

UPDATED RELEASE

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**THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION EXPLORES THE INTERSECTION OF ART AND SCIENCE IN
*MAN RAY—HUMAN EQUATIONS: A JOURNEY FROM MATHEMATICS TO SHAKESPEARE***

Press Preview
Tuesday, Feb. 3
9:30 a.m.–noon
RSVP to [Elizabeth Lubben](mailto:Elizabeth.Lubben@phillipscollection.org)

**Exhibition displays together for the first time Man Ray's
photographs and paintings with the mathematical objects that inspired them**

Washington, D.C.—On February 7, 2015, The Phillips Collection introduces *Man Ray—Human Equations: A Journey from Mathematics to Shakespeare*, an exhibition exploring the intersection of art and science that defined a significant component of modern art on both sides of the Atlantic at the beginning of the 20th century. Highlighting the multimedia work of the legendary Surrealist artist, *Man Ray—Human Equations* is on view through May 10, 2015.



Man Ray, *Julius Caesar*, 1948. Oil on masonite, 24 × 19 3/4 in. The Rosalind & Melvin Jacobs Collection, New York. © Man Ray Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY / ADAGP, Paris 2015

Working in Hollywood in the late 1940s, Man Ray (American, 1890–1976) created his *Shakespearean Equations*, a series of paintings that he considered to be the apogee of his creative vision. Drawing upon photographs of 19th-century mathematical models he made in the 1930s, the series was a culmination of 15 years of multimedia exploration. Featuring more than 125 works, *Man Ray—Human Equations* displays side-by-side for the first time the original plaster, wood, papier-mâché, and string models from the Institut Henri Poincaré (IHP) in Paris, Man Ray's inventive photographs of these unusual forms, and the series of *Shakespearean Equations* paintings they inspired.

“Although nearly every significant Man Ray exhibition since 1948 has included at least one of the *Shakespearean Equations*, no publication or exhibition has ever brought all three components together for an in-depth study,” says

exhibition curator Wendy Grossman. “In fact, Man Ray never witnessed the triangle of mathematical object, photograph, and painting displayed as an ensemble. Placed in context with his other paintings, photographs, and objects, these works illustrate the artist’s proclivity to create art across media that objectifies the body and humanizes the object, transforming everyday materials into novel forms of creative expression.”

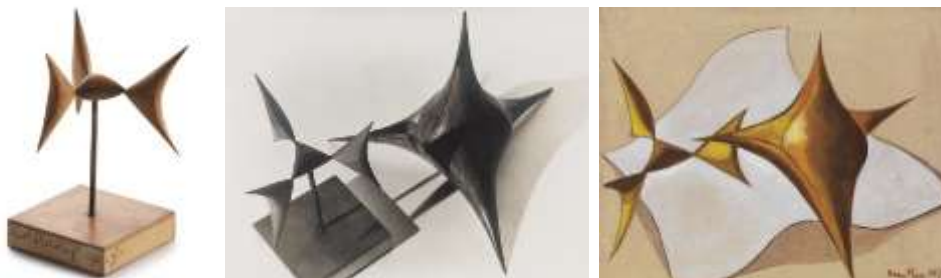
The exhibition’s diverse works—including 70 photographs, 25 paintings, eight assemblages or modified “readymades,” and 25 original mathematical models—juxtapose Man Ray’s Surrealist-inspired photographs of mathematical models and the associated *Shakespearean Equations* paintings within the larger context of the role of the object in the artist’s work. This is evidenced by other canvases, photographs, and objects—both celebrated and little-known—linking his wider artistic practice with the *Shakespearean Equations* project and casting these accompanying works in a new light.

Man Ray—Human Equations sheds light on the development and appreciation of new art forms at the heart of the art/science matrix and the growing acceptance of photographs as works of art in their own right. The exhibition investigates the journey crossing two decades and two continents that brought the artist from mathematical models to human equations and, ultimately, to the translation of Shakespeare’s plays into an amalgamation of these elements.



Man Ray, *Still life composition for "Minotaure"*, 1933. Three-color carbon transfer print, 12 1/16 x 9 3/8 in. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. © Man Ray Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY / ADAGP, Paris 2015

FROM PHOTOGRAPH TO PAINTING



Mathematical Object: *Algebraic Surface of Degree 4*, c. 1900. Wood, 3 1/8 x 2 3/8 in. Made by Joseph Caron. The Institut Henri Poincaré, Paris, France. Photo: Elie Posner; Man Ray, *Mathematical Object*, 1934-35. Gelatin silver print, 9 1/2 x 11 3/4 in. Courtesy of Marion Meyer, Paris. © Man Ray Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY / ADAGP, Paris 2015; Man Ray, *Shakespearean Equation, All's Well that Ends Well*, 1948. Oil on canvas, 16 x 19 7/8 in. Courtesy of Marion Meyer, Paris. © Man Ray Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY / ADAGP, Paris 2015

In 1934, Man Ray, already established as a leader of the Dada and Surrealist movements, visited the Institut Henri Poincaré in Paris to see a collection of three-dimensional mathematical models, made in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to illustrate geometrical properties for the investigation and teaching of algebraic equations. Man Ray accepted a commission from art historian Christian Zervos to take a series of photographs in preparation for an issue of *Cahiers d'Art* devoted to the “Crisis of the Object.” In so doing, he transformed their appearance through innovative lighting and composition, highlighting forms that would be intriguing,

dramatic, suggestive, and disturbing to the observer. His photographs exploited the viewer's propensity to seek out readily recognizable human forms, emphasizing human and anatomical associations.



Man Ray, *Mathematical Object*, 1934-35. Gelatin silver print, 11 3/8 x 9 in. Private Collection, Paris. © Man Ray Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY / ADAGP, Paris 2015

Man Ray's photographs captivated his Surrealist colleagues and art historians and contributed to the debate regarding the importance of the Object that was becoming increasingly integral to recent developments in Surrealism. In 1936, 12 photographs were illustrated in *Cahiers d'Art* and his original photographs were displayed in major Surrealist exhibitions, including the *International Surrealist Exhibition* in London, and *Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism* at The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

In 1937, Man Ray published *La Photographie n'est pas l'Art, L'Art n'est pas de la Photographie*, a manifesto that would signal his abandonment of photography as his major artistic and commercial endeavor. This new direction reflected his renewed interest in painting in France and later engagement with object-making in Hollywood. At the start of World War II, Man Ray fled France and returned to the United States, eventually settling in Hollywood in late 1940.

Having been forced to leave the majority of his work behind, he set about repainting some of his most emblematic Surrealist paintings of the late 1930s. Even without having his photographs of the mathematical objects in his possession, the influence of geometry and mathematics remained prominent in Man Ray's work.

During a brief trip to France in 1947, Man Ray retrieved much of his pre-war artistic output and shipped many works back to the United States. These included his photographs of the mathematical models that would inspire an ambitious series of new paintings, signaling a return to figurative "non-abstract" painting. Ultimately dissatisfied by the typically Surrealist titles that André Breton suggested in 1936 for the corresponding photographs, Man Ray instead assigned the title of a celebrated play to each canvas and named the series *Shakespearean Equations*. Man Ray considered this series his "final realization of the mathematical equations." Indeed, these 20 canvases arguably comprise the final important series of paintings by the artist and clearly reflect his affinities with Surrealism.

Man Ray—Human Equations is organized by The Phillips Collection and The Israel Museum, Jerusalem. The exhibition will also be on view at the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek,



Man Ray, *Shakespearean Equation, Romeo & Juliet*, 1954. Oil on canvas, 31 7/8 x 23 5/8 in. Private Collection, Courtesy Fondazione Marconi, Milan. © Man Ray Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY / ADAGP, Paris 2015

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Copenhagen, June 11–September 20, 2015, followed by The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, October 20, 2015–January 23, 2016.

IMAGE GALLERY

High-resolution press images are available by request or by accessing the museum's online Dropbox: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/sz4w1kqnxxkbbii/AAAjblrF8JTY93pZGBSFilp1a?dl=0>

CATALOGUE



Man Ray—Human Equations: A Journey from Mathematics to Shakespeare

Edited by Wendy A. Grossmann and Edouard Seblin; with essays by Wendy A. Grossman, Adina Kamien-Kazhdan, Edouard Seblin, and Andrew Strauss.

238 pages

Available this spring for \$49.95 in the museum shop and online: www.shop.phillipscollection.org

EXHIBITION-RELATED EVENTS

Thursday, Feb. 19 (6:30 p.m.): Poetry reading and book signing. Pulitzer Prize-winning author Rae Armantrout reads from her work in response to the special exhibition.

Thursday, Mar. 5 (5–8:30 p.m.): Phillips after 5, Shakespeare Made Modern. Experience Shakespeare through a contemporary lens. Gallery talks explore how the playwright inspired titles of works in the special exhibition. Learn to speak like Shakespeare during an interactive game and enjoy a special shakes-beer tasting.

Thursday, Apr. 2 (5–8:30 p.m.): Phillips after 5, Hack the Museum. Inspired by Man Ray's artistic practice to repurpose found objects, see the museum in a new way. Experience the interactive installation artwork of Daniel Wurtzel as he explores the science of wind currents in a museum gallery. Observe the art of 3D printing and experiment with creating your own digital 3D models.

Saturday, Apr. 11 (2 p.m.): Directors' dialogue. In conjunction with the special exhibition, Dorothy Kosinski, Director of The Phillips Collection, and Michael Witmore, Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library, consider how symmetry and other formal patterns inform our thinking about Shakespeare's plays and Man Ray's paintings.

Thursday, Apr. 16 (6:30 p.m.): Concert. Vocal Arts DC's talented artists pair artworks in *Man Ray—Human Equations* with musical excerpts evocative of similar themes. In collaboration with Vocal Arts DC.

Thursday, Apr. 23 (6:30 p.m.): Gallery Talk. Exhibition curator Wendy Grossman and Florence Fasanelli, mathematics educator and advisor to the project, engage in dialogue about the intersection of art and mathematics.

Thursday, May 7 (5–8:30 p.m.): Phillips after 5, Nerd Night. Geek out at the Phillips! Be inspired by Man Ray through speed chess and learn about the intersection of art and math through a screening of *Donald Duck in Mathmagic Land* and tours in the exhibition.

For a complete schedule of events, visit www.phillipscollection.org/events

COMPANION EXHIBITION

Hiroshi Sugimoto: Conceptual Forms / Mathematical Models

February 7–May 10, 2015

Hiroshi Sugimoto (b. 1948), one of Japan’s most important contemporary artists, was inspired by Man Ray’s 1930s photographs to capture on film a collection of 19th century mathematical models at the University of Tokyo. Featuring six photographs and three sculptures, this is the first exhibition to contrast Sugimoto’s mathematical photographs with his aluminum or stainless-steel mathematical models crafted with computer-controlled, precision milling machines.

SPONSORS

The exhibition is organized by The Phillips Collection and The Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

The exhibition and its international tour are supported by the Terra Foundation for American Art. The Terra Foundation for American Art is dedicated to fostering exploration, understanding, and enjoyment of the visual arts of the United States for national and international audiences. Recognizing the importance of experiencing original works of art, the foundation provides opportunities for interaction and study, beginning with the presentation and growth of its own art collection in Chicago. To further cross-cultural dialogue on American art, the foundation supports and collaborates on innovative exhibitions, research, and educational programs. Implicit in such activities is the belief that art has the potential both to distinguish cultures and to unite them.

Generous support provided by Dr. and Mrs. Ronald A. Paul and the Harris Family Foundation.

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Brought to you by the Exhibition Committee for *Man Ray—Human Equations*: Florence Fasanelli, Dr. Mark Green, Eric Richter, and Toni A. Ritzenberg

ABOUT THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION

The Phillips Collection is one of the world's most distinguished collections of impressionist and modern American and European art. Stressing the continuity between art of the past and present, it offers a strikingly original and experimental approach to modern art by combining works of different nationalities and periods in displays that change frequently. The setting is similarly unconventional, featuring small rooms, a domestic scale, and a personal atmosphere. Artists represented in the collection include Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Vincent van Gogh, Edgar Degas, Henri Matisse, Pierre Bonnard, Paul Cézanne, Pablo Picasso, Paul Klee, Claude Monet, Honoré Daumier, Georgia O'Keeffe, Arthur Dove, Mark Rothko, Milton Avery, Jacob Lawrence, and Richard Diebenkorn, among others. The Phillips Collection, America's first museum of modern art, has an active collecting program and regularly organizes acclaimed special exhibitions, many of which travel internationally. The Intersections series features projects by contemporary artists, responding to art and spaces in the museum. The Phillips also produces award-winning education programs for K–12 teachers and students, as well as for adults. The museum's Center for the Study of Modern Art explores new ways of thinking about art and the nature of creativity, through artist visits and lectures, and provides a forum for scholars through courses, postdoctoral fellowships, and internships. Since 1941, the museum has hosted Sunday Concerts in its wood-paneled Music Room. The Phillips Collection is a private, non-government museum, supported primarily by donations.

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