

*Fantasies and Freak Shows:
Salvador Dalí's Dream of Venus and the 1939 New York World's Fair*

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One of the most important cultural events of the twentieth century, the 1939 New York World's Fair opened amid a global economic depression and escalating national tensions that would erupt into a second world war before it closed its gates.¹ Despite such dire circumstances, the fair was subtitled "Building the World of Tomorrow" and featured numerous exhibits dedicated to social and urban planning that embodied the belief that science and technology would forge the path to a more prosperous future.² Twice the size of Chicago's 1933 Century of Progress Exposition, the fair covered twelve hundred acres, employed fifty thousand workers, and attracted more than forty-four million people over the course of its two seasons.³ Although the abstract and geometric Trylon and Perisphere marked the center of City Hall Square and decorated myriad souvenirs ranging from postcards to ashtrays, the majority of the fair's sculptural decoration, from James Earle Fraser's 60-foot-tall statue of *George Washington* (1939) to William Zorach's monumental and allegorical *The Builders of the Future* (1939), was figurative and realistic, epitomizing the classicism then favored by the National Sculpture Society. An apparent exception to this aesthetic was offered by Salvador Dalí, whose *Dream of Venus* promised to translate the tropes of the European avant-garde into an entertaining diversion for American audiences (Fig. 1).

Located along the Amusement Zone's main promenade, *Dream of Venus* offered fair-goers the ultimate escape from the day-to-day—a surrealist tableau of sculpture, painting, and performance. Stuccoed in white and pink plaster, draped in red velvet, and decorated with an enlarged black-and-white photostat of Sandro Botticelli's *Venus* surrounded by crutches, prosthetic arms, and headless mermaids, Dalí's *Dream of Venus* featured the continuous exhibition of semi-nude female performers. As Abel Green wrote in *Variety*, "The diving girls, exposed generously above the waist, do their stuff in unique swimming apparel, backgrounded by such

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Fig. 1. Eric Schaal, Exterior of *Dali's Dream of Venus*, 1939 © 2022 Salvador Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí / Artists Rights Society (ARS) New York 2022

set-pieces as limp pianos, melting telephones, palpitating walls with zippers for doorways. The glass tanks lend further curious perspectives to the surrealism. And whether you like that sort of art, the prime appeal of this two-bit, walk-through is the undraped stuff.”⁴ Expressing a similar sentiment, a reviewer for the *New Yorker* exclaimed, “One of the best sights on the midway is the bewilderment of the cash customers in Dalí’s crazy girl show. They don’t know whether to be angry, amused, or excited.”⁵

At the time, Dalí (1904–89) was an international art celebrity well known to American audiences. There had been exhibitions of surrealist art at the Wadsworth Atheneum and the Baltimore Museum of Art, not to mention the blockbuster “Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism” show at the Museum of Modern Art (December 7, 1936 – January 17, 1937).⁶ Dalí graced the cover of *Time* magazine in 1936, designed covers for *American Weekly* in 1937 and 1938,⁷ and his presence at the 1939 New York World’s Fair was extensively covered in the contemporary press. More recently, his *Dream of Venus* (1939) has received well-deserved attention in Lewis Kachur’s *Displaying the Marvelous: Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dalí, and Surrealist Exhibition Installations* (2001) and Ingrid Schaffner’s *Salvador Dalí’s Dream of Venus: The*

Surrealist Funhouse from the 1939 World's Fair (2002).⁸ Situating *Dream of Venus* within Surrealism and the fair's Amusement Zone respectively, Kachur and Schaffner offer detailed descriptions and extensive contemporary responses that provide important insights into the pavilion, but neither examines how Dalí's *Dream of Venus* operated within the context of the fair's larger sculptural program.⁹ This article builds on their foundational work but extends the study of Dalí beyond conventional art historical limits into disability studies to demonstrate that far from upending aesthetic expectations or challenging cultural conventions, his *Dream of Venus* conflated idealism with the grotesque to perform the role of a burlesque freak show and reinforce the normative values that underpinned the fair's positivist agenda.

Building the World of Tomorrow: From "Surrealist House" to "Dalí's Dream"

In spring of 1935, New York City's most prominent community and business leaders came together to form the World Fair Corporation.¹⁰ Over the next four years they worked to transform the Corona Ash Heap in Queens into a streamlined and modern "World of Tomorrow." As reported in *Life* magazine, "Business is using the Fair to show off the marvels of its industrial technology. Since its technology is pretty wonderful, the Fair will be full of wonderful things."¹¹ Indeed, robots, televisions, speech synthesizers, and fluorescent light bulbs offered visitors multiple visions of a wondrous future made possible by science and technology. Lewis Mumford's documentary film *The City*, sponsored by the American Institute of Planners and funded by the Carnegie and Rockefeller foundations, visualized an ideal community where families enjoyed life in the "City of Tomorrow." The fair's two most popular exhibits—"Democracy," Henry Dreyfuss's diorama of suburbia housed in the monumental Perisphere, and "Futurama," Norman Bel Geddes's model city of the future displayed in the streamlined Art Deco General Motors pavilion,—envisioned futures perfected by urban planners where high-speed cars ferried passengers along superhighways to city centers full of futuristic skyscrapers.¹²

Despite this emphasis on the future, the majority of the fair's one hundred plaster sculptures by thirty-three different artists depicted idealized bodies.¹³ Classicism was felt keenly in American sculpture during the 1930s and exerted a strong influence at the fair in the work of contributing artists James Earle Fraser, Leo Friedlander, and Paul Manship, all of whom served terms as president of the National Sculpture Society.¹⁴ In addition to an extensive collection of larger-than-life size free standing sculptures, the fair's numerous buildings were adorned with figurative high-relief plaster sculptures as well, the majority of which favored the Greco Deco style, which blended the linear precision of the machine age with the subject matter of classical mythology. As contemporary art critic Elizabeth McCausland noted, these sculptures exhibited "an almost universal reliance on a mythological vocabulary and a representational manner of design."¹⁵ As I have argued elsewhere, eugenics informed the fair's sculptural program, which served

to naturalize the American body politic as white, male, heterosexual, and able-bodied.¹⁶ This essay also demonstrates how Dalí's *Dream of Venus* participated in this process in calling upon the uncanny to enfreak the body of Venus and thus reassure normative values.

But how did Dalí end up at the 1939 New York World's Fair? Inspired by the success of the "Pavillon de l'Élégance" at the "Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne de Paris" in 1936 and the "Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme" at the Galerie Beaux-Arts in Paris (which over 3,000 people attended on January 17, 1938), New York City gallerist Julien Levy and architect Ian Woodner Silverman submitted a proposal to the World Fair Planning Committee on January 27, 1938 for a "Surrealist House" featuring work by Dalí, Max Ernst, René Magritte, and Marcel Duchamp.¹⁷ Levy and Woodner Silverman no doubt hoped to capitalize on the international attention garnered by both expositions, which, as Adam Jolles notes, challenged "the conventional boundaries between visual media, language, and the space of public display."¹⁸ They proposed a building shaped like an eye that would include "an over-life-size glass woman" whose body parts were illuminated one-by-one while Solomon's *Song of Songs* played over a loudspeaker; a "Photographic Booth" where visitors could have their pictures made in front of "one of several surrealist backgrounds, some using World's Fair features as their motifs"; and a room "inhabited by surrealist waxworks" and "serious works of art by leading surrealists."¹⁹ The Planning Committee routed Levy and Woodner Silverman's proposal to the director of the Amusement Zone who responded positively to their application, stating that it was "one of the very few amusement projects which will interest the *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* set."²⁰ Levy and Woodner Silverman secured a financial backer, and the contract for the "Surrealist House" was signed on May 27, 1938.²¹ The 4,500 square-foot pavilion that opened to the public on May 31, 1939, however, differed dramatically from the house set forth in the original prospectus.

Whereas the Paris inspiration for the "Surrealist House" featured works by sixty artists from fourteen different countries who made extensive use of mannequins to critique bourgeois values, Levy and Woodner Silverman were only able to secure Dalí's participation.²² Levy guaranteed him a solo show at his gallery to seal the deal; while in New York Dalí courted controversy and garnered publicity. Dalí renamed and revamped the proposed Surrealist House into an exhibition he first called "Bottoms of the Sea" and then renamed *Dream of Venus*.²³ He jettisoned the ground plan and eye façade and replaced it with a stuccoed hall that resembled a grotto. A Venus-themed three-dimensional fantasy, it was housed within a Baroque conglomeration of undulating lines and decorative accretions that featured numerous iterations of the goddess of love. Its monumental columns were sculpted and painted to resemble women's legs, then adorned in pink-and-aqua striped stockings held up by oyster shell garters. Patrons passed between these legs to enter Dalí's



Fig. 2. Eric Schaal, *Dali's Dream of Venus*, 1939 © 2022 Salvador Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí/Artists Rights Society (ARS) New York 2022

dreamscape where they encountered semi-nude models, a revised version of Dalí's *Rainy Taxicab* from the Paris Exposition, and umbrellas hanging from the ceiling like phallic stalactites, an appropriation of Duchamp's installation at the "Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme" (Fig. 2).

A mash-up of the masterpieces of western art history, Dalí's *Dream of Venus* included numerous Venuses—painted, sculpted, and living. On the exterior of the pavilion, a 25-foot-tall photostat enlargement of the figure of Venus from Sandro Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* (1485–86) was installed above the entryway.²⁴ Living "Venuses" took the form of young models in bathing suits who posed above the doorway. A niche on the side of the pavilion was plastered with an enlarged print of Leonardo da Vinci's *St. John the Baptist* (1513–16) with the face of the *Mona Lisa* (1503–06) collaged onto it; inside the pavilion, a nude woman, in imitation of the *Sleeping Venus* (c. 1510) by Giorgione and Titian, reclined on a bed covered in white and red satin adorned with flowers and ivy (Fig. 3). Models played the roles of Venus's attendants and swam in a room-sized aquarium filled with typewriters and telephone receivers—perhaps an allusion to Peter Paul Rubens's *Nereids Lamenting the Dead Body of Leander* (1603–04) in which sea nymphs mourn the death of Leander by calling out to Venus after she drowned him to prevent his rendezvous with one of



Fig. 3. Eric Schaal, *Dali's Dream of Venus*, 1939 © 2022 Salvador Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí/Artists Rights Society (ARS) New York 2022

her virgin priestesses. Updated for a modern audience, Dalí's Nereids used modern-day telephones as they swam behind glass in a room filled with water (Fig. 4). In the center of the pavilion stood a variation on Dalí's 1936 *Venus de Milo with Drawers*. His "original" 1936 version, a half-size white plaster model with drawers cut into the goddess's forehead, breasts, chest, navel, and knee, punned on the English name for a bureau, with the chest of drawers referring to the woman's bust and the placement of the mink-adorned drawers concealing her breasts and genitalia. In the pavilion's version, the Venus was without her mink drawer pulls but stood atop a model of the womb-like Perisphere and adjacent to Dalí's version of the phallic Trylon, both of which were decorated with melting keys. Rather than offering an avant-garde critique of bourgeois values, Dalí's generous appropriations and "corrected masterpieces" depended on classical subjects adapted to the tropes of the carnival.²⁵

To enfreak Venus, Dalí included three-dimensional representations of fragmented body parts. He sculpted the headless torsos of mythological mermaids and echidnas; he created columns out of disembodied legs; and he decorated the pavilion with crutches and prosthetic arms. He attached Venus's missing and



Fig. 4. Eric Schaal, *Dali's Dream of Venus*, 1939 © 2022 Salvador Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí/Artists Rights Society (ARS) New York 2022

broken appendages, as well as crutches, braces, corsets, and other medical devices, to the exterior of the pavilion, at once repairing and unifying Venus's body and drawing attention to its brokenness. As theorized by David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, prostheses, whether literal or metaphorical, are developed to solve "the 'problem' that disability" poses to society,²⁶ and have been related to the uncanny, which describes the experience of seeing something as strangely familiar, but, as Nathan S. Dennis argues, "Prostheses can—and quite often should—be approached as works of art that consciously subvert the uncanny by accentuating the abrupt unification of animate flesh and inanimate materiality as uniquely aesthetic solutions to the fragmented body."²⁷ This type of iconophilia, which can be traced from antique statuary through medieval votives to Baroque polychrome wood sculpture, underwent a shift in signification during the modern era. As noted by Marquand Smith, verisimilitude gave way to hyperrealism, and figurative sculpture went from being "inanimate human forms figured as fetishistic objects that are stand-ins for other things, to their figuring as erotic things that are capable of 'independent activity.'"²⁸ For the Surrealists, the appeal of the mannequin, which "confused the boundaries between animate and inanimate, human and machine, male and female,

the sexualized and the sexless, and ultimately life and death,”²⁹ was irresistible. “L’Exposition internationale du Surréalisme” famously featured a hall with sixteen embellished mannequins contributed by Dalí, Duchamp, Tanguy, and Ernst, among others, and which featured everything from a mannequin wearing a bird cage and floral ball gag to another decorated with a crocheted headdress and covered in demitasse spoons.³⁰ As Amy Lyford notes, “Surrealist practices emphasized bodily dismemberment in order to critique, or at least question, prevalent ideas about bodily integrity and social progress,”³¹ but Dalí’s dismemberment of *Venus* at the 1939 New York World’s Fair, rather than challenging able-bodied normativity, called upon the conventions of the freak show to reify it.³²

Fantasies and Freaks

Rather than using prosthesis, in the words of Hal Foster, to “shore up a disrupted body image or to support a ruined ego construction,” Dalí decorated his pavilion with sculptures that called upon the spectacular exhibits of the freak show.³³ Following the tradition of carnival barkers, swimsuit-clad models stood above the entrance, called out to passersby, and held bamboo fishing rods to “reel in” customers. Dalí’s use of topless performers and live swimming showgirls (he employed seventeen working-class white women) even led critics to compare it to a burlesque “nudie tank show”; and, by costuming his models to resemble lobster inspired sea nymphs, Dalí referenced both burlesque nudity and enfreaked them.³⁴ Following the freak show’s interest in transgender performers (“Josephine Joseph” being among the most popular) and the burlesque’s Pansy Craze of the 1930s (during which transgendered dancers, known as “pansy performers,” experienced a surge in popularity in Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco), the exterior of Dalí’s *Dream of Venus* included a photostat of Leonardo da Vinci’s St. John the Baptist with the face of the Mona Lisa collaged onto it. Already an androgynous figure in Leonardo’s painting, Dalí transformed St. John the Baptist into a drag performer masquerading as La Gioconda. St. John’s muscular arm recalled carnival’s strongmen, and the Mona Lisa’s enigmatic smile kept viewers guessing in this burlesque performance of gender and sexuality. His headless mermaids referenced the freak show’s interest in hybrid animal/human acts such as the “Headless Woman” and “Miraculous Mermaid”; his lobsterwomen recalled the popular “Lobster Family,” a group of performers with ectrodactyly; and his armless sculptures recalled the silhouette of Frances O’Connor, billed as the “Living Venus de Milo” in Tod Browning’s classic 1932 film *Freaks*. As one contemporary critic of Dalí’s *Dream* noted, “[It] is like taking a trip to Mars, or visiting the zoo to look at the strange beasts, or reading Ripley.”³⁵

One headless female figure, sculpted on the exterior of the pavilion with dark protruding ribs and festooned with hair hanks and ivy vines, was not “girded with eels” as proposed by *Vogue* or “erotically grasped by long dark bands,



Fig. 5. Elsa Schiaparelli and Salvador Dalí, “Skeleton Dress,” 1938, silk crêpe, trapunto quilting, cotton wadding, Victoria & Albert Museum, London © 2022 Salvador Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí / Artists Rights Society (ARS) New York 2022

apparently the eight tentacles of an unseen octopus,”³⁶ as hypothesized by Kachur. Instead, she most closely resembled the popular freak show attraction, “The Living Skeleton” and recalled the Skeleton Dress Dalí designed with Elsa Schiaparelli in 1938 (Fig. 5). Visualizing his personal obsession with lobsters, and perhaps inspired by the Lobster Dress he co-designed, Dalí costumed his Venuses to resemble the crustaceans. Seventeen women were employed for *Dream of Venus*, but it was difficult to differentiate between the various models. They all had similar body types and measurements, and all were dressed in similar red mesh halter tops that suggested the silhouette of lobster’s claws, each wore crimson hairnets. Lobsters both embodied and reassured male fears of castration, impotence, and disability and acted as prostheses, or, as Nancy Frazier puts it, “The lobster threat was correlated not only with acts of emasculation of the son by the father but also with female envy of male genitals.”³⁷ Lobsters, notable for their strong, phallus-like tails, are an incredibly aggressive species. To mate, the female lobster must molt and move unprotected into a male lobster’s habitat.³⁸ During the two weeks that lapse between mating and the regrowth of her shell, she is trapped in the male’s cave, vulnerable to



Fig. 6. George Platt Lynes, *Salvador Dalí*, April 1939, Gelatin Silver Print, 16.7 x 14.5 cm (6 9/16 x 5 11/16 in.), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York, used with permission of the Lynes Family © 2022 Salvador Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí / Artists Rights Society (ARS) New York 2022

death and dismemberment. By visualizing Venus as a lobster trapped in a tank, Dalí simultaneously repaired the goddess's disfigured body and rendered her dependent on an imagined and potentially dangerous lover/spectator. Notably, the lobster was extensively employed as a prop in publicity photographs, with Dalí performing the role of menacing lover (Fig. 6).

From mannequins cast to resemble pianos to the armless sculptures of mermaids, Dalí's *Dream of Venus* enfreaked and disabled Venus, a perspective which was further exaggerated by the pavilion's placement in the Amusement Zone, a commercialized area of the fair that fulfilled the role of the midway. Popular acts in the 1939 New York World's Fair Amusement Zone included Morris Gest's "Little Miracle Town" (a village inhabited by people with dwarfism), the "Strange as It Seems" freak show (complete with a Bearded Lady, Petrified Man, Lobster Family, and Pygmies from Batwa), Billy Rose's Aquacade (a music, dance, and synchronized swimming show), and "Frank Buck's Jungleland" (where viewers could see "Native hunters" and "exotic animals"). The freak show was a locus for consumer capitalism, voyeurism, and display, and Dalí's *Dream of Venus*, pitched to the World's Fair planning committee as an "old type 'funny house' but with each attraction translated into terms of surrealism," made ample use of mirrors and masquerades to amaze viewers.³⁹

As theorized by Robert Bogdan, Rosemarie Garland Thomson, and Rachel Adams, the freak show presented an arena where assumptions about people with bodily and cognitive differences were interrogated.⁴⁰ A place where visitors' fantasies of aggression and superiority could be safely played out and their sense of normality reassured, freak shows supported what Robert McRuer calls "compulsory able-bodiedness."⁴¹ "Compulsory able-bodiedness"—a system that is intricately bound up with what Adrienne Rich conceptualized as "compulsory heterosexuality"—naturalizes and normalizes white, heterosexual, abled bodies.⁴² Historically, whether performed by people with disabilities, unique talents, or from foreign countries, freak show acts often reassure audiences of their normative status. Venus, as Lennard J. Davis notes, in addition to her status as the ideal lover, is based on "the idea of mutilation, fragmented bodies, decapitation, [and] amputation."⁴³ In short, the freak show was a place where white male visitors' fantasies of aggression and superiority could be safely played out, narratives of civilization and progress underscored, and positions of normality and privilege reassured; but it also was a place where people deemed different by society found work and cultivated community.⁴⁴

During the 1930s people with disabilities occupied an increasingly complicated societal role. Beginning in the nineteenth century, so-called "ugly laws" had been passed across the country that made it illegal for people with visible physical impairments to be seen in public; twenty-eight states adopted statutes that sought sterilization and marriage restriction of people with cognitive impairments.⁴⁵ Although New York's sterilization law was declared unconstitutional in 1918, the city's American Museum of Natural History hosted international eugenics congresses in 1921 and 1932. As national political and economic tensions mounted in the years leading up to the Second World War, the physical traumas including death and dismemberment that marked the Great War were still evident on the prosthesis-adorned bodies of veterans. Coupled with an economic depression that

simultaneously unemployed a third of American men and forced women to join the workforce, this created a scenario in which the double threat of castration (the fear of the loss of bodily integrity via accident or war and the loss of economic use-value via unemployment) penetrated the psyches of many American men. Just as the World Fair Corporation was planning the “World of Tomorrow,” the League of the Physically Handicapped (LPH), whose members “limped or wore leg braces and used crutches or canes as a result of polio. . . had cerebral palsy, tuberculosis, or heart conditions . . . lost limbs in accidents . . . [or] had been gassed as a soldier in the Great War,” staged a sit-in at the offices of New York City’s Emergency Relief Bureau (ERB) to protest their exclusion from both the Social Security Act of 1935 (which only provided benefits to children and those who were blind) and from employment with the Works Progress Administration (reserved for “those able-bodied unemployed persons who are in greatest need and who have been so certified by a local agency”).⁴⁶ The ERB, under pressure from the LPH, eventually relented, but hired only fifteen hundred of an estimated five thousand employable adults with disabilities.⁴⁷ This pattern of discrimination was replicated at the fair. With the exception of the people with dwarfism employed by Morris Gest for his popular “Little Miracle Town,” and people with physical impairments working in the “Strange As It Seems” freak show, the fair hired few people with disabilities.⁴⁸ *Dream of Venus* employed able-bodied women; although their costuming in nets and corsets may be viewed as disabling, Dalí primarily focused on bodily dismemberment in his sculpted and painted representations of female bodies. Like the larger World Fair in which it was situated, Dalí’s *Dream of Venus*, then, limited the civic participation of actual people with disabilities while using representations to confine hypersexualized bodies and assuage anxieties.

Conclusion

How did Dalí’s *Dream of Venus*, billed as “amazing, weird, and amusing,” participate in the construction of the normative body at the 1939 New York World’s Fair? Dalí’s generous borrowing from the freak show genre allowed for the display and disabling of female bodies. His appropriation of the classical trope of Venus, with its connotations of beauty and high art, satisfied fairgoers’ artistic pretensions. The representation of Venus is often employed to arouse and control, and Dalí’s *Dream of Venus* depended upon the idealized, hypersexualized, and prostheticized female body to embody the anxiety evoked by women and disability during the Great Depression. The 1939 New York World’s Fair, with its mix of capitalism and consumerism, offered Dalí the perfect venue in which to endorse normative values, and to perform rather than practice avant-garde aestheticism.

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- 1 Jessica Weglein et al, *Guide to the New York World's Fair 1939 and 1940 Incorporated Records* (New York: New York Public Library Manuscripts and Archives Division, 2008), 6.
- 2 Zones included the Theme Center, Government, Community Interests, Food, Communications, Production, Distribution, Transportation, and Amusement.
- 3 Held in Flushing Meadows, Queens, New York, the Fair opened on April 30, 1939. Season 1 was held April 30 - Oct. 31, 1939 and Season 2 was held May 11 - October 27, 1940.
- 4 Abel Green, "Expo Attraction Dalí's Dream of Venus," *Variety*, June 1939, 55.
- 5 Clifford Orr, "Around the Fair: Foreigners and Natives," *New Yorker*, July 15, 1939, 40.
- 6 The 1936 *Fantastic Art, Dada, and Surrealism* exhibition at the MoMA was especially influential. See: Keith L. Eggener, "An Amusing Lack of Logic: Surrealism and Popular Entertainment," *American Art*, 7, no. 4 (1993): 33.
- 7 His cover drawing for a 1937 issue of *American Weekly*, *Conquest of the Air*, resembles Norman Bel Geddes's "Motorcar No. 9" (1932) and is especially prescient of the streamlined aesthetic favored by the World Fair organizers. Thanks to Elliott King for bringing these covers to my attention.
- 8 Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous: Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dalí, and Surrealist Exhibition Installations* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001) and Ingrid Schaffner, *Salvador Dalí's Dream of Venus: The Surrealist Funhouse from the 1939 World's Fair* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002).
- 9 For an extended treatment of the fair's extensive sculptural program and the place of *Dream of Venus* within it, see Keri Watson, "Dalí's *Dream of Venus*: Sex, Surrealism, and Eugenics at the 1939 New York World's Fair," in *Performing Arousal: Precarious Bodies and Frames of Representation*. Edited by Julia Listengarten and Yana Meerzon, 27-40 (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2021).
- 10 Paul K. Longmore and David Goldberger, "The League of the Physically Handicapped and the Great Depression: A Case Study in New Disability History," *Journal of American History* 87, no. 3 (2000): 888; and Joseph P. Cusker, "The World of Tomorrow: Science, Culture, and Community at the New York World's Fair," in *Dawn of a New Day: The New York World's Fair, 1939/40*, ed. Helen A. Harrison (New York: Queens Museum and the New York University Press, 1980), 3.
- 11 "World's Fair," *Life* magazine, March 13, 1939, 33.
- 12 Steven Selden, "Eugenics and the Social Construction of Merit, Race and Disability," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 32:2 (2000): 242; and Erin McLeary and Elizabeth Toon, "'Here Man Learns About Himself': Visual Education and the Rise and Fall of the American Museum of Health," *American Journal of Public Health* 102:7 (2012): 27.
- 13 Two of the fair's statues represented black figures. Bernard J. Rosenthal's sculpture *Time* (1938) depicted what was described as a "Nubian Slave," and Augusta Savage's *Harp* (1939) depicted twelve stylized black singers that symbolized the strings of a harp and represented James Weldon Johnson's 1900 anthem *Lift Every Voice and Sing*. Both plaster sculptures were painted black. There were no sculptures of physically-disabled bodies.
- 14 Elizabeth McCausland, "Contemporary American Art at the Fair," *Parnassus* 10, no. 7 (1938): 9.
- 15 Elizabeth McCausland, "Preview: World's Fair Murals and Sculptures," *Parnassus* 10, no. 7 (1938): 6.

- 16 Keri Watson, “‘Building the World of Tomorrow’: Disability, Eugenics, and Sculpture at the 1939 New York World’s Fair,” in *Disability and Art History from Antiquity to the Twenty-first Century*, Ann Millett-Gallant and Elizabeth Howie, eds. (New York and London: Routledge, 2021), 187-203.
- 17 Kachur, 108-110.
- 18 Adam Jolles, *The Curatorial Avant-Garde: Surrealism and Exhibition Practice in France, 1925–1941* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2013), 7.
- 19 Schaffner, *Surrealist Funhouse*, 39-40.
- 20 Maurice Mermey, interoffice memo (March 21, 1938), Records, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library.
- 21 Kachur, 111.
- 22 Ibid., 112.
- 23 Just three months after it opened, the pavilion was rebranded “20,000 Legs Under the Sea,” and by December 1939, Dalí and Levy had filed an “involuntary petition in bankruptcy.” Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous*, 128.
- 24 For more on art historical references in *Dream of Venus* see: Riccardo Venturi, “Into the Abyss: On Salvador Dalí’s *Dream of Venus*,” in *Botticelli Past and Present*, eds. Ana Debenedetti and Caroline Elam (London: UCL Press, 2019), 266-289.
- 25 Jolles, 3.
- 26 David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 2000), 47.
- 27 Nathan S. Dennis, “The Aesthetics of Prosthetics: From the Premodern Uncanny to the Post-modern Imaginary,” in *The Routledge Companion to Art and Disability*, eds. Keri Watson and Timothy W. Hiles (New York and London: Routledge, 2022), 358-359.
- 28 Marquand Smith, *The Erotic Doll: A Modern Fetish* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 68.
- 29 Ghislaine Wood, *The Surreal Body: Fetish and Fashion* (London: V&A Publications, 2007), 10.
- 30 Other artists who created mannequins at “L’Exposition internationale du Surréalisme” included: Jean Arp, Sonia Mossé, Marcel Jean, Kurt Seligmann, Joan Miró, Augustín Espinoza, Wolfgang Paalen, Maurice Henry, Man Ray, Oscar Domínguez, Léo Malet, Paul Masson, and Raoul Ubac. The former was made by Paul Masson, the latter by Dalí. For more on this exhibition see: Benjamin H. D. Buchloch, “The Dialectics of Design and Destruction: The *Degenerate Art Exhibition* (1937) and the Exposition internationale du Surréalisme (1938),” *October* 150 (2014): 49-62.
- 31 Amy Lyford, “Advertising Surrealist Masculinities: André Kertész in Paris,” in *Surrealism, Politics and Culture*, eds. Raymond Spiteri and Donal LaCoss (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), 75-76. See also: Amy Lyford, *Surrealist Masculinities: Gender Anxiety and the Aesthetics of Post-World War I Reconstruction in France* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2007).
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- 33 Hal Foster, “Amor Fou,” *October*, 56 (1991): 67–8.
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