

THE
FORECAST
IS HOT!

REVOLUTION
AGAINST
WHITENESS

SURREALIST
WOMEN

BLUES &
THE POETIC
SPIRIT

MEMPHIS
MINNIE'S
BLUES

SURREALIST
EXPERIENCES

WHO NEEDS
THE WTO?

IMAGES OF
DESIRE

POETRY

TIME-TRAVELERS
POTLATCH

REVIEWS

RELATED
LINKS

BLACK SWAN
PRESS/
SURREALIST
EDITIONS



SURREALIST GAMES

"Surrealist Games" highlights collective play as a major form of surrealist research. Currently featured here is the game Time-Travelers' Potlatch.

TIME TRAVELERS' POTLATCH

In Time-Travelers' Potlatch, each player indicates the *gift* that she/he would present to various historical, mythical, or fictional figures on the occasion of their meeting. The game introduces the *object* into an imaginary relationship that otherwise tends to be defined too superficially by an arbitrary and abstract subjectivity. The object—the *gift*—functions symbolically between the giver (the player, who lives in the present) and the receiver (who dwells in the past, or on another plane of existence). Altering the relationship between the two, the imagined gift constitutes a third term: a catalyst of the future in the form of a crystallization of *desire*. Thus the game opens a new approach, from an unanticipated angle, to all the old and unresolved problems of projection, identification, idealization, fixation, obsession, etc.

The examples here are selected from a game played in Chicago on October 2nd, 1999. Louis Armstrong, Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven and the Marquis de Sade were all suggested as recipients, but players were also invited to present gifts to anyone they liked.

A Selection of Gifts

Anne Olson

For Catherine the Great: My foot and a chainsaw dipped in lime juice

For the Marquis de Sade: Space shoes and ping pong and lollipops and MTV

For Simone de Beauvoir: Red sheets and blue sheets and jaundiced kewpie doll legs

For Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven: A boa of thorns

Penelope Rosemont

For Hannah Höch: A rooster wearing a Balinese hat and playing the "St. Louis Blues" on a trumpet

For Robert Desnos: A very comfortable pillow that enables him to communicate with the planet Venus while asleep, and which allows him to become the first Earthman to play Venusian music on the harmonica

For Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven: A castle on the East River with hot and cold running words, steam-heated poetry, and wall-to-wall chance encounters

Paul Garon

For Memphis Minnie: 1000 silver dollars with which to make an entire gown

For Tommy Johnson: A case of 100-proof Chivas Regal and a set of Steuben glass vessels to drink from

For Sandor Ferenczi: Membership in a polygamous tribe

For Louis Armstrong: A chauffeured pirogue, covered in fur, to sail down the Hudson River

Sarah Metcalf

For the Marquis de Sade: A bed of pink sherbet in a field of poppies

For Saint-Just: A hall of mirrors where he could witness the infinity of his physical being

For Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven: A carousel of forbidden fruits shrouded in piano keys

Jennifer Bean

For Meret Oppenheim: Rocks of varying shapes and sizes that I collected while walking from my home to hers

For Franz Kafka: A newspaper article about the chess game between Gary Kasparov and Deep Blue

For the Marquis de Sade: Access to the Internet

For Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven: A camera

Franklin Rosemont

For Thelonious Monk: A rhinoceros-shaped piano covered with starfish

For Mary Shelley: A large igloo on Waikiki Beach, with music by Johnny Hodges

For Louis Armstrong: The Eiffel Tower, painted black and leaning at a 45 degree angle

For Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven: a baby-blue steam locomotive in which she could roar down the streets of New York

Ron Sakolsky

For Vachel Lindsay: Sun Ra's celestial greetings sent from Saturn in a pulsating mass of glowing blue light encircling the poet's bed of dreams in mysterious Springfield, Illinois

For Louis Armstrong: A platter of white hot chocolate alligators to surround the perfect note

Ryan Deibert

For Louis Armstrong: A postcard from Madame Laveau's; pasted to the back, a picture of my friends and me asleep under his statue at Congo Square

For Joseph Cornell: My first diorama from kindergarten, in which the heads of thistles were prehistoric trees for purple dinosaurs to eat

For Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven: A tie stolen from my father's closet

EXQUISITE CORPSE

[Exquisite Corpse](#)

Anne Olson, Franklin Rosemont, and Beth Garon

[Exquisite Corpse](#)

Penelope Rosemont, Jennifer Bean, and RyanDeibert

[Exquisite Corpse](#)

Daina Almario-Kopp, Christina Sornito, Jennifer Bean, and Anne Olson

"Game of folded paper which consists of having several people compose a phrase or drawing collectively, none of the participants having any idea of the nature of the preceding contribution or contributions. The now classical example, which gave its name to the game, is the first sentence obtained in this manner: The exquisite—corpse—shall drink—the young—wine."

—Abridged Dictionary of Surrealism (1938)

The Exquisite Corpse game has served many functions for the Chicago Surrealists, their friends and their colleagues. It can be both initiatory and exploratory, both inspiring and clarifying, both relaxing and stimulating. And when one adds to this mixture the notion of the *observer*, the functions multiply geometrically.

—Paul Garon