

# Mary Reynolds

and the Spirit of Surrealism

THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO *Museum Studies*

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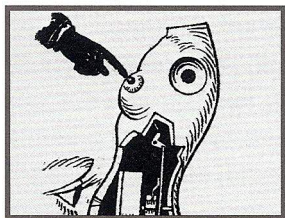


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# Edward Hopper's *Nighthawks*, Surrealism, and the War

GAIL LEVIN

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W e all know Edward Hopper as a great master in the ranks of American realists.<sup>1</sup> Few would readily link him to the European movement known as Surrealism. Yet the very galleries at the fledgling Museum of Modern Art, where Alfred H. Barr, Jr., the museum's founding director, hung Hopper's first retrospective in 1933, played host just three years later to the first major show of Surrealist art in New York ("Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism"). Such shows at the Modern had been regularly attended by Edward and Jo Hopper ever since the museum's founding in 1929, as Jo recounted in the diaries that she kept from the early 1930s on. The Surrealists' opening was no exception. What Edward liked, he told Jo, was their fine use of color; some of them, he observed slyly, were better artists than they realized.<sup>2</sup> Knowing Hopper's own aesthetic predilection for realism, we can imagine him preferring the ironic verisimilitude of painters such as René Magritte and Salvador Dali. Magritte's claustrophobic spaces bear an affinity with Hopper's own.

Other affinities between the Surrealists' art and Hopper's work were not hard to see. In Barr's show, a number of artists featured dream imagery and nocturnal visions—from Dali's *The Persistence of Memory* (1931; The Museum of Modern Art, New York) to Yves Tanguy's *The Storm (Black Landscape)* (fig. 2). The latter emphasizes night, which had early

fascinated Hopper, who produced etchings of uncanny scenes such as *Night on the El Train* in 1920 and *Night Shadows* and *Night in the Park* in 1921 (figs. 3–5). Although Hopper was more circumspect than the Surrealists, something of their concern with sexuality and psychological introspection underlies the aesthetic that he articulated for the catalogue of his 1933 retrospective: "I believe that the great painters, with their intellect as master, have attempted to force this unwilling medium of paint and canvas into a record of their emotions. I find any digression from this large aim leads me to boredom."<sup>3</sup>

More revealing than his painfully spare prose is an introspective self-caricature that Hopper produced around the time of the Surrealism show representing an imaginary dream—*Le Rêve de Josie* (fig. 6). In the role of the man of "Jo's dream," Hopper sketched himself as a dude, decked out in tweeds and cape, a feather tucked into his hat band, peering through a monocle. Yet the hands are as hirsute as the suit, and the socks slip, revealing shanks as prickly as the hands. To one side sits a wicker basket crammed with heavy reading.

Hopper's use of French in addressing this drawing to Jo reflects their lifelong inter-

**Our awareness of Hopper's expressed admiration for some of the Surrealists' work should help us to understand better the complexity of Hopper himself.**

LEFT  
Berenice Abbott  
(American, 1898–1991).  
*Edward Hopper*,  
1948. Gelatin silver  
print; 40 x 32.3 cm.  
The Art Institute  
of Chicago, Peabody  
Fund (1951.258).  
Reproduced with the  
permission of Berenice  
Abbott/Commerce  
Graphics Ltd., Inc.

est in the culture from which the Surrealists emerged, starting with the movement's favorite poetry. The Hoppers' enthusiasm for French Symbolist poets began with Paul Verlaine, whom they quoted to each other while courting, and grew to encompass Stéphane Mallarmé and Arthur Rimbaud, who is sometimes referred to as a pre-Surrealist and was admired by André Breton, among others.<sup>4</sup> Yet the word "dream" in the drawing's title also evokes the vogue of dream analysis and the impact of Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung. Hopper had long shared with the Surrealists an interest in Freud. Freud's ideas figure in the first Surrealist Manifesto, which Breton published in 1924: "Freud very rightly brought his critical faculties to bear upon the dream."<sup>5</sup> But as early as 1913, Freud was already a topic of discussion in Greenwich Village, when Hopper first moved to Washington Square, where he was to remain for the rest of his life.

Freud stimulated conversation and much activity in the avant-garde circle that buzzed around the salon of Mabel Dodge, which was a short walk up Fifth Avenue from Hopper's studio. Although Hopper never seems to have been part of Dodge's circle, Freudian notions provoked plenty of discussion in other quarters. Hopper certainly rubbed shoulders with Freud in the popular press when his illustrations for "The Hero Business," a story by Edith Mirrielees, appeared in the June 1915 issue of *Everybody's Magazine* along with Max Eastman's "Exploring the Soul and Healing the Body."<sup>6</sup> Eastman, a defining spirit of Village culture, discussed the "two schools of psycho-analysis" headed by Freud and Jung,<sup>7</sup> whose names figure prominently in another self-caricature by Hopper. He depicted himself as a skinny child with outsized embryonic head and huge eyeglasses who clutches under his arm two books labeled "Jung" and

"Freud." The drawing wittily combines the ideas of the impressionable infant, vulnerable to neuroses, and the adult "voracious reader" fascinated with the latest fashion for "dissecting the human species," which is how Hopper's satiric bent was once described.<sup>8</sup> Hopper was capable of talking about Freud for an entire evening, as Jo reported in one of her diary entries; and his comments in an interview years



later confirm his enduring interest in psychoanalytic ideas.<sup>9</sup>

Prominent among these ideas was the belief expressed by Jung that “dreams give information about the secrets of the inner life,” which otherwise remains hidden from consciousness.<sup>10</sup> A desire to plumb such inner depths informs Hopper’s statement, quoted above, that he sought to capture his emotions

through art. Likewise, the idea of a contrast between outer and inner reality informs the caricature *Le Rêve de Josie*, with its representation of the contrast between artificial smartness on the outside and natural awkwardness beneath.

### Surrealism, the War, and *Nighthawks*

In the later 1930s, as tensions rose in Europe,

FIGURE 1  
Edward Hopper  
(American, 1882–1967).  
*Nighthawks*, 1942. Oil  
on canvas; 84.1 x 152.4  
cm. The Art Institute of  
Chicago, Friends of  
American Art  
Collection (1942.51).



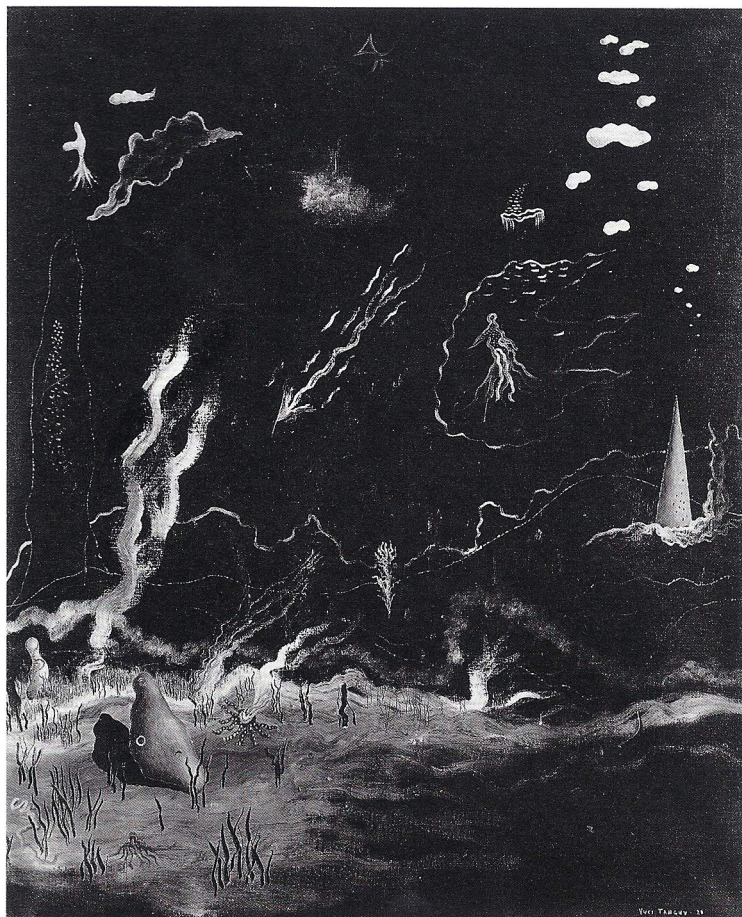


FIGURE 2  
Yves Tanguy  
(American [born  
France], 1900–1955).  
*The Storm (Black  
Landscape)*, 1926.  
Oil on canvas; 81.3 x  
65.4 cm. Philadelphia  
Museum of Art  
(1950–134–187).

the Surrealists and other vanguard artists found themselves vilified and threatened. Many sought refuge in New York, where The Museum of Modern Art had prepared the way for their art. The Europeans attracted attention from critics, galleries, and collectors, often at the expense of Americans such as Hopper. In the long run, the wave of immigrants would revolutionize the American art scene. At the time, their plight received much attention in the press and communicated a growing sense of uneasiness about the war.

Matta, the young Chilean Surrealist, arrived in New York from France on November 1, 1939, and in March 1941 his painting *Invasion of the Night* (fig. 7) was featured in an exhibition on Surrealism arranged by the art

dealer Howard Putzel at the New School for Social Research in Greenwich Village, which was not far from Hopper's studio on Washington Square. (A number of the Surrealists, including Breton, Matta, Tanguy, and the painter Gordon Onslow Ford, were also living in Greenwich Village in the early forties.) Accompanying the exhibition was a lecture series, "Surrealist Painting: An Adventure into Human Consciousness," delivered by Onslow Ford.

Onslow Ford spoke of his close friend Matta's fascination with "psychic landscape" in terms that recall Hopper's interest in introspective moods and his own admission that in *Nighthawks* (fig. 1) he painted from his "unconscious." Onslow Ford concluded by praising the "bleak landscapes" of American Surrealist Kay Sage (the wife of the French Surrealist Yves Tanguy) for "creating an atmosphere where some important drama is bound to be enacted."<sup>11</sup> Exactly the same might be said of the atmosphere created by Hopper with the realist setting of *Nighthawks*.

Whether or not the Hoppers attended Onslow Ford's lectures or saw the accompanying Surrealist exhibition, Matta's theme of "night invasion" was about to become an urgent preoccupation in their lives. They would come to feel exposed to imminent invasion both in their Cape Cod retreat and in New York, under the skylights of their top-floor walk-up studio.<sup>12</sup> By the late summer of 1940, Edward wrote to his old friend Guy Pène du Bois: "We are evidently eye witnesses to one of those great shiftings of power that have occurred periodically in Europe, as long as there has been a Europe, and there is not much to be done about it, except to suffer the anxiety of those on the side lines, and to try not to be shifted ourselves."<sup>13</sup> He also gave a clue as to how he would deal with the anxiety: "Painting seems to be a good enough refuge from all

this, if one can get one's dispersed mind together long enough to concentrate on it."

As it turned out, Hopper did not find it possible to paint again until the following February: on Valentine's Day, he conceived the striking picture *Girlie Show* (1941; private collection). A further attack of painter's block led the Hoppers to travel West that summer in search of subjects. Back in New York in November 1941, Hopper again found himself stymied before a blank canvas in his studio—which is how he appears in a photograph by the young Arnold Newman, who caught the inwardness and tenseness of his subject, and even the difficulty of filling a canvas (fig. 8).

Notably, Hopper would have seen the exhibitions of Joan Miró and Dali that opened at The Museum of Modern Art in November 1941. Since the beginning of the previous year, the Hoppers had become members of the Modern; Jo wrote in her diary that she and Edward had been invited to everything since the museum's founding in 1929, and that "it's high time we joined."<sup>14</sup> Hopper would have found something to applaud in the essay by James Johnson Sweeney in the Miró exhibition catalogue, which quoted Miró on the importance of subject matter: "Have you ever heard of greater nonsense than the aims of the abstractionist group?"<sup>15</sup>



FIGURE 3

Edward Hopper. *Night on the El Train*, 1920. Etching, printed in greenish-black on white wove paper; 18.7 x 20.1 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of the Print and Drawing Club (1944.154).

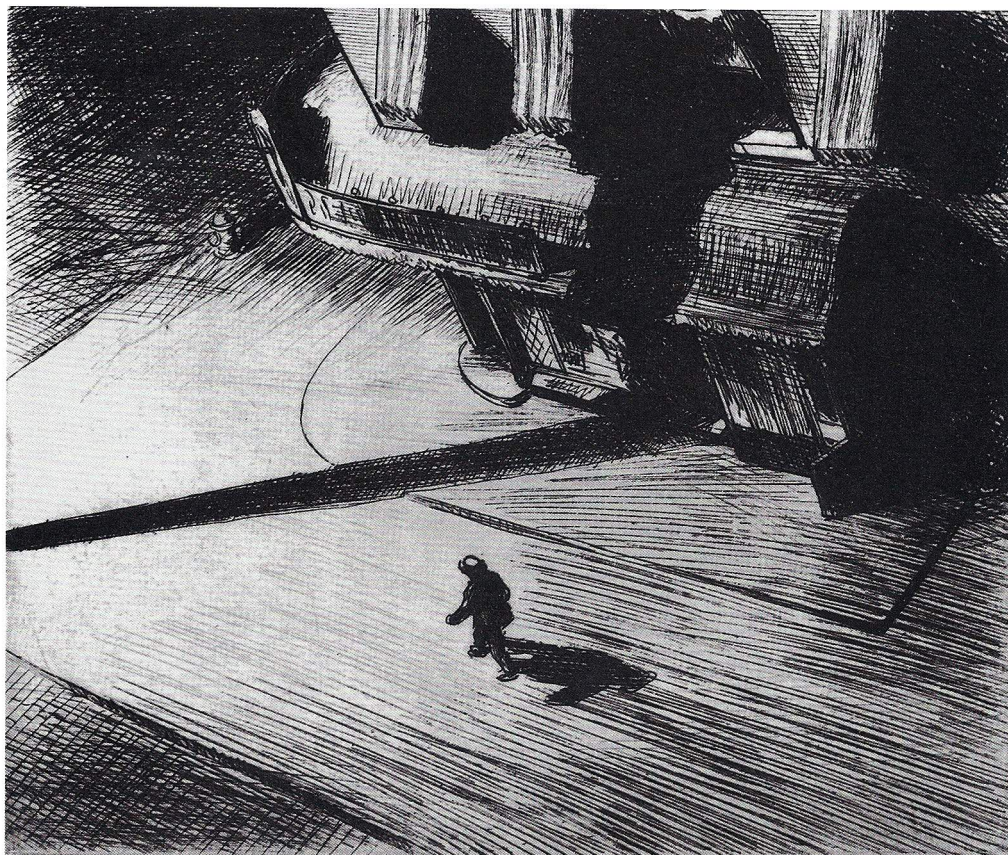
It was mid-November when Newman found Hopper unable to paint. A month later, Hopper had concentrated enough to begin the canvas that would eventually be called *Nighthawks* and become his most famous work. Jo considered that Edward's concentration on the painting was preternatural, in view of the alarm and agitation that gripped all New York and certainly herself in the wake of the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7:

Ed refused to take any interest in our very likely prospect of being bombed—and we live right under glass sky-lights and a roof that leaks whenever it rains. He refuses to make for any more precautions and only jeers at me for packing a knapsack with towels and keys and soap and check book, shirt, stockings, garters in case we ran to

race out doors in our nighties. For the black-out we have no shade over the sky light . . . but Ed can't be bothered. He's doing a new canvas and simply can't be interrupted! The Rehn gallery invites E. to remove some of his pictures to a store house so that the whole collection won't be in one place. Frank Rehn is very concerned and making many precautionary measures. I can't say I'm a bit panicky [*sic*] but I'm the kind that believes in precautions, and in a matter that everyone is concerned in, I can't see why anyone refuses to take an interest. Hitler has said that he intends to destroy New York and Washington. . . . It takes over a month for E to finish a canvas and this one is only just begun. . . . E. doesn't want me even in the studio. I haven't gone thru even for things I want in the kitchen.<sup>16</sup>

FIGURE 4

Edward Hopper. *Night Shadows*, 1921. Etching and drypoint on white wove paper; 17.7 x 21.1 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of the Print and Drawing Club (1944.156).





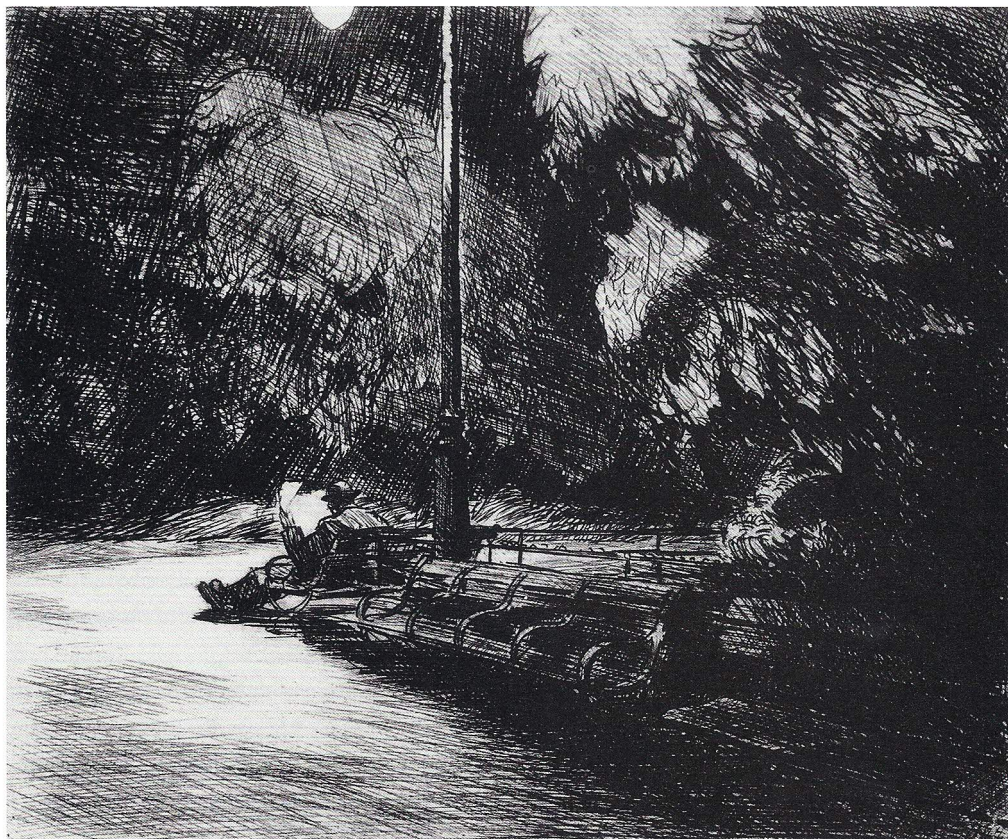


FIGURE 5  
Edward Hopper. *Night in the Park*, 1921.  
Etching printed in black on white wove paper; 17.5 x 21.1 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of the Print and Drawing Club (1944.158).

FIGURE 6  
Edward Hopper. *Le Rêve de Josie*, 1936.  
Pencil on paper; 27.9 x 21.6 cm. The National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C.

Over a month then passed before January 22, 1942, when Jo reported in a letter to Edward's sister Marion in Nyack:

Ed has just finished a very fine picture—a lunch counter at night with 3 figures. Night Hawks would be a fine name for it. E. posed for the 2 men in a mirror and I for the girl. He was about a month and half working on it interested all the time, too busy to get excited over public outrages. So we stay out of fights.<sup>17</sup>

It seems clear that, in this extraordinary burst of concentration and creativity, Hopper was finding the refuge from war anxiety that he had envisioned in his letter to Du Bois the year before. He did so by assembling a number of motifs from his own earlier works and from his



reading—a process of assembling his “dispersed mind.”

By pulling together with heightened intensity themes and forms that had permeated his mind and had long attracted critics and the public to his paintings, Hopper managed to create what is arguably his masterpiece. Heretofore *Nighthawks* has not been discussed in the context of World War II because it is such an early and personal response to the involvement of the United States in the war, which in any case it does not depict directly. Yet Hopper’s cranky refusal to deal openly with the issues raised by the war and pressed upon him by Jo differs from the recalcitrance he so often showed when she tried to goad him out of depression into painting. In this case, he painted furiously with her loyal support; she modeled for him as needed or kept out of his way. His bullying concentration unconsciously reveals the depth of his fears about the war, which fueled a work of exceptionally disquieting power. Hopper’s response to the imminent threat of war was not dissimi-

lar to that of the Surrealists.<sup>18</sup> Our awareness of Hopper’s expressed admiration for some of their work should help us to understand better the complexity of Hopper himself.

### The Initial Reception of *Nighthawks*

On St. Patrick’s Day of 1942, the Hoppers went to The Museum of Modern Art to attend the opening of an exhibition of the art of Henri Rousseau. The exhibition was organized by Daniel Catton Rich, director of The Art Institute of Chicago, who had shown Hopper’s work most recently the previous autumn at the Art Institute. When Alfred Barr “spoke enthusiastically of [Hopper’s 1940 painting] ‘Gas,’” which is in The Museum of Modern Art, Jo told him he just had to go to the Frank K. M. Rehn Gallery to see *Nighthawks*.<sup>19</sup> It was Rich, however, who went to the gallery; he pronounced *Nighthawks* “fine as a Homer,” and arranged its purchase for the Art Institute. On May 11, Frank Rehn called Hopper to say that the Art

FIGURE 7

Matta (Roberto Sebastian Antonio Matta Echaurren) (Chilean, born 1911). *Invasion of the Night*, 1941. Oil on canvas; 96.5 x 152.7 cm. San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Bequest of Jacqueline Marie Onslow Ford.



Institute had made the purchase, paying for *Nighthawks* in part by trading Hopper's smaller canvas *Compartment C, Car 293* (1938; now in the collection of the IBM Corporation), which the Art Institute had purchased after showing it in 1938 in its annual exhibition. Rehn told Edward that he had shown *Dawn in Pennsylvania* (1941; collection of Daniel J. Terra) to Barr, who said he thought Hopper was "the most exciting painter in America," causing Jo to reflect: "One is glad that Barr can find the excitement latent in E's silent, austere, outwardly serene pictures."<sup>20</sup>

The importance Rich attached to his new acquisition was underlined that autumn when the Art Institute awarded the Ada S. Garrett Prize—seven hundred and fifty dollars, given for "an oil painting by an American artist"—to Hopper for *Nighthawks*. Hopper's preoccupation with the war led him to take part that fall in the "Artists for Victory" exhibition at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. But inevitably his attention turned to Chicago, where the Art Institute showed its new acquisition in "The Fifty-Third Annual Exhibition of American Paintings and Sculpture," which featured a memorial show of the work of Grant Wood, who had died earlier that year. The "biographical note" on Hopper in the exhibition catalogue states:

EDWARD HOPPER was born in Nyack, New York, in 1882. His early work aroused so little interest that he gave up painting for several years. In 1924 a one-man show of water colors which he had recently executed was received with such enthusiasm that he felt sufficiently encouraged to continue a career of painting. He began once more to work in oils and was soon acclaimed as one of the outstanding champions of honestly American subjects. He is noted for his clear-cut compositions, luminous color, and interest in light



effects. His paintings are expertly designed, never overcrowded, and contain few people, though the buildings themselves are alive with personality.<sup>21</sup>

Hopper's active involvement with the Art Institute continued into the spring of 1943, when he traveled to Chicago to judge the "Twenty-Second International Exhibition of Water Colors" together with the Chicago painter Ivan Albright and Herman More, curator of the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.<sup>22</sup> A photograph taken during their meetings at the Art Institute on April 13 and 14, 1943, documents the jury (fig. 9). The Art Institute's press release, written by Katharine Kuh, who later became the museum's first curator of twentieth-century art, identified Hopper as the "noted New York artist" and described him with even greater enthusiasm:

EDWARD HOPPER, famous exponent of the so-called "American Scene," is also an outstanding nationally known artist. His work, like that of Albright, has been shown in every recognized

FIGURE 8  
Arnold Newman  
(American, born 1918).  
*Edward Hopper in  
His New York Studio*,  
1941. Photograph.  
©1980 Arnold  
Newman.



FIGURE 9  
Jury for the 1943  
“Twenty-Second Inter-  
national Exhibition  
of Water Colors” at  
the Art Institute.  
Left to right: Herman  
More, Curator of  
the Whitney Museum  
of American Art,  
and the artists Ivan  
Albright and  
Edward Hopper.

museum in the country and has been awarded many prizes. Hopper first became known as an etcher, but since 1924 his water colors and paintings have received constant public attention. He has a great genius for taking a simple American scene and imbuing it with poetic realism.<sup>23</sup>

Reviewing the show, the Chicago critic Eleanor Jewett complained: “There is little that is ‘international’ about this year’s exhibit, altho the word is retained in the title. War has prevented participation on the part of those countries which a decade ago were among the most intriguing contributors.”<sup>24</sup> In terms of the works exhibited, however, it is interesting to note that Hopper, Albright, and More chose some of the European artists living in exile in the United States, namely Marc Chagall, Fernand Léger, and the Surrealist André Masson. Also exhibited were some Americans, such as O. Louis Guglielmi and James Guy, whose work was clearly influenced by Surrealist art.

In his foreword to the exhibition catalogue, Frederick A. Sweet, the Art Institute’s

curator of painting and sculpture, discussed the impact of the war on American artists:

Chicago’s Twenty-second International Exhibition of Water Colors opens after the country has been at war for nearly a year and a half. During this period large numbers of our artists have joined the armed forces and the numbers continue to increase as the weeks go by. For this reason many excellent artists are not represented in the exhibition and numerous others are showing for the last time until after the war. We are glad, however, to see a few men sending work from army camps in spite of the fact that they have so little time to paint. Service men’s work is for the most part either straight reporting of camp activities or humorous anecdote. The horrors of war do not seem to concern them since they have not yet been overseas and are not in any case inclined to dwell on the gruesome side of their duties. Artists depicting the realities of warfare are usually those who are not in service but feel very strongly about the principles involved.<sup>25</sup>

As Sweet went on to explain, “Many civilian artists are fascinated by war plants, shipyards, and army camps, but strict regulations prevent their painting from direct observation anything having to do with war activities.” He also noted the reduction in opportunities for travel that changed the working habits of Hopper, among others: “Gas rationing and restrictions on travel have curtailed artists’ accustomed trips to the country, with the result that there is a greater emphasis on city scenes. Such rural landscapes as there are in many instances represent last summer’s final country vacation and will presumably be seen in ever-decreasing numbers from now on.”

Elsewhere in his foreword, Sweet remarked that “a lack of many war themes does not mean that the American artist is not thinking about the war or is not concerned with it”—an obser-

vation that precisely fits Hopper's case and the dynamic force embodied in *Nighthawks*. Sweet also noted the inclusion in the exhibition of "several emigre European artists" with the Americans "as they have in most cases expressed their desire to become American citizens" and he called attention to the American artist William Gropper's "biting satire . . . so masterfully directed toward anti-Nazi propaganda." As his essay clearly demonstrates, the war was on everyone's mind.

The Art Institute turned to Hopper again later in 1943 when the catalogue for the "Fifty-Fourth Annual Exhibition of American Paintings and Sculpture" proclaimed: "This year for the first time the Art Institute has included in the Annual American Exhibition a one-man showing of the work of a living American artist. Edward Hopper has been selected for this occasion and is represented by twenty-one paintings."<sup>26</sup> Sweet, who also organized this show, now wrote of Hopper:

A slow worker, he has always maintained complete independence from either academic trends or so-called fashionable modern tendencies. Strictly honest and direct he paints matter-of-fact subjects which to him typify the background of the average American's life. . . . To represent topically a single incident would be to reduce the composition to the trivial. Hopper gives us a larger conception, simplified to its essence.

Sweet went on from this general account of Hopper's style to praise *Nighthawks* as a powerful exemplar of "the intensity of his recent work, daring in design and dramatic in lighting." Sweet described the observer "amazed at so much dynamic force being contained within such calm and uneventful surroundings."

In contrast to Sweet's emphasis on Hopper's Americanism, which became the predominant point of view on the artist, the



critic for the *Chicago Daily News*, Clarence J. Bulliet, wrote: "Hopper has imagination, invention and a subtle feeling for what is alive, without exhibitionism. He has the psychological insight of the best of the 'Surrealists' without their circus methods."<sup>27</sup> Unerringly Bulliet sensed the affinity with Surrealism that we were describing above.

### Hopper and His Affinities with Surrealism

The affinities between Hopper and Surrealism also struck some of the Surrealists and their earliest American enthusiasts. The avant-garde journal *View* (founded in 1940 by Charles Henri Ford) involved some of the Surrealists in New York and featured their work in a special issue (October-November 1941) edited by Nicholas Calas. For the issue, Calas interviewed Breton, recently arrived in New York, who spoke of the need to "read with and look through the eyes of Eros" to offset the war and its destruction. Breton chose two examples of erotic sight "outside of surrealism,"

FIGURE 10  
Edward Hopper. *New York Movie*, 1939.  
Oil on canvas; 81.9 x 101.9 cm. New York, The Museum of Modern Art, Anonymous gift. © 1996 The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

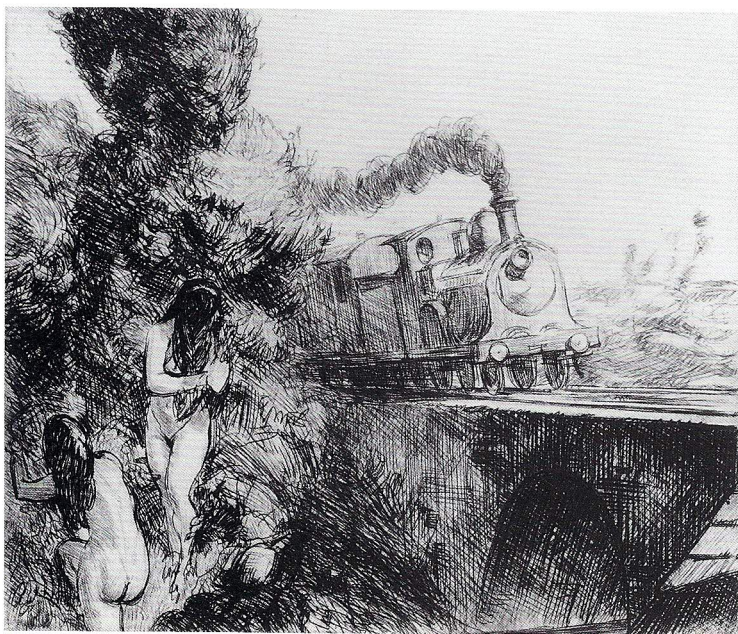


FIGURE 11  
Edward Hopper.  
*Train and Bathers*,  
1920. Etching printed  
in black on white  
wove paper; 21.2 x  
25 cm. The Art  
Institute of Chicago,  
Gift of the Print  
and Drawing Club  
(1944.142).

one of which—Hopper’s *New York Movie* (fig. 10)—had just been acquired by The Museum of Modern Art. After seeing this painting at the Modern, Breton was inspired to describe it in this way: “The beautiful young woman, lost in a dream beyond the confounding things happening to others, the heavy mythical column, the three lights of ‘New York Movie,’ seem charged with a symbolical significance which seeks a way out of the curtained stairway.”<sup>28</sup>

Hopper surfaced again in *View* in October 1945, when its associate editor, Parker Tyler, published an article entitled “‘Encyclopedism’ of American Art.”<sup>29</sup> Tyler’s piece influenced others, among them the journal’s managing editor, John Bernard Myers, who wrote in 1946: “Parker Tyler has taken umbrage at what he considers my ‘prejudice’ against art by Americans. He agrees with my idea that to speak of ‘American art’ is parochial and imprecise, but he then surprised me by urging me to really *look* at the work of Edward Hopper, a painter who he believes is first rate.”<sup>30</sup> After

a visit to the Rehn Gallery, Myers concluded: “I realized that I hadn’t really *seen* Hopper’s work, that I simply had lumped him with ‘social conscience’ artists like Reginald Marsh and Moses Soyer. It gradually dawned on me that Hopper’s painting is sophisticated and deeply felt.”<sup>31</sup>

When twenty of Hopper’s paintings went on display at the Venice Biennale in 1952, several critics compared his art to the early work of Giorgio de Chirico, the Italian metaphysical painter, yet another of the Surrealists’ enthusiasms. The two artists shared a penchant for silent, empty spaces. While it is unlikely that Hopper, who had already painted an eerie empty train station by 1908, was ever influenced by looking at the work of de Chirico, it should not surprise us that Stuart Preston reported in the *New York Times*: “Hopper made the deepest impression. Foreigners recognized, and rightly, something authentically American in the pathos of his landscapes, a germ of loneliness that they detect in our literature. ‘An American Chirico,’ one critic called him.”<sup>32</sup> The critic Emily Genauer wrote that she found in Hopper “a haunting mysterious, portentous air which somehow seems related to those early metaphysical paintings of empty, silent city squares done years ago by de Chirico.”<sup>33</sup> Hopper himself hated to be classified as an “American Scene” painter.<sup>34</sup> As demonstrated here, his work appealed to a much broader audience, even winning the respect of the Surrealist leader André Breton. Like the art of the Surrealists, with whom Hopper shared his love of French Symbolist poetry, his work demands to be read on many levels, and commensurately rewards the effort.

The acquisition of *Nighthawks* crowned a long and constructive relationship between Edward Hopper and The Art Institute of Chicago. Hopper had been etching for only three years when his *Les Poilus* (1917) was shown at the museum in 1918, in an exhibition of etchings organized by the Chicago Society of Etchers. This lone entry depicted three soldiers speaking to a woman in the French countryside during World War I. A year later, Hopper entered four prints into the Society of Etchers' annual show at the Art Institute: *The Bull Fight* (c. 1917), *The Monhegan Boat* (1918), *The Open Window* (1915–18), and *Train and Bathers* (1918; fig. 11). With *A Corner* (1919), which he entered in the organization's show for 1920, he began to present urban scenes with increasing success.

## Hopper and The Art Institute of Chicago: An Overview

He sent *Night Shadows* in 1921 and *Night in the Park* in 1922 (figs. 4–5). All of these prints except for *Les Poilus* and *The Open Window* were acquired (along with sixteen other prints by Hopper) in 1944 for the Art Institute's permanent collection as a gift of the Print and Drawing Club, which purchased the prints from the New York gallery H. V. Allison and Company.

In 1923 Hopper showed *Evening Wind* (1921; fig. 12) and *Eastside Interior* (1922; fig. 13)

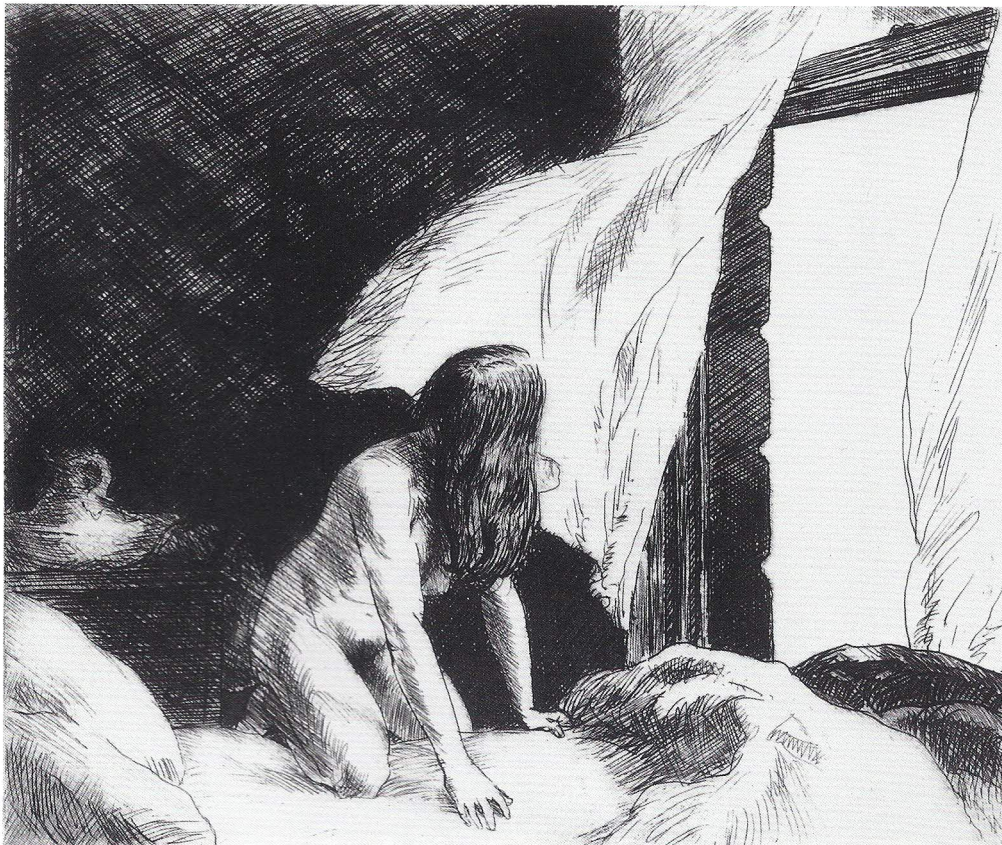


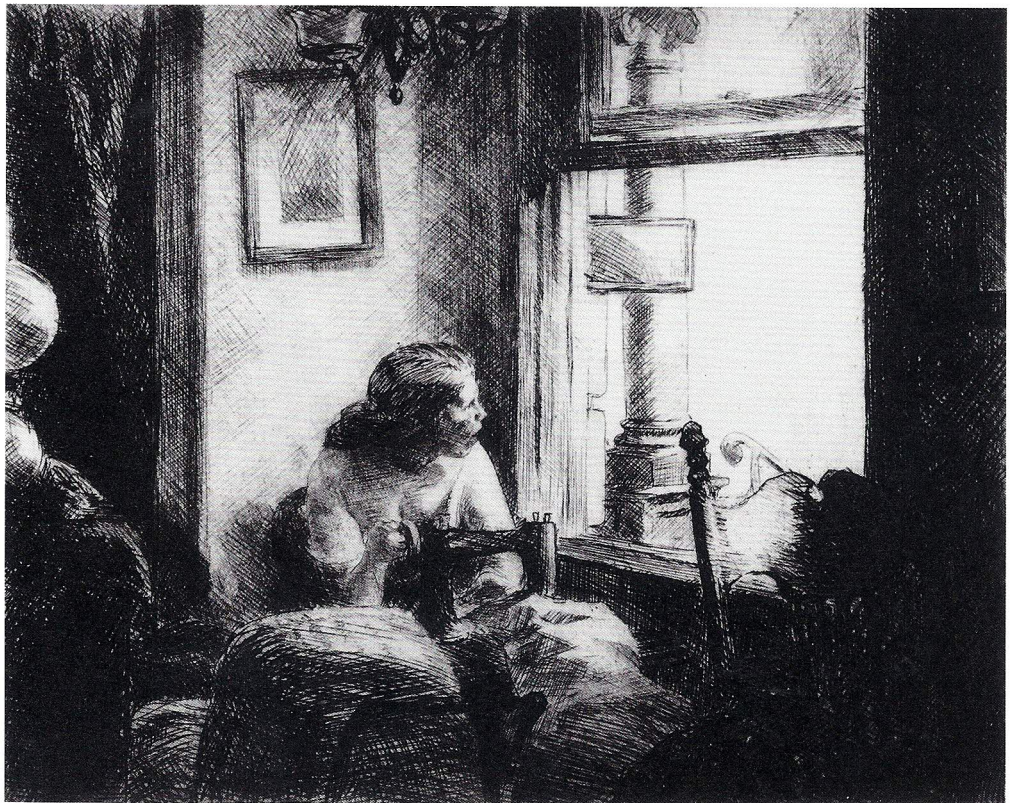
FIGURE 12  
Edward Hopper.  
*Evening Wind*, 1921.  
Etching printed in  
black on white wove  
paper; 17.6 x 21.2 cm.  
The Art Institute of  
Chicago, Anonymous  
Gift Fund (1939.2082).

in the Chicago Society of Etchers exhibition and won the Mr. and Mrs. Frank G. Logan Prize of twenty-five dollars for the latter, which was purchased by the Art Institute. Hopper was so proud of winning the prize that he wrote to the critic Henry McBride, to whom he had given a copy of the print, telling him of the award and quipping: "I don't suppose you believe in the giving of prizes, nor do I except when they are given to me. However now that my fall has been accomplished there is nothing to be done."<sup>35</sup> McBride had prompted the gift when he had singled out Hopper at the American Etchers Salon held in New York at the Brown-Robertson Galleries the previous year: "A little known etcher who stands out in the present exhibition is Edward Hopper, whose 'Evening Wind' and 'Eastside Interior' show positive promise. The

'Evening Wind,' in particular, is full of spirit, composed with a sense of the dramatic possibilities of ordinary materials and is well etched."<sup>36</sup>

For the 1924 Chicago Society of Etchers exhibition, Hopper sent *The Cat Boat* (1922) and *Aux Fortifications* (1923), the last work he made on a French theme. That same year, he first participated in the Art Institute's "Fourth International Water Color Exhibition," showing four works. The next year, Hopper again showed his work at the Art Institute with the Chicago Society of Etchers (*Cow and Rocks* [1918] and *The Railroad* [1922]) as well as in the "International Water Color Exhibition" and in the "Thirty-Eighth Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Paintings," where he showed an oil, *New York Restaurant* (c. 1922; Muskegon Museum of Art, Muskegon, Mich.).

FIGURE 13  
Edward Hopper.  
*Eastside Interior*,  
1922. Etching on paper;  
20.0 x 25.3 cm.  
The Art Institute of  
Chicago, Mr. and  
Mrs. Frank G. Logan  
Prize Fund (1944.144).

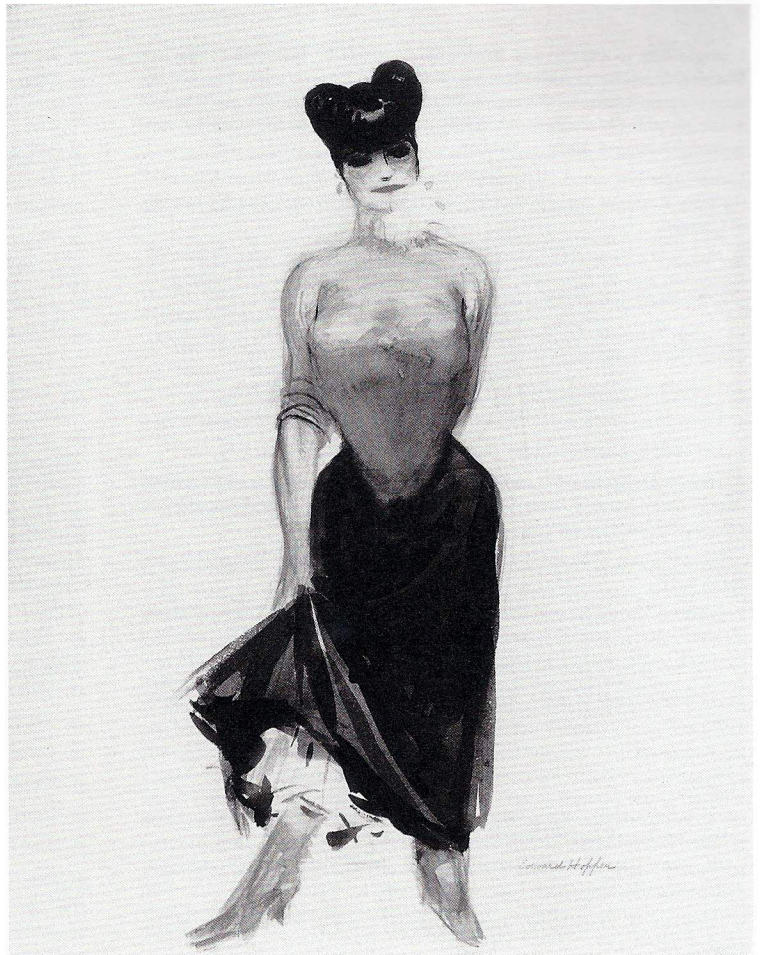




From this point on, Hopper exhibited his work frequently at the Art Institute, regularly taking part in the annual exhibitions of paintings and watercolors. He found an important patron in Annie Swan Coburn, who purchased four of his watercolors from the Frank K. M. Rehn Gallery in New York in 1926. Mrs. Coburn gave these to the museum in 1933, a year after they were included in the Art Institute's show of the Coburn Collection.

Two of these watercolors, *Le Terrassier* (*The Roadmender*) and *La Pierreuse* (*The Streetwalker*) (fig. 14), lively caricatures painted in France in 1906, represent his early work in watercolor, most of which was bequeathed to the Whitney Museum by Hopper's widow in 1968. Another work in the Art Institute, *Haskell's House* (*Gloucester Mansion*) of 1923, is an example of Hopper's renewed interest in watercolor as a medium for noncommercial work, which he had abandoned after his French caricatures. He was no doubt drawn to the subject because of its mansard roof, a type of roof he had first admired in his native Nyack. Hopper painted *Interior*, the last of the Art Institute's watercolors, in Santa Fe in 1925; it reveals his embryonic awareness that his new wife, the artist Josephine Nivison, would make an ideal model. Jo noted in the record book that she kept for Edward: "Wife in shirt tail, hair down, foot of oak bed across foreground, bureau top with red powder box-tin, tall."<sup>37</sup>

In 1939, the year after the Art Institute purchased *Compartment C, Car 293*, its first oil by Hopper, he was invited to show a group of twenty-six watercolors in the "Eighteenth International Exhibition of Water Colors, Pastels, Drawings, and Monotypes." Following the acquisition of *Nighthawks* in 1942, the painting became a favorite, launched on its way to the immense popular recognition that it enjoys today. Less than nine years later, the



painting inspired the first of many published poems—by Samuel Yellen.<sup>38</sup> Following the Garrett Prize in 1942, the Art Institute awarded Hopper the Mr. and Mrs. Frank G. Logan Art Institute Medal and a five-hundred-dollar honorarium in 1945 for his painting *Hotel Lobby* (1943; Indianapolis Museum of Art), which was chosen by a jury composed of three New Yorkers: Juliana Force, director of the Whitney Museum, and the artists Reginald Marsh and Raphael Soyer. Finally, in 1950, Hopper traveled to Chicago to accept the School of the Art Institute's honorary doctorate of fine arts. He had become a star in the Art Institute's firmament.

FIGURE 14  
Edward Hopper. *La Pierreuse* (*The Streetwalker*), n.d. Watercolor with touches of gouache over graphite on cream wove paper; 30.2 x 23.7 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Annie Swan Cobourn in memory of Olivia Shaler Swan (1933.488).

great historic value. You are dealing with the only portrait that exists of baron Angelo Milfastos when he was a child and began to cut off the heads of his aunts. He later died on the gallows, but that was a great injustice and a judicial error. He was by no means a criminal but the inventor of a magnificent new contraption for sharpening knives; in cutting off heads he only set out to test the apparatus." The inscription refers to Juan Soriano's family history—he has often boasted of his thirteen aunts.

19. For Maya prototypes, see Linda Schele and Mary Ellen Miller, *The Blood of Kings: Dynasty and Ritual in Maya Art*, exh. cat. (Forth Worth, Tex., 1986), pp. 66–69. Atapulgitte clay was used by Maya artists to make a blue pigment; because the blue color is permanent, it remains visible on Maya art today. Artists painted ceramic figurines, such as the Jaina pieces, using the "Maya blue." It was also used in mural paintings, the most spectacular examples of which are at Bonampak in southern Mexico.

20. Hammocks are the common sleeping apparatus of the Lacandón Indians of Chiapas; they are also a ubiquitous item of trade today, frequently sold to tourists. Carrington's inclusion of the hammock in the painting seems to have been intended as a subtle bit of humor.

21. Linda Schele and David Freidel, *A Forest of Kings: The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya* (New York, 1990), p. 61.

22. See Mary Ellen Miller, "The Image of People and Nature in Classic Maya Art and Architecture," in Richard F. Townsend, ed., *The Ancient Americas: Art from Sacred Landscapes*, exh. cat. (Chicago and Munich, 1992), pp. 164–68.

23. The few instances where Mexico becomes the subject of her art include a 1947 painting, *Saint John's Mule* (private collection), and a short story, "The History of Mole," from around the same time.

24. The following is a partial list of Carrington's exhibition activity in Mexico City in the fifties: solo exhibitions at the Galería Clardecor in 1950 and at the Galería Antonio Souza in 1957; and group exhibitions at the Galería Diana in 1955 and at the Salon Frida Kahlo, Galería de Arte Contemporáneo, in 1956.

25. Dawn Ades, *Art in Latin America: The Modern Era, 1820–1980*, exh. cat. (New Haven, Conn., 1989), pp. 198–201.

26. Chadwick (note 17), p. 26.

27. Dorie Reents-Budet, *Painting the Maya Universe: Royal Ceramics of the Classic Period*, exh. cat. (Durham, N.C., 1994), pp. 48–49.

#### LEVIN, "Edward Hopper's *Nighthawks*, Surrealism, and the War," pp. 180–95.

This essay is for Hedy Davenport.

1. I am grateful to the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, where I held the American National Bank Chair of Excellence in the Humanities for 1995–96, during the course of writing this article.

2. Jo Hopper, Diary, Dec. 15, 1936. For a discussion of Jo Hopper's diaries, see Gail Levin, *Edward Hopper: An Intimate Biography* (New York, 1995), pp. xv–xiv, 248.

3. Edward Hopper, "Notes on Painting," in Alfred H. Barr, Jr., *Edward Hopper: Retrospective Exhibition*, exh. cat. (New York, 1933), p. 17.

4. André Breton, *Surrealism and Painting* (New York, 1972), p. 4, cites "Lautréamont, Rimbaud, and Mallarmé" as "the first to endow the human mind with a quality that it had entirely lacked." See also Gail Levin, "Edward Hopper: Francophile," *Arts Magazine* 53, 10 (June 1979), pp. 114–21.

5. André Breton, in "The First Surrealist Manifesto," quoted in Lucy R. Lippard, ed., *Surrealists on Art* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1970), p. 10.

6. Max Eastman, "Exploring the Soul and Healing the Body," *Everybody's Magazine* 32 (June 1915), pp. 741–50.

7. Their ideas remained current and by 1933, in the sixth chapter ("Freud and Jung—Contrasts") of a collection of essays addressed to a general public, Jung himself sought to explain the difference between their views. See C. G. Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (New York, 1933), pp. 132–42.

8. Guy Pène du Bois, Diary, Nov. 30, 1918, Guy Pène du Bois Papers, Archives of American Art.

9. See Levin (note 2), p. 277.

10. Jung (note 7), p. 18.

11. Gordon Onslow Ford, quoted in Martica Sawin, *Surrealism in Exile and the Beginning of the New York School* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995), p. 165. See also Dickran Tashjian, *A Boatload of Madmen: Surrealism and the American Avant-Garde, 1920–1950* (New York, 1995).

12. For a discussion of the effect of World War II on the Hoppers, as well as other information related to the painting of *Nighthawks*, see Levin (note 2), esp. pp. 348–57.

13. Letter from Edward Hopper to Guy Pène du Bois, Aug. 11, 1940. The quotation that follows is also drawn from this letter.

14. Jo Hopper, Diary, Jan. 24, 1940.

15. Joan Miró, quoted in James Johnson Sweeney, *Joan Miró* (New York, 1941), p. 13.

16. Letter from Jo Hopper to Marion Hopper, Dec. 17, 1941.

17. Letter from Jo Hopper to Marion Hopper, Jan. 22, 1942.

18. For a discussion of the Surrealists' response to the horrors of World War I, see Sidra Stich, ed., *Anxious Visions: Surrealist Art*, exh. cat. (New York, 1990).

19. Jo Hopper, Diary, Mar. 17, 1942.

20. Jo Hopper, Diary, May 11, 1942.

21. The Art Institute of Chicago, *The Fifty-Third Annual Exhibition of American Paintings and Sculpture*, exh. cat. (1942), unpag. The exhibition was held at the Art Institute from Oct. 29 to Dec. 10, 1942; Hopper was represented only by *Nighthawks*, which is no. 132 in the catalogue.

22. "The Twenty-Second International Exhibition of Water Colors" was held at the Art Institute from May 13 to Aug. 22, 1943.

23. Katharine Kuh, public relations counsel, "Water Color Jury to Meet," news release from The Art Institute of Chicago, Apr. 6, 1943.

24. Eleanor Jewett, "Fine Paintings in 22nd Water Color Exhibit," *Chicago Tribune*, May 16, 1943.

25. Frederick A. Sweet, "Foreword," in The Art Institute of Chicago, *The Twenty-Second International Exhibition of Water Colors*, exh. cat. (1943), unpag. The quotations that follow in this paragraph and the next are also drawn from this source.

26. Frederick A. Sweet, "Foreword," in The Art Institute of Chicago, *The Fifty-Fourth Annual Exhibition of American Paintings and Sculpture*, exh. cat. (1943), unpag. Sweet's comments in this paragraph and the next are drawn from this source.

27. C. J. Bulliet, "Artless Comment on the Seven Arts," *Chicago Daily News*, Oct. 30, 1943, p. 7.

28. Nicolas Calas, "Interview with André Breton," *View* 1, 7–8 (Oct.–Nov. 1941), p. 1.

29. Parker Tyler, "'Encyclopedism' of American Art," *View* 5, 3 (Oct. 1945), p. 17.

30. John Bernard Myers, *Tracking the Marvelous: A Life in the New York Art World* (New York, 1983), p. 70.

31. *Ibid.*

32. Stuart Preston, "Art Survey by Nations," *New York Times*, July 20, 1952, sec. 10, p. 2.

33. Emily Genauer, "National Pavilions in Big Venice Biennial Exhibit Offer Surprises," *New York Herald Tribune*, June 29, 1952, sec. 4, p. 8.

34. See Gail Levin, "Edward Hopper and the Democratic Tradition," in Alfred Hornung et al., *Democracy and the Arts in the United States* (Munich, 1996), pp. 85–87.

35. Letter from Edward Hopper to Henry McBride, Feb. 19, 1923.

36. Henry McBride, "Art News and Reviews—Public," *New York Herald*, Feb. 26, 1922, sec. 3, p. 5.

37. See Gail Levin, *Edward Hopper: A Catalogue Raisonné* (New York, 1995), vol. 2, p. 87.

38. See Gail Levin, ed., *The Poetry of Solitude: A Tribute to Edward Hopper* (New York, 1995), p. 32, for this and other poems the painting has inspired.