

ubu

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HANS BELLMER  
PHOTOGRAPHS & DRAWINGS FROM THE 1930s

March 20 – May 1, 1999

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**Ubu Gallery** will present an exhibition of the photographs and drawings of **Hans Bellmer** (1902–1975), a Surrealist whose overt influence on current art trends far outweighs the recognition of his emotionally and intellectually charged oeuvre. The exhibition, which opens on March 20<sup>th</sup> and runs through May 1, 1999, will present the finest examples of Bellmer's pre-War output – including eight large format photographs first exhibited in 1944, six exquisitely hand-colored contact prints from the maquette for *Les Jeux de la poupée* (1938) and eight sketchbooks filled with over 200 drawings composed between 1936 and 1939.

Bellmer is best known for a series of photographs of two life-sized adolescent female dolls which he constructed and photographed between 1934 and 1938. The first doll, which was documented in various stages of its construction, and the fully-articulated second doll, whose limbs, head and breasts were arranged in a variety of natural and unnatural configurations, were each recorded by Bellmer variously in the guise of an innocent, a temptress and a victim. The lighting and staging – with their nods to German expressionist cinema, Renaissance religious painting and illumination, and explicit fetishism – allowed Bellmer to establish a sexually-laden atmosphere and to realize a personal language of desire which he felt would, in his own words, “make it possible to recreate physically the dizzying heights of passion and to do so to the extent of creating new desires.”

Bellmer's photographic activity was sporadic and his production was small – no more than 150 different images (and within this group many just subtly varied) – yet it possesses an extraordinary richness and individuality without peer in Surrealism. The appreciation of the photographs is enhanced in the broader developmental context of Bellmer's continuous production of paintings, prints, sculpture and, principally, drawings. Bellmer's draftsmanship is unique in Surrealism, grounded as it is in the northern European classical tradition, and is unusual and powerful as pure visual style. In Bellmer's oeuvre, drawing leads to sculpture and photography, which, in their turn, cause Bellmer to rethink the drawing. In this regard, Bellmer's art embodies a constant dialogue among all the plastic mediums.

The exhibition is presented jointly with **Galerie Berinson, Berlin**, which will show the works in Winter 1999 – Spring 2000. A selection of the works will be included in “**Dolls-Bodies-Automatons: The Phantasms of Modernism**” at the **Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Dusseldorf**, from July 24<sup>th</sup> through October 17, 1999.

Ubu Gallery is located at 16 East 78<sup>th</sup> Street. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 11:00 AM – 6:00 PM.