FASHIONING THE NEW WOMAN: ELSA SCHIAPARELLI AND THE ILLUSION AND AGENCY OF FEMININE PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

Elsa Schiaparelli was an Italian fashion designer based in Paris during the interwar period of the early twentieth century. This thesis will examine her career from a feminist perspective and contextualize her unusual womenswear designs within the Surrealist movement and 1930s Paris, when "New Women" experienced increased freedom and agency, but also, as a consequence, backlash from society. As an active and independent business owner experiencing international success for her unique and "shocking" pieces, Schiaparelli herself was an exemplary New Woman. However, her triumphs did not come without a number of difficulties, and these obstacles and Schiaparelli's complicated self-image inspired her to explore identity, vulnerability, and objectification in her work.

I argue that Schiaparelli reveled in the artifice of feminine performance, using it to fashion a new, empowered image for the wearer of her designs by employing Surrealist strategies that include mirroring/doubling, shocking juxtapositions, and uncanny illusions. Her use of a layered Surrealist visual language in fashion allowed her to test the boundaries of this movement by deflecting the over-sexualization of the female body in the context of commercial fashion. In her countering of Surrealist misogyny, she

contributed not only to the avant-garde group but to the zeitgeist of Parisian society in the 1930s. Though Schiaparelli's work has often been dismissed by critics as less radical and impactful than Surrealism in the fine arts, it is my argument she introduced an entirely new and innovative expansion of the movement by extending onto the physical body in a manner that questioned and critiqued the performed identity.

Introduction

In the first line of her 1954 autobiography, famed Italian fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli states, "I merely know Schiap by hearsay. I have only seen her in a mirror. She is, for me, some kind of fifth dimension."[1] Referring to herself as "Schiap," she describes herself as if she were an elusive stranger whom she has only seen and heard of through indirect means. In writing from a detached first-person perspective while referring to Schiap, she severs herself in two just as she fragments her own surname. She continues to describe Schiap's behavioral quirks and the inconsistencies of her personality:

> She is unpredictable but, in reality, disarmingly simple […]. Her laughter and tears collide, […] soaring from despair to heavenly delight […]. Intensely human, she both despises and loves human beings: those whom she dislikes find themselves looked right through as if they were transparent […]. Her life has been a means to something else—an everlasting question mark […]. If she is charming she can also be the most hateful person in the world. She is aware of this but cannot help it […]. I have seen her in the mirror.[2]

The reader is presented with an extremely complex, multifaced view of Schiap, which acknowledges and celebrates the multiplicity of Schiaparelli.

It is this multi-layered conception of the self and of identity that provides a basis for much of Schiaparelli's oeuvre throughout the 1930s, which is the period on which I will be focusing in this thesis. She was constantly viewing herself and her experiences through a metaphorical mirror, rearranging and shifting her own image and thus manipulating how others observed her. She translated this perspective into her work as

[1] Elsa Schiaparelli, *Shocking Life* (London: JM Dent & Sons Ltd., 1954), i.
[2] Ibid.

well, allowing her wearer to subtly guide the ways in which she would be perceived by her spectators. The wearer could challenge traditional notions of feminine presentation through "shocking" dress exhibiting themes of masquerade, vulnerability, and the fetish. In doing this, she opened up a space for the wearer to evade and subvert issues like objectification and even gendered violence by communicating this reconceived image of modern womanhood. She played with notions of illusion, artifice, and façade throughout her fashion career, pulling back the proverbial curtain and exposing the inner workings of feminine performance through her surreal designs. Her work exposes fashion's ability to both alter and reproduce conceptions of the feminine, acknowledging the frivolity that is embedded in the act of self-decoration while simultaneously empowering women and armoring them against these aforementioned "attacks" from men.[3]

Schiaparelli has long been associated with the Surrealist movement in the 1930s, and her collaborations with a handful of the group's most illustrious figures in Paris led to some of her most well-known garments. However, she has frequently been accused of appropriating the movement to boost her own fashion career and source unique ideas for her designs. Because of this, many critics view her work as derivative, as merely transposing the ideas of "real" Surrealists with whom she collaborated into clothing, and thus as only skirting or even corrupting the surreal.[4] This reductive view of her work tends to exclude the multitude of surreal garments and accessories she designed on her own and the ways in which she describes herself in her memoir. It is my argument that Schiaparelli exhibited interests and creative pursuits that would make her a Surrealist in

[3] Caroline Evans and Minna Thornton, "Fashion, Representation, and Femininity," *Feminist Review*, Summer, 1991, No. 38 (Summer, 1991): 49-50.
[4] Dickran Tashjian, *A Boatload of Madmen: Surrealism and the American Avant-Garde 1920-1950* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995), 84.

her own right, always demonstrating a proclivity for the uncanny, dreamlike, and magical aspects of life. Her exploration of these surreal topics led to a contribution to the movement unlike that of her male counterparts—a contribution that spoke specifically to the feminine experience and identity.

Schiaparelli's more shocking designs illustrate a direct parallel to the Surrealists' challenges to conventional notions of beauty first introduced in André Breton's 1928 novel *Nadja*. He states that beauty should be convulsive, possessing the ability to shock in its dissonance and discordance.[5] In Surrealist art, the concept of a convulsive beauty has been illustrated via images of "unspeakable human expressions" of hysteria, pornography, and violence with the intent of inciting psychological disturbances among observers.[6] Schiaparelli translates Breton's convulsive beauty ideals into the context of consumable fashion by incorporating elements meant to surprise and shock her audience—her unusual womenswear designs, her perfume "Shocking," her trademark Shocking Pink hue, and the title of her autobiography, *Shocking Life*, all convey her association with this notion of a convulsive beauty. Her clothing designs extended these ideas onto the human body; her inventive garments transformed women into surreal apparitions, a physical embodiment of the key Bretonian principles of Surrealism.[7]

The concept of the "marvelous," an idea that is at the core of the Surrealist movement, is similarly found in her work. According to Breton, the marvelous is experienced via transcending limitations of conventional reality, consciousness, and

[5] Dilys Blum, *Shocking! The Art and Fashion of Elsa Schiaparelli* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2003): 152-3.
[6] Sharla Hutchinson, "Convulsive Beauty: Images of Hysteria and Transgressive Sexuality," *symplokē,* Vol. 11, No. ½, Theory Trouble (2003): 212.
[7] Blum, *Shocking! The Art and Fashion of Elsa Schiaparelli,* 121.

existence. The Surrealist aesthetic strives to actualize the marvelous.[8] Breton wrote in 1924, "The marvelous is always beautiful, anything marvelous is beautiful; indeed, nothing but the marvelous is beautiful." At the same time, Breton described the pursuit of the marvelous as a reflection of "incurable human anxiety" that is recognizable by "the special revelatory shudder it evokes in those who experience it."[9] Schiaparelli's use of visual symbols and motifs, such as mirrors and body parts, to disrupt the everyday and challenge conventional standards of female identity illustrates her intention to shock and incite the marvelous through the conversion of banality into strange, avant-garde glamour.

In this thesis, I will focus on Schiaparelli's fashion career in the mid to late 1930s, which marked both the height of her Surrealist pursuits as well as the peak of her fashion house's success. By that time, she had already established a prosperous business model designing and manufacturing sportswear since 1927 for her operation "Schiaparelli Pour Le Sport" at 4 rue de la Paix. Her boutique experienced an expansion in 1932 when she began producing garments from a total of eight ateliers while her number of employees reached four hundred. Since 1929, she was one of the few French couturiers whose designs were sold in American department stores and advertised in overseas publications like the *Ladies' Home Journal*.[10] Her rapid and widespread success can be attributed to the initial popularity of her sweaters and daywear collections suitable for the active New Woman, with designs ranging from culottes and pleated wool skirts to bathing suits and beach pajamas. This term "New Woman" is used to describe the new view of

[8] Willard Bohn, "From Surrealism to Surrealism: Apollinaire and Breton," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism,* Vol. 36, No. 2 (Winter, 1977): 206.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Blum, *Shocking! The Art and Fashion of Elsa Schiaparelli*, 34.

womanhood that had originally emerged at the turn of the century when young women began to rebel against the outmoded Victorian ideals of bourgeois culture.[11] This ideal continued to impact society into the 1920s and 1930s, especially in Paris where women explored social and professional spheres traditionally dominated by men and enjoyed greater sexual and financial independence.

These New Women for whom Schiaparelli designed (and embodied herself) frequently faced backlash from men who were threatened by their increased agency and pursuit of opportunities, sparking a "crisis" of male power due to these new, more fluid conventions of gender in both their activities and appearance.[12] Jennifer Sweeney-Risko argues that the contemporary notion of women as forces of power and agency clearly colored Schiaparelli's design processes.[13] Through fashion, and Schiaparelli's designs in particular, women could "challenge conventional sensibilities about the relationship between appearance and identity," therefore enabling them to "demonstrate the gap between dominant representations of the feminine and their own desires to occupy the public sphere."[10]

In the twenties, at the start of her fashion career, women's growing participation in athletics significantly impacted fashion design, and Schiaparelli's building of her business on sportswear appropriate for the active lifestyle of the New Woman in the late 1920s reflects this trend. Her designs placed a special emphasis on practicality and freedom of movement. Her creation of the split skirt sparked controversy among those

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[11] Mary Louise Roberts, *Disruptive Acts: The New Woman in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002): 21.
[12] Caroline Evans, "Masks, Mirrors and Mannequins: Elsa Schiaparelli and the Decentered Subject," *Fashion Theory* 3, no. 1 (1999): 20.
[13] Jennifer Sweeney-Risko, "Elsa Schiaparelli, The New Woman, and Surrealist Politics," *Interdisciplinary Literary Studies* 17, no. 3 (2015): 310.
[10] Ibid., 315.

who denounced women's trousers when tennis champion Lili de Alvarez wore a custom Schiaparelli divided skirt to a tournament in London. Similarly, Schiaparelli utilized new and innovative textiles like kasha, a figure-hugging woolen stretch fabric resistant to wear and tear, for the sake of practicality and comfort for women on-the-go.[11]

Later, after the expansion of her business, Schiaparelli's designs began to gear toward evening wear and suit sets appropriate for the busy, yet elegant New Woman. Her collections often featured reversible, multi-functional garments like skirts that could be made into capes and wrap-around dresses that could be put on and removed in one simple motion. These early installments of the *Maison de Schiaparelli* were marketed as ideal wear for the independent and self-sufficient woman.[12] In later years, after the opening of her legendary showroom at 21 Place Vendôme in 1935, WWII air-raids inspired multi-faceted jumpsuits with large pockets to hold the equivalent of a sizable handbag in the case of unexpected attacks. Her post-WWII *Transformable Dress* featured an overcoat that could be attached to the back of the gown as a train for more formal occasions.[13] She was also the first designer to incorporate the visible zipper into her designs for ease of removal.

Not only concerned with changeable garments, Schiaparelli likened herself to a sculptor who could shape and mold her clients' personas through dress, emerging from the shop more elegant and confident individuals. Jean Cocteau famously stated, "Her establishment in the Place Vendôme is a devil's laboratory. Women who go there fall into a trap, and come out masked."[14] In her memoir, she recounts that a young and

[11] Palmer White, *Elsa Schiaparelli: Empress of Paris Fashion* (New York: Rizzoli, 1986): 57.
[12] Ibid., 57.
[13] Ibid., 49.
[14] Sweeney-Risko, "Elsa Schiaparelli, The New Woman, and Surrealist Politics," 311.

relatively unknown Katharine Hepburn experienced a dramatic metamorphosis upon a visit to her showroom. The actress, who came in looking "ugly and dowdy," emerged "strikingly beautiful." Hepburn described how this experience influenced her ultimate stardom, stating that "this transformation […] had been the starting point of a wonderful job."[15]

This proclivity for sculpting the body with dress as a way of transforming her clients' appearances and, by extension, their perceived character, was not carried out by revealing more of the body with less clothing or creating constricting garments that could mold the body into smaller shapes. Instead, Schiaparelli often employed rather conservative silhouettes accompanied by extra draping and padding which extended the body outward while achieving a slim outline. Throughout the 1930s, she used shoulder pads to broaden shoulders and employed straight and narrow silhouettes that created the illusion of a longer, squared torso—a shape that would later be termed the "skyscraper silhouette."[16] In her memoir, she argues that "clothes had to be architectural: that the body must never be forgotten and it must be used as a frame is used in a building, […] the more the body is respected, the better the dress acquires vitality."[17] Tailored evening jackets and suits featuring exaggerated shoulders, "leg-of-mutton" sleeves, and heavy beading illustrate her intention to build upon the female body through accoutrements and severe silhouettes rather than baring it.

Schiaparelli's emphasis on the construction of an armature that would reinforce and extend the woman's silhouette participated in new ideas of feminine beauty that

[15] Schiaparelli, *Shocking Life*, 56.
[16] Marylaura Papalas, "Fashion in Interwar France: The Urban Vision of Elsa Schiaparelli." *French Cultural Studies* 28, no. 2 (2017): 166.
[17] Schiaparelli, *Shocking Life*, 49.

emerged out of the emphasis on the New Woman. In the realm of 1930s fashion, women previously perceived as unattractive were now considered *jolies-laides* (meaning "good-looking uglies"), and chicness began to prevail over prettiness—ugliness was transformed into a new version of charming beauty. This perfectly suited Schiaparelli's trademark "hard-chic" aesthetic for the bold woman. Bettina Bergery, Schiaparelli's longtime assistant, described her definition of "pretty" in a 1933 issue of the *Ladies' Home Journal*: "Features sometimes frankly irregular; a slim polished directness that seems to emphasize angles rather than curves; hair sculpted close to the head; a profile that is strong; carriage that is distinguished rather than graceful."[18] Uncoincidentally, these physical traits described Schiaparelli's appearance almost exactly. Having been deemed the "ugly duckling" of her family since childhood, Schiaparelli tended to avoid having her picture taken and chose to dress smartly to make up for her unconventional features. But this avoidance of her own image ended in the context of this newer, now fashionable, hard-chic femininity embodied so well in her designs, which made room for New Women like herself to "shock" rather than rely on more traditional forms of allure.[19]

A notion central to my argument is that Schiaparelli's status as an outsider—an Italian in France, a female business owner, a divorcée, and a single mother— would have certainly contributed towards her inclination to play with these new concepts of femininity through unconventional and witty imagery, masking, and illusion in her work.[20] Beginning in New York, when her husband had left her to engage in an illicit affair with Isadora Duncan, she was forced to transform her own persona and repress her

[18] Blum, *Shocking! The Art and Fashion of Elsa Schiaparelli*, 153.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Evans, "Masks, Mirrors and Mannequins: Elsa Schiaparelli and the Decentered Subject," 20.

natural shyness and sensitivity in order to find work to support herself and her child.[21] Later, when she relocated to Paris, she experienced first-hand the difficulties and dangers of being a single, financially-independent woman, stating, "If I ever wished to be a man it was then, […] the possibility of going out alone at anytime, anywhere […] are privileges that seem to be so unimportant, but in reality make the taste of living so much more pungent and complete."[22] As Caroline Evans asserts, Schiaparelli's status as an outsider heightened her consciousness of the culturally constructed character of identity, and thus of its openness to transformation.[23] She shifted and molded her own performance of identity in order to fashion her ideal self-image—one that was free to pursue creative passions and overcome the trials of her situation. Just as she separates her past self from her current self in her memoir, she had to grapple with her introversion and reinvent her identity to find success and personal fulfillment under arduous circumstances.

In the first chapter of this thesis, I discuss themes of identity, performance, and masquerade present in Schiaparelli's oeuvre. *Shocking Life* recounts her unusual relationship with her own identity and status as a New Woman, thus explaining her motivations for this exploration. I relate her work to theories explored by Judith Butler, Mary Anne Doane, and Joan Rivière to guide my observation of these concepts of a specialized gender performance consisting of donning a "mask" of femininity via clothing. Schiaparelli's repetitive use of mirror imagery and reflective surfaces communicate concepts of a multi-faceted character and changing viewer perceptions. Her designs also point to a concern with ideas of revealing and concealing through various

[21] White, *Elsa Schiaparelli: Empress of Paris Fashion,* 38.
[22] Schiaparelli, *Shocking Life, 44.*
[23] Evans, "Masks, Mirrors and Mannequins: Elsa Schiaparelli and the Decentered Subject," 21.

aspects of dress. The way one can expose certain fragments of their character while hiding others, whether these fragments are entirely authentic or not, is enhanced and illuminated in Schiaparelli's work. Her garments allow for the questioning and examination of artifice that is traditionally existent in feminine expression.

This notion of revealing and concealing is carried into the second chapter, in which I discuss Schiaparelli's use of death and macabre imagery to illustrate female vulnerability and gendered violence experienced by women in the 1930s. The looming threat of the Second World War prompted many Surrealists to muse over themes of morbidity and melancholy. Despite their increased freedom to pursue a wider set activities and professions throughout the previous decades, women were not immune to domestic violence and general aggression from men fearful of both this freedom and the impending war. I argue that Schiaparelli explored themes of death and violence in her work not only to convey a collective anguish brought about by the rise of fascism, but also the persisting anxieties felt by New Women who were benefiting from but also targeted for their greater freedoms. However, by creating garments like the *Skeleton Dress* and the *Tear-Illusion Dress,* which visually communicate a sense of mortality and cruel violence, Schiaparelli succeeded in reversing this image of vulnerability in granting the wearer the power to announce and flaunt her victimization via elegant evening wear. Instead of concealing these points of hardship, Schiaparelli, and the women who wore her designs, regain strength by assertively flaunting them. In her designs, apparent vulnerabilities were transformed into a hard-chic armor.

In the final chapter, I discuss Schiaparelli's use of displaced and repeated body part motifs and the manner in which they further complicate and enhance the wearer's

performance of feminine identity to undermine objectification and over-sexualization. The multiplication of body parts allows for a multiplied articulation of the self, layering stylized parts on top of their biological equivalents in a manner that whimsically complexifies the act of self-decoration and simultaneously demystifies its illusory nature. Her work featuring body imagery provides a stark contrast to that of male Surrealists who worked with similar subject and were inspired by Sigmund Freud's theories on men's unconscious fascination and disgust with female anatomy. Artists like Hans Bellmer, Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray, René Magritte, and André Masson used women's bodies and their fragmented parts to objectify, sexualize, and, in Bellmer's case, mimic violence towards them. I argue that Schiaparelli's designs ornamented with female body part motifs, as clothing made to be worn on real bodies, provides a much more complicated image of feminine expression that evokes the fetish but refrains from over-sexualization. Rather than appearing exploitative, her references to the concept of the fetish and female sexuality read as playful jokes. In the context of women's clothing, stylized body part imagery becomes part of a layered Surrealist bricolage that extends the body beyond the biological realm and onto the garments' surfaces—allowing the body to become both the player and the setting for the spectacle of femininity.

It is my argument that, based on the selection of designs I examine, Schiaparelli utilized fashion as a means to challenge the idea of a static, fixed interpretation of women. She sought to communicate the notion that female identity is boundless and infinite, and is especially capable of being changed or molded through the act of dress. Her designs pose an opposition to traditional understandings of women as vulnerable objects inferior to men and open to "attacks" like objectification and over-sexualization.

As a New Woman herself, she ultimately aims to promote the modern woman's agency and autonomy by guiding the manner in which she is perceived by others.

Chapter One:

Multiplied Reflections: Masking and Unmasking in Schiaparelli's *Mirrors Jacket* and *Desk Suit*

Identity, performativity, and masquerade constitute a common thread in both Schiaparelli's designs and writing. In the mid to late 1930s, at the height of her couture house's activity, the decades-old concept of the New Woman still elicited anxieties, particularly in terms of women's appearance and dress customs. Her memoir and various anecdotes allude to her participation in struggles for equality as a modern, financially independent, single mother. The struggles she faced as an outsider throughout her career, even after she had experienced impressive success, constantly shaped the ways in which she studied herself both in retrospect and in the present.

Accounts of Schiaparelli, including her own, suggest her awareness of identity as an unstable construction. Well-known for her eccentric character and contradictory behavior, she was described by her contemporaries as detached and erratic while remaining utterly charming. Her autobiography is most revealing in terms of her unusual attitude towards her own identity. When recounting stories from her youth or early career, she frequently alternates between the use of first and third-person pronouns. For the most part, troubling events like her husband's absence and the disintegration of her marriage are written from a third-person perspective, allowing her to distance herself from the realities of her past and momentarily assume the identity of an unknown outsider. Descriptions of her personality and behavior are inconsistent but wholly fascinating throughout *Shocking Life.* A humorous anecdote recounting a social event held in Berlin illustrates this detached, complicated self-perception: "As I mounted the

imposing staircase, surrounded by mirrors, I saw in the center of a crowd of rather shabby people one who reminded me of Paris. 'There,' I said to Jerome, 'at last there is a smart woman!' 'Heavens!' exclaimed Jerome, 'but don't you recognize yourself?"[24] Apocryphal or not, the inclusion of stories like this one point to Schiaparelli's interest in the multiplicity of identity and of the self.

These varied reflections in Schiaparelli's writing echo the theme of plurality that appears so frequently in her designs. In this chapter, I will examine her use of mirror imagery to suggest the complexity of identity and the deconstruction of stereotypes of the feminine and the female body. This is a visual symbol she referenced in various instances throughout the late the 1930s, whether through the incorporation of hand mirror motifs or reflective surfaces like actual mirror pieces or large, lustrous sequins. The concept of the double image (and the doubling of the self as presented through a mirror's reflection) speaks to the multitude of identities a single person can possess and express, as well as the illusion and artifice involved in performing the self.

Fashion photographer Horst P. Horst's 1937 portrait of Schiaparelli (Fig. 1) provides a tongue-in-cheek visual metaphor for these ideas. The image shows her dramatically dressed in a rather severe ensemble consisting of a structured jacket and a large asymmetrical hat while peering out of an oval-shaped mirror frame. At first glance, the photo appears to have captured an image of her reflection in a wall-mounted mirror, but closer inspection reveals the ornate frame actually borders a hole in the partition between Horst and his subject. Instead of a reflected two-dimensional image, we are met with the actual Schiaparelli who is resting a forearm on the frame, exposing the optical

[24] Schiaparelli, *Shocking Life*, 106.

trick. The illusion of the artificial mirror reveals that there is more than one side to her image. A visualization of Schiaparelli's mirror fixation, this image captures the deceptive nature of the mirror as well as the intricacies of representation.[25]

An image of a mirror also features prominently, although to a different effect, in a photograph taken by Man Ray in May of 1935 in which model and artist Nusch Éluard is dressed in a Schiaparelli ensemble consisting of a sari dress, shawl, purse, and fan (Fig. 2). These items were designed for Schiaparelli's 1935 "Stop, Look, and Listen" collection, which was presented earlier that year. The fan modeled by Éluard is perhaps the most literal example among Schiaparelli's designs of her penchant for mirrors. The fan was made using Rhodophane, a cellophane fabric partly developed by Schiaparelli in 1934.[26] The fabric had a glass-like appearance that produced clear reflections similar to that of a mirror. Rhodophane was utilized for other accessories and garments like her 1935 transparent "glass cape" made for wear over an evening dress. The Rhodophane fan, however, is Schiaparelli's most evocative use of reflective materials to invoke self-reflection, combined with a nod to the association of women with vanity and adornment. The Man Ray photograph highlights this quality of the object, and contextualizing this photo as one composed and captured by a male Surrealist artist is vital to analyzing it. The subject holds the object not as one would hold a fan for practical use, but as one would hold a hand mirror. The positioning of the fan allows the viewer to see two angles, or two versions, of Éluard's face as she looks away. One can thus assume that the

[25] Evans, "Masks, Mirrors and Mannequins: Elsa Schiaparelli and the Decentered Subject," 14.
[26] "Man Ray," Schiaparelli and the Artists, Maison Schiaparelli, accessed Oct. 18, 2020, https://www.schiaparelli.com/en/21-place-vendome/schiaparelli-and-the-artists/man-ray/portrait-of-nusch-eluard/.

duplicated woman and her adjacent mirror image are not presented for the subject, but solely for the observer's scrutiny.

Man Ray's composition reverses what Schiaparelli aims to accomplish through her designs. Here, the female image has been presented as an object open to be perceived by anyone who looks in her direction, while the woman herself appears to disassociate from the situation. Although she is the one holding the mirror, she does not care to look at her reflection or look in the direction of her viewer despite knowing she is being watched. Additionally, due to the nature of this image as a posed fashion photograph, the fan is not necessarily being used in the context for which it was designed. In reality, the user would have the choice to present the mirrored side of the fan outward, towards her observers, or inward to reflect her own image back to herself. In a practical sense, the user could gesture a fanning motion to cool herself which would likely obscure the fan's reflective quality to those watching. Similarly, she could use it to conceal certain parts of her face, like the lower half just below eye level with the mirrored side facing in whichever direction she pleased. Overall, Man Ray's composition simplifies and reduces the fan's versatility as well as the agency of the user, who is presented as a passive object who does not return the gaze of her observer. Schiaparelli's designs counter this objectification as the wearer is constantly aware of the fact that she is being perceived by others and often controls or deflects this look.

This subject/observer relationship was further explored by Schiaparelli for her *Hall of Mirrors* jacket, originally designed for the "Zodiac" collection, which debuted in 1938. The Palace of Versailles served as a direct inspiration for this dinner jacket adorned with buttons in the shape of Rococo busts and representations of upside-down baroque

hand mirrors in luminous gold embroidery near the bustline (Fig. 3). With tiny square glass fragments attached to the jacket, light and images are refracted, allowing Schiaparelli to create the illusion of a window view into the figure (Fig. 4).[27] But as the observer draws closer, they are instead met with their own reflection as the fragments function as real mirrors. It is not the wearer but the spectator who is met with a fragmented self-image in these mirrors, reversing the phenomenon examined by John Berger, in which traditional representations of women in the arts and visual culture are looked at by men while women watch themselves being watched—"Thus she turns herself into an object — and most particularly an object of vision: a sight."[28] The jacket wearer instead bypasses and deflects this gaze. The mirrors are thus evocative of both depth and interiority as well as refraction, reflecting Schiaparelli's multi-layered conceptions of identity and her desire to guide its reception. In subtly controlling how she is viewed by donning the *Mirrors Jacket,* the wearer can be protected against unwarranted objectification or sexualization.

The way in which the structured silhouette and padded shoulders of the *Mirrors Jacket* reshape the body produces an image of strength, especially given the shield-like appearance of the hand mirrors on the bust of the jacket . With the "armor" of the mirror tiles, the wearer is able to intercept her own objectification, maintaining a protective barrier between herself and those who perceive her. By drawing inspiration from the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, which functioned as a gathering space for various ceremonies

[27] Marylaura Papalas, "Avant-garde Cuts: Schiaparelli and the Construction of a Surrealist Femininity," *Fashion Theory*, 20:5 (2016): 507.
[28] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (Penguin Books Ltd: London, 1972), 47.

and rituals, Schiaparelli transforms the subject into a backdrop or stage against which the spectacle of identity can be performed and re-examined.

It is through this lens of performance that one can more fully examine much of Schiaparelli's work (and the constructs of women's fashion as a whole). Judith Butler's exploration of gender performativity lays the groundwork for scrutinizing women's self-fashioning and adornment as expressions of a perceived gender identity. In Butler's words, "Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time…"[29] Fashion and dress act as signifiers of one's gender, which is always "a fantasy inscribed and instituted on the surface of bodies…"[30] Thus, the act of donning what is perceived as traditionally feminine clothing, wearing makeup, and other acts of self-decoration constitute this careful performance: "There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results."[31]

The wearer thus disguises herself through masquerade, creating distance between herself and those who interpret her and deduce unfixed meanings from her performance. She is being watched, but she ultimately decides what to reveal and what to hide. Mary Ann Doane's thoughts on the concept of the female spectator and masquerade enrich Butler's performativity theories and can be related to this sense of distance that is created between the subject and observer in regard to the mirrored jacket. In response to Laura Mulvey's gaze theory, Doane uses the female spectator and her projected image in the

[29] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 33.
[30] Ibid., 136.
[31] Ibid., 25.

context of film to illustrate her points that women must detach themselves from their on-screen image in order to avoid an "over-identification" which could lead to heightened emotionality and excessively empathetic reactions. In other words, the woman who identifies with the projected image of her gender is at risk of revealing too much herself, but by initiating detachment, she can look at herself, speculate about herself, represent herself, and describe herself for what and who she is without attaching or over-identifying with that image.[32] In this way, engaging in masquerade in the context of fashion holds femininity at a distance, as the "mask" can be removed at any time. Through masquerade, the woman is able to establish distance between oneself and one's image while using the body as a disguise, creating "space" in which others can contemplate her performance and make various assumptions about her identity.[33]

Doane's theories expand upon earlier work in Joan Rivière's 1929 paper, "Womanliness as Masquerade," in which the latter states:

> Womanliness therefore could be assumed and worn as a mask . . . The reader may now ask how I define womanliness or where I draw the line between womanliness and the 'masquerade.' My suggestion is not, however, that there is any such difference; whether radical or superficial, they are the same thing.[34]

By suggesting that both the act of masquerading and flaunting femininity are one in the same, Rivière provides a theoretical counterpart to Schiaparelli's designs in which the body is presented as a surface upon which ideas about female identity can be articulated. In this case, clothing becomes a mask under which the woman can hide or expose

[32] Mary Anne Doane, "Film and the Masquerade," in *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*, ed. Amelia Jones (New York: Routledge, 2003), 78.
[33] Doane, "Film and the Masquerade," 78.
[34] Evans, "Masks, Mirrors and Mannequins: Elsa Schiaparelli and the Decentered Subject," 7.

whatever she pleases. However, as Rivière suggests, there is no *real* identity beneath this "mask"; it is in this performance of revealing and concealing that the woman's identity lies. In short, Rivière, like Butler, believes that female identity is a performance. It is a surface-level construction fabricated and carried out through acts of self-adornment—with fashion being the ultimate vehicle for such acts.[35] However, it is not my belief that Schiaparelli's masquerading designs imply that all forms of feminine expression are a lie inasmuch as they question their truths. As similarly illustrated in Horst's portrait, elements of illusion and playful deception in her designs allow for the reception of one's identity to be manipulated, establishing a critique of femininity as artifice and elaborate performance.

The woman who dons Schiaparelli's *Mirrors Jacket* is therefore participating in this phenomenon of masquerade, disguising herself in order to attain the space/distance described by Doane. It is this space in which she offers up her body and appearance to be interpreted and perceived by others. In the context of her performativity, her "masked" body becomes the backdrop upon which these interpretations unfold. However, the mirror fragments on the bust of the jacket further complicate this concept. The wearer succeeds in further sabotaging the relationship between the subject and her spectators as observers are greeted with their own image reflected back to them upon encountering her. She thus exerts her authority over the situation from behind her "mask," which only she can remove or replace.

Two years prior to the creation of the *Mirrors Jacket,* Schiaparelli's *Desk Suit* offered a similar glimpse into her fascination with notions of revealing and concealing

[35] Evans, "Masks, Mirrors and Mannequins: Elsa Schiaparelli and the Decentered Subject," 7.

through clothing. Making its initial debut in her 1936-7 winter collection, the suit was the first of several creative collaborations with Salvador Dalí. The suit, which is actually a long calf-length coat belted to create the illusion of a skirt and jacket set, features rows of true and false "drawer" pockets attached to its front (Fig. 5). Like the *Mirrors Jacket*, this coat is heavily structured and conservative, displaying Schiaparelli's trademark hard-chic silhouette with its padded shoulders and stiff high collar. While only a few versions of the *Desk Suit* were produced and possessed fewer pockets, Schiaparelli's original design sketch shows eight "drawers" adorning the front of the garment: one on the collar of the coat, two across the chest, one centered at the waist, and two on each hip.[36] Each pocket was embroidered and ornamented with large leather buttons to represent drawer pulls.[37]

By this period in 1936, Schiaparelli and Dalí had frequented the same crowds for years and developed a close partnership due to their shared interests. In her autobiography, she notes, "Dalí was a constant caller. We devised together the coat with many drawers from one of his famous pictures."[38] Dalí had long been fixated on the idea of drawers and hidden compartments in relation to the female body, and produced a handful of works illustrating these visions. *The Anthropomorphic Cabinet* (1936) and *Venus de Milo with Drawers* (1936) are among the most notable products of his interest. He was heavily inspired by Freudian themes of the unconscious and of dreamlike sexual desire, and used drawers and cabinets as symbols for the orifices of the female body that simultaneously intrigued and repulsed him.[39] Jacques Lacan's Mirror Stage theory and

[36] Robyn Gibson, "Schiaparelli, Surrealism, and the Desk Suit." *Dress* 30 (2003): 51.
[37] When New York department store Bergdorf Goodman sold their reimagined version of the *Desk Suit,* they omitted the leather "drawer pulls." Like many of Schiaparelli's designs, the *Desk Suit* lost its Surreal touches when reinterpreted by manufacturers for mass marketing.
[38] Schiaparelli, *Shocking Life*, 96.
[39] Gibson, "Schiaparelli, Surrealism, and the Desk Suit," 50.

concepts of the fragmented self likely motivated Dalí's fantasies involving dismantled or decomposed bodies as well, as they displayed similarities to Lacan's *corps morcele* and can also be closely related to the themes of identity and masquerade examined by Schiaparelli. It is clear that both individuals had a similar awareness of contemporary psychoanalytic theory and used their collaborations as an opportunity to produce garments that spoke to those shared fascinations.

The *Desk Suit*, however, reflects Schiaparelli's distinct viewpoint, as it overturns Dalí's eroticized "drawers" and conveys an alternate interpretation of these hidden compartments. By concealing real pockets beneath some of the sewn-on drawers, the jacket suggests female agency. Contrasting *Venus de Milo with Drawers*, in which the armless figure of Venus is powerless and exists only to be examined and explored through touching and opening the compartments on her unclothed torso decorated with furry pom-pom drawer pulls, Schiaparelli diverts attention away from the body and onto the clothing. The suit becomes a symbol of authority for the wearer, as only she knows which drawers are functional pockets from which she can remove something "personal, intimate, perhaps shocking."[40] She can thus expose inner parts of herself at her own discretion, reinforcing the concept that the wearer (and designer) is able to reveal and conceal certain parts of herself as made similarly evident in the *Mirrors Jacket*. However, the wearer's ability to disclose this desired image is made more explicit via the existence of real "hiding places" in the form of disguised pockets. She is once again creating space between herself and those who watch her, masquerading and performing a chosen version of her identity. This time, however, she is granted slightly more power in guiding these

[40] Gibson, "Schiaparelli, Surrealism, and the Desk Suit," 51.

perceptions, as she can physically hide and reveal a plethora of items with these "drawers." Just as an actual locked desk can contain personal information and private records, the wearer can guard or divulge parts of herself, and only she holds the key.

The *Mirrors Jacket* and the *Desk Suit* transform the woman's body into a stage upon which the intricate performance of masquerade unfolds. This playful spectacle succeeds in challenging notions of a static, one-dimensional identity defined by traditional understandings of feminine presentation. It is in this performance that identity is ultimately exposed as a construct or mask, bringing to light the artifice of self-adornment via the layering of unusual objects and symbols onto the body. In the end, Schiaparelli's designs are not just visually enchanting, they unmask and deconstruct the deeply personal experience of self-expression—an act that can further complicate one's identity by taking on the strange and Surreal.

Chapter Two:

Envisioning Violence and Death: Schiaparelli's Exploration and Reclamation of Female Vulnerability

Although the *Mirrors Jacket* and the *Desk Suit* foreground the agency of women and their ability to shape how they are perceived, Schiaparelli did not shy away from representing women's vulnerability to objectification and even gendered violence in her fashion designs. The *Tear-Illusion Dress* (Fig. 5) and the *Skeleton Dress* (Fig. 6), both of which Schiaparelli designed in collaboration with Dalí for her "Circus" collection, evoke this vulnerability through subtly macabre imagery suggestive of torn flesh and death. Schiaparelli abandoned all notions of restraint and tradition for her riotous presentation of this collection on February 4, 1938, only three weeks after the similarly iconoclastic *Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme*. Ringmaster jackets, evening dresses accessorized with tent veils, and tall hats shaped like inkwells, hens, and lamb chops adorned the heads of models and dancers traipsing down grand staircases and leaping in and out of the windows of her showroom. The bulk of the collection was defined by its whimsical embroidery, buttons, and embellishments depicting acrobats, dancing animals, clowns, and other spectacular imagery.[44] The two products of her partnership with Dalí thus stand out for their darker, corpse-like qualities amid the candy-colored playfulness of the other garments.

In a period defined by the anxieties associated with the impending world war, many individuals were constantly consumed by ideas of mortality and trauma. The juxtaposition of the *Skeleton Dress* and the *Tear-Illusion* within the bounding merriness

[44] White, *Elsa Schiaparelli: Empress of Paris Fashion*, 166.

of Schiaparelli's "Circus" collection presentation communicates the persistence of these preoccupations even amidst celebration. During this time, the Surrealist group often mused on the visceral qualities of the body and the presence of death in various aspects of life. Walter Benjamin specifically related fashion to death and decay in "Paris Passage II," written between 1927 and 1940 as part of his *Arcades Project.* In it, he suggested that fashion "was never anything but the parody of a colorful corpse, the manner in which woman provokes death, and a communion with decay that is bitterly whispered between loud and memorized cries of joy."[45] Benjamin implied that fashion and dress are inherently tied to mortality; fads and styles in vogue are already dead upon becoming fashionable.

Schiaparelli echoes these sentiments in her autobiography, describing how she "found that [dress designing] was the most difficult and unsatisfying art, because as soon as a dress is born it has already become a thing of the past." Once a design is materialized after being imagined or dreamed, it is fundamentally dead. Continuing, she adds that "a dress cannot just hang like a painting on the wall, or like a book remain intact and live a long and sheltered life." Whereas Benjamin asserts that fashion is dead upon arrival with no chance of revival, Schiaparelli states that only the wearer can re-animate a dress, finally imbuing it with new life once it surrounds an active body. When this happens, the garment becomes an "indifferent object […] dream, or expression."[46] She recognizes the fleeting transience of fashion, and implies the empty dress is akin to a corpse while the body is the soul that activates it. For Schiaparelli, fashion has no vitality or meaning without connection to the body.

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[45] Ulrich Lehmann, *Tigersprung: Fashion in Modernity*, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2000), 272.
[46] Schiaparelli, *Shocking Life*, 45.

A year before the debut of her Circus collection, Schiaparelli touched on the connection between death, fashion, and the body in her display at the *Pavillon d'Elégance* at the 1937 *Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne* in Paris. A state-sponsored exhibition, organizers decided to take advantage of Surrealism's current influence in popular fashion magazines and prompted all participating designers to display their merchandise in a Surreal manner using plaster mannequins that were strangely misshapen, oversized, and faceless. Robert Couturier, the designer, wanted them to appear like "fantastic giants of terracotta" to enhance the uncanny quality of the displays.[47] Schiaparelli, not entirely fond of the provided resources and the "hideous" dummy, chose to present her mannequin completely bare and situated on the ground surrounded by flowers, with its disproportionate limbs twisting in odd directions. Beside the mannequin was one of her charming dresses, now lifeless and strewn on a clothesline, accompanied by panties, stockings, and shoes (Fig. 7).[48]

Juxtaposed alongside other displays of elegant glamour from the finest French couture houses, Schiaparelli's unclothed mannequin caused a stir among the pavilion's visitors, some of which interpreted the mannequin as a bloated corpse.[49] A journalist for *Harper's Bazaar* noted, "Schiaparelli stretches a nude figure on the ground, partially covered by a rug of flowers. On the opening day, someone threw a visiting card on the blanket with condolences, so now that lady has been jerked up to a sitting position, with her discarded dress and hat thrown on a garden chair."[50] Because Schiaparelli's blatant

[47] Alyce Mahon, "Displaying the Body: Surrealism's Geography of Pleasure," in *Surreal Things: Surrealism and Design*, ed. Ghislaine Wood (London: V & A Publications, 2007), 134.
[48] Schiaparelli, *Shocking Life*, 78.
[49] The Wols photograph, Figure 7, depicts Schiaparelli's display after she had changed the pose of the mannequin to be seated against the faux tree trunk.
[50] Anon.,"Within the *Pavillon d'Elegance*," *Harper's Bazaar* (15 September 1937), 78.

nod to ideas of death and lifelessness in her display succeeded in amplifying the pavilion's Surrealist tones (which were otherwise downplayed by journalists documenting the event) her display was virtually disregarded by esteemed journals and magazines. Due to her radicalism, photographs of the provocative display did not appear in any published documentations of the event. Perhaps Schiaparelli's controversial showcase inspired the "mannequin alley" at the following year's *Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme,* where nineteen Surrealists were given free rein to decorate, dress, or undress female figures.[51]

Schiaparelli continued to make explicit visual references to this notion of the life and death of clothing in the two aforementioned pieces, the *Tear-Illusion Dress* and the *Skeleton Dress*. According to her statements, these garments, like all of her designs, were conceived as transformative objects destined to procure deeper, varied meanings when given "life" while being worn. And in these two darker pieces, a significance beyond just the Surrealist occupation with the anxieties of war and the rise of fascism is conveyed. It is evident that they are veiled by distinct markings of gender issues and a specifically feminine identity as material objects intended to clothe female bodies. Upon being worn, both gowns would transform the wearer into a ghostly figure branded with images of decaying flesh and exposed bones, while simultaneously highlighting her femininity and sexuality with a figure-hugging silhouette. One can thus read these gowns as the product of a climate partially defined by the imbalance of gender hierarchies, designed by an individual who experienced these disparities first-hand. Schiaparelli's desire to comment

[51] Victoria Pass, "Schiaparelli's Dark Circus." *Fashion, Style & Popular Culture* 1:1 (2014): 35-6.

on contemporary anxieties and traumas is entwined with her equal desire to address the role of gender, particularly in terms of the identity of the New Woman.

The *Tear-Illusion Dress* was partly inspired by Dalí's 1936 painting *Three Young Surrealist Women Holding in Their Arms the Skins of an Orchestra* (Fig. 8) and two similar works in which figures wear clothing resembling flayed skin, making it difficult to differentiate between flesh and fabric. One of these paintings, titled *Necrophiliac Springtime* (1936), was procured by Schiaparelli for her personal art collection (Fig. 9). The image features a female figure whose head is covered entirely with blooming flowers while her body is dressed in a tattered gown of muted grey, a tone not unlike the woman's flesh.[52] This blurring of the boundaries between skin and dress is directly referenced in the design of the *Tear-Illusion Dress*.

The gown's *trompe-l'œil* print of ripped "flesh" designed by Dalí covers the length of the gown while Schiaparelli's accompanying veil is given three-dimensional tears in the fabric that reveal another layer of deep reddish-purple textile beneath (Fig. 10). A handful of the gruesome tear motifs appear to resemble dangling claw-like hands, almost as if they represent the very hands that created the wounds, still reaching out to mar the observer. The fabric's background color was originally a ghostly pale blue on both the gown and the tent veil, but the textile has unfortunately faded to white with the passage of time. The underside of the tears is colored a light fleshy pink while the exposed "wounds" are a maroon shade that evokes the color of bruised skin and dried blood. The gown was originally accessorized with a set of pink crêpe opera gloves with ruffles adorning the length, a detail evocative of lacerated skin (Fig. 11).

[52] Blum, *Shocking! The Art and Fashion of Elsa Schiaparelli*, 139.

This combination of a cool muted color palette, thin gauze-like textiles, and delicately gathered fabric convey a sense of fragility, transparency, and the grotesque as the wearer masquerades as a corpse. Left completely exposed, she displays her wounds and scars while essentially presenting as a dead body. However, despite these visual cues of death and defeat, she also performs traditional femininity. The gown's figure-hugging silhouette, demure veil, and gloves alongside the visceral images of a targeted attack convey a dangerous *femme fatale* image. The graphic imagery marking the length of her body is off-putting and possibly repellent to the squeamish. These macabre and grotesque elements thus provide her with the ability to intimidate, frighten, and unnerve those around her. By juxtaposing active violence and danger with conventional signifiers of the feminine, a new version of feminine performance is brought forth. The New Woman has been metaphorically violated and killed by men who view her as inferior, yet she still lives beneath and through this performative mask. The various garments and accessories—the full-length gown, veil, and opera gloves—cover the wearer's body almost completely. Although the woman who wears this design chooses to bare all of her wounds and publicize her victimization, leaving her fully exposed before her spectators, she ultimately wears a mask. As with the *Mirrors Jacket* and the *Desk Suit*, the New Woman exposes her vulnerability, but she is ultimately in control of that vulnerability as she uses it to evoke an image of subtle danger. While the garment may present her as a product of repressive gender hierarchies, it also lends a sense of power in her decision to communicate the realities of life as a modern woman and her ability to distance herself from her "mask."

Like the *Tear-Illusion Dress*, the *Skeleton Dress* was also partially based on a series of study sketches by Dalí, and one in particular in which female skeletons are draped in transparent textiles and posed in a manner reminiscent of contemporary fashion spreads (Fig. 12). Surviving correspondences between Schiaparelli and Dalí that include these sketches provide further insight into this instance of collaboration; under one sketch Dalí writes, "Dear Elsa, I like this idea of bones on the outside enormously."[53] Dalí should not be given singular credit for this conception, as Schiaparelli had been creating garments with skeleton and bone imagery since the early days of her career as a sportswear designer. Among her best-selling *trompe-l'œil* knitwear designs in the late 1920s was the X-ray sweater, "that shocked the bourgeois but hit the newspapers, which then took little notice of fashion."[54] Made of lightweight black knit fabric, a fully proportionate human ribcage design would cover the torso so that the wearer would have the appearance of being seen through an X-ray.[55]

The *Skeleton Dress* represents a more fully-fledged incarnation of the early X-ray sweater as the "bones" are now three-dimensional and tangible on the gown, reshaping the natural surface of the body. The skeletal structure is rendered in relief through trapunto quilting and boning that forms ridges over the torso, shoulders, and back of the wearer. The padded rib cage reaches completely around the upper body, and hip and leg bones descend down the length of the dress to the knees of the wearer. The jutting shoulder bones make the wearer's figure appear more angular, while a protruding spine receives prominence on the back of the dress, standing out as perhaps the most defined

[53] Pass, "Schiaparelli's Dark Circus." 39.
[54] Unfortunately, I have been unable to find any existent photographs of the skeleton sweater in online or print resources.
[55] Schiaparelli, *Shocking Life*, 50.

"bone" on the gown. The silhouette of the dress sheaths the body almost entirely, a style element in line with Schiaparelli's architectural, hard-chic approach. The figure is concealed from the neck down in the black crêpe dress, with its long sleeves that reach the wrists and a floor-grazing hem. Original sketches show this gown paired with a snail-like coiled hat, and a black crêpe tent veil (Fig. 13).[56] This would have made for a rather off-putting and outlandish ensemble, resembling whimsical mourning attire with a markedly dangerous twist.

With this design, Schiaparelli again brings the inside of the body to the surface as reality blurs with illusion. The *Skeleton Dress* can be read as her most blatant allusion to these themes of the inner vs. the outer self and the concept of revealing and concealing. Compared to other examples, this gown is more evidently macabre. The evocation of death and decay is instantly apparent as the wearer is disguised as a skeleton, the most recognizable symbol of mortality. The padding and dull black crêpe fabric give the wearer an imposing silhouette due to its augmented yet tight-fitting shape, an effect that would be further enhanced when paired with the pointed hat and black veil. References to the dangerous *femme fatale* are even more pronounced in this garment. Her silhouette is hugged by the clinging fabric, which closely reveals the shape of her body underneath the garment, while simultaneously obscuring it with the protruding skeletal structure. The tactility of these raised "bones" invite one to touch the protrusions on the surface of the gown, but the imposing nature of the ensemble warns one of the dangers of getting too close.

[56] Blum, *Shocking! The Art and Fashion of Elsa Schiaparelli*, 175.

As with the *Tear-Illusion Dress*, themes of femininity and sexuality are framed and contrasted by death, violence, and melancholy. The woman is fully exposed, as her bones are laid bare for all to see. While this, in theory, should create an impression of weakness, she instead appears almost disconcerting and unapproachable thanks to the hard-chic of Schiaparelli's designs. Her strength is communicated through the gown's conjuration of mystery, danger, and nuanced sex appeal. Again, the wearer masquerades her identity with a performance of a wholly tactile femininity. The inner body is metaphorically liberated as she displays her insides on the outside, but this is ultimately just a mask. The prominent spine, the strongest bone in the body, nods to the fortitude of the wearer as she exposes herself before her spectators.

In contrast to the *Mirrors Jacket* and the *Desk Suit*, these designs act as a blatant commentary on mortality and gendered violence. Where the jackets intercept the objectification of the wearer by deflecting the gaze and highlighting her strength and agency through masquerade, the *Tear-Illusion Dress* and the *Skeleton Dress* act as masks of death and danger. These designs can thus be interpreted as an example of Schiaparelli's exploration of the ongoing vulnerabilities and gender disparities, including sexual assault and domestic violence, experienced by New Women as they began to explore spaces previously dominated by men. Schiaparelli's decision to expose the realities of gender through her work can be understood as a cathartic outlet through which she could reflect on the struggles of the modern New Woman, transforming vulnerability into a source of power.

Chapter Three:

Body Language: Schiaparelli's Palimpsestic Fashion and the Reframing of the Fetish

In addition to utilizing *trompe-l'œil* prints and elements of relief on the surface of her designs, Schiaparelli regularly employed motifs representing everyday objects to adorn her formal garments in the form of embroidery, appliqués, buttons, or prints on textiles. She stirred intrigue with these designs by methodically displacing otherwise ordinary items onto unrelated and unexpected locations. This practice was central to the Surrealist group, which displaced everyday objects into new contexts as a way of defamiliarizing them. This disjunction was believed to reveal new realities, or sur-realities, through the uncovering of veiled psychological or sexual desires in the unconscious. The Surreal transposition of common objects and imagery would become one of the hallmarks of Schiaparelli's body of work, contributing to her shocking reputation in the fashion world. In doing so, her garments were embellished with layered meanings and latent symbolism that further communicated the complexity of identity and perception.

Schiaparelli's symbolism and layering is most confounding in her employment of feminine body part motifs. She utilized ornate embroidery, beading, and appliqués representing lips, eyes, hands, and other body parts as surface decoration for gowns, jackets, and accessories. These details were highly stylized and exaggerated rather than naturalistic representations of their real biological counterparts. She thereby enriched her designs by juxtaposing playful images of feminine body parts on top of real women's bodies. The body is thus transformed into a palimpsest—"a complex vessel of meaning

where layers and sartorial garb adorn it."[57] She succeeds in extending the female body beyond its corporeal makeup and complicating the performance of feminine identity. Similar to her use of desk drawers and other unconventional object motifs, a sense of illusion and light-heartedness defines these garments—but here the body becomes both the backdrop and the player in feminine self-representation and expression.

Among Schiaparelli's most well-known examples of this is a 1937 ensemble featuring a suit jacket with functional embroidered lip pockets, brooches on each lapel depicting women's lips in profile, and her iconic *Shoe Hat* (Fig. 14). The *Shoe Hat,* another product of collaboration with Dalí, playfully displaces the image of a foot onto the head of the wearer while the jacket relocates lips onto the torso. Paired with the jacket, the outlandish nature of the hat is even more pronounced, enhancing its ability to draw attention away from the physical body and towards the symbolic body within the realm of language. The images of body parts become signifiers for their real counterparts that lie elsewhere beneath the veil of clothing. With the displacement exhibited by the *Shoe Hat* and the *Lips Jacket,* Schiaparelli hints toward the body as the repressed unconscious that can be voiced through the language of clothing.[58]

Moreover, the fetishistic qualities and sexual symbolism of this pairing are unmistakable. In psychoanalytic theory, fetishism is defined as the practice in which an object, usually a type of clothing, or an inappropriate part of the body is chosen as an object of sexual desire.[59] By the mid-twentieth century, shoes and feet had been regarded as sexual symbols for centuries, and the high-heeled shoe is especially evocative of this

[57] Papalas, "Avant-garde Cuts: Schiaparelli and the Construction of a Surrealist Femininity," 514-5.
[58] Evans and Thornton, "Fashion, Representation, and Femininity," 53.
[59] Ibid.

fetishism. When acceptable women's fashion was limited to long dresses and skirts, capturing a glimpse of a woman's lower legs or feet would lend a perverse excitement to onlookers whose view of the rest of her body would be obstructed by rather conservative dress.[60] Furthermore, the sexualization of high heels can be accredited to their perceived ability to impact the mood and gait of the wearer while also heightening their physical stature—qualities that can be evocative of seduction and sexual prowess.[61] In his 1927 essay "Fetishism," Freud describes the origin of these fixations and the connections between shoes and sexuality:

> The foot or shoe owes its preference as a fetish – or a part of it – to the circumstance that the inquisitive boy peered up at the woman's genitals from below, from her legs up; fur and velvet – as has long been suspected – are a fixation of the sight of the pubic hair, which should have been followed by the longed-for sight of the female member; pieces of underclothing, which are so often chosen as fetish, crystallize the moment of undressing, the last moment in which the woman could still be regarded as phallic.

The sequence of events described here makes reference to the notion of a feminine "lack," a phenomena that, according to Freud, haunts all men and women. This concept ultimately stems from his musings on the male Oedipus complex, which he later modified to apply to young girls as the feminine Oedipus attitude. Freud asserted that as a young child, the female becomes aware that she is biologically dissimilar to her father and other men around her as she realizes that she lacks a penis. Upon this recognition, she forms a sexual fixation and an envious attachment to her father while becoming increasingly hostile towards her mother with whom she shares like parts. This "penis

[60] Sabina Stent, "Fetishizing the Feminine: The Surreal Fashion of Elsa Schiaparelli," *Nottingham French Studies* 50, no. 3 (2011): 83.
[61] Ibid., 82.

envy" can therefore be defined as the female equivalent of "castration anxiety," a phenomena in which men fear castration as a punishment for their thoughts of incest and violence toward their mothers and fathers, respectively.[62] As Freudian theories were widely discussed and studied by the Surrealist group, it is certain that Schiaparelli and Dalí were aware of this perceived female lack and the unconscious desire to remediate it.

The use of an uber-feminine stiletto-type shoe for the hat's design, available in all black or with a Shocking Pink velvet heel (Fig. 15), to ultimately represent a phallus perfectly exemplifies Schiaparelli's constant tendency to playfully draw upon the artifice and illusion of adornment to comment on the female body and feminine identity. Its phallic connotations are made clear in its both its form and jutting presence, and are further exhibited in the more suggestive pink-heeled version. The prominence of the hat acts as a supplement to a body that suffers from a supposed lack, demonstrating how adornment and layering can extend and appropriate the meaning of clothing. By proudly presenting the *Shoe Hat* atop her head, the wearer is perhaps acknowledging this lack while making something of a mockery of it.[63] While it symbolically represents a part of the male body that is traditionally hidden from view, the hat is displayed without a disguise at the highest point of the women's body. It becomes a witty celebration and showcase of the wearer's ultimate possession of this part for which she has allegedly yearned in her subconscious since youth.

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[62] Anne D'Alleva, *Methods and Theories of Art History,* (London: Laurence King Publishing Ltd., 2005): 90.

[63] Despite the *Shoe Hat*'s celebrity, it was not widely distributed or popular among consumers due to its unorthodox design. Dalí's wife, Gala, was photographed wearing the *Shoe Hat,* but it was Parisian socialite and longtime Schiaparelli client Daisy Fellowes who was bold enough to wear it out and about.

The latent symbolism present in the hat is only made richer when paired with the corresponding jacket. By reaching into the jacket's pockets, the wearer would be placing her hand into a lustrous red-lipped mouth not unlike her own. This notion of layering and transposition would be further complicated when the wearer would use these lip pockets to reveal previously hidden items, as she could perhaps unveil personal objects and expose certain aspects of herself that would otherwise remain unseen—a concept that was also explored in her earlier *Desk Suit*. Schiaparelli's "secret" pockets mirror the mouth's biological role as a membrane or barrier separating the internal body from the external body and an orifice in which other body parts, bodily fluids, and foreign objects can both enter and exit. The striking presence of the *Shoe Hat* protruding from the woman's head would highlight its obtrusive, penetrative qualities when juxtaposed with these symbolic lips. Like many of Schiaparelli's designs, this pairing conveys both feminine and masculine signifiers, albeit even more blatantly.

The phallic symbolism of the *Shoe Hat* becomes all the more intriguing with regard to an earlier essay by Tristan Tzara, "D'un certain automatisme du goût," published in the December 1933 issue of the Surrealist journal *Minotaure.* Tzara was a Dadaist and friend to Schiaparelli who frequented the same social circles in Paris. In his article, he uses a set of Man Ray photographs showcasing hats from Schiaparelli's 1933-4 winter collection to discuss how fashion's emphasis and embellishment of different parts of the body serve as both "sign and summons" and how clothing has the ability to reveal the wearer's innermost unconscious desires and fears (Fig. 16).[64] His argument hinges on his interpretation of the hats as sexual metaphors and symbolic of female genitalia,

[64] Dilys Blum, "Fashion and Surrealism" in *Surreal Things: Surrealism and Design*, ed. Ghislaine Wood (London: V & A Publications, 2007), 140.

reversing Freud's belief that, "The hat has been adequately established as a symbol of the genital organ, most frequently the male, through the analysis of dreams."[65] These ideas had previously been visualized by Max Ernst for his 1920 collage *C'est le chapeau qui fait l'homme,* for which print images of men's hats were clipped from magazines and painted around to create teetering phallic towers.[66] J.C. Flügel would later expand upon the sexual symbolism of certain men's and women's clothing items in his 1930 book *The Psychology of Clothes*:

> It is only in the last few years that there has been any clear realization of the fact that clothes not only serve to arouse sexual interest but may themselves actually symbolize the sexual organs. Here again psychoanalysis has added considerably to our knowledge, […] we know, however, that a great many articles of dress, such as the shoe, the tie, the hat, the collar, […] the coat, the trousers, and the mantle may be phallic symbols, while the shoe, the girdle and the garter may be corresponding female symbols.[67]

Tzara frames Schiaparelli's hats as a reversal of this now decades old Freudian theory, as the hat is being used to represent the feminine rather than the masculine. Man Ray's photographs, one of which features Schiaparelli herself modeling the *Crazy Coxcomb* hat, were taken from high angles to emphasize Tzara's points as they highlighted the folds and indents on the surface of the hats.

Schiaparelli's involvement with this article indicates that she was cognizant of these discussions surrounding clothing, and her designs in particular, as sexual metaphors, which makes the creation of the *Shoe Hat* four years later all the more

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[65] Marcus Grantham, "The Sexual Symbolism of Hats," *American Imago*, Volume 6, No. 4, (December 1949), 281.
[66] Blum, "Fashion and Surrealism," 139.
[67] Ghislaine Wood, *The Surreal Body: Fetish and Fashion,* (London: V & A Publishing, 2007): 62.

fascinating. This collaboration with Dalí can be read as an explicit reference to Freudian thought and the various responses to it from within the Surrealist community, including not only Tzara's essay but also the much earlier works mentioned above. By unambiguously combining both female and male sexual imagery in an unconventional and shocking manner, she makes a tongue-in-cheek gesture to these theories, and a conscious reference to the unconscious.

Schiaparelli's evocation and manipulation of body parts might appear to be a mere transposition of an approach shared with her male Surrealist colleagues to the realm of fashion; as I will show in this chapter, the results were ultimately very different. Male Surrealists were fascinated by hidden desires and often fixated on the idea that one's inner dreams and consciousness was revealed through external manifestations. Inspired by Breton's concept of a convulsive beauty, they employed strategies of isolating female body parts in their works, frequently producing highly sexualized forms that were fragmented or doubled. Bellmer's series of images depicting dismembered and disfigured life-size dolls meant to represent young pubescent girls is exemplary of the highly misogynistic themes frequently expressed in Surrealist art and photography (Fig. 17). First published in the winter 1935 issue of *Minotaure,* the photographs are extremely violent and graphic: various parts of the female body are rendered nearly unrecognizable under Bellmer's manipulation. Made of plaster and wood held together by screws and rods, many of these dolls were displayed in ways that highlight the mechanics of their construction, providing the fragmented figures with a more inhuman appearance. Bellmer successfully presents them as pure objects or playthings that can be positioned and handled as he pleases, hence the series title, *Poupée.* Scholars have viewed Bellmer's

photographs and the work of other male Surrealists depicting violently fragmented and eroticized female bodies as the product of an objectification of women as well as a displacement of post-war male anxieties. Men recovering from the traumas of the First World War felt pressure as they attempted to re-assimilate into society, often relying on wives, mothers, and sisters for support more than ever before, leaving many feeling weak and emasculated.[68]

Surrealists like Bellmer used female bodies in their art to explore both their disgust and sexual attraction toward women's anatomy. These musings may be attributed to both Freud and Lacan's fragmentation theories, the latter being another favorite within the Surrealist group in Paris. Freudian thought suggested that female bodies were both the ultimate object of male sexual desire and a source of male fear, as hypothesized by his "castration anxiety" theory. Surrealist art created by men often reflects this combination of erotic fascination and apprehension towards women.

While not all male Surrealists were as unabashedly brutal as Bellmer in their depictions of women, many engaged in similar objectification, as shown, for example, by the use of female mannequins in the 1938 *Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme*. Unlike Couturier's mannequins displayed at the *Pavillon d'Elégance* the previous year, these figures more closely resembled traditional department store mannequins with articulated facial features, styled hair, and make-up. They were chosen by the Surrealists for their resemblance to the "eternal feminine," and were transformed as displays by the artists (all male save for one). Man Ray, the event's photographer, recounts the exhibition

[68] Amy Lyford, *Surrealist Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 15.

and illuminates its sexual overtones and the Surrealists' violation of these "young women":

> In 1937 nineteen young women were kidnapped from the windows of the large stores and subjected to the frenzy of the Surrealists who immediately deemed it their duty to violate them, each in his own original and inimitable manner but without any consideration whatsoever for the feelings of the victims who nevertheless submitted with charming goodwill to the homage and outrage that were inflicted on them, with the result that they aroused the excitement of a certain Man Ray who undid and took out his equipment and recorded the orgy…[69]

Masson's mannequin was particularly evocative of the disturbing character of these presentations (Fig. 18). His manipulation of the figure resulted in a body silenced and imprisoned within what appears to be the expression of a sadomasochistic fantasy. A birdcage was placed over the figure's head, resting on her shoulders, while her mouth was fixed with a velvet gag adorned with a purple pansy. More pansies decorated her underarms and peacock feathers barely hid her groin. Her overall appearance was bizarre and vaguely exotic, as if she were an entrapped animal, bound and unable to speak. Masson blurred the boundaries between pain and pleasure, simultaneously exercising violence and erotic fixation through his display. While this display is not necessarily a fragmentation of the female body, it is still a blatant limitation and minimization of it.[70]

Artists such as Duchamp and Magritte frequently depicted isolated female body parts and signifiers in their works to express dream states in an erotic and sexualized manner. Works like Duchamp's book cover design for the 1947 *Le Surréalisme* exhibition catalog, titled "Please Touch," featuring a disembodied rubber breast

[69] Mahon, "Displaying the Body: Surrealism's Geography of Pleasure," 135-6.
[70] Ibid.

surrounded by black velvet beckoned the viewer to come closer and experience the tactility of the sculpture (Fig. 19). Magritte's series of *Shéhérazade* paintings displaced female eyes and lips and transformed them into a kind of exotic, erotic decorative object (Fig. 20). Despite their dismantling and reducing of the female body into mere objects, these Surrealist artists viewed this treatment as a metonymic practice—each body part was to ultimately represent a wholeness, or the entirety of the body. This could be described as a celebration, as André Breton illustrates in his poem, "Free Union," in which singular parts of his wife are listed and praised repeatedly—each hyper fixation overwhelming his senses in a way that invokes her total presence. This glorification of disembodied parts is nevertheless indicative of male Surrealists' efforts to condense the presence of women into smaller, more sexualized forms that could be objectified via their art. It is ultimately impossible to translate these fragmentary reductions into wholeness. The partial woman cannot equal the whole woman.[71] This device of isolation and fragmentation only succeeds in trivializing the female form as it becomes an oversimplification of the body to serve a specifically male gaze.

Where male Surrealists succeeded in collapsing, fragmenting, and controlling femininity and female imagery under the guise of conveying mystery, exoticism, and subconscious desires, Schiaparelli used these displaced images in the context of womenswear to enable the wearer to complicate and ramify her identity through layering. The wearer was able to fragment and multiply her own image by donning a bricolage of body parts that mirrored her own physical form, but in an ultimately dreamlike, exaggerated, and symbolic manner. The garment allowed the subject to disrupt traditional

[71] Mary Ann Caws, "Ladies Shot and Painted," in *The Expanding Discourse: Feminism and Art History*, ed. Norma Broude, (New York: Routledge, 1992), 386.

feminine ideals and sexualization by presenting a strange and complex construction of real and Surreal elements.

A pair of gloves designed for her 1936-7 winter collection illustrate Schiaparelli's ability to reverse the concept of clothing as a form of concealment in ways that amplified the woman's body and presence (Fig. 21). The gloves, originally paired with the *Desk Suit*, were constructed in both black and white suede with red python skin "nails" at the tip of each finger. Gloves and hands had long been common motifs in Surrealist art and literature, one of the most well-known examples being Breton's 1928 novel *Nadja* in which a pair of gloves with transformative properties become a simulacrum—the object of his amorous obsession and a symbol for the titular character's paradoxical identity.[72]

Similarities can be drawn between Schiaparelli's gloves and a 1935 photograph taken by Man Ray which focuses on two women's hands that have been painted by Picasso to mimic the appearance of wearing gloves (Fig. 22). Whereas Man Ray's image can be viewed as an instance of *trompe-l'œil* in which an exposed hand was meant to appear covered, Schiaparelli's gloves succeeded in reversing this relationship. The layering of suede on top of the hand simulates the real hand underneath, again exercising the concept of revealing through concealing. However, the starkness of the black or white leather in contrast to the natural tones of human skin would prevent viewers from mistaking the gloves for the wearer's actual hands, thus communicating Schiaparelli's

[72] Renée Riese Hubert and Breton, "The Coherence of Breton's *Nadja*," *Contemporary Literature*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Spring 1969): 251

desire to extend the body beyond its physical form with clothing that transforms parts into stylized symbols.[73]

Schiaparelli's 1937 floor-length jacket based on a drawing by Cocteau presents another example of the doubling and displacement of a woman's body. The jacket is adorned with bugle beads and sequins forming the shape of a woman's face, hands, torso, and cascading hair on a single side of the garment (Fig. 23). She writes of their creative collaboration in her memoir, "Jean Cocteau made some drawings of heads for me. I reproduced some of these on the back of an evening coat, and one, with long yellow hair reaching the waist, on a grey linen suit."[74] The textured surface of the beaded garment invites one to touch and feel, tracing the symbolized body, hair, and, by extension, the woman it adorns. The design serves as an echo to the body of the wearer: the embroidered woman's forearm and hand lies where the actual woman's left arm would rest if she laid it across her torso; the head of the female figure also emulates the profile of the subject if she were to turn to the left. The embroidered woman's hands hold a pair of shimmering beaded gloves, again referencing the common Surrealist trope of the hand and its duplicate, which could be quadrupled in this case if the wearer were to don a pair of her own gloves (especially gloves like those paired with the *Desk Suit*).

Schiaparelli's musings on self-reflection and the fragmentation of identity in her memoir are materialized in designs like this jacket. Her collaboration with Cocteau spawned an additional jacket, this time a floor-length evening coat of blue rayon and silk (Fig. 24). The back of the garment features an interpretation of the classic visual fallacy

[73] For the London Gallery's 1937 exhibition *38 Surrealist Objects and Poems,* British Surrealist Eileen Agar constructed a hat using a black pair of Schiaparelli's 1936 gloves, and ammonite, and palm leaves, further dissociating the symbolic hands from their real equivalents by transposing them onto the head.
[74] Schiaparelli, *Shocking Life*, 97.

in which both a vessel filled with pink roses and two women in profile are composed via the same outlines, allowing the viewer to see two separate images in one. Once again, Schiaparelli has employed visual metaphor, the double image, for the way in which the wearer can convey multiple parts of herself through clothing. As alluded to in her faux-mirror portrait by Horst, the perceived image is not always as it appears upon first glance. She makes an explicit reference toward the act of illusion in dress, as she similarly does with her *trompe-l'œil* prints, mirror motifs, and layering of symbols. The heavy stylization of the female face and body in both jackets heightens the dreamlike nature of the garments' images, contrasting her male counterparts' extremely visceral approach to bodily representation. Instead of evoking physicality and corporeality with her fragmented body parts, she instead invites a multiplied reflection of the wearer. By repeating and transposing these parts, the person who dons these garments is able to multiply and confuse her means of her expression, suggesting the complexity of her identity.

With the *Shoe Hat*, the *Lips Jacket*, the python nail gloves, and both embroidered coats, Schiaparelli once again plays with the concept of surface decoration as a means of inspiring a more complex self-expression through layering. She uses the female body and its stylized counterparts not as objects of desire or sexuality, but instead as both the backdrop and the performers carrying out playful performances and allowing commentaries to unfold. The juxtaposition of real bodies and their Surreal counterparts again prompts a dialogue surrounding the façade of female presentation and artifice. By complicating and extending signifiers of the body beyond its physical self and onto clothing, a more complex discussion of identity and expression is brought forth, and the

wearer thus becomes an autonomous agent in this discourse by literally wearing it on her sleeve.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have argued that Schiaparelli's fashion designs constitute an extension of feminine expression through clothing—an act inspired by her own personal experiences as a New Woman and her proclivities toward the uncanny and marvelous. I believe her natural alignment with the Surreal as expressed throughout *Shocking Life* informed her interest in portraying themes of illusion and masquerade through clothing. Schiaparelli's desire to grant the wearer an ability to display a complex and multi-faceted identity is made clear through the selection of garments I have examined. Her cognizance of the performativity innate in articulating traditional femininity is expressed via her use of playful motifs, *trompe-l'œil* prints, and defamiliarized body imagery. In doing so, she embraced surface decoration and excess, drawing a parallel to the performance of female self-adornment and self-fashioning.

Garments like the *Mirrors Jacket* and the *Desk Suit* provide a sense of autonomy to the wearer, as she is (to an extent) able to subvert and control how she is viewed by her observers with the use of mirrors and secret pockets. The *Tear-Illusion Dress* and the *Skeleton Dress* communicate dark images of violence and the macabre, but ultimately promote the wearer's autonomy to expose these vulnerabilities and reclaim power through a display of a distinctly feminine elegance and somewhat dangerous sexuality. Similarly, Schiaparelli's employment of stylized body imagery reverses the overt exploitation of female anatomy by male Surrealists. Her use of body part motifs served to engender layered meanings into her designs—meanings that served to describe female sexuality and understandings of the body beyond just its physical makeup. By

multiplying and transposing these parts, the illusory nature of masquerade and self-decoration is heightened.

It is my argument that Schiaparelli's perpetual status as an outsider, both in her early life and in Paris during the interwar period, inspired her to play with the intricacies of feminine identity in her fashion designs. By pursuing a Surrealist perspective, she was able to achieve a dreamlike aesthetic that communicated her desires to escape the everyday and abandon mundanity. This rupturing of reality allowed her to transform and destabilize traditional gender dynamics, overturning them to instead empower the wearer. In transforming her various obstacles into opportunity, Schiaparelli was able to attain international success as a New Woman. Her career, though cut short after the end of World War II, demonstrated her ability to fashion her identity and shape herself into the woman of her dreams and (formerly) unconscious desires, as well as her capacity to do the same for other women. This journey of overcoming, she writes, is ultimately an internal one—"The only escape is oneself, and nobody can take that away—it is stronger than jealousy, hardship, or oppression."[75]

[75] Schiaparelli, *Shocking Life,* ii.

Figures

Figure 1. Horst P. Horst. *Elsa Schiaparelli Reflected in a Mirror*, 1937.

Figure 2. Man Ray. *Nusch Éluard in Schiaparelli dress, mirror, and purse*, 1935.

Figure 3. Elsa Schiaparelli. *Evening jacket*, 1938-9. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Figure 4. Elsa Schiaparelli. *Evening jacket*, 1938-9. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Figure 5. Cecil Beaton. *Schiaparelli's Desk Suit*, *Vogue*, September, 1936.

Figure 6. Elsa Schiaparelli and Salvador Dalí. *The Tear-Illusion Dress,* 1938. Viscose-rayon and silk blend printed with *trompe-l'oeil* print. V & A, London.

Figure 7. Elsa Schiaparelli and Salvador Dalí. *The Skeleton Dress*, 1938. Silk crêpe, trapunto quilting, cotton padding. V & A, London.

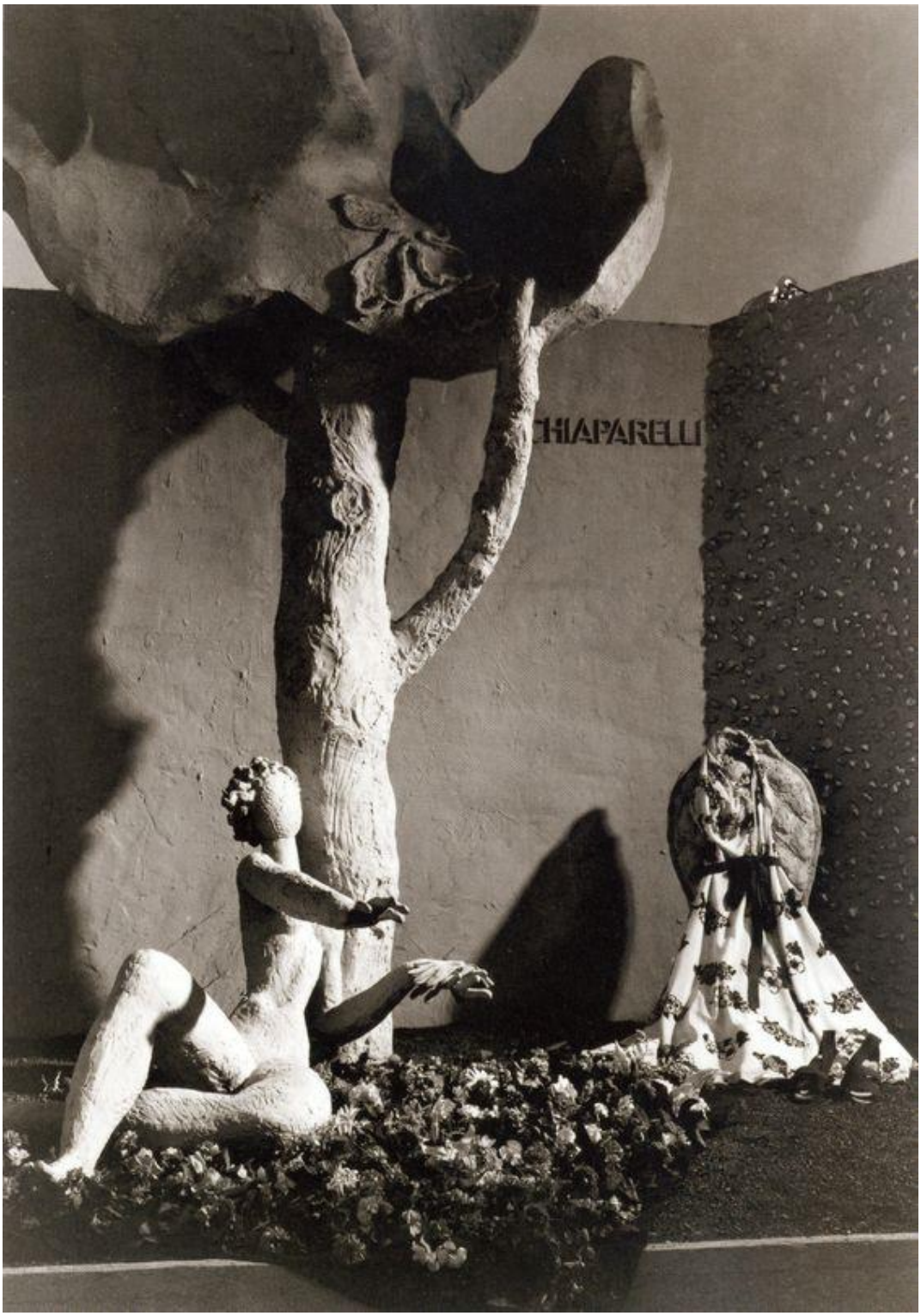

Figure 8. Wols, *Elsa Schiaparelli's display at Le Pavillon de l'Élégance*, 1937.

Figure 9. Salvador Dalí. *Three Young Surrealist Women Holding in their Arms the Skins of an Orchestra*, 1936.

Figure 10. Salvador Dalí. *Necrophiliac Springtime*, 1936

Figure 11. Elsa Schiaparelli and Salvador Dalí. *The Tear-Illusion Dress*, 1938. Viscose-rayon and silk blend printed with *trompe-l'oeil* print. V & A, London.

Figure 12. Elsa Schiaparelli. *Pair of evening gloves*, 1938. Crêpe. V & A Museum, London.

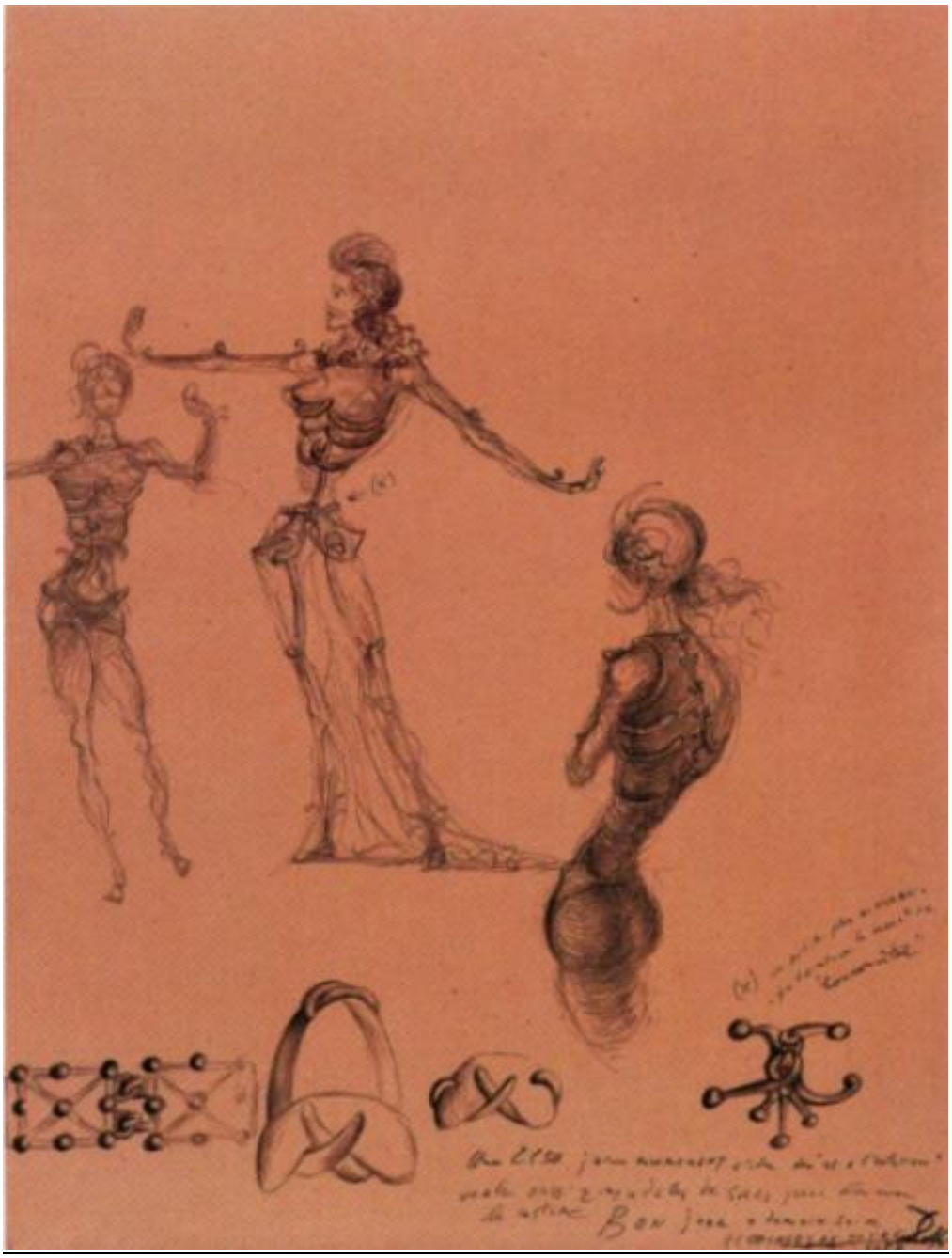

Figure 13. Salvador Dalí. *Design drawing for Skeleton Dress*. Indian ink on paper, 1938. Archives of Schiaparelli. Paris, France.

Figure 14. House of Schiaparelli. *Fashion sketch of "skeleton" evening dress for summer 1938.* Musée de la Mode du Textile, Paris. Collection UFAC, D 73.21.1874.

Figure 15. Man Ray. *Schiaparelli shoe hat and lips jacket,* 1937.

Figure 16. Elsa Schiaparelli and Salvador Dalí. *Shoe Hat*, 1937-8. Wool felt and silk velvet. V & A, London.

D'un certain Automatisme du Goût

par TRISTAN TZARA

Figure 17. Man Ray. *Hats from Schiaparelli's collection for winter 1933-4*. Reproduced from *Minotaure* magazine, nos. 3-4 (Oct.-Dec. 1933), pp. 81, 83. Courtesy of the Philadelphia Museum of Art Library © Man Ray Trust/ Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY/ADAGP, Paris.

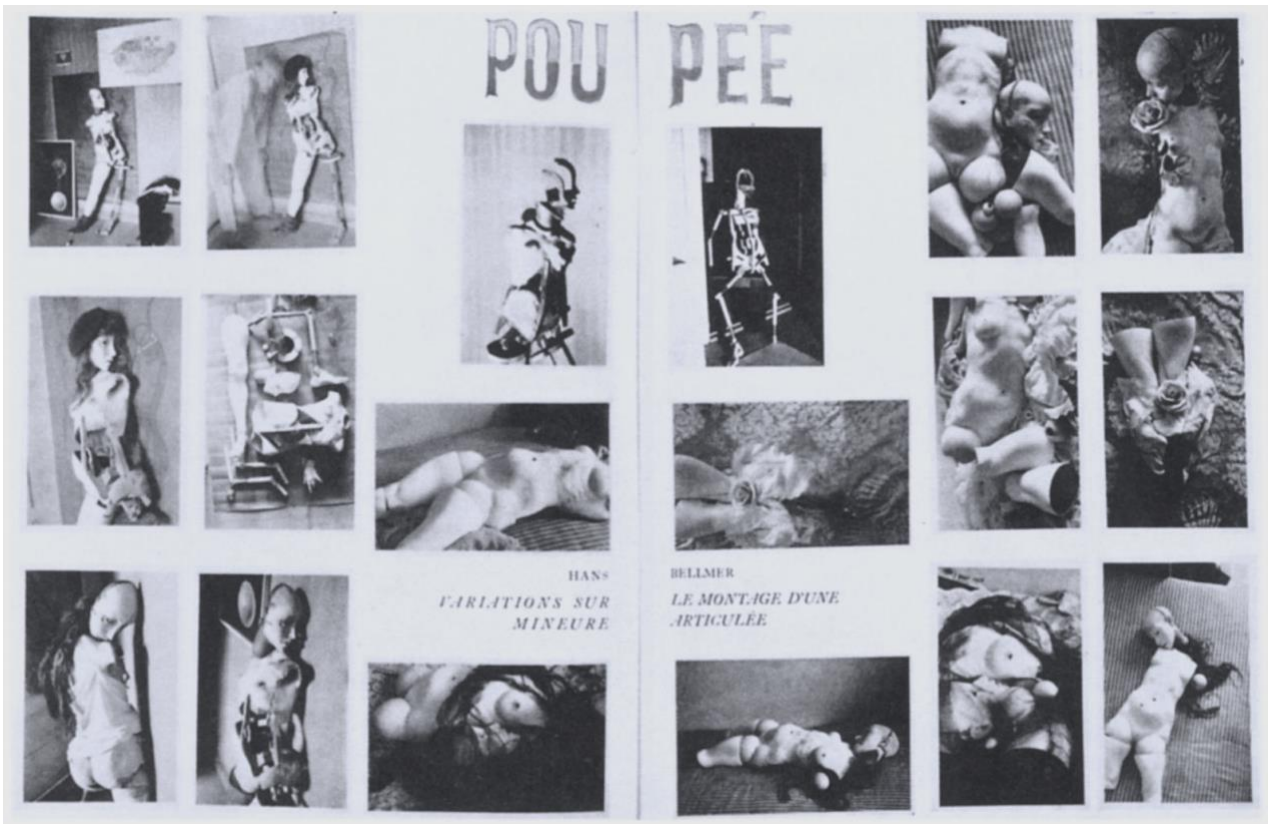

Figure 18. Hans Bellmer. *Poupée*, 1935. In *Minotaure* 6 (Winter 1935): 30–31. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York /ADAGP, Paris.

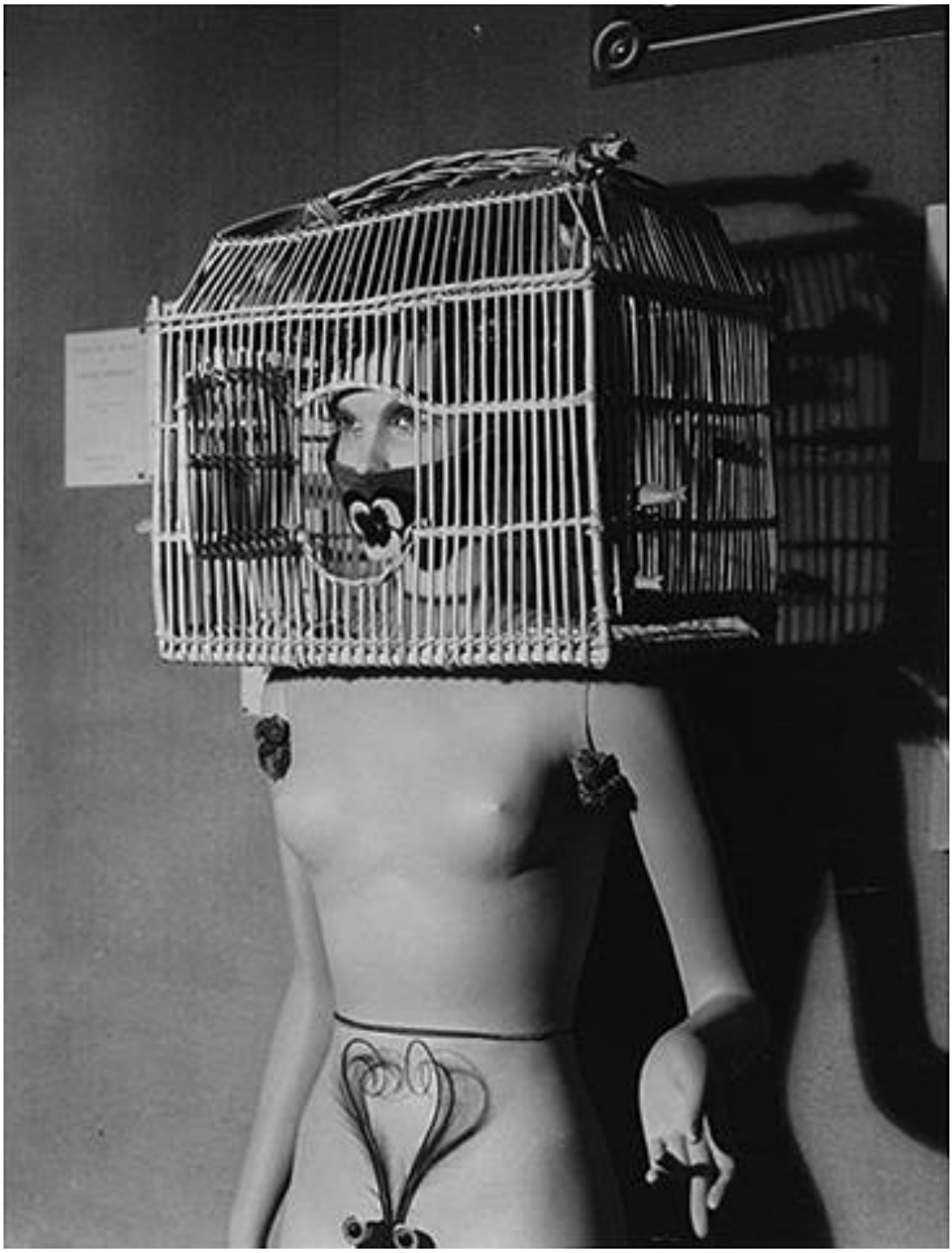

Figure 19. Man Ray. *André Masson's mannequin at the International Surrealist Exhibition*, 1938.

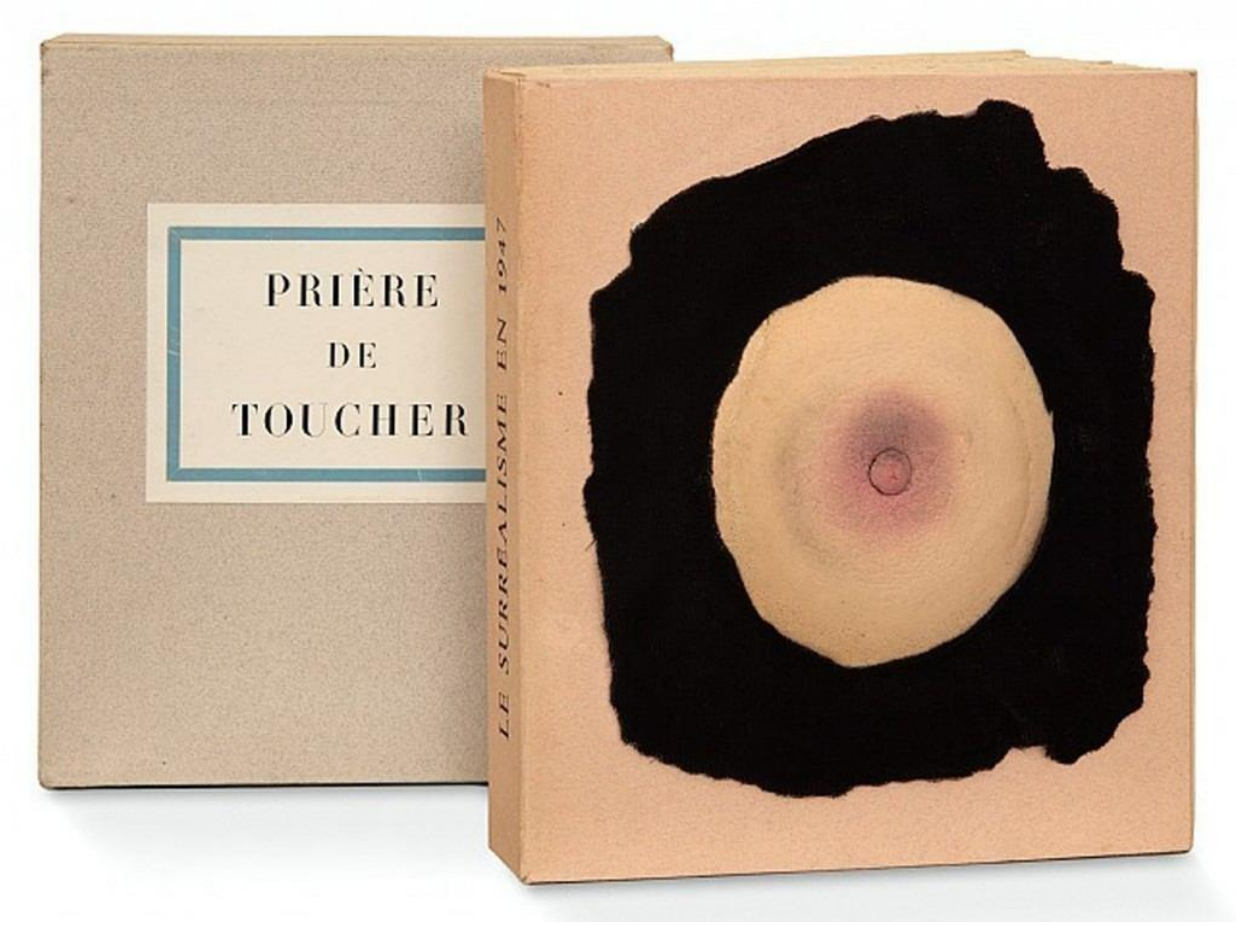

Figure 20. Marcel Duchamp. *Prière de toucher (Please Touch)*, 1947. Book with collage of foam rubber, pigment, velvet, and cardboard adhered to removable cover. © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris / Succession Marcel Duchamp. Philadelphia Museum of Art.

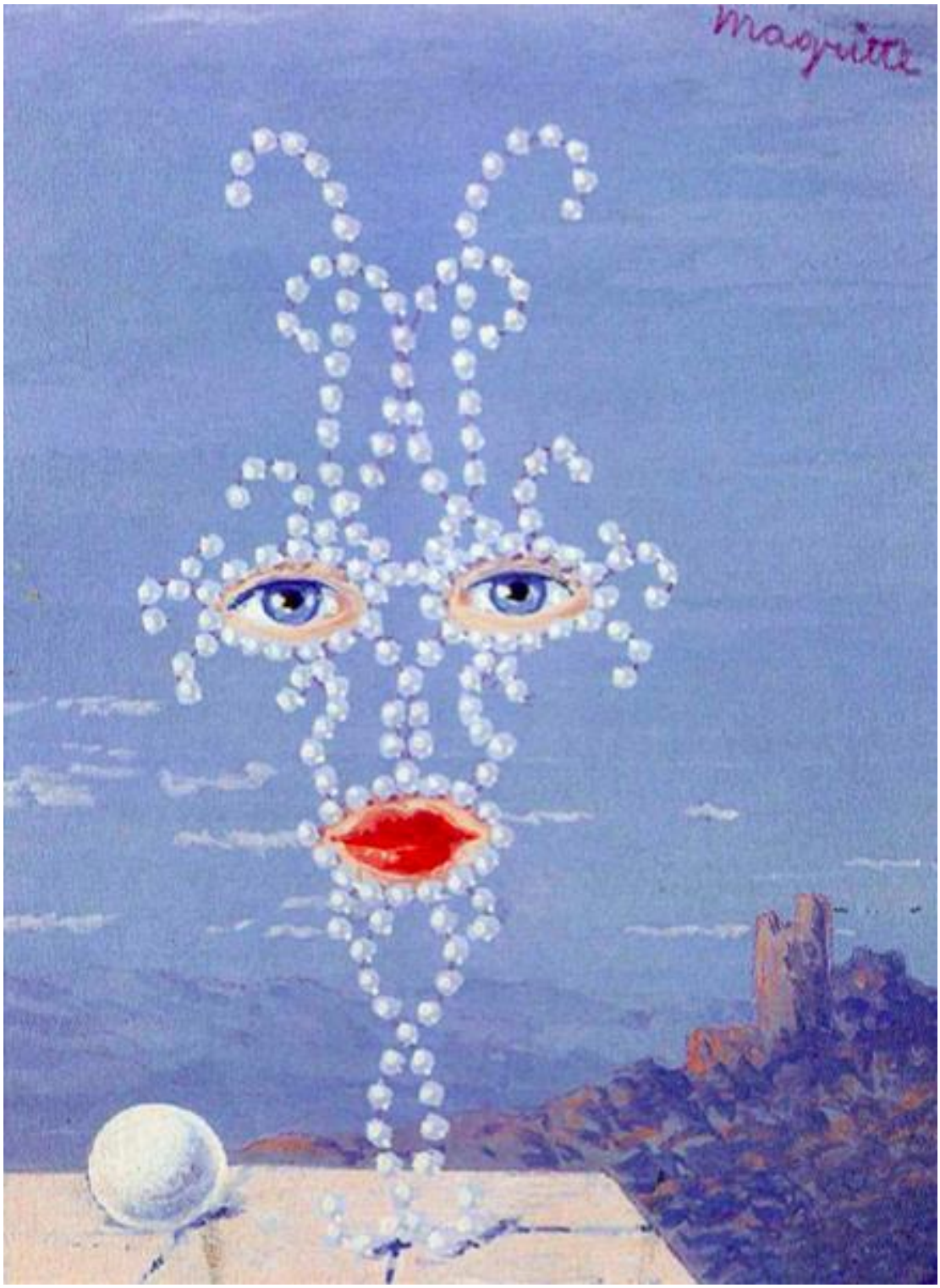

Figure 21. René Magritte. *Shéhérazade*, 1950.

Figure 22. Elsa Schiaparelli. *Gloves*, winter 1936-37. Black suede with red snakeskin simulating fingernails. Philadelphia Museum of Art.

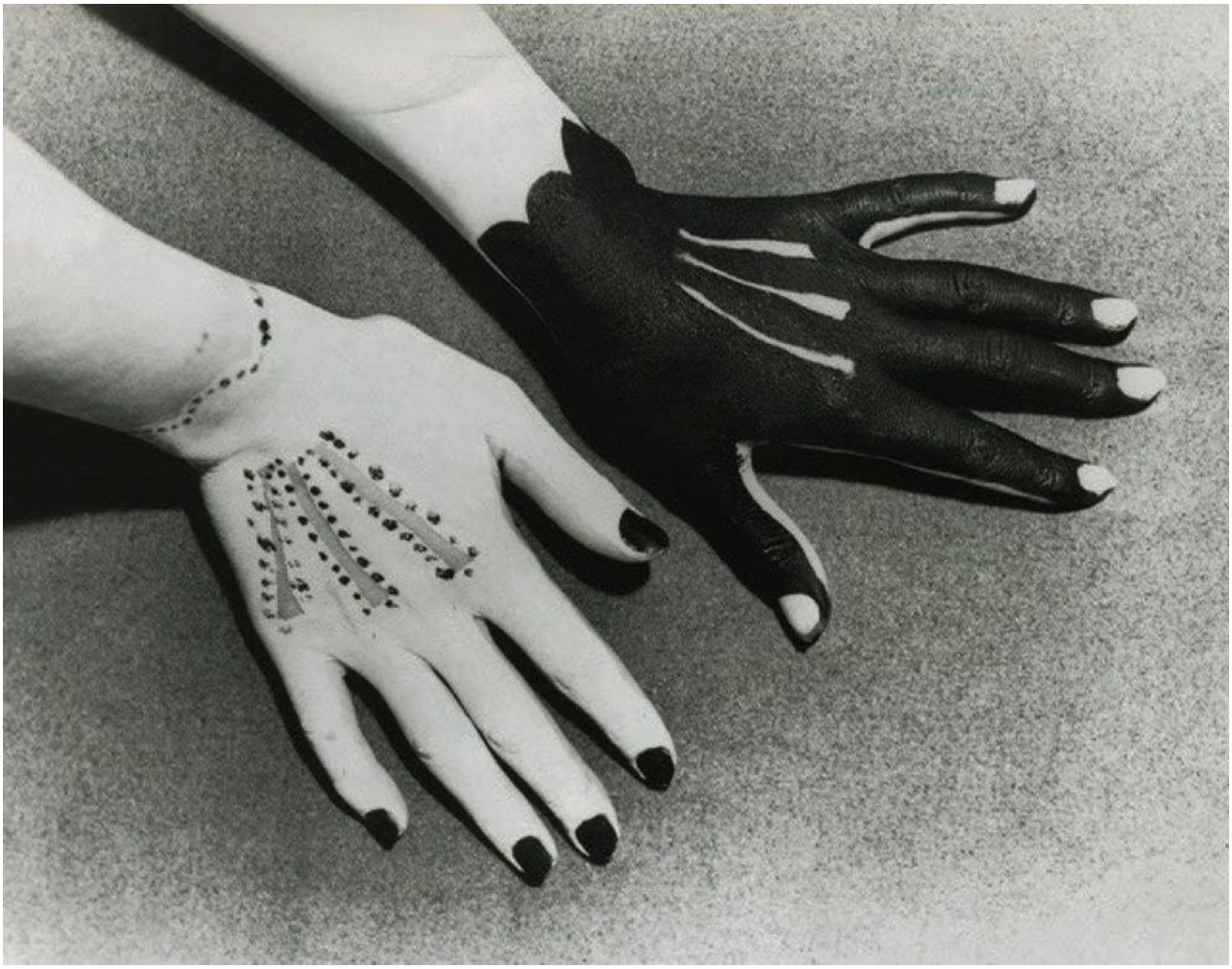

Figure 23. Man Ray and Pablo Picasso. *Hands Painted with Trompe-L'œil Imitating Gloves,* 1935.

Figure 24. Elsa Schiaparelli in collaboration with Jean Cocteau. *Woman's Dinner Jacket*, Fall 1937. Linen plain weave, gilded metallic and silk thread embroidery, beads, and paillettes. Embroidered by Lesage, Paris. Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Figure 25. Elsa Schiaparelli in collaboration with Jean Cocteau. *Woman's Evening Coat*, Fall 1937. Rayon knit, silk and gilded metallic thread embroidery, silk appliquéd flowers. Embroidered by Lesage, Paris, founded 1922. Philadelphia Museum of Art.

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