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The art stops here

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It is the only opportunity for Americans to see one of the most extensive and significant collections of Dada and Surrealist art in the world.

The Cincinnati Art Museum will be the sole U.S. venue for an exhibition that features works by the greatest masters of that art - Picasso, Salvador Dalí, Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst, René Magritte and Joan Miró, among others.

"Surrealism and Beyond: In the Israel Museum, Jerusalem," running Feb. 15 to May 17, will showcase 234 pieces and 10 film clips from a collection of 1,200 Dada and Surrealist works belonging to the Jerusalem museum.

It will be one of the largest exhibitions of its kind ever presented in this country, from one of the foremost collections in the world.

"In terms of an exhibition that is available and has significant, great works by the most interesting people who made the Dada and Surrealist movement, this is really it," Cincinnati Art Museum director Aaron Betsky said.

"Bits and pieces of it have traveled, but this is the only time the full exhibition will go on the road, and Cincinnati is the only place to see it in the United States."

The core of Israel Museum's collection was a 1998 gift from Milanese collectors Vera and Arturo Schwarz, who befriended many of the Surrealists.

The museum is undergoing an \$80 million renovation and expansion project. Betsky heard a rumor that the museum was thinking of touring its Dada and Surrealist art and made a phone call to museum director James S. Snyder, "an old family friend."

It will survey Surrealist art from its roots - in the beginnings of the Dada movement (1916) - through recent manifestations and will be organized by theme. Works by Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray, for example, were meant to shock, seduce or disorient the viewer.

Paintings such as Magritte's "The Castle of the Pyrenees" illustrate the Surrealists' belief in dreams and the imagination.

"Part of what made this show so delectable is its sensuousness, from the Dalí women to the Man Ray photographs of women, to the Hans Arp abstractions of the human body," Betsky said.

Because of the way the exhibition will be designed, "it will be like walking into a dream world," he said. "For some, it will be like walking into a nightmare or a fantasy."

Ticket prices will be determined. Information: 513-721-2787; www.cincinnatiartmuseum.org.
