
Ejler Bille

(Danish, 1910–2004)

Large Mask (Store Maske), **1944**

Bronze

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-235

Ejler Bille, a writer and a painter, was a key member of the Danish avant-garde groups *Linien* (The Line), *Helhesten* (The Hell-Horse), and *Høst* (Autumn), which continued the avant-garde legacy of Dada, Surrealism, and German Expressionism in Denmark in the 1930s and 1940s. Bille's *Large Mask* reflects the Danish avant-garde's investigation of ethnographic objects and ancient Scandinavian art. Rather than a mask to be worn, the heaviness of the bronze suggests something ancient and permanent, much like the prehistoric Nordic rock carvings discussed in the journal *Helhesten* (1941–1944). The mask takes on an anthropomorphic quality through the extensions suggesting limbs that protrude from the bottom and sides, emphasizing the playful animation of traditional artistic forms that characterized the *Helhesten* group in particular.

Eugène Brands

(Dutch, 1913–2002)

Mask, 1946

Papier maché

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-352

After studying commercial drawing at the Amsterdam School for Applied Arts, Eugène Brands became an artist in the 1930s, making assemblages of found objects inspired by Surrealism. Just after the end of the war, Amsterdam art dealer Frits Lemaire commissioned Brands to create precise pencil drawings of his extensive collection of ethnographic masks and objects from west Africa and Oceania for a book he was publishing. This project inspired Brands to design and manufacture his own versions of masks. Often beginning with a papier-mâché base, he would add paint and elements of assemblage, such as egg shell or snake skin, to form the masks. Lemaire also took a series of photographs of Brands imaginatively posing with these masks, as seen in the exhibition slide show.

Egill Jacobsen

(Danish, 1910–1998)

Two Yellow Figures (To gule figurer), 1942

Oil on canvas

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-232

Egill Jacobsen developed a new approach to mask painting evident in these two yellow masked figures, painted in thick textures as if the canvas were actually adorned with masks. The Helhesten artists viewed the mask as a universal form that was neither fully abstract nor representational, a meeting point between the personal and the social. These forms played on the expressive power of masks and responded to the dehumanization of modern society, which these artists believed had become cut off from ancient structures of myth and ritual.

Asger Oluf Jørgensen

(Asger Jorn; Danish,
1914–1973)

Head (Tête), 1940

Oil on canvas

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-226

Asger Jorn painted this mysterious mask picture just after returning from Paris, where he was studying with Fernand Léger but struck by the work of abstract Surrealist artists Max Ernst and Joan Miró, as well as the work of Pablo Picasso and Paul Klee. The hatched lines around the eyes turn abstract elements into a face, in a deliberately kitschy or childlike process. The black drips recall Jorn's experiments with surrealist "automatic" painting in 1938, when he dripped paint off the balcony of Alberto Giacometti's studio to see what forms would appear on the paper below. Danish sculptor Sonja Ferlov (1911–1984), a key member of the Linien and later Cobra groups, had a studio next to Giacometti's at the time and helped introduce the Danish artists to Parisian art scene.

Asger Oluf Jørgensen

(Asger Jorn; Danish,
1914–1973)

Untitled, 1941

Oil on wood (Shrovetide barrel)

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-227

Jorn decorated this barrel with Danish popular traditions in mind. Traditionally at Carnival celebrations each spring, children would swing bats to let the “cat out of the barrel,” a festival activity with the same roots as the party piñata. Jorn’s abstract-surrealist designs depict male and female figures turning into insect or animal forms, transforming a folk technique into a modern artistic expression.

Lucebert

(Lubertus Jacobus
Swaanswijk; Dutch,
1924–1994)

Untitled, 1941

Ceramic

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-80.43

Lucebert, a key poet of the Dutch “Viftigers (Fiftiers)” movement as well as an important visual artist, embodied the Cobra ideal of interdisciplinary artistic experiment. In the 1940s, he and the other Dutch artists painted designs on factory-made ceramics as well as hand-made pieces by ceramist Frieda Koch. Koch was the wife of Lucebert’s close friend, the Cobra poet Bert Schierbeek. Lucebert’s folk motifs and expressive forms recall the symbols and rhythms of his Cobra poetry.

Erik Ortvad

(Danish, 1917–2008)

Shining Things (Skinnende ting), 1948

Double-sided, oil on canvas

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-81.52

Erik Ortvad, a self-taught artist, was the youngest member of the Linien (The Line) group in Denmark, although his time in this group was cut short by his father, who disapproved of art as a profession. Ortvad fled occupied Denmark with his Jewish wife during the war, moving to Sweden. Upon his return to Copenhagen just after the war, he joined the Høst (Autumn) group that would be incorporated into Cobra by Asger Jorn in 1948. The double-sided painting *Shining Things* forms a semi-abstract landscape dotted with supernatural flora and fauna, including humanoid forms.

Erik Ortvad

(Danish, 1917–2008)

Untitled, 1947

Oil on canvas

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; FIC2013.254

Carl-Henning Pedersen

(Danish, 1913–2007)

Fairy Tale Picture (Eventyrbilledet), 1943

Oil on canvas

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-79.33

Carl-Henning Pedersen fervently believed in the Marxist (and later Cobra) idea that everyone had the potential to create. He developed a unique way of depicting animals and figures in fantastic landscapes inspired by Marc Chagall, Paul Klee, children's and outsider art. In the early part of World War II, during the Nazi occupation of Denmark, Danish artists were allowed to work freely even in methods that the Fascist sympathizers called "degenerate" at the time. However, in 1943, the Danish situation changed when the resistance movement became more active. In the midst of an increasingly restrictive political situation, Pedersen's palette darkened. His composition is divided by unsettling diagonals and shadowy shapes, suggesting tragedy even in the escape of a fantasy world.

Asger Oluf Jørgensen

(Asger Jorn; Danish,
1914–1973), images
and

Genia Katz Rajchmann

(Genia Richez; Polish), text

The Girl in the Fire (Pigen i ilden), 1938

Artist's book, color lithographs,
printed by Fischers Forlag, Copenhagen:
Fischers Forlag

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection

While he was living in Paris and studying with Léger, Jorn (who was known as Asger Jørgensen until 1946) translated into Danish and had privately published a book of stories in the style of folk tales by Genia Katz Rajchmann, his lover at the time. It was one of many illustrated books and book projects on which Jorn collaborated throughout his life. Its imagery shows a clear relationship to the biomorphic abstractions of Jean Arp and Joan Miró, as well as the spontaneous line drawings of Paul Klee.

“The Heart” **Translation**

— There once were two doves. The loved each other dearly, and they had only one heart.

There came a time when they had to take leave
of each other,

— and so one heart was broken in two —

The hearts searched for each other — full of longing — they stretched their hands far out toward each other. But — in vain — they were too far, and they could not reach.

— And suddenly they — full of compassion — left the doves in order to come together again.

And the doves were distressed, because they had been left without hearts.

— *Translation by Karen Kurczynski*

Erik Thommesen (Danish, 1916–2008)

Bust, 1939

Wood (lemon, lime, and ash)

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-359

In May 1941, the Helhesten artists organized *13 Artists in a Tent*, an experimental exhibition suggesting popular festivals and fairgrounds, situated in Dyrehaven (Deer Park), a park in Copenhagen popular with the working class. Erik Thommesen’s *Bust* was included in this seminal exhibition, which received only a few visitors but made a profound mark on the Danish art scene in the midst of the occupation. *Bust*’s smooth wooden form redefines the portrait bust into something more universal, suggesting inspirations in nature, modernist sculpture, West African art, and ancient monuments. It seems to mark humanity’s lineage from prehistoric past to war-torn present, suggesting an earthly beauty and fragility.

Robert Dahlmann Olsen

(Danish, 1915–1993), editor

***Helhesten Art Journal* (*Helhesten Tidsskrift for Kunst*), 1941–1944**

Digital version produced
by NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale

Helhesten (The Hell-Horse) was published by a collective of artists, poets, psychologists, archeologists, and anthropologists brought together by the charismatic Danish artist Asger Jorn (1914–1973). Established in Copenhagen in 1941, this group, and the publication they produced, were made during the German occupation of Denmark. Celebrating “mythmaking” as a creative response to the static mythologies imposed on people by ideologies such as Fascism, *Helhesten* reproduced modern art work, folk and children’s art alongside written texts on varied topics. It acted as a public forum for the group’s profound critique of contemporary society. *Helhesten* celebrated the power, universality, and potential for connection inherent in human creativity.

Carl-Henning Pedersen

(Danish, 1913–2007)

Asger Jorn

(Danish, 1914–1973)

and

Egill Jacobsen

(Danish, 1910–1998)

Cobra no. 1, March 1949

Color-lithograph with hand coloring

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection

Christian Dotremont

(Belgian, 1922–1979)

Edouard Jaguer

(French, 1924–2006)

Luc Zangrie

(Luc de Heusch;
Belgian, 1927–2012)

Michel Ragon

(French, b. 1924)

and

Jean Laude

(French, 1922–1984)

Free Artists: Sixteen monographs; First series of the Permanent Encyclopedia of Experimental Art (Artistes libres: Seize monographies; première série de l'encyclopédie permanente de l'art expérimental), 1950

16 volumes, original color lithography on covers

Printed by E. Munksgaard, Copenhagen

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection

At the August 1949, meeting of the Cobra artists in Bregnerød, Denmark, Christian Dotremont and Édouard Jaguer began writing a series of texts to be published as monographs on the artists of Cobra. The 15 monographs of the “Cobra Library” (Bibliothèque de Cobra) were dedicated to Pierre Alechinsky, Else Alfelt, Karel Appel, Jean-Michel Atlan, Ejler Bille, Constant, Corneille, Jacques Doucet, Sonja Ferlov, Stephen Gilbert, Svavar Gudnason, Henry Heerup, Egill Jacobsen, Asger Jorn, and Carl-Henning Pedersen. Other planned volumes on artists including Erik Thommesen and Ernest Mancoba were never produced.

Christian Dotremont

(Belgian, 1922–1979), text
and

Jean-Michel Atlan

(French-Algerian, 1913–1960),
images and text

The Transforms (Les transformés), original 1950; facsimile printed in 1972 by Pierre Alechinsky

Artist's book; edition 513/600

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection

This collaboration between poet Christian Dotremont and artist Jean-Michel Atlan, made in Pierre Alechinsky's famous Ateliers du Marais studio in Brussels, exemplifies the Cobra principle of collaborative interdisciplinary art-making. Words written or painted by both artists accompany Atlan's images in a classic Cobra “word painting.” The text reads in part: “If I get lost in the woods, it is only to find the forest.” The traditional division between text and image blurs and the two forms of communication, visual and verbal, cannot be separated.

Jean-Michel Atlan

(Algerian, 1913–1960)

Tripoli, 1952

Wax crayon on paper

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-242

In 1951, the United Kingdom of Libya became independent from the British, who had held it since the Allies defeated Italy there in 1943. Atlan, a French Jewish artist born in Algeria, seems to celebrate the new autonomy of the Libyan capital city, Tripoli, with its long and rich history as a cosmopolitan center on the Mediterranean coast. This drawing recalls both a rising figure and a map or coastline, suggesting the confluence of ancient and modern elements in creating the city's changing identity.

Eugène Brands

(Dutch, 1913–2002)

Singing Nightingale, 1957

Oil on paper on canvas

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-79.14

Christian Dotremont

(Belgian, 1922–1979)

and

Corneille

(Guillaume Cornelis van
Beverloo; Dutch, 1922–2010)

Improvisation, original word-drawings 1949; facsimile printed in 1990 by Jan Nieuwenhuizen Segaar

Artist's book

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection

Stephen Gilbert

(Scottish, 1910–2007)

Untitled, 1948

Oil on canvas

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-67

Gilbert and Scottish artist William Gear were the only British members of Cobra. Asger Jorn met Gilbert at the Salon des Surindépendants in Paris in 1947 and soon invited him to visit Denmark. In 1949, Gilbert and his wife participated in Jorn's Cobra festival in Bregnerød, outside Copenhagen, where he painted spontaneous decorations on the walls around the fireplace of the Danish Architecture Academy's summer house.

Karl Otto Götz

(German, b. 1914)

Encounter (Begegnung), 1948

Gouache on paper

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-93.10

The Scottish Cobra artist William Gear befriended Karl Otto Götz while a soldier stationed in Germany during the war, later introducing him to the Cobra artists in Paris. Götz edited his own art periodical *Meta* (1948–53) as well as the German 5th issue of the *Cobra* journal. Later known for his virtuosic, large-scale Informel paintings, Götz painted more symbolic and expressive figures in the Cobra period that typify the group's interests in a socially meaningful abstract art.

Henry Heerup

(Danish, 1907–1993)

Untitled, 1950

Painted stone

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-698

Henry Heerup made a mark on the Danish art scene in the 1930s, when he produced a series of playful “junk” sculptures out of found objects. Heerup became a fixture in the Danish art scene, living outside Copenhagen and treating his sculptures like living beings in his garden; he preferred only to sell them to people he could visit by bicycle. Heerup's mature work celebrates the creative potential of the earth in one of its simplest and rawest forms— stone. Heerup believed that each stone contained a form that it was the artist's job to discover. Rejecting the academic art tradition, he developed his own technique inspired by folk and outsider art. His carved snake, with painted accents in primary colors, becomes a totem for the Cobra movement. In world mythology, including Christian tradition, the snake is a common conduit between the natural, human, and spiritual worlds.

Asger Jorn

(Danish, 1914–1973)

The Eagle's Share (Le Droit de l'aigle), 1951

Lithograph

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; FIC2013.24

Jorn's "Eagle's Share" series began with a thick, almost black painting he made in Paris in 1950. At the time, he was becoming increasingly ill with the tuberculosis that would lead him and Christian Dotremont to declare an end to Cobra in 1951. The two-headed eagle recalls ancient heraldic imagery and the Prussian national symbol, but was also created explicitly to symbolize the two global superpowers of the Cold War. In homage to Goya's "Disasters of War" and Picasso's famous image of Fascist violence in *Guernica*, Jorn's stark vision draws on popular animal symbols to create a new expressive allegory of contemporary political events.

From top to bottom:

Asger Jorn

(Danish, 1914–1973)

Golocup Devouring a Missionary (Imaginary Beast) / Golocup Devorant Missionnaire (Fabelvæsen), 1951

Woodcut

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; FIC2013.30

Committee for the Propagation of Danish Beauty Abroad (Komitéen til udbredelse af dansk skønhed i udlandet), 1952

Woodcut

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection

From top to bottom:

Asger Jorn

(Danish, 1914–1973)

Untitled, 1952

Oil on panel; 1952

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-79.25

Untitled, 1952

Oil on panel

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-79.24

This painting of multiple small figures in a landscape exemplifies Asger Jorn's concept of the "human animal," which recognized the social significance of irrational human desires and behaviors. While recovering from tuberculosis in his native Denmark in 1951–52, Jorn began reinvestigating ancient Scandinavian and Viking art and incorporating their symbolic animal figures and patterns into his artistic vocabulary. Jorn's diminutive creatures reject heroic human imagery and recall popular art and political cartoons. Their menacing interactions comment on the threatened violence of the Cold War and the Atomic Bomb. The vulnerability and vitality of these figures with bared teeth and flailing limbs, rendered with child-like forms and brushstrokes, suggests the tenuous social and political condition of this time.

Carl-Henning Pedersen

(Danish, 1913–2007)

Early Dawn, 1947

Crayon, incising, watercolor,
and ink on wove paper

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-633

Carl-Henning Pedersen

(Danish, 1913–2007)

Forest Spirit, 1948

Crayon, watercolor, and ink on wove
paper

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-78.16

Shinkichi Tajiri

(American, 1923–2009)

Warrior, ca. 1950

Welded copper

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-79.35

Shinkichi Tajiri, the only American artist in Cobra, volunteered for the U.S. Army in 1943 to escape the camp where his Japanese-American family was interned. After encountering renewed racism in the US after the war, he returned to Paris to study sculpture with Ossip Zadkine and ultimately settled in the Netherlands. In 1949, he began making “one-day sculptures” in a junk yard on the banks of the Seine. The small, playful figures he made there later evolved into the “warriors” for which he became known, combination samurai-soldier figures which Tajiri intended as pacifist statements.

Shinkichi Tajiri

(American, 1923–2009)

Tower of Babel, 1964

Bronze

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-358

Tower of Babel is part of a series of “Bricks” Tajiri made in the 1960s in Amsterdam, an experiment in making positive forms out of the negative spaces of casting. The artist carved negative spaces and grooves into porous bricks, stacked them, and filled them with molten bronze. Created entirely in the cast with minimal polishing, the resulting sculptures were unpredictable in their appearance. Their surfaces simultaneously evoke the organic and the built environment, suggesting corrosion or colonization by lichen.

Collective Cobra Murals

The Cobra artists defined their group identity not only by painting and writing together, but in a general spirit of conviviality exemplified by the Ateliers du Marais, a shared studio in Brussels that Pierre Alechinsky and his wife Micky opened to their friends in 1950. Many artists, especially Asger Jorn and Constant, were equally interested in redefining the relationship between art and architecture as a way to bring art closer to the spaces and experiences of social life. They produced murals all over Europe and even Cuba (where a 1969 mural painted by Jorn still remains). These images include some of their most well-known collective murals, from the Helhesten wall paintings at Sophus Baggers Kindergarten in 1944 to the famous results of the Cobra “Encounter” at Bregnerød in 1949, when Asger Jorn secured permission from the Danish Art Academy to repaint the Architecture department’s summer house — they likely had no idea what Jorn really had in mind. Today only the ceiling remains in the Sophienholm museum in Copenhagen. Also included are images of the murals Appel, Constant, and Corneille produced at the home of Danish artist Erik Nyholm in 1949, and the famous installations designed by Aldo Van Eyck for the “International Exhibition of Experimental Art” at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, that November. As a coda, the sequence ends with the murals Jorn organized for the opening of the high modernist Statsgymnasium (High School) in Århus in 1959. First came the notable 80-foot experimental ceramic mural Jorn produced with expert ceramists in the studio of San Giorgio in Albisola, Italy, installed in Denmark by the team in 1959. Two years later, a monumental tapestry was completed, which Jorn designed with Pierre Wemaëre (French, 1913–2010), an abstract painter who left painting behind and taught himself to weave in 1940. It was woven collectively in a spirit of spontaneity in Wemaëre’s Paris workshop.

Pierre Alechinsky

(Belgian, b. 1927)

Among Us (Parmi Nous), 1965

Acrylic on paper and canvas

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-78.2

Pierre Alechinsky was a key organizer of the Cobra movement, founder of the collective “Ateliers du Marais” in Brussels, and one of its youngest artists. This expressive large-scale painting shows the development of his mature style in the 1960s, following the Cobra movement’s end. Working against the separation of painting, drawing, and writing, this work develops through various layers that make it seem as if gregarious figures are emerging from behind a colorful scrim, punctuated by an ominous dark area in the lower left corner. The ambiguous sea of faces that peer out from the composition suggest direct emotional connections with viewers, who are addressed as a group more than as individuals. In 1965 Alechinsky made a significant body of work in New York City, where he began making smaller drawings he called “marginal remarks” around his larger painted compositions. His collaborative projects with Jorn and Chinese artist Walasse Ting furthered the legacy of Cobra and helped to introduce the “human animals” of Cobra to new audiences.

Pierre Alechinsky

(Belgian, b. 1927)

Backs Adorned, Golden Heads (Dos Ornés Têtes Dorées), 1973

Acrylic on paper and canvas

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-79.1

Pierre Alechinsky

(Belgian, b. 1927)

Sikkim, 1981

Oil on pilotage chart

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-238

Over a military land map of Sikkim, a landlocked Indian state located in the Himalayan mountains, swarm Alechinsky’s hand-painted waves and creatures. In the 1970s, Alechinsky began painting over old book pages, 18th-century letters, French maps, and outmoded U.S. Air Force “tactical pilotage” charts bought in Paris. In the artist’s hands, banal messages come to life, and utilitarian diagrams transform into imaginative hordes. Lakes and rivers become eyes and other orifices; painting, as he wrote in the *Cobra* journal in 1951, becomes “a terrain of experience.”

From left to right:

Karel Appel

(Dutch, 1921–2006)

White Mittens, 1954

Gouache on paper

Smith College Museum of Art,
Northampton, Massachusetts;
Given anonymously

Birds on a Rooftop, 1953

Gouache on paper

Smith College Museum of Art,
Northampton, Massachusetts;
Gift of Martha Jackson (Martha Kellogg,
class of 1928) in memory of Louise
Eastman (class of 1933)

Birds on a Rooftop dates from Karel Appel's breakthrough period in Paris just after the official end of Cobra, when his work became internationally known with the help of French critic Michel Tapié. Through a particularly direct approach to form, color, and brushwork, and a dedication to the spontaneity of children's art, he created a highly material and dramatic type of painting. The creatures cavorting on this roof appear like monstrous visions of the pigeons commonly kept on city rooftops in the early 20th-century. Appel, who grew up in working-class Amsterdam, would feel an immediate affinity with New York City when he arrived by boat in 1957. There, he quickly befriended not only artists like Willem de Kooning and Franz Kline, but also jazz musicians like Count Basie and Dizzy Gillespie, who he convinced to sit for his series of "jazz portraits." This work was donated to the Smith College Museum of Art from Martha Jackson, the art dealer who gave Appel his first solo exhibition in New York in 1954.

Karel Appel

(Dutch, 1921–2006)

Ogre, 1957

Gouache on paper

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-78.28

Karel Appel

(Dutch, 1921–2006)

Untitled, 1969

Lithograph; edition 22/75

Collection University Museum of
Contemporary Art, University of
Massachusetts, Amherst.
Purchased with funds from the
Fine Arts Council Grant, UM 1970.9

Karel Appel

(Dutch, 1921–2006)

Wafting in the Wind, 1975

Oil on canvas

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-79.7

Corneille

(Guillaume Cornelis van Beverloo; Dutch, 1922–2010)

The Bird and the Flowery Earth
(L'Oiseau et la terre fleurie), 1968

Oil on canvas

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-78.4

Corneille was born in Belgium, moved to Amsterdam in 1940, and relocated to Paris with Karel Appel after the end of the war in 1947. His travels took him to Hungary, Tunisia, the Sahara, Central America and the Caribbean. Inspired by the folk and African art he collected as well as the vivid scenery he encountered in the tropics, his compositions evoke both aerial views of the earth and human-animal encounters.

Corneille

(Guillaume Cornelis van Beverloo; Dutch, 1922–2010)

Beauty and the Beast
(La belle et la bête), 1974

Color lithograph

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-133

Corneille

(Guillaume Cornelis van Beverloo; Dutch, 1922–2010)
(Dutch, 1922–2010)

Pensive Head
(Tête pensive), 1980

Color lithograph

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-659

Corneille

(Guillaume Cornelis van Beverloo; Dutch, 1922–2010)

The Butterfly Bird
(L'Oiseau papillon), 1978

Color lithograph

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-117

Corneille

(Guillaume Cornelis van Beverloo; Dutch, 1922–2010)

Untitled from the series Grass (Herbes), 1973

Gouache and watercolor on lithograph
NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-693.f

The prints in Corneille's *Grass (Herbes)* series speak directly to human interaction with the natural world, here seen through the form of eroticized women and colorful birds and other animals. The bold palette and detailed patterns employed in this series speak to Corneille's time traveling in Mexico and the Caribbean. In the 1970s, nature and his imagination became the primary sources of his imagery. He developed a personal symbolic language where birds represented higher beings, women represented the earth, and cats represented the mysterious (as well as the predators of birds). These fabricated idyllic scenes, where humans and animals live peacefully, suggest a psychedelic escape from urban existence and the political realities of the Cold War.

Asger Jorn

(Danish, 1914–1973)

The Red Earth (Den Røde jord), 1954

Lithograph

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-148

Asger Jorn

(Danish, 1914–1973)

Jutlandish Lines (Jyske Linier), 1953

Lithograph

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-10

Asger Jorn

(Danish, 1914–1973)

Poor Poet (Pauvre poète), 1962

Oil on canvas

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-81.52

Jorn may be referencing an old stereotype of the wretched or outcast poet here, as well as the particular situation of the German artist Uwe Lausen, a member of the Gruppe SPUR and the Situationist International. Bavarian authorities jailed Lausen for three months for pornography and blasphemy for a provocative text he published in the SPUR journal. Lausen's cause was adamantly defended in the second issue of de Jong's *Situationist Times*. Jorn's painting presents animated paint textures and vibrant colors in a hybrid figure, seemingly caught in a process of becoming out of the sheer energy of paint.

Asger Jorn

(Danish, 1914–1973)

***Unforeseen Maternity* (*Maternità imprevista*), 1972**

Bronze

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-78.10

In the last year of his life, before he succumbed to lung cancer in Denmark, Jorn began yet another new exploration. He studied traditional methods of bronze and marble sculpting with the help of master sculptors in Italy, where he owned a house in Albisola, on the Ligurian coast. Yet what he made of these materials was typically unconventional, playful, and even grotesque. The titles of these works were often plays on words, in this case referencing both the high and the low: traditional Italian Madonnas meet banal human drama. In its unpredictable form and reference to new life, *Unforeseen Maternity* celebrates the spontaneity and vitality of artistic creation.

Asger Jorn

(Danish, 1914–1973)

***Untitled*, 1953**

Ceramic

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-224

Asger Jorn

(Danish, 1914–1973)

***Untitled*, 1953**

Ceramic

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-26

Asger Jorn began experimenting with ceramics while recovering from tuberculosis in his hometown of Silkeborg, Denmark, a region known for its ancient ceramic tradition. Jorn wrote at the time of his interest in reviving the foundering tourist economy in the lake region of Jutland by revitalizing the local ceramics industry in the town of Sorring. Equally inspired by Danish modern ceramics and modernist experiments by Pablo Picasso as well as Joan Miró and Josep Llorens Artigas, Jorn painted spontaneous abstract imagery on the sides of pots thrown by ceramist Knud Jensen in Sorring, mixing colors and designs typical of the region with abstract elements.

Lucebert

(Lubertus Jacobus
Swaanswijk;
Dutch, 1924–1994)

Man with a Parrot, 1970

Oil on canvas

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-79.26

Lucebert, not only a painter but an essential Dutch poet of the Viftigers (Fiftiers) movement, rejected academic theories in favor of spontaneous responses to traditional or popular imagery. His own words, from the catalog of his exhibition at the Van Abbe Museum in the Netherlands in 1961, might best describe his art: “I paint anything that occurs to me, I paint and draw everything on everything, all conceptions I appreciate equally, I do not select motifs, and I do not aim at syntheses, with me contrasts remain undisturbed in office, and while they struggle with each other, I do not oppose them, I do not meddle with them, and experience the liberty granted me only by my pictures, my poems, those beatifying playgrounds, where the seesaws do not oust the swings, where sandboxes, Saharas and large oceans merge. I do not swear by the lean pictures, nor by the fat ones, I do not favor any particular palette, today I may take refuge in tree-brown, but tomorrow I may drown laughingly in dew-blue. Concretion, abstraction, it is all the same to me, I hardly know the difference; I only know that they are conceptions originated in a conceptual world, in which I am and want to remain a xenophobic stranger.”

Reinhoud

(Reinoud d’ Haese;
Belgian, 1928–2007)

Au coin du feu (By the Fire), n.d.

Copper

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-78.17

Reinhoud

(Reinoud d’ Haese;
Belgian, 1928–2007)

Don’t Be So Shy, 1980

Copper

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-80.46

Pierre Baudson

(Belgian)

“Une rétrospective Reinoud,” Clés pour les Arts no. 30 (Feb. 1973)

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection

Belgian Cobra poet Luc de Heusch once compared the Flemish artist Reinoud’s playful sculptures to the fantastic creatures invented by Hieronymus Bosch and James Ensor. American critic Carter Ratcliff wrote of their connection to the pagan and Christian demonology of the late Middle Ages. Drawing on ancient stories as well as everyday situations, these hybrid human-animal figures bring the materials of sculpture, hammered and welded by the artist, whimsically to life.

Serge Vandercam

(Belgian, 1924–2005)

The Time of Looking (Le temps des regards), 1970

Oil on canvas

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; FIC2013.314

Born to a Belgian father and an Italian mother, Vandercam would spend 18 months of the war in a camp in Poland. In the Cobra period, he produced evocative photographs of abandoned bunkers on the Belgian beaches. In the 1950s, he became a filmmaker and a painter, producing “word-paintings” and ceramics with Christian Dotremont and Dutch poet Hugo Claus. His haunting later paintings suggest encounters with strange creatures, some of them inspired by his observations of Islamic culture and Sufism encountered on a 1957 visit to Turkey.

Pierre Alechinsky

(Belgian, b. 1927)

L’Imagination prend le pouvoir (Imagination Takes Power), 1968

Poster (lithograph printed in black, red,
green and purple ink)

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-553

This poster, made during the national uprisings of May, 1968 in France, includes “phrases taken from the walls of the Sorbonne and the Odeon, Paris, May 25, 1968, solitary remarks drawn by Alechinsky, for the benefit of the students.” Alechinsky, who would later teach at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris in the 1980s, produced it for the National Union of French Students.

Pierre Alechinsky

(Belgian, b. 1927)

and

Christian Dotremont

(Belgian, 1922–1979)

Seismographic Armful (Brassée Seismographique), 1972

Logogram by Dotremont,
marginal remarks by Alechinsky

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-72

In the 1960s, Dotremont and Alechinsky collaborated with each other as well as many other ex-Cobra artists, on what Alechinsky called “la peinture à quatre mains” (four-handed paintings). Dotremont began his own series of “Logograms” in 1961, writing out spontaneous poetry in calligraphic brushwork inspired by Asian calligraphy. These works, which appear in the center of *Seismographic Armful*, operate between writing and painting, just as Alechinsky’s colorful frame seems to animate little painterly figures into a unique visual language inspired by comic strips.

Transcription of Dotremont’s Logogram

brassée sismographique de gouffre
au fur et à démesure de nuit
à caresses de colère d'encre
à va-et-vient de caprices de montée
striante de roche
de stratigraphie de souffles
vers le haut d'astres
de matin brusquement créé réel
mais de toutes progressions de toutes
couleurs
survenantes de toutes formes soulevées
de source encore se démultipliant de surgir
abruptement mais déjà vers le jour se
multipliant de vivre
de visage en vision
de soleil en perle de serpentement en fête
de nature d'herbe en gerbe de volcan
en roseaux jusqu'à l'océan si pimpant
d'un ciel
en élancement de terre jusqu'au cri si vivace
d'un arbre
et déjà pourtant menacé d'une forme de mort
que la vie même refuse
par une nuit nouvelle
vers le haut du même gouffre
non moins peuplé de fables
vivaces à même tout désespoir de source
de condition de vivre et quotidiennement
revivre
vers le matin revenant réel créé
vers le premier cri à resurgir
à même toutes formes et toutes couleurs
si ardentes toujours
qu'elles nous jettent à devenir

Translation

seismographic armful of emptiness nightwise
nightcrazy as and when
with caresses of ink and anger
come and go go as you flow upward streaking
rockpath
of breath stratigraphy
upward and starward
into morning created suddenly there but from
all progressions all colors
arising from all forms arisen
from origin still gearing down from surging
abruptly but already toward the day gearing
up from living
from face to vision
from sun to pearl snakeloops to celebration
grass nature to volcanic sheaf
in reeds all the way to the ocean so spick and
span from a sky
soaring up from earth all the way to a tree's
cry
perennial and yet already threatened by a
form of death
that life itself rejects
by a new night
to the highest reach of the same emptiness
no less peopled with fables
hardy in the midst of despair of origin of
condition
of living daily reliving
toward the morning created returning real
toward the first cry to arise
in the midst of all forms all colors
so ardent still
they launch us into becoming

— Translated by Michael Fineberg in *Pierre
Alechinsky: Margin and Center* (New York:
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1987),
p. 133.

Asger Jorn

(Danish, 1914–1973)

Desert Hat, 1969

Décollage made from found posters
NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-28

Asger Jorn

(Danish, 1914–1973)

The Golden Horns and the Wheel of Fortune (Guldhorn og lykkehjul), 1953

Artist's book, offset lithography
NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
Museum Library Fund 83.12

Jacqueline de Jong

(Dutch, b. 1939),
editor, 1961–1967

The Situationist Times, no. 4, 1963

Softcover periodical, 171 pages,
text and images

Collection Hillyer Library, Smith College,
Northampton, Massachusetts

While Jacqueline de Jong had the idea for *The Situationist Times* as an English-language journal of the Situationist International in 1960, she actually began the project in protest against the exclusion of artists by the orthodox Situationists, led by Guy Debord, the following year. The Situationist International refused to defend the excluded German artists of Gruppe SPUR who were on trial for blasphemy in Munich at the time. The journal soon evolved into an interdisciplinary, multilingual, and visually experimental presentation of art, design, science, mathematics, poetry, psychology, and literature, culminating in the special issues 3, 4, and 5 devoted respectively to topology, the labyrinth, and rings and chains. The vast range of visual material collected in these issues recalls the earlier project developed by Asger Jorn in the Cobra period but printed in 1957, *The Golden Horns and the Wheel of Fortune*. This artist's book grouped mythic, folk and heraldic symbols from all over the world according to their content. In it, Jorn argued that these images all reflected a continual creative evolution linked to the day-to-day existence of the community in relation to the cycle of the seasons. These projects, which are art works in their own right, demonstrate the artists' extensive interest in and knowledge of history, philosophy, literature, archaeology, and other topics, all of which informed their creative practice.

Asger Jorn

(Danish, 1914–1973)

Untitled, 1968

Set of four lithographs

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-274

Asger Jorn created this suite of lithographs in support of the May 1968 protests in France, during which university students together with Situationists Guy Debord and Michèle Bernstein occupied the Sorbonne and workers occupied factories around the country, calling for a political and cultural revolution. The scrawled text on these posters mimic Left Bank graffiti, recalling the group's experiments with creating artistic actions in urban spaces and their collective poetic responses to the rapidly transforming social situation of the 1960s. The bold visual impact of these posters fuses personal expression with public slogans from the margins of society, messages that push traditional politics in a more creative direction.

Constant

(Constant Nieuwenhuys;
Dutch; 1920–2005)

Untitled, 1974

Lithograph

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-288

from left to right:

Constant

(Constant Nieuwenhuys;
Dutch; 1920–2005)

Untitled, n.d.

Lithograph

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-620

New Babylon, 1960

Lithograph

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection; M-530

Constant developed his first models for the global city that would become “New Babylon” in Alba, Italy, where he and fellow Situationist Giuseppe “Pinot” Gallizio (1902–1964) were sympathetic to the plight of Roma people living in camps on the city square. While Gallizio intervened politically to defend their rights, Constant began making visionary designs for a new nomadic existence on a global scale. He would turn to his old friend, architect Aldo Van Eyck, for help in his early designs. The megastructures of New Babylon, which only ever existed as plans or models, colonized existing urban spaces in order to liberate human desires and make play a permanent part of adult experience.

Reinhoud

(Reinhoud d’ Haese;
Belgian; 1928–2007)

illustrations for Alfred Jarry
(French; 1873–1907)

The Five Senses (Les cinq sens), 1984

top row, from left to right

Cover

Touch

Smell

bottom row, from left to right

Hearing

Sight

Taste

On arches paper, ed. 37/40

Published by Fata Morgana

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra
Collection

Reinhoud encountered the Cobra artists in 1949 when he met Pierre and Micky Alechinsky and moved into the Ateliers du Marais. There, he took over the courtyard for his sculpture studio and kept everyone awake with the sound of hammering, as he created the sprightly metal figures for which he is known. In 1959, he moved to the Oise region north of Paris, where he would collaborate frequently with Alechinsky. Both artists produced many illustrations for avant-garde writers old and new.

Guy Debord

(French, 1931–1994)

and

Asger Jorn

(Danish, 1914–1973)

***Memoirs (Mémoires)*, 1958**

Artist's book, offset lithography, printed by Permild og Rosengreen, Copenhagen

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale,
Museum Library Fund; 83.6

Mémoires is an artist's book made by Asger Jorn and filmmaker and theorist Guy Debord in 1958, in the context of the Situationist International movement. It draws on the experiments pioneered in their 1957 artist's book *Fin de Copenhague*. These "memoirs" were the opposite of personal memories: instead, the texts are entirely appropriated by Debord from popular journals, advertisements, Neo-Marxist and Situationist writings. The book sets painterly marks dripped and scratched with a matchstick by Jorn in dialogue with architectural plans, appropriated texts, reproductions of history paintings, comics, ad slogans, and photographs of the Situationists and their friends who were involved in the pre-Situationist Lettrist International in the early 1950s. Danish printers Otto Permild and Bjørn Rosengreen printed *Mémoires* in their Copenhagen studio using offset lithography. The entire book is encased in a sandpaper cover, in order to damage all adjacent books on the shelf.

Nicole Eisenman

(American, b. 1965)

***Untitled (Balloon Heads)*, 1998**

Acrylic and ink on paper

Collection of Richard Gerrig and
Timothy Peterson, Stony Brook,
New York

Nicole Eisenman

(American, b. 1965)

***Swamp Games*, 1999**

Ink and gouache on paper

Collection of Richard Gerrig and
Timothy Peterson, Stony Brook,
New York

Nicole Eisenman

(American, b. 1965)

***"Untitled" ("Angry Godhead")*, 2007**

Monotype

Collection of Richard Gerrig and
Timothy Peterson, Stony Brook,
New York

Nicole Eisenman

(American, b. 1965)

Twelve Heads, 2012

Etching and aquatint; edition 19/20

Collection of Richard Gerrig and
Timothy Peterson, Stony Brook,
New York

Nicole Eisenman

(American, b. 1965)

Untitled, 2012

Woodcut; edition 7/10

Collection of Richard Gerrig and
Timothy Peterson, Stony Brook,
New York

Herbert Gentry

(American, 1919–2003)

Man's and Animals' Earth, 1963

Oil on canvas

Courtesy of the Estate of Herbert Gentry

Herbert Gentry

(American, 1919–2003)

Arrival, 1999

Acrylic on canvas

Courtesy of the Estate of Herbert Gentry

Herbert Gentry

(American, 1919–2003)

Our Desires, 2000

Acrylic on canvas

Courtesy of the Estate of Herbert Gentry

Jacqueline de Jong

(Dutch, b. 1939)

Bastard and Scumbags (Le Salau et les Salopards), 1966

Acrylic on canvas, three panels;
plastic mirror with wood frame

Courtesy of the artist
and Blum & Poe Gallery, Los Angeles

Jacqueline De Jong

(Dutch, b. 1939)

“Pommes de Jong,”

2007–2012

Gold plated potatoes

Courtesy of the artist
and Chateau Shatto, Los Angeles

The potato has long been a symbol of earthiness and a humble food, one particularly valued during the deprivations of the Second World War. In 1949, the Séminaire des Arts in Brussels included germinating potatoes in the Cobra exhibition “L’Objet à travers les âges (The Object Through the Ages),” alongside other found objects that challenged the norms of exhibitionary practices, such as a basket of dirty laundry. Christian Dotremont called them “reserves of sensibility.” In 2003 Jacqueline de Jong began making art from the potatoes grown in her vegetable garden in the Bourbonnais region of France. Dried slowly over a period of two years and submerged in a bath of platinum or gold, these *pommes de terre* and their shoots transmogrify into jewelry, as Pommes de Jong.

Jacqueline De Jong

(Dutch, b. 1939)

Untitled,
from the “War” Series,
2013

Pastel and charcoal on paper

Courtesy of the artist
and the Weyland de Jong Foundation

Jacqueline de Jong proves a key link between Cobra, the Situationist International and contemporary art. She was one of the only active woman participants in the Situationist International following the Second World War, and was founding editor of *The Situationist Times* (1961–1967), a radical journal exploring topology. De Jong further explores the relationship between the personal and the political in her recent “War” series. Based on World War I and on the current war in Syria, this series explores the violence and irrational human behavior that continue to drive the world to war today. Recalling Asger Jorn’s concept of the “human animal,” this work features a human skull with a distressed creature, seemingly enveloped together in, or erupting from, the battleground.

Jacqueline De Jong

(Dutch, b. 1939)

Untitled, from the “War” Series, 2013

Pastel and charcoal on paper

Courtesy of the artist
and the Weyland de Jong Foundation

Jacqueline De Jong

(Dutch, b. 1939)

Horsemen 1918, from the “War” series, 2013

Oil on canvas

Courtesy of the artist and the
Weyland de Jong Foundation

Jacqueline De Jong

(Dutch, b. 1939)

The Last Kiss, 2002–2012

Oil on canvas

Courtesy of the artist
and the Weyland de Jong Foundation

The Ultimate Kiss suggests a complex relationship between humans, non-human animals, and the living world. Sheep grazing on the hillside, recalling a house in France, are supported by the green suggestion of a figure who seems to organize the entire scene and support the two main figures in a larger embrace.

Albert Oehlen

(German, b. 1954)

Test Animal (Ein Versuchstier), 1998

Oil on canvas

Private Collection, © Albert Oehlen;
Courtesy of the artist and Luhring
Augustine Gallery

Tal R

(Danish, b. 1967 in Tel Aviv)

The Slime, 2012

Rabbit glue, pigment, and wax crayon
on canvas

Courtesy of the artist
and Cheim & Reid, New York

Tal R

(Danish, b. 1967 in Tel Aviv)

Scholars, 2012

Raku fired ceramic

Courtesy of the artist
and Cheim & Reid, New York

Tal R

(Danish, b. 1967 in Tel Aviv)

Scholars, 2012

Raku fired ceramic

Courtesy of the artist
and Cheim & Reid, New York

Tal R

(Danish, b. 1967 in Tel Aviv)

Scholars, 2012

Raku fired ceramic

Courtesy of the artist
and Cheim & Reid, New York

Axel Heil

(German, b. 1965)

Red Animal, 2014

Bronze cast from found object

Courtesy the artist
and Van de Loo Projekte, Munich

Axel Heil

(German, b. 1965)

Dr. Rat, 1991

Mixed media on canvas

Courtesy the artist, Van de Loo Projekte,
Munich, and Petezel Gallery New York

Dr. Rat refers to William Kotzwinkle's dystopian novel *Doctor Rat* from 1970. The story is told from the point of view of a rat in an experimental laboratory, described in terms reminiscent of a concentration camp. Kotzwinkle's narrative was an exposé of animal cruelty, an investigation of animal consciousness, and an allegory for inhumane practices that are commonplace in contemporary society.

Jacqueline de Jong

(Dutch, b. 1939), editor

The Situationist Times, no. 5, 1964

Special issue on "Rings and Chains"

Museum of Modern Art Library,
New York

Video by Karen Kurczynski

Axel Heil

(German, b. 1965)

Cultural Congress of Havana: Reunion of Intellectuals from Around the World on Problems of Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Congreso Cultural de La Habana: Reunión de intelectuales de todo el mundo sobre problemas de Asia, Africa y América Latina), 2007–2010

Bronze cast from found objects, body board, and live cactus

Courtesy the artist, Van de Loo Projekte, Munich, and Petzel Gallery New York

Cultural Congress of Havana... refers to the international congress of the same name that Asger Jorn attended in Cuba in 1968, along with artists from all over the world, intended to promote the political relevance of culture in solving world problems. The Michelin tire company's famous Bibendum, a European trademark introduced in the late 19th century, sits on two pigs, cast from found objects made in Asia, one of which wears a mask on its face based on traditional African art. On the Michelin Man's head is a cactus, a symbol of Latin America, arranged like a parody of the feathers used in outmoded engravings to signify native Americans. In this way, the three continents of the congress are playfully called to mind. Heil has replaced the original "MICHELIN" text on the belly of the Bibendum to "CHE!" in tribute to Che Guevara's famous paraphrase of a line by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin — which the Cobra artists posted in French on the Poet's Cage in 1949 — "Let's be realistic and attempt the impossible (*Seamos realistas y hagamos lo imposible*)."

"The Turtle"

There once lived a turtle. He never wanted to look out of his shell. He was completely isolated and lived happily with his own feelings. Still, his life was great and rich. Then one day the sun shined so strongly on the shell, that he wanted to look out. He opened himself up a little, and he thought that no one noticed him. He looked up, but saw two large eyes observing him. He was ashamed. He quickly closed himself up. But the man thought he was beautiful, and asked him to open himself again. He didn't want to. He was afraid. But the man begged him so, told him about the delightful life around it and it had such an effect on him, that the turtle opened himself up more and more.

– And as soon as he was fully open, the man laughed at him and went away. – He had never seen anything so terrible.

– The truth is not pretty for everyone.

– Translated by Karen Kurczynski