



**RENÉ
MAGRITTE
MUSEUM**

GUIDE - EN

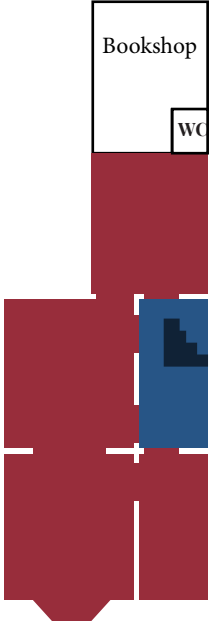
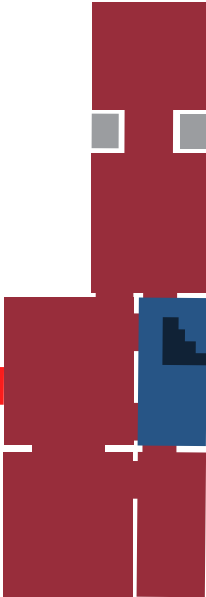


MAP OF THE RENÉ MAGRITTE MUSEUM

SECOND FLOOR

FIRST FLOOR

Access through the museum of Abstract Art



Exhibition rooms

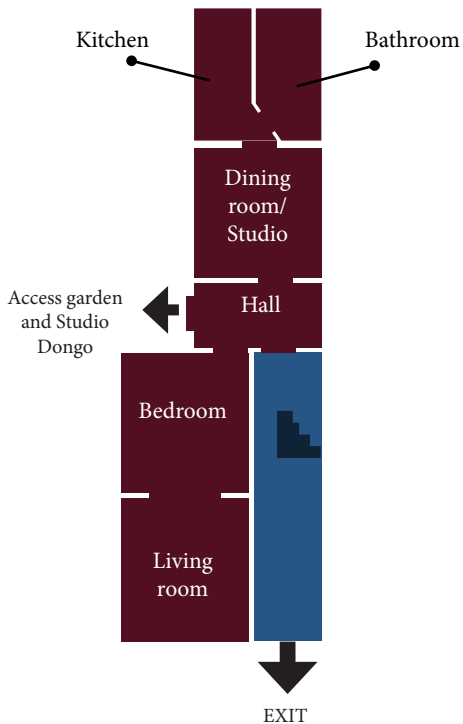
Stairwell

Hall

Private spaces

Magritte Appartement

GROUND FLOOR



WHAT IS SURREALISM ? (2nd floor)

Surrealism partially originated from Dada. Dada was mainly attracted to chance and absurdity, whereas Surrealism focussed more on the **unconscious**, and any fixed meaning was questioned. In order to retrieve some information of the unconscious, certain techniques (such as automatic writing and drawing) were applied and dream images were used as a source of inspiration. The godfather of Surrealism, André Breton, defined Surrealism in his manifesto of 1924: **‘Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express—verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner—the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern.’**

Giorgio De Chirico was for many surrealists a prime source of inspiration. His academic style brings the spectator to a **dreamlike universum** where objects interact with each other. Magritte would also dedicate himself, around 1925, to similar surrealist images. Max Ernst, Paul Delvaux and Salvador Dali were equally influenced by the Italian master.

In Belgium, Pol Bury and Christian Dotremont would, after 1945, restore the link between Surrealism and Abstract art. In 1946 they formed **Le Surréalisme révolutionnaire** that would evolve into **CoBrA**.

THE LOST MAGRITTE (2nd floor)

Here you see **27 exact copies** of paintings and sculptures that Magritte conceived between 1922 and 1966. The copies are made between 2005 en 2016, and are a result of intensive research regarding composition, style and use of color. The reasons of the destruction of the original works are numerous. Most of them were destroyed in 1940 when a German **bomb** hit a warehouse in London. Others were accidentally destroyed by collectors, or have been **repainted** by Magritte himself. Often these works are representative of a certain period of Magritte's career showing themes he never repeated afterwards. Most of these works have been lost for 70 years, and sometimes, in the best case, merely a black and white picture still exists. The aim of showing these reconstructions is **solely for scientific and didactic purposes**.

The last time art lovers were able to admire a new work of Magritte dates back to Januari 1967, in Paris. More than half a century has passed since then. The **Lost Magrittes** on display provide the visitor, probably for the last time ever, an opportunity to experience a similar feeling.

We would like to thank the Magritte Foundation for their kind permission.

BIOGRAPHY OF RENÉ MAGRITTE (*1st floor*)

René Magritte was born in 1898 and spent his youth in **Châtelet** where he started painting at the age of 11. He met his future wife, **Georgette Berger**, at the village fair. In 1922 they married and decided to move to Jette (North of Brussels). During this period, Magritte painted in a **cubist-abstract style** and produced his **first surrealist works**. Shortly afterwards, they would try their luck in Paris. Three years later they returned to Jette, to this house, in **Rue Essegem 135**. Over the next 24 years Magritte would paint **800 works** that cover various themes. However, public recognition eluded the artist. He also participated in several short-lived magazines and supported some manifestos and pamphlets with an inflammatory content. During the occupation, Magritte changed his style of painting, a style that was influenced by Impressionism and that is called his **Renoir-period**. In 1947, New York gallery owner Alexander Iolas sold some works of Magritte. The year after Magritte decided to show in Paris a series of works that was painted roughly and in bright colors, which he called his **Période Vache**. After a short period he returned to his familiar style, at least to 'please Georgette', and painted in his living room annex studio one of his masterpieces: *L'empire des lumières*. In 1954, Magritte and Georgette moved to Schaarbeek, where the artist started an international career. On the 15th of August 1967 Magritte died relatively young of cancer at home.

VISITING RENÉ MAGRITTE

(groundfloor)

René en Georgette Magritte rented the **ground floor** of this house from 1930 until 1954. They were looking for an apartment with a garden, mainly for their dog Loulou. In the studio, which Magritte had built at the back of the garden (**Studio Dongo**), he, after a while, only produced publicity work. He made his paintings in a small room annex living space, where the Belgian surrealists also met once a week. Due to its limited amount of natural light and space, we may call it an atypical studio. The surrealist artist painted here no less than **half of his oeuvre** (c. 800 paintings).

The inspiration for his paintings was drawn from his **direct environment**, therefore the apartment is not only historically important, it also gives us more insight into his art.

The apartment has been almost entirely reconstructed with **authentic furniture** and with a composition based on photos and on eyewitnesses' accounts. It is interesting to note the **black and red** furniture in the bedroom, designed by Magritte during his abstract period (1922).