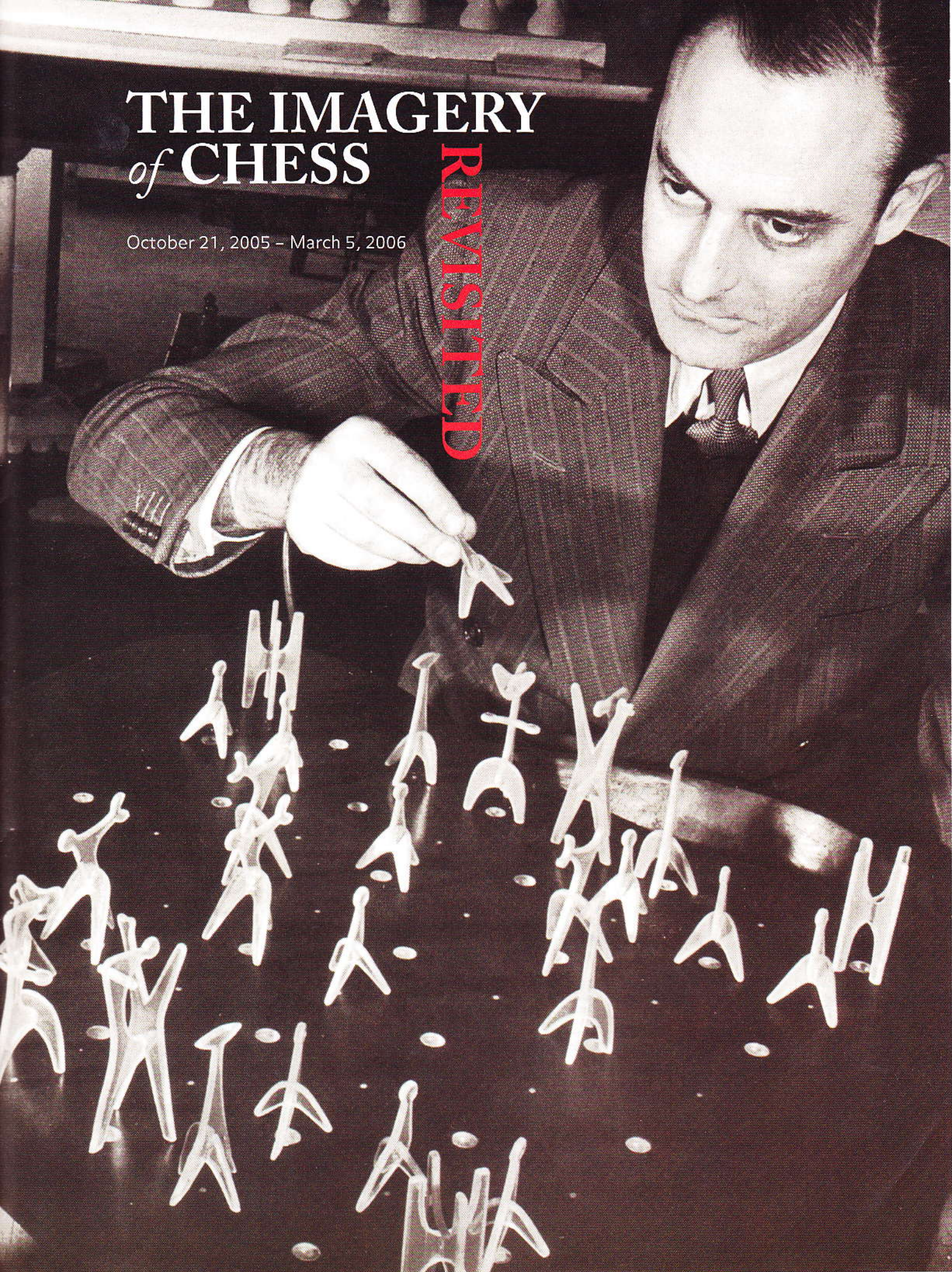


THE IMAGERY *of* CHESS

October 21, 2005 – March 5, 2006

REVISITED



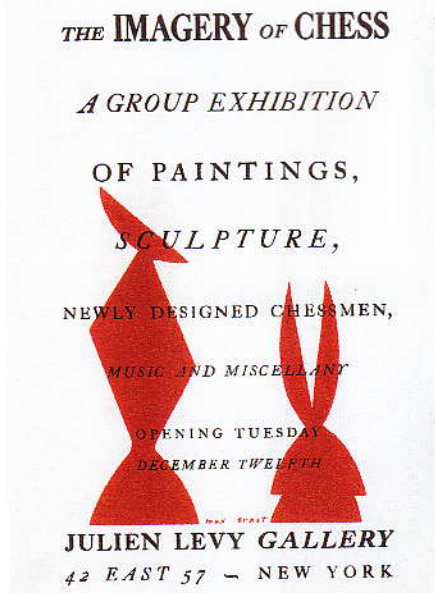
Foreword

With the opening of the renovated Noguchi Museum in June 2004 came the introduction of an expanded exhibition program. Focusing on different aspects of Isamu Noguchi's work in the collection and the context in which that work was created has long been within the purview of the curatorial function at the Museum. Developing exhibitions that also consider Noguchi in relationship to other artists and the larger sphere of the art world in which he operated seemed to be an appropriate next step. Yet Noguchi operated in so many spheres—where and how to begin this effort became the challenge. As these kinds of thoughts and meanings were taking shape, a wonderful opportunity arose: to reexamine and re-create *The Imagery of Chess*, a legendary mid-twentieth-century exhibition that represented the New York art world of which Noguchi at mid-life was very much a part.

The Imagery of Chess Revisited evolved from a winning auction bid in 2002 placed by The Noguchi Museum's curator, Bonnie Rychlak, bringing one of the nine known existing chess tables designed by Noguchi into the Museum's collection. The table, along with a chess set, originally had been made for the exhibition *The Imagery of Chess*, held in the winter of 1944–45 at the Julien Levy Gallery in New York—one of the most experimental venues at the time—for which artists and others were invited to create their own chess sets or chess-related art. On the advice of designer George Nelson, the Herman Miller Company subsequently produced a number of the Noguchi tables in a commercial edition between 1947 and 1949. The chess set, however, had disappeared long ago. The Museum decided that a facsimile chess set should be produced in order to have a true sense of what a *Newsweek* review in 1944 judged to be "the most beautiful piece in the [Julien Levy] show."¹ Noguchi left no drawings or notes concerning the chess set or table. Very little other information existed on the set itself,

and so a description in the *Newsweek* review of the material being red and green plastic served as the beginning. Contacting artist and model-maker Larry List was the next step in the evolution of *The Imagery of Chess Revisited*. An often-reproduced photograph (see cover) of the art dealer Julien Levy playing with the Noguchi chess set led to further research and discovery. This prompted a process of remarkable detective work, resulting in the realization of a stunning facsimile set. It also became apparent that the initial sleuthing had unearthed a great deal beyond what it set out to do.

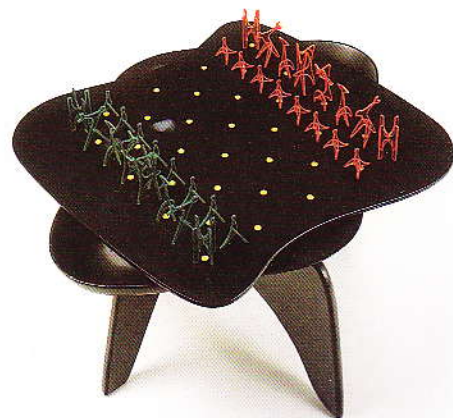
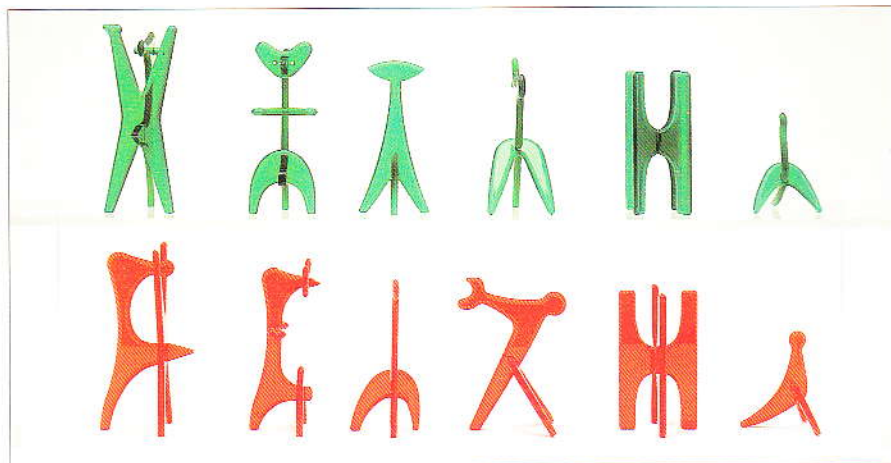
The numerous documents, images, and individuals that Larry List had identified as part of his research belonged to an exhibition that had long intrigued the art world but, like the "lost" Noguchi chess set, had little in the way of documentation and therefore had been scarcely explored. In fact, not even a checklist of the Levy Gallery show was known to exist. Accordingly, under the aegis of Bonnie Rychlak, Larry List was invited to continue his work and serve as the guest curator for an exhibition The



Noguchi Museum would call *The Imagery of Chess Revisited*.

When *The Imagery of Chess* opened at Julien Levy's East Fifty-seventh Street gallery in December 1944, it was clear, however, that this was much more than a display of ingeniously designed chess sets. The exhibition was a catalyst, working on numerous metaphorical levels relating to gamesmanship and battle. It occurred at a crucial juncture in mid-twentieth century art when the Eurocentric Surrealist movement was being challenged by younger artists of the emerging New York school. World War II was ending. In the game of art, by the close of the decade the New York school and its defining spirits would be considered, if only for a short time, the art-world victors.

The show, conceived by Levy and the painter-sculptor Max Ernst, was informally curated by Marcel Duchamp. The "Surrealist sympathizer"² and chess master had for over twenty-five years been absorbed by and championed the game and had met Levy in 1926 when Duchamp was serving as Constantin Brancusi's agent in New York.



Although he had given up painting for chess in the early 1920s, Duchamp's intense involvement with chess and art were mutual as each discipline informed his thinking about the other. He once remarked, "From my close contact with artists and chess players, I have come to the personal conclusion that while all artists are not chess players, all chess players are artists."³ To Duchamp the connection between art and chess appeared seamless and he found kindred spirits in the artists Man Ray, Ernst, and later Levy.

The Julien Levy Gallery opened on Madison Avenue in 1931. Levy was the first American dealer to represent the Surrealists—European émigrés—and ran one of the first galleries of the twentieth century to function as a convivial meeting place for artists. Cocktails were served at openings (a practice first credited to Levy). The atmosphere appears to have been that of a salon, a place for the exchange of ideas first and the commercial business of art second.

In the summer of 1944 Julien Levy and his new wife, Muriel Streeter, shared a beach house with Max Ernst and his wife-to-be Dorothea Tanning in Great River, Long Island. Chess was their game; however, lacking chess sets, the only way they could play was to design and construct their own. By extension, other artists were invited to create chess sets and chess-related art for an exhibition to be held that winter at the Julien Levy Gallery. Included were examples by many recent émigrés and a generation of American artists whose voices were just beginning to be heard.

The brochure announcing *The Imagery of Chess*—designed by Duchamp, with drawings of chess pieces by Max Ernst—features the participants' names arrayed in a chess-board grid, each appearing in lieu of one of the thirty-two chess pieces. The contributors, of which nearly one quarter were women, represented a wide range of ages, talents, and nations of birth. Duchamp, at fifty-seven, was the oldest, while Richard Filipowski—a student at the Institute of Design in Chicago who in effect served as Maholy-Nagy's response to the invitation to participate in the exhibition—was just twenty-one. Aside from painters and sculptors, the group included architects, scenic and graphic designers, experimental photographers, two composers, an industrial design team, a ceramist, a research librarian, and an esteemed psychoanalyst. The list includes both visual artists and musicians who are

prominently associated with twentieth-century art as well as less obvious names who went on to accomplished careers in various aspects of the design field. Dr. Zilboorg, a psychiatrist who was well regarded in chess circles, did not create a work but loaned his Bauhaus prototype chess set designed by Josef Hartwig.

The Imagery of Chess captured these respective talents through the common language of a board game marked by very specific parameters that must be addressed in order for the game to be played. Yet, looking at the contribution that each artist made to the exhibition reveals a distinct correlation to his or her studio practice. Noguchi, for example, would have just completed the interlocking set components for Martha Graham's dance performance

Soon after discovering Brancusi, via Duchamp, Noguchi moved to Paris, hoping to study with him, and he did so. Noguchi would subsequently refer to Brancusi as his mentor. In Paris during the late 1920s, Noguchi also got to know Alexander Calder and he later became close friends with Arshile Gorky, the similar forms in their work seeming to echo this relationship. *The Imagery of Chess* is perhaps in some ways a mirror for our own times—one in which war, a lively if incestuous art scene, and an abiding interest in the game of chess play a part.

Designed for a very different space in a very different time, and aided by history, hindsight, scholarship, and memory, "revisiting" *The Imagery of Chess* has had as its goal not only to bring together all extant works we believe to have been in Julien



OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP:
From the invitation to *The Imagery of Chess*, designed by Marcel Duchamp, 1944.

OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM:
Isamu Noguchi. *Chess Set and Chess Table*. 1944. *Chess Set*: 2003 replica of 1944 lost original. Red and green Plexiglas. Tallest piece 3 7/8 in. *Chess Table*: ebonized joined birch tabletop with red and clear acrylic plastic insets, ebonized veneer lumber-ply legs, and painted or anodized cast-aluminum storage pockets. 19 1/8 x 24 15/16 x 26 1/4 in.

LEFT:
Julien Levy Gallery, January 6, 1945. *Imagery of Chess* contributors Vittorio Rieti, Dorothea Tanning, and Max Ernst take part in the blind-fold chess event held in conjunction with the exhibition, using chess sets from the show. The Estate of Jean F. Levy and The Julien Levy Archive

Hérodiane, which opened in October 1944. He was also working in his McDougal Alley studio on sculptures and drawings that formally resembled his chess pieces. The chess table allowed the artist to bring his pure sculptural interests together with the functional requirements of furniture, an approach that was already evident in his *Radio Nurse*, which he created for the Zenith Corporation in 1937. By 1944, he had designed a number of tables, including his now famous glass-topped coffee table, later produced by the Herman Miller Furniture Company, which shares the use of a transparent material and interlocking assembly.

It is notable that the relationships among the participants in *The Imagery of Chess* wove a tangled web of connections that indeed defined the art world of the time. Levy had written about Noguchi, and Noguchi had made a portrait bust of Levy.

Levy's original exhibition but to create a kind of conceptual framework for what no longer survives in its original form. This has meant, in addition to the facsimile Noguchi chess set, the construction of replicas of three objects from the 1944–45 show, along with assembling documentary photographs and other ephemera relating to the original exhibition and its participants, in order to impart a sense of another place and another time. Also included in this new exhibition are various other examples by contributors to Levy's show, which provide a context for the artists' chess-themed work. In this way, a half century later, we hope to bring to new life for new audiences a particular and resonant moment in twentieth-century art.

Jenny Dixon
Director, *The Noguchi Museum*

1. "Levy's Gambit," *Newsweek*, December 25, 1944, 82–83.

2. Ingrid Schaffner, "Alchemy of the Gallery," in Ingrid Schaffner and Lisa Jacobs, eds., *Julien Levy: Portrait of an Art Gallery* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998), 46.

3. Quoted in Ingrid Schaffner "Play," in Schaffner and Jacobs, eds., *Julien Levy: Portrait of an Art Gallery*, 144.

The Imagery of Chess *Revisited*

When *The Imagery of Chess* opened the evening of December 12, 1944, at the Julien Levy Gallery, on view was an exceptional collection of works by some of the most creative people of the era. The announcement for the show included a statement, "On Designing Chessmen," which had laid down a challenge to the artists and designers. Decrying the Staunton and French-style chess sets, the standard playing sets used internationally since the mid-nineteenth century, as stodgy and lacking in utility, it called for new designs that were more harmonious "to the touch and sight" and "more adequate to the role the figure has to play in the struggle..."

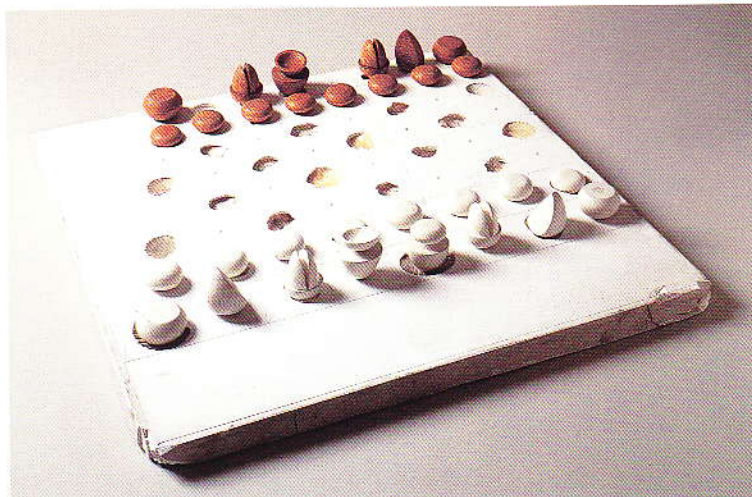
The proposition was alluring to the émigré Surrealists, in New York waiting out World War II, because it offered a challenge that was both dynamic and contradictory: create a beautiful, functional design for a non-functional activity. Along with the Europeans, some of the American artists, including Isamu Noguchi, Alexander Calder, David Hare, and John and Xenia Cage, valued communal and creative play as an artistic stimulus; hence, the concept for the show dovetailed perfectly with their aesthetic practices. It was an exploration of Max Ernst's belief that "art is not produced by one artist, but by several. It is to a great degree a product of their exchange of ideas one with another."¹

While some of the participants—including Julien Levy, the art dealer who mounted the show—were avid devotees of chess, others, like Noguchi, Richard Filipowski, and Kurt Seligmann, understood the game and its history but were not intensely involved with it. There were even a few in the group, like the Chilean architect-turned-painter Matta and Surrealist theorist and leader André Breton and his young colleague the critic Nicolas Calas, who openly opposed the supposedly rational basis of chess and ridiculed the players as narcissistic and self-indulgent.

The works that were produced were as varied as the participants. The World War II emphasis on rationing, recycling, and substitution of one material for another gave rise to ingenious design solutions. Chess sets were made of clay, plaster, wood, glass, paper, plastic, metal, seashells, and even red and white wine. From the fact that the war had forced many of the European participants into exile status, with its accompanying nomadic uncertainty, came economy of means and portability of designs, as well as a desire to camouflage or veil subject

matter. Wartime techniques of camouflage were often discussed, studied, and taught by these artists, Calder and Arshile Gorky, in particular. A wine-glass chess set created by Breton and Calas, known today only from reviews of the exhibition, was just such a wartime improvisation. An example of the genre of "put-together" chess sets, it was most likely assembled on a makeshift board

skill. While chess had its roots as a game of war, during the Middle Ages in Europe it also became the game of courtly love, the only social activity in which single gentlemen and ladies could meet without chaperones. For their contributions to Levy's exhibition, many of the artists drew on their own experiences in both love and war as well as their knowledge of history and myth.



Julien Levy. *Chess Set and Board*. 1944. Chess Set: stained and painted oak. Tallest piece 2 1/2 in. Board: cast reinforced plaster with incised lines and seashells. 1 1/4 x 24 x 24 in. The Estate of Jean F. Levy and The Julien Levy Archive

of mirrors from available stemware. Players were to "drink the symbolic blood,"² of each captured piece, tying the intoxicating violence of the game to the wholesale carnage of the larger war raging on. The transparent pieces, half-seen through, half-reflected, lost themselves in the image-splintering chessboard.

In their works for *The Imagery of Chess*, the artists mined the rich associations of the game and its history, a number of them investing this international pastime of aristocrats, warriors, prisoners, and refugees with personal meaning as well. In a time of world conflict, which the artists were powerless to influence, chess represented a controllable, tabletop form of ritual warfare, devoid of chance and predicated on



André Breton and Nicolas Calas. *Wine Glass Chess Set and Board*. Exhibition replica, 2004, of lost original, date unknown [c. 1944], dimensions unknown. Described in *Newsweek*, December 25, 1944. Mirror glass, wood, glass, red and white wine.

Origins

Some of the participants, like Duchamp, Ernst, Man Ray, and Yves Tanguy, had been passionately engaged with chess for many years and had already included chess imagery or designs in their art making. In 1919, Duchamp, living in Buenos Aires, designed and produced a strikingly modern, yet utilitarian chess set and table. The table featured folding legs and built-in chess clocks. Duchamp would move from the design of three-dimensional pieces on a board, to flat wall maquettes and writings on chess tactics, to a beautiful, but esoteric, book on chess endgame strategy. Man Ray, the most prolific designer of the group, described his own interest as "directed towards designing new forms for chess pieces...to me a fertile field of investigation."³ Max Ernst had been an avid chess player since his Dada days in Paris. He made his earliest known chess set in 1929 and had the King, Queen, and Bishop from that set cast in bronze. Tanguy had made an elegant, minimal chess set from sections of a broomstick and, before he left Paris in 1939, gave it to his mentor and friend, the sculptor Constantin Brancusi. However, once in America, Tanguy made another copy of the set for himself, which was most likely the "playable chess set" that both Levy and Duchamp stated he contributed to *The Imagery of Chess*.

From their earliest efforts, Duchamp, Man Ray, and to a lesser extent, Max Ernst, entertained the dream of creating a chess-set design that would be endorsed by chess-world professionals, produced continuously, and sold as a mass-market edition capable of providing a source of income to support other artistic pursuits. In 1920, Duchamp outlined his idea for a chromatic chess set, in which the pieces of his Buenos Aires set would be color-coded to indicate their direction of movement, and have it endorsed for sale by his friend, the chess world figure Frank Marshall of New York City. In 1943, Duchamp attempted to create an improved version of the standard pocket chess set—which he included a year later in Levy's exhibition—by redesigning the celluloid pieces, affixing each one with a pin to make play more secure, and marketing the set with the imprimatur of chess master George Koltanowski.

While these ideas ultimately proved unworkable, ceramist Carol Janeway succeeded in early 1944 in producing a chess set that maintained elements of traditional sets but was more modern in its design and sold it to a wide audience through upscale stores in New York and Los Angeles. Her pieces, inexpensive to produce, were made of brightly colored glazed ceramic and were half the size of those by other designers. A version of the chess set was displayed in *The Imagery of Chess*. After seeing the Janeway set in New York in 1945, Man Ray began to produce large editions of half-sized, brilliantly colored aluminum chess sets, which he marketed through prominent retail outlets in California.

Modern Forms, Modern Materials

The modernist artists and designers involved in *The Imagery of Chess* sought to break with tradition in a number of ways. Duchamp began the process by simplifying and abstracting the standard forms. Man Ray reduced the pieces to pure geometric solids, while Josef Hartwig, of the Bauhaus, and Tanguy designed new geometric forms that identified the pieces solely by hierarchy and direction of movement. The era's drive toward substituting one material for another led to the replacement of natural wood and noble metals with more "modern" acrylic plastic in chess sets by Noguchi and by Filipowski and eventually, in the years immediately after the chess show, to Man Ray's inventive use of anodized aluminum.

Compound Grids and Shared Sources

Other artists embraced the styles and traditions of the past and boldly transmuted them into new forms. Julien Levy, like

Duchamp and Ernst, owned numerous books on chess technique, design, and history. Unlike most gallery owners, Levy had actually taken studio courses in painting, photography, and sculpture. His simple egg-shaped chess pieces drew inspiration from the ovoid Brancusi sculpture he owned, *The Newborn*, while his chessboard combined the Asian-style game-board grid made of center points with the standard Western chessboard grid of sixty-four squares. The compound grid of squares and center points had its origins in the chessboards of India, where it is most likely that the game originated. Classic Indian black-lacquered chessboards featured disk-shaped center-point inlays of mother-of-pearl within an engraved grid of squares and distinctive red and green chess pieces. The Indian color scheme was adopted in the chess table and set made by Noguchi, who, familiar with the traditional arts of India, substituted white acrylic plastic for mother-of-pearl insets in the on his table and used translucent red and green plastic for his pieces.

Levy embedded seashells to create craterlike center points in which his round-bottomed chess pieces would nest. For his white game-board slab riddled with craters, Levy likely was inspired by Giacometti's 1932 sculpture *On ne joue plus* (*No More Play*), a work first shown by the dealer, who also owned the piece. Giacometti, himself, may have drawn from the traditional African games of *i* and *Bao*, each played on a series of palm-sized craters scooped directly into the earth and from the tradition of French *pique-sable* chess sets, made for play in the sand.

Composite Forms

While Man Ray, Filipowski, Hartwig, and Tanguy sought to reduce the chess set to minimal, unitary geometric forms, other artists pieced together scavenged objects and materials or collaged images into composite forms. Kurt Seligmann painted or sketched spectral figures that appear as composites of bones, armor, flesh, and other detritus. Robert Motherwell used scraps of real materials to create his collages, while in his figural ink drawings he skewered series of stacked ovals on vertical axes, reminiscent of French-style chess pieces. Ernst arrived at his final wood chess set of 1944 by initially combining multiple plaster casts of parts of everyday objects into a series of prototypes, which were then translated into wood. Most audaciously direct, Alexander Calder created his "assemblage" chess pieces from a set of actual sofa legs (the Castles) and fragments of other architectural bric-a-brac.



Max Ernst. *The King Playing with the Queen*. 1954. Bronze, cast from plaster original, 1944. 38 1/2 x 18 3/4 x 20 1/2 in. at base. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of Dominique and John de Menil (330.1955vw2)

Sculpture

Two major sculptures made specifically for the 1944–45 exhibition were by Max Ernst and David Hare. These were shown in their original plaster states, as wartime restrictions made bronze for casting artworks scarce and expensive. Each depicts a fantastic being playing a game at a table, with inspiration coming from medieval chess lore, Arthurian legends, and Greek mythology, as well as the real-life romantic conflicts within the artists' social circle. For *The King Playing with the Queen*, Ernst employed the same approach he used in his chess-set design—combining and refining cast-plaster forms from his surroundings—while it is more likely that Hare's forms originated in the artist's imagination.

Paintings and Drawings: Landscapes, Grids, and Figures

The Imagery of Chess also gave rise to a diverse, yet related, group of paintings and drawings. Some works used the chessboard to map real or imagined perspectival landscapes. Others featured the chessboard grid as a basis for a new type of pictorial spatial system, perhaps presaging later Minimalist grid painting. Chess pieces were portrayed as costumed or shrouded figures, ambiguous symbols, or totemic forms.

Like all Surrealist works, Dorothea Tanning's painting *End Game* was to be regarded as a product of the free association of images and emotions surfacing from the subconscious. Using a chessboard as a theatrical backdrop, Tanning (who like the other Surrealists was highly anti-clerical) depicted a dramatic encounter in which a white silk high-heel shoe (a white Queen)



Dorothea Tanning, *End Game*. 1944. Oil on canvas. 17 1/2 x 17 1/2 in. Collection of Harold and Gertrud Parker, Tiburon, California

crushes a symbol of clerical and chessboard authority, a black Bishop, represented only by his miter. Tanning, herself, appears as the white Queen in a painting that Muriel Streeter created especially for Levy's exhibition, *The Chess Queens*, which also portrays Streeter as the black Queen.

Two visual works featured chess-themed musical compositions. A chessboard grid was literally made out of music by the then-young experimental American composer John Cage. Chess literature and imagery suggested music to the Italian Vittorio Rieti, a renowned composer of opera and dance scores for George Balanchine and others.



Julio de Diego. From *Chess Series*. c. 1944. Oil and wash on paper. 17 3/4 x 23 3/8 in. Collection Kiriki Metzo, New York

Linear Networks

Duchamp had internalized the primary directive of chess: create lines of connection between one's pieces and an opponent's in order to link them, while simultaneously creating lines of obstruction in order to prevent access to the pieces. The space of chess, therefore, can be described as complex, linear, and multi-directional. This idea was not lost on other artists, like Matta, Xenia Cage, and Xanti Schawinsky, who participated in *The Imagery of Chess*. Matta used networks of sharp, thin lines to trap flat shapes and figures in his collage drawings' multi-perspectival spaces. In her chess table Xenia Cage employed thin crisscrossing rods that buttress the understructure while describing the directions of chess-piece movements. Schawinsky used arcing Lucite rods to trace the imagined trajectories of the players' strategies above a chessboard battlefield. Similar linear and multi-directional elements would soon become the central attributes of the "allover" paintings of Jackson Pollock and the compositional underpinning in the works of other New York school painters.

Photography

Exhibition participants created chess-themed photographs, some of which were key elements of photomontages (Steffi Kiesler), or functioned as self-portraits (Man Ray), or as conversions of three-dimensional works

to two-dimensional images (Schawinsky). Julien Levy used photography to document the blindfold chess event, held in conjunction with the show on the evening of January 6, 1945, at the gallery. For this occasion, several participating artists, along with founding director of the Museum of Modern Art, Alfred Barr Jr., simultaneously played the reigning blindfold chess master, George Koltanowski, using chess sets designed for the show. Marcel Duchamp served as interlocutor. In retrospect, this collaborative group activity could be regarded as an early "process" or "performance art" piece. Afterward, Levy remarked that "[t]he audience and players had a marvelous time, and in some ways Marcel and I later thought of this as a 'pre-happening' happening."⁴ This approach even extended beyond the group of participants: *Town & Country* magazine used the gallery as a photographic environment in which to combine chess with elements of fashion, high society, wartime service, and avant-garde art.

Revisiting The Imagery of Chess

The subsequent work of many of the artists who took part in Levy's exhibition may have evolved directly from ideas first explored in *The Imagery of Chess*. Revisiting the exhibition reveals a larger legacy. The theme, the outgrowth of a summer day at the beach, proved to be a surprisingly rich one—encompassing fourteen centuries of sources and references and spanning a broad range of cultures, styles, and materials. Lending coherence to a diverse, fiercely independent group of artists without imposing limits, it encouraged, like the game, both communal spirit and competitive urges. Drawing on war and love, it resulted in works that were, at turns, intense and personal, cold and formal, beautiful or brutal. It offered twentieth-century modernists valuable alternate ways of thinking about physical and pictorial space and it forced a break with past figurative traditions, firmly establishing a new set of abstract modernist norms that would encourage the explorations of subsequent generations of visual artists, designers, and architects.

Larry List
Guest Curator

Condensed and excerpted from *The Imagery of Chess Revisited*, edited by Larry List (New York: The Noguchi Museum and George Braziller, 2005).

I wish to dedicate the exhibition *The Imagery of Chess Revisited* to the memory of Julien Levy (1906–81) and Jean Farley Levy (1912–2003).

1. Max Ernst quoted in James Johnson Sweeney, "Eleven Europeans in America," *The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art* 13, nos. 4–5 (February 1946): 16–17.
2. "Levy's Gambit," *Newsweek*, December 25, 1944, 82.
3. Man Ray, *Self Portrait* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1998), 186.
4. Julien Levy, *Memoir of an Art Gallery* (Boston: MFA Publications, a division of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 2003; first published 1977), 275.

The Imagery of Chess, Julien Levy Gallery, 1944–45

There is no known extant checklist of the original exhibition. The following list was reconstructed in 2005 using 1944–45 photographs and documents. An asterisk indicates a work possibly, but not conclusively, in the exhibition.

André Breton and Nicolas Calas [Calamaris]

Wine Glass Chess Set. Glasses of red and white wine on mirror board. Date unknown [c. 1944].

John Cage

Chess Pieces. 1944. Black and white ink over gouache on Masonite.

Xenia Cage

Chess Table. 1944. Wood-dowel structure.

Mobiles (exact titles unknown). 1943–44. Wood strips, thread, wire, and colored rice paper.

Alexander Calder

**Assemblage Chess Set and Board*. c. 1944. Painted found-wood and painted plywood.

**Carved Wood Chess Set and Board*. c. 1944–45. Carved wood and painted plywood.

**The Chess King*. c. 1944. Carved wood.

The Knightmares Portfolio. 1944. Thirty-five ink and watercolor drawings on paper.

**Traveling Chess Set Pieces with Box*. 1942. Painted wood, metal screws, and bent metal.

Julio de Diego

From *Chess Series*. c. 1944. Oil and wash on paper.

Marcel Duchamp

The Imagery of Chess invitation/brochure. 1944. Red and black ink on paper.

**L'Opposition et Les Cases Conjuguées Sont Reconciliées/Opposition und Schwesterfelder Sind Durch Versöhnt/Opposition and Sister Squares Are Reconciled*. By Marcel Duchamp and Vitaly Halberstadt (Paris and Brussels: L'Éditions L'Echiquier, 1932).

Pocket Chess Set with Rubber Glove. 1943–44. Leather pocket chessboard with celluloid chess pieces and metal pins.

Max Ernst

Plaster Chess Set Prototype. 1944.

Wood Chess Set. 1944. Stained boxwood.

The King Playing with the Queen. 1944. Plaster. *Roi, reine et fou* (King, Queen and Bishop). 1929. Bronze.

Strategic Value Chessboard 1. 1944. Medium unknown.

Strategic Value Chessboard 2. (Possibly by Ernst.) 1944. Gouache on paper mounted between plates of glass.

Strategic Value Chessboard 3. (Possibly by Ernst.) 1944. Medium unknown.

Richard Filipowski

Clear Chess Set. 1943. Acrylic plastic.

David Hare

Magician's Game. 1944. Plaster.

Josef Hartwig. See Zilboorg

Jean Hélion

Untitled Chess Drawings. 1945. Set of three. Pencil, ink, and watercolor on paper.

Carol Janeway

Chess Set. 1944. Glazed ceramic.

**Chess Table*. c. 1944. Hand-painted ceramic tiles and wood.

Leon Kelly

The Plateau of Chess. 1944. Oil on canvas.

Steffi Kiesler

Chess Village. c. 1944. Photomontage: one-page typewritten essay on German "chess village" of Ströbeck and three turn-of-the-twentieth-century newspaper photographs of children playing chess; mounted on mat board.

Is Chess a Martial Game? c. 1944.

Photomontage: black-and-white photograph, two black-and-white magazine photographs, and typewritten captions glued to mat board.

Julien Levy

Chess Set and Board. 1944. *Chess Set*: stained and painted oak. *Board*: reinforced plaster with incised lines and seashells.

Plaster Chess Piece Prototypes. 1944. Plaster casts from eggshells.

Man Ray [Emanuel Radnitzky]

Wood Chess Set. Designed 1944; executed 1945. Natural and ebonized birch.

**The Knight's Tour*. c. 1944–46. Oil on board.

Silver Chess Set. 1926. Silver-plated and oxidized silver-plated brass.

**Group of chess-set design drawings*. c. 1920–45. (possibly postdated). Assorted drawings in pencil and inks on paper, black-and-white photographs, and photograms.

**Self-Portrait*. c. 1944. Black-and-white photograph.

Matta [Roberto Sebastian Antonio Matta Echaurren]

6 Threats to a White Q. 1944. Pencil, crayon, and collage on paper.

**Untitled*. post-44. Pencil and crayon on paper.

Robert Motherwell

**The Bloody Queen*. 1944. India ink and wash on Strathmore paper.

**The Queen's Gambit Accepted*. 1944. India ink and wash on Strathmore paper.

**V-Letter*. 1944. Revised and retitled *View from a High Tower* in 1947. Collage and oil with topographic map of battlefield. (originally a vertical rectangle in format).

H.J.R. [Harold James Ruthven] Murray

**A History of Chess*. First edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913).

Isamu Noguchi

Chess Set. 1944. Red and green probably acrylic plastic.

Chess Table. 1944. Ebonized joined birch table-top with red and translucent acrylic plastic insets, ebonized veneer lumber-ply legs, and painted or anodized cast-aluminum storage pockets.

Vittorio Rieti

Chess Serenade (music for a chess ballet). 1944. Red and black ink on music paper.

Kay Sage

Near the Five Corners. 1943. Oil on canvas.

Xanti [Alexander] Schawinsky

**Chess Game 1944*. Black-and-white photograph.

Chess Table Assemblage. c. 1944. Wood table with clear acrylic plastic chessboard over a black-and-white photograph; cast mannequin hand; acrylic plastic rods; and wood Régence-style chess set.

Kurt Seligmann

The Chess Match. 1944. Oil on canvas.

Muriel Streeter [Levy]

The Chess Queens. 1944. Oil on canvas.

Harold Sterner

Chess Painting. Date and medium unknown.

Yves Tanguy

**Black and White Castle*. 1944. Gouache.

**Chess Set and Table*. Replica of original (before 1939) made by artist, c. 1944. Painted wood and metal.

**My Life White and Black*. 1944. Oil on canvas.

Dorothea Tanning

End Game. 1944. Oil on canvas.

Gregory Zilboorg

Bauhaus Prototype Chess Set, 1923, by Josef Hartwig (contributed by Dr. Zilboorg). Stained wood.

Participants in the exhibition whose work has not been identified include the following:

Eugene Berman

Mary Callery

Arshile Gorky [Vosdanik Adonian]

Antonín Heythum

Charlotta Heythum

Frederick Kiesler

Ossip Zadkine

Public Programs

Jennifer Shahade vs. the World!!!

Saturday, January 14

2:00–5:00 pm

Visitors to The Noguchi Museum will have the opportunity to challenge Jennifer Shahade, 2002 and 2004 United States Women's Chess Master, in a game of chess. Shahade has been hailed as the strongest American-born female chess player in history. Participation in this event is on a first come, first-served basis.

Second Sundays: Dialogues on Art, Architecture, and Design

The second Sunday of each month, at 3:00 pm

Free with Museum admission

The Second Sundays series is supported, in part, by the Independence Community Foundation.

Chess Sets: Modernist Art and Design (and Beyond)

Sunday, November 13, 2005

Robert Rabinovitz will moderate a discussion on design evolution as reflected in chess-set design. Panelists will include Michael Graves, Douglas Polumbaum, and Mark Sanders. After the discussion, guests will be able to view the finalists from the Museum's collegiate chess-set design competition and the winning design will be recognized.

Reading Chess

Sunday, December 11, 2005

Moderator Paul Hoffman will lead a panel discussion with noted writers J. C. Hallman, author of *The Chess Artist: Genius and Madness in the World's Oldest Game*, and Jennifer Shahade, author of *Chess Bitch: Women in the Ultimate Intellectual Sport*.

Curator's Talk

Sunday, January 8, 2006

Larry List, guest curator of *The Imagery of Chess Revisited*, will discuss the exhibition and will also explore the significance of undertaking the reconstruction of the original *Imagery of Chess* and the influence that the 1944–45 exhibition had on the worlds of art and chess.

Chess and Art: An Interplay of Disciplines

Sunday, February 12, 2006

Inspired by Marcel Duchamp's famous statement, "Not all artists are chess players, but all chess players are artists," The Noguchi Museum will host a discussion on the interplay between the disciplines of art and chess. Guest curator Larry List will serve as moderator. Panelists include Francis Naumann, Wendy Grossman, and Ingrid Schaffner.

Family Workshops

Families are invited to experience The Noguchi Museum together through a variety of specially designed activities, including tours and hands-on workshops. Reservations are required for all workshops. Please call 718.204.7088, ext. 205.

Art for Families

Saturdays, October, 15, 29; November 19; December 10; February 18; March 1. 10:30 am–12:30 pm

For families with children ages 5–11

Art for Families Special Workshop: Being Chess!

Saturday, January 14

10:30 am–12:30 pm

Art for Tots

Saturdays, October 8, 22; December 3, 17; February 11, 25; March 4. 10:30 am–11:30 am

For families with children ages 2–4

Gallery Talks and Group Tours

Free Gallery Talks

Take place at 2:00 pm, Wednesday through Sunday, and are open to all individual visitors. Reservations are not required. As part of the Second Sundays series of public programs, the 2:00 pm gallery talk will also be available translated into Japanese.

School Group Tours

Interactive visits to The Noguchi Museum are available to students in grades Pre-K–12, Wednesday–Friday, year-round. All visits are led by Museum Educators and are designed to engage students' minds and senses as they explore the work of Isamu Noguchi.

Guided Group Tours

Conducted by Museum Educators, group tours for adults explore specific works in the Museum, focusing on the wide variety of materials and approaches employed by Isamu Noguchi. Tours translated into Japanese and Spanish are available.

Please note: FM headsets for sound amplification are available for all group tours upon request. Sign-language interpretation for all programs is available with four weeks advance notice. These services are free. To schedule a group tour, please visit the Museum's Web site at www.noguchi.org or call 718.204.7088.

Programs are subject to change; please visit our Web site or call 718.204.7088 for updates.

The Imagery of Chess Revisited is supported, in part, with public funds from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts. The education and public programs that accompany this exhibition have been made possible through a generous contribution from the Independence Community Foundation. The book accompanying the exhibition was published with support from the Dedalus Foundation, Inc. The Museum also gratefully acknowledges the many individuals and private foundations whose generosity and support helped make this project possible.



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Cover: Julien Levy playing with a chess set designed by Isamu Noguchi at *The Imagery of Chess, 1944–45*. Photograph: attributed to George Platt Lynes.