THE LATEST STATEMENT OF THE CHICAGO SURREALIST GROUP

The following declaration, drawn up hurriedly as the ignoble attacks of the remains of André Breton’s estate draw near, expresses the views of the Surrealist Group in Chicago and a few of our out-of-town comrades who happened to be in close touch at the time.

Other participants in the Surrealist Movement in the U.S. who wish to add their signatures should let us know as soon as possible.

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Once more on the impending auction of the Andre Breton Estate and the proposed “Breton Museum”

WHO WILL EMBALM THE EMBALMERS?

DID YOU KNOW that the academics of the Melusine mailing list —who pretend to report on everything having to do with surrealism—have been concealing their subscribers the fact that, with a few minor exceptions, not one surrealist has signed the comic petition addressed to the French Minister of Culture and the President of the Republic by the so-called “Breton Committee”?

WHY HAVE THEY SUPPRESSED the collective declaration, “Surrealism Is Not For Sale” sent to them many weeks ago by the Surrealist Movement in the United States?

CAN YOU IMAGINE any surrealist, anywhere, asking the State to finance the sort of museum we are? We are thinking in particular of those who actually knew André Breton and enjoyed his confidence: Sarane Alexandrian, Enric Baj, Jean Benoît, Guy Cabanes, Jorge Camacho, Her de Vries, Hervé Delabarre, Gabriel Der Kevorkian, Nicole Espagnol, Georges Goldfain, Georges Gronier, Jean-Pierre Guillot, Robert Guyon, Radovan Ivić, Tad Joans, Alan Jouët, Gerome Kamerovski, Konrad Klapeck, Jacques Lacombez, Annie Le Brun, Elisabeth Lenk, Sergio Lima, Mary Low, Conroy Maddox, Mimi Parent, Bernard Poger, Perelles, and Franklin Rosemont, Georges Siebog, Francois Rieh Simon, Michel Zimbacca, and several others.

FROM WHAT FOG AND GLOOM, meanwhile, did the self-proclaimed “André Breton Committee” emerge? Who are these gentleman who so modestly have conferred upon themselves that prestigious title? What are their qualifications? Only one among their number, Claude Rossier, has ever raised his voice in defense before the announcement of the infamous auction provided an opportunity to advertise themselves so shamelessly. So far, the Committee has shown only its talent for media manipulation and misrepresentation.

IS IT NOT REVEALING that, in their eagerness to enlist the aid of surrealism’s irreducible enemies (politicians, senile and neo-Stalinists, littérateurs), the Committee has categorically refused to acknowledge that all of Breton’s surviving friends and comrades, as well as the younger surrealists throughout the world, are totally opposed to the Committee’s exercise in appropriation, which has no other aim than to render surrealism inoperative?

BUT WHAT IS RIGHT do they falsely portray André Breton as a rich collector, shrewd merchant, pandering author, chauvinist poet? Don’t they know that such ‘portraits’ are nothing but lies?

AND WHAT CAN ONE EXPECT of these obsequious and self-aggrandizing ‘incoherents’ (to use Alfred Jerry’s term)—who have spread so much misinformation about the author of Nadja, and manifested their complete contempt for Breton’s friends and for surrealism, past, present, and future—should they manage to gain control of a “Breton Museum,” a “Breton Temple,” a “Breton Mausoleum”? If that, is the French government provides the indispensable funds and metal detectors?

WHO will embalm the embalmers?

WE INVITE all those who would like a true idea of the poet’s thought, and of the sense that he intended to give to surrealism, to read or reread “The Disdainful Confession,” and to recall, in the face of the recoupers of every stripe, that today as yesterday, SURREALISM IS THAT WHICH WILL BE.

April 2003

For THE SURREALIST GROUP IN CHICAGO: Gale Athens, Jennifer Bean, Jan Bemsen, Dennis Cooper, Guy Ducomet, J. Allen Feas, Bath Garon, Paul Garon, Robert Grewe, Jan Hathaway, Joseph Jabłoński, De La Croix, David London, Mary Low, Tristan Melnické, Anna Olson, Ruth Oppenheim-Rothchild, David Rodgerink, Franklin Rosemont, Penelope Rosemont, Mark Rosenzweig, Louise Simons, Tamara Smith, Debra Taub, Joel Williams. For THE SURREALIST GROUP IN PORTLAND: Andrew Daly, Sarah Frances, Brandon Freels, Morgan Miller, and M.K. Shireh. For LES LOUPS SONT FACHES (Paris): Eric Benveniste.