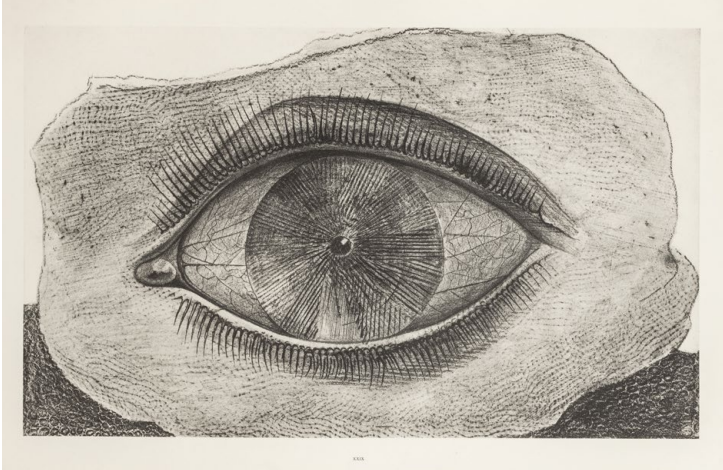


FROM SEPTEMBER 21, 2024 TO JANUARY 18, 2025

PARIS SURREALIST

MAX ERNST
Histoire Naturelle

To celebrate 100 years of Surrealism, the Professional Committee of Art Galleries partners with the Centre Pompidou and the Association Atelier André Breton around the «Surrealism» exhibition, presented at the Centre Pompidou from September 4, 2024 to January 13, 2025.



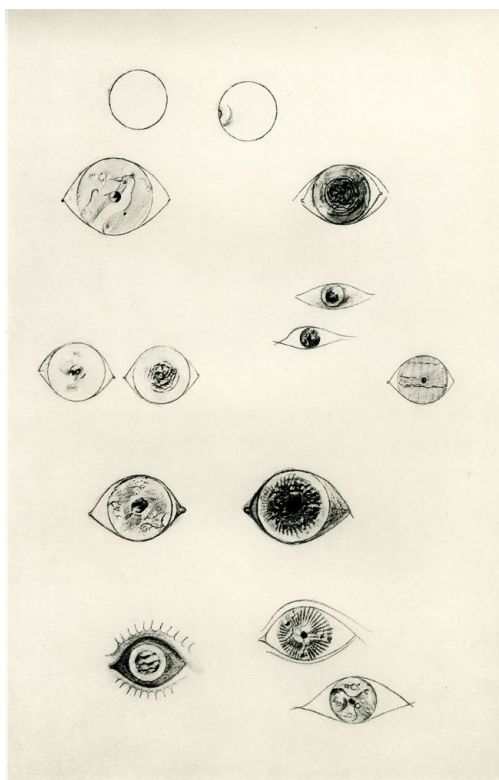
Max Ernst, *Histoire Naturelle - La roue de la lumière*, 1926, plate XXIX, frottage reproduced in collotype, 33 x 55 cm, edition 191/300, Jeanne Bucher Editions, photo: Jean-Louis Losi, Courtesy Jeanne Bucher Jaeger, Paris-Lisbon, © Adagp, Paris 2024

As part of the *Paris Surrealist* event, the gallery is exhibiting Max Ernst's *HISTOIRE NATURELLE* edition published in 1926 by Jeanne Bucher. It consists of 34 frottages and scratchings by Max Ernst, reproduced in phototypy, all signed by the artist except for 6 non-commercial copies, numbered a to f; the rest of the edition is divided into 20 copies on Imperial Japan paper numbered 1 to 20, 30 copies on Arches vellum numbered 21 to 50, and 250 copies on vellum numbered 51 to 300.

A graphic equivalent of automatic writing, frottage, created by applying a sheet of paper on different surfaces and then rubbing it with a pencil, is one of the artist's most original contributions to the history of surrealism. The phototypy (also called collotype) used for these prints is a greasy ink printing process using bichromated gelatin and exposed on a glass plate. This process, the primary mode of postcard printing until the 1930s, allows for continuous tone rendering without screening.

This is one of the first albums from Jeanne Bucher Editions, which later continued with many surrealist artists and poets such as Max Ernst, Tristan Tzara, Georges Hugnet, Man Ray, Paul Eluard, Hans Bellmer, and Yves Tanguy, Jean Hugo and his *Miroir Magique*, published by Jeanne Bucher in 1927 and currently celebrated in the exhibition at the Musée Fabre in Montpellier. Max Ernst's *Histoire Naturelle* was specifically presented at the Pierre Chareau shop between April 24 and May 15, 1926.

As Max Ernst writes about the genesis of the work: «Starting from a childhood memory during which a fake mahogany panel opposite my bed played the role of an optical provocateur of a semi-sleep vision, and finding myself, on a rainy day, in an inn by the sea, I was struck by the obsession exerted on my irritated gaze by the floor whose thousand washes had accentuated the grooves. I then decided to explore the symbolism of this observation, and... I produced a series of drawings from the boards, randomly placing sheets of paper on them which I then rubbed with a pencil... My curiosity aroused and amazed, I began to explore all sorts of materials that might be in my visual field in the same way: leaves and their veins, the frayed edges of a sackcloth...»



Max Ernst, *Histoire Naturelle - Système de monnaie solaire*, 1925, plate XXXI, frottage reproduced in collotype, 50 x 33 cm, edition 191/300, Jeanne Bucher Editions, photo: Reserved Rights, Courtesy Jeanne Bucher Jaeger, Paris-Lisbon, © Adagp, Paris 2024

In his text for *Cahiers d'Art* No. 4 of May 1926, p. 80, Tériade writes:

«... *This painting of geological states enchants us with its newness, its surprise, and its scientific romanticism, so honored today. A plastic suggestion of emptiness, sounds amplifying in calligraphed waves, very subtle and very skillful drawings, in short, beautiful illustrations of a book... These are the drawings that Max Ernst composed for his Histoire Naturelle. His astonishing variety of grays with which he achieves the most sensitive colorations, a material worked to perfect suppleness, sometimes fluid and transparent, and sometimes dense and loaded, give him solid qualities. They allow all literary escapades, all intellectual wanderings, all imaginative adventures. In the realm of illustration where we find ourselves and where Max Ernst must have a prominent place, every drawing must contain its literature. The whole thing is not to be content with it.*»

René Crevel's column in *N.R.F.* No. 169, October 1, 1927, p. 554-555:

«... *But that Mont-Blanc, thanks to the prestige of its 4810 meters, continues to dominate Europe, does not prevent the curtain of sleep fallen on the boredom of the old world, suddenly raised for surprises of stars and plants, and the walls between which one had wanted to chain the winds of the spirit collapse. The spiders tired of eating flies have devoured our usual mountains, and we know the reign of disproportionate things. Justice is finally done to insects. What we*

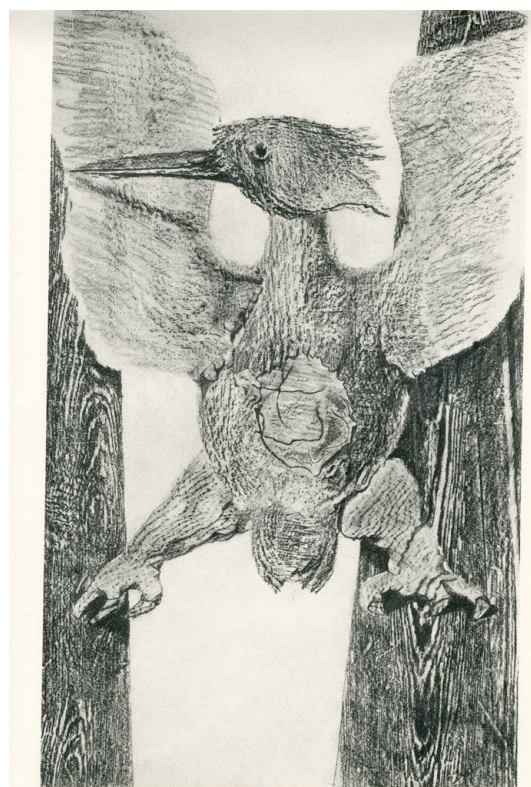
proudly called 'our education' is to be completely redone and Max Ernst is right, who, under the simple title Histoire Naturelle, presents us with thirty-four plates of the terrible wonders of a universe whose small secrets, now greater than us, our sole will no longer try to crush...»

Christian Zervos wrote later, in 1960: «*It was Jeanne Bucher who offered Max Ernst the opportunity to present us with images seen through the whims of his imagination, translated with the precision of his drawing and his talent for craftsmanship. Is there another book by this artist that recalls and represents him more happily than the frottages of his Histoires Naturelles.*»

Several copies of this exceptional edition are found in major museums such as MoMA and this work has featured in major international exhibitions dedicated to Surrealism (LACMA, Musée d'Orsay, Musée des Beaux-arts de Nancy...).

Founded in 1925, the Jeanne Bucher Jaeger gallery is one of the few international galleries to have nearly 100 years of existence with a list of artists and a collection of works spanning the field of 20th-century art and extending into the 21st century.

In dialogue with this presentation of *Histoire Naturelle* by Max Ernst, the gallery is holding a new exhibition by Evi Keller, *ORIGINES*, from September 21, 2024 to January 18, 2025.



Max Ernst, *Histoire Naturelle - L'Origine de la pendule*, 1925, plate XXVI, frottage reproduced in collotype, 50 x 33 cm, edition 191/300, Jeanne Bucher Editions, photo: Reserved Rights, Courtesy Jeanne Bucher Jaeger, Paris-Lisbon, © Adagp, Paris 2024