



## Dušán and Voitre Marek: Surrealists at sea

*'The sea is an enormous windmill.'* - Dušan Marek

*[surrealism is] ... seeing not only with eye in eyeholes but opening new eyes in knees, in throat, in palms.* - Voitre Marek

**Adelaide, Australia:** *Dušán and Voitre Marek: Surrealists at sea* at the Art Gallery of South Australia will be the first major survey of the art of Czech-Australian brothers Dušan and Voitre Marek. The exhibition will draw together over 200 works from public and private collections across the country, many of which will be on public display for the first time.

AGSA Director Rhana Devenport ONZM says, 'Necessary and illuminating, this exhibition follows a similarly remarkable story of rediscovery as AGSA's recent Clarice Beckett survey. *Surrealists at sea* aims to reinsert the art and influence of Dušan and Voitre Marek back into the pages of Australian art history, where the contributions of many émigré artists have been too often overlooked.'

From their arrival in Adelaide in 1948, Dušan and Voitre set into motion a surge of new ideas that challenged the conventions of Australian art. Their pioneering surrealist exhibitions in Adelaide and Sydney were met with praise, puzzlement and censorship. Among those objects deemed 'incomprehensible and obscene', are paintings created on board the *SS Charlton Sovereign* during their long sea journey to Australia, which form the heart of this exhibition.

Set against the sound of ticking clocks and a music box, *Surrealists at sea* will trace six decades of the artists' radical explorations in diverse media: paintings, drawings, sculpture, prints, photographs, jewellery and Dusan's avant-garde films. Inviting the viewer to plunge into

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the depths of their investigations, doors, windows and mirrors in this exhibition become avenues to transport the mind and ignite the imagination.

Exhibition curator, AGSA's Associate Curator of Australian Art, Elle Freak says, 'Like remnants of a dream, Dušan and Voitre's art resists straightforward interpretation. They embraced the intangible and ambiguous in their exploration of the very mysteries of the human heart and mind. As the exhibition title suggests, the sea, with its mystery, romance, and metaphor, frequently appears in both artists' work and forms a connecting thread throughout this exhibition.

'An active meditation on time, travel, love and liberty - dual stories of another time, yet with a potency for today, this exhibition is at once long overdue and yet perfectly timed for now,' Rhana Devenport ONZM said.

To accompany the exhibition, Patch Theatre has devised an immersive and interactive space for art lovers of all ages as part of the inaugural Illuminate Adelaide. Entitled *Sea of Light*, this project draws inspiration from Voitre Marek's time as a lighthouse keeper on Kangaroo Island. *Surrealists at sea* will also be supported by a number of free events as part of AGSA's inclusive public programs. Entry to this exhibition is free.

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## **IMAGES**

[https://files.artgallery.sa.gov.au/ftp/marketing/MEDIA/2021/Surrealists\\_at\\_Sea\\_IMAGES.zip](https://files.artgallery.sa.gov.au/ftp/marketing/MEDIA/2021/Surrealists_at_Sea_IMAGES.zip)

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## **Exhibition Season**

19 Jun – 12 Sep 2021

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Header image: Dušan Marek, 1926-93, *Analysis of substance*, 1952, Kings Cross, Sydney, oil on canvas, 36.5 x 88.2 cm; Purchased with the assistance of James Agapitos OAM and Ray Wilson OAM 2007, National Gallery of Australia © Art Gallery of New South Wales.