



Ilana Savdie, *Spinal Sheds of a Desperate Glory*, 2024

PRESS RELEASE | EXHIBITION

IMAGINE REALITY

L'ILLUSION DU RÉEL DANS L'ART MODERNE *

ET CONTEMPORAIN PRÉ-IA

17.12.26 → 14.05.28

* Illusion of the real in pre-AI modern and contemporary art

Centre Pompidou × West Bund Museum Project

Semi-permanent exhibition

Curated by

Scientific Coordination Officer to the Director of the
Musée national d'art moderne - Centre Pompidou
Pamela Sticht

Assisted by
Maximilien Theinhardt, Associate Curator, Musée
national d'art moderne - Centre Pompidou

Staging
Pascal Rodriguez

In the era of artificial intelligence, the "Imagine Reality" exhibition invites us to explore the many ways in which artists from the 20th and 21st centuries interrogate, interpret and transform reality. This new thematic and transhistoric presentation of the Centre Pompidou collection brings together nearly 80 major works which, each in their own way, have translated, shifted or reinvented our relationship with reality and its illusions, from Fauvism to more contemporary artistic practices.

The exhibition opens with masterpieces from the Fauve period by André Derain and Georges Braque. In these incandescent compositions, colour was now essentially chosen for its expressive power, no longer a mere naturalist point of reference. Fauvism was the founding movement of modern art, opening a breach. From that point on, artists were freed from mimetic convention and explored new visual possibilities to represent "their" realities.

The exhibition goes on to explore the confines of dreams, the subconscious and reality, through works from the Surrealist movement by Giorgio de Chirico, Max Ernst, Joan Miro, Victor Brauner and pioneer of experimental cinema Germaine Dulac.

With the rise of photography and cinema, followed by new technologies, modern and contemporary artists have constantly reinvented ways to represent reality. Over time, the question of reality has increasingly become a subject in its own right, also found in other major 20th-century movements: from New Vision to pop art, conceptual art to current practices.

In this exhibition, visitors are plunged into a world where different levels of reality blend together and clash with one another, with large immersive installations by artists such as Dan Graham, Thomas Demand, Olafur Eliasson, Alicja Kwade and Ange Leccia, screenings of works by Bill Viola, Christian Boltanski, Andy Warhol & Gerard Malanga, Philippe Parreno and Véronique Boudier, and major pieces by Michelangelo Pistoletto, Roy Lichtenstein, Maurizio Cattelan, Jacques Monory, Roman Ondak and Ceal Floyer.

They vividly illustrate the famous observation by science fiction writer J.G. Ballard : "The most effective method of dealing with the world around us is to assume that it is a complete fiction."

As the idea of a unified and normative representation of the world fades, reality appears increasingly like a construction, a projection or even a fantasy. As human perception cannot distinguish in an absolute way between a subjective reality and a so-called "objective" one, the exhibition highlights the paradigm shifts announced by contemporary issues around artificial intelligence.

At a time when digital technology is profoundly redefining our relationship to images and to the world, "Imagine Reality" interrogates the shifting boundaries between reality and illusion, perception and simulation. In an unprecedented dialogue between key works from the collection spanning two centuries, Centre Pompidou offers an ambitious and accessible reflection around how we inhabit and imagine the world.

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Opening
Daily except Mondays
11 am - 6 pm