

<p>Institution: The University of Glasgow</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: D28A: Modern Languages and Linguistics</p>
<p>Title of case study: Filling The Surreal House: enhancing public engagement with the avant-garde.</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Ramona Fotiade helped shape an exhibition on Surrealism that attracted 42,500 visitors to the Barbican Centre, London, and secured extensive positive media coverage. Fotiade was one of four high-profile international special advisors contributing to <i>The Surreal House</i> exhibition, which ran from June to September 2010 at the Barbican, Europe's largest multi-arts centre. Fotiade contributed four essays – Antonio Gaudi, Le Facteur Cheval, the Villa Malaparte, Maya Deren and Andrei Tarkovsky – on the interaction between Surrealism and visual arts to the exhibition catalogue, which sold more than 5,000 copies, and she curated the exhibition's film programme which was judged "central to the success of the exhibition" by the Barbican's senior curator. Fotiade's contribution enhanced public engagement with the avant-garde, enriching the experience of visitors to the gallery.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Ramona Fotiade's (Senior Lecturer in French, 1995-present) research spans three inter-related areas of research in French 20th century studies: avant-garde literary movements; philosophy; and visual culture. She has made a wide contribution to scholarship in the fields of Surrealism and avant-garde cinema, publishing extensively in academic journals, anthologies, authoring books and presenting papers at conferences. She draws on this research expertise to curate and extend public engagement with surrealist texts, films, architecture and artefacts. Fotiade co-edited and contributed to a special issue of <i>La Part de l'oeil</i> (nr 25-26/ 2010-2011, Bruxelles) devoted to Benjamin Fondane's theory and experimental practice of visual arts. She has also published book chapters and articles in both French and English on the word-image interaction in Surrealist visual art and avant-garde films. Her research focuses on the interaction between Surrealist architecture and cinema; Salvador Dali's appraisal of Antonio Gaudi's architecture and the Surrealist appropriation of Art Deco through Dali's conception of critical paranoia; Dali's collaboration with Luis Bunuel on the making of <i>Un Chien andalou</i> and <i>L'Age d'or</i>; and, the post-war legacy of the Surrealist movement in the work of American and Russian filmmakers such as Maya Deren and Andrei Tarkovsky.</p> <p>Fotiade's exploration of Surrealist architecture in relation to film was established by her involvement in the <i>Fantasy Space - Surrealism and Architecture</i> conference held at the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester (2003). Her paper, 'A Throw of the Dice: Man Ray at the Villa Noailles' was later (2009) published in the <i>Mélusine</i> magazine of the Paris-based <i>Centre de recherche sur le surréalisme</i>, led by Henri Béhar. The argument in this paper focused specifically on the transition between Dada and Surrealist visual experimentation and the manner in which Man Ray appropriated and re-interpreted the architectural space of the Villa Noailles (designed by Robert Mallet-Stevens, who was mostly associated with the functionalism of Le Corbusier's style, and who worked with the well-known abstract Dada painter and filmmaker Fernand Léger). The analysis of the production contexts (given that this was a commission funded by the owner of the villa, the Vicomte de Noailles) and of the finished film emphasised Man Ray's own evolution from</p>

abstraction and Dada experimentation (in his earlier collaboration with Léger during the making of *Le Ballet mécanique*, or in his short films, *Le Retour à la raison* and *Emak Bakia*) to Surrealism (in his last film, *Les Mystères du château du dé*). In 2004 and 2005 Fotiade was commissioned as an expert to contribute to three major dictionaries and encyclopaedia projects, writing entries on the key Surrealist and avant-garde figures Luis Bunuel, André Breton, Jean Cocteau, Marcel Duchamp, Fernand Leger, Man Ray, Raul Ruiz, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Boris Vian.

3. References to the research

1. Five commissioned contributions (Antonio Gaudi, Le Facteur Cheval, the Villa Malaparte, Maya Deren and Andrei Tarkovsky) published in the catalogue of *The Surreal House* exhibition at the Barbican Centre (London), June-September 2010 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press/ Barbican Art Gallery, 2010. ([ISBN: 9780300165760](#)) [available from HEI])
2. 'Un coup de dés: Man Ray à la Villa Noailles', in [Mélusine nr. XXIX](#), «Le Surréalisme sans l'architecture », February 2009, pp. 171-182. ISBN 9782825139318 [available from HEI]
3. 'Fondane-Einstein: l'écriture cinématographique', in Liliane Meffre & Olivier Salazar-Ferrer (eds.), *Carl Fondane et Benjamin Einstein: avant-gardes et émigration dans le Paris des années 1920-1930*, Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2008, pp. 15-26. (ISBN 978052014456) [available from HEI]
4. 'From Ready-Made to Moving Image: The Visual Poetics of Surrealist Cinema', Graeme Harper & Rob Stone (eds.), [The Unsilvered Screen: Surrealism on Film](#), London: Wallflower Press, 2007, pp. 9–22. ISBN: 978-1-904764-87-8 [available from HEI]
5. 'Automatism and the Moving Image: From Verbal to Visual Metaphor in *L'Etoile de mer*' (book chapter), in Marie-Claire Barnet, Eric Robertson and Nigel Saint (eds.), *Robert Desnos. Surrealism in the Twenty-First Century*, Oxford: Peter Lang, 2006, pp. 263–284. ISBN 9780820493084 [available from HEI]
6. '*Un Chien andalou*', in Philip Powrie (ed.), [24 Frames: French Cinema](#), Wallflower Press, 2006, pp. 21-29. ISBN 9781904764472 [available from HEI]

4. Details of the impact

As a special advisor to *The Surreal House* exhibition at the Barbican in London, Fotiade directed new ways of presenting the link between Surrealist film and architecture – one of the key aims of the show. In particular, her selection of films to complement the artworks was a noteworthy innovation to the creative practice, which was noted in the show's many favourable press reviews. Fotiade's specialised expertise helped the Barbican to attract 42,500 visitors to the exhibition, contributing to the local creative economy and enriching public cultural life through this most interesting and enigmatic of subjects.

Fotiade's research expertise on the evolution of Surrealist cinema and its legacy in post-war France, Spain and the USA led to her being commissioned by the Barbican Centre as a special advisor to the exhibition in 2010. The Barbican's senior curator contacted Fotiade after reading her contributions to specialist books on Surrealist visual art and the 1998 issue of [Screen](#) magazine devoted to Surrealist cinema which Fotiade edited. Fotiade was approached as the UK's foremost expert on Surrealist cinema and was selected as one of four international special advisors invited to contribute to the exhibition and catalogue.

Impact case study (REF3b)

The 42,500+ visitors to the Barbican's exhibition had an opportunity to experience firsthand some of the best-known installations and visual art works related to the early Surrealist period (including paintings by Dali, Miro and Ernst) alongside later developments in the Anglophone and American post-war art world. The [show](#) brought together over 170 works, many of which had not been shown before in the UK, including – in addition to paintings – drawings, photography, installations and architecture.

The Barbican's senior curator was keen to use films as a way of enhancing the visitor experience and Fotiade helped select the film content which became an integral part of the exhibition. Fotiade's choice of films for the Barbican exhibition reflected the evolution of the Surrealist movement in Europe and the USA, with representative illustrations from the work of Maya Deren, Jean-Luc Godard's celebrated *Le Mépris*, and Andrei Tarkovsky's last film, *The Sacrifice*. Fotiade also provided detailed essays for the [exhibition catalogue](#) on Catalan architect Antonio Gaudi, Le Facteur Cheval (a postman who built his 'ideal palace' out of random stones over 33 years), the Villa Malaparte in Capri, and filmmakers Maya Deren and Andrei Tarkovsky. These essays focused on the interaction between Surrealist art and modern architecture and between architecture and cinema in addition to the legacy of the Surrealist movement in the work of post-war experimental/art-house filmmakers such as Deren, Godard and Tarkovsky. Fotiade's analysis of Tarkovsky's *The Sacrifice* was also chosen by the Barbican as the closing statement of the exhibition. The Barbican curator described Fotiade's contribution:

Ramona, as one of the Advisors, made an invaluable contribution in terms of helping decide on filmic content for this exhibition. She quickly understood the project and my vision for it. I couldn't have done the exhibition without support from academics with in-depth knowledge of surrealism. I think the films she suggested – Tarkovsky, Deren and Godard – were central to the success of the project. It totally relied on the mix of disciplines and cross-generational approach. The idea was that the blend of exhibits would render the whole like a dream. The exhibition far exceeded audience target and was critically acclaimed in many of the major national papers. The book is beautiful and well-researched. Ramona's contribution to that was also incredibly welcome – her sensitivity to the subject and thorough understanding of the significance of these films to surrealism shines through in the text.

The exhibition was of great public interest and reached a wide international audience. *The Surreal House* was described as an "excellent opportunity to see rarely exhibited works brought together under an interesting guise." It was awarded four out of five stars by [Time Out London](#) and recommended by the [BBC](#).

The significance of the films selected by Fotiade was noted in the reviews. For example, architecture and design magazine *Blueprint* stated: "The curators have made an intelligent choice over the use of sound, as a multitude of different voices and sounds from various films situated in a range of locations are allowed to collide and overlap each other creating an atmospheric, confusing and haunting effect." Another review, in online magazine [Interface](#), also commended the curation:

I found 'The Surreal House' to be a satisfying and stimulating exhibition which, although detailed and dense to the extent that it would practically be impossible to watch all the films and examine every item in one visit or for that matter list them all here, the experience of the curation enabled this visitor to read the whole and the detail together and feel compelled to embark on further inquiries into several of the works that stood out for me.

Impact case study (REF3b)**5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

Fotiade's contribution to exhibition and catalogue; scope of event

- Statement from Senior Curator, Barbican Centre, London (available from HEI)
- [The Surreal House: Exhibition event details](#)
- [The Surreal House: Exhibition full programme](#)
- [The Surreal House: Exhibition catalogue information](#)
- [Screen Magazine, Vol. 39](#) (led to the Barbican commissioning Fotiade as advisor)

Critical success of exhibition

- [The Independent: Welcome to the mad house: A monument to the world of the surreal](#)
- [The Guardian](#)
- [Time Out London: Time out says](#)
- [The Metro: Home Sweet Flying Lobster](#)
- [Interface: The Surreal House](#)
- Blueprint magazine: The Surreal House (no longer available online; available from HEI)