

# ARSENAL

## SURREALIST SUBVERSION

30th August 1976

Dear Edouard Jaguer,

This is not yet, alas! the "long letter" promised long ago, but only a brief and hurried communication to re-establish contact with you, to let you know that everything is flourishing here (although in unceasingly "hectic" circumstances), and to acknowledge your kind and comradely letters which all of us deeply appreciate.

The World Surrealist Exhibition has been, of course, a very great success --- far exceeding our wildest hopes in many regards. I shall write to you about various aspects of this venture in another letter; meanwhile I am enclosing some clippings of newspaper reviews, and a few photographs, which I hope you will find of some interest....

We are sending you twenty extra copies of the catalog, and twenty extra copies of ARSENAL #3, for circulation among the friends of PHASES.

The reason I am unable to write at greater length at this moment is that I am completing a multitude of revisions, additions, etc. to the long introduction and notes and appendices to a volume of "selected writings" of André Breton, which I have edited, and which is now to be published (in New York and London) next spring. The publishers have implored me to have all of this material to them by the middle of September which, with all the additional work that is necessary to do "from day to day," is a difficult task requiring all of my attention. I assure you, however, that with the completion of this major task I shall write to you in detail and at length, and shall henceforth look forward to remaining in close & fruitful communication with you and all the PHASES comrades.

Susana Wald's daughter, visiting in Chicago for a few days, arrived one morning at our door and left for Toronto with the great bulk of PHASES materials exhibited in our exhibition. We retained a few items, in the hope that we might be able to exchange some works by the artists in our group here for some of the PHASES works. Penelope and I, for example, would like very much to exchange some examples of our works for the magnificent pieces by Anne Ethuin. We also have a few items from PHASES friends who sent works directly, with whom we also hope to trade.... In the event that anyone is unwilling to exchange, we shall naturally send their works to Susana Wald.... I shall discuss the details of all this in my next letter. Meanwhile, I shall note that we are planning a traveling exhibition of SURREALIST DRAWINGS, which will open here at the Gallery 2269 (where we organized an important exhibition of old & new works by Gerome Kamrowski concurrent with our exhibition) and then journey to Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio, California and elsewhere (we are just beginning to plan the itinerary). This will be a comparatively modest show, with perhaps 100 items, but will be important as an "initiation" into surrealism for a great many people throughout this country who know nothing of this movement. We shall be in touch with you about this project soon.

Another project "in the works" is a compilation, or perhaps an irregular periodical, on the subject of "SURREALISM & DANCE." This project derives directly from the deeply moving, exceptionally powerful & inspiring series of performances by Alice



Farley at our exhibition (I sent you a copy of the program of this "Surrealist Dance," and shall soon send you some additional photographs). We are curious to know if you or any other friends in PHASES might have something to contribute theoretically or poetically regarding this realm of expression, or if you might have some knowledge of "historical" premonitions of this development. Do you know anything about the dance performance at the International Exhibition in Paris in 1938, by Hélène Vanel? Aside from three pages by Georges Hugnet and a single photograph, we know nothing at all about this. Might it be possible to locate Helene Vanel? Recently, visiting New York, Alice Farley discovered a film of a dance in which the settings and costumes were designed by Kurt Seligmann, who also directed the film.

There are a great many other projects, some very tentative and others more definite, that I am looking forward to discussing with you. We wonder, for example, if it might be possible for you to ~~help~~ help us organize an exhibition of works by surrealists in the U.S., that might begin in Paris and travel to two or three other countries. There is the possibility, too, that we could reciprocally arrange some PHASES shows here, at the Gallery 2269 and perhaps elsewhere....

I am sure, in any case, that great things can and will come of our close collaboration. All of us are very favorably impressed not only by the quality and diversity of the contributions to our exhibition by the PHASES comrades, but also by your very evident enthusiasm and fraternal attitude which, in the midst of so many and varied "technical" difficulties, meant a lot to us.

Thus far we have received 5 copies of the new PHASES. Several of our friends whose works are reproduced therein still do not have copies, and I hope additional copies will arrive soon. It is regrettable that we did not have copies on hand at the exhibition, because we sold a great amount of literature. However, there are a couple of bookstores here that will certainly carry PHASES, so it would still be advisable to send us a dozen additional copies....

We are eager to learn of the various "repercussions" of the World Surrealist Exhibition. In addition to the enclosed clippings, I know that there is a very long text in a Danish newspaper, that we have not yet received. There are also supposedly a series of texts in Portuguese papers; we have not yet received them, but expect them soon --- though I assume you will receive them directly from Mario Cesariny. I am sure that, in addition to the "printed" word, there are also a good number of "spoken" repercussions that would be of interest. If you hear of anything substantially of interest, particularly on the effect of this project on the milieux that call themselves surrealist, we would be grateful for any information.

Hoping all is going well with you, & looking forward to hearing from you again soon,

surrealist greetings,

*Franklin Rosemont*

P.S. --- A historical query: Do you know who wrote the text, "A propos de Jacques Vaché" published in LA MAIN A PLUME? One of the projects I am dreaming of is an English publication of Vaché's letters, Breton's prefaces, and a "dossier" ~~of~~ of related texts, such as the article by Paul Nougé, etc.

Do you still hear from Claude Tarnaud???

Is it possible to obtain the monograph on Moesman from you? It has proved impossible to procure a copy from the "Dutch Bureau."