, the book's design, organization, and curation leave much to be desired.

Sean says

*A shadow is a shadow all the same.
Make two o'clock with one clock.
Never wait for yourself.**

Ditch the Scrabble and Trivial Pursuit this holiday season and instead inflict some spicy Surrealist action on your bourgeois family and friends. Of course everyone knows about the Exquisite Corpse, but how about 'Certain Possibilities Relating to the Irrational Embellishment of a City' where players are asked whether they would 'conserve, displace, modify, transform, or suppress certain aspects of a city' [or other object, system or concept]. Or perhaps 'Would You Open the Door?' where players imagine they are dreaming and there is a knock at the door; after opening it and recognizing the visitor, they must decide immediately if they would let the visitor in or not and why (visitors may be famous, infamous, living or dead, or someone known to all players—answers must be the first thing that comes to mind). The book also includes amusing examples of answers and outcomes from usual Surrealist suspects such as Breton, Péret, and Magritte. All games guaranteed to be even more fun with a glass of absinthe in hand.

*from *Proverbs for Today* by Paul Eluard and Benjamin Péret
