

Les deux amies / The two girlfriends (Gifts of the Feminine)

The first volume is Sunday and the element is the two girlfriends. The example is *Gifts of the Feminine (Dons des Féminines)*, the collage-poem that Valentine Penrose published in 1951. i The publication is a travel book and much more than that, it is also a queer biographical document and a visual critique of the fragmented representation of women by male surrealist artists.

As a travel book, it narrates a special journey to India, taken by Valentine Penrose, a surrealist poet and collagist that belonged to a group of surrealist artists and friends that included painter Max Ernst. In 1936, three years after Max had himself traveled to Italy for a creative residency at the Palazzo de Vigoleno, Valentine went to India. Valentine was particularly interested in female mysticism, alchemy and the occult, and had been from an early age drawn to the East. In India, she aimed to learn Sanskrit and study at an ashram. Throughout her life she would go there various times. But the trip of 1936 had a particular significance, as she would travel with poet and painter Alice Rahon. For several months, both women visited Bombay, Goa, and Mirtola. But by the end of the trip they separated, and never saw each other again.

The result of both trips taken by the two surrealists would be two collage books. *A Week of Goodness (Une Semaine de Bonté, 1934)* created by Max in 1933ii who was also influenced by alchemyiii, would be published soon after his stay in Italy, in 1934, in 5 volumes, one for each day of the week, and the remaining three in one single volume. *Dons des Féminines*, Valentine's collage poem, would have to wait to be created and published, and this only happened almost two decades later, in 1951.

Dons des Féminines is composed of 26 tableaux. These are printed in one page and illustrate a section of the poem, printed in the opposite page. Even though the collages are not a direct illustration of the poem, through these, we can follow and visualise the adventures of two Victorian women as they travel by ship or balloon to glamorous landscapes abounding with flowers, exotic plants, birds, elephants, butterflies, leopards and other animals.

As a fictional biography, its two characters, Maria Elona and Rubia, stand for Valentine and Alice. The collage-poem narrates the travels and lyric love shared by two women through an illustrated bilingual poem made of collages, assembled from images of nineteenth century fashion magazines such as *Le Moniteur de la Mode* or *La Mode Illustrée*. In these, women in pairs often gaze at a landscape or some kind of objects such as a book or a fashion accessory. Their apparitional presence as a lesbian couple, suggested but never confirmed, haunts the gothic landscapes. The sexual meaning of their affect comes in and out of focus, both in the cut-outs of embraced women and in the symbolic poetic words:

Let us go to each limit where the sun is cold/ Where we enter no long by the passage/
Things to come some puzzling others certain/ They speak they wander/ Nothing has ever been so
haunted. Goodbye my beloved / Your wife of clamours enters the landscape/ Farewell Rubia /
Ransom for the red multitude of your name Rubia/ Your initial is a bird in my life/ Beauties able to
give us daylight let us live without promises/ Worshipping the hands that take the oath/ Of love that
others will keep.

Valentine was influenced by the gothic, as this created a space for sexual explorations, happening in an imaginary sphere. The fantasy space of the gothic novel enabled one to test out and explore unconscious desires and personal anxieties pertaining to both gender and sexuality, as it presented both authors and readers with a realm of escapism within which they could inscribe their intimate, often repressed desires; where anything considered different, such as queer sexuality, could be personified in monstrous and transgendered others and ghostly apparitions. Likewise, in *Dons des Féminines* Valentine drew on gothic conventions such as concealment and revelation: if on one hand it is clearly discernible from her text that a love attachment exists between the two women, Maria Elona and Rubia, that relationship is never affirmed. This mixed-media collage 'phantasmagoria' is a strategy developed by surrealist women to deal with queer sexuality: by borrowing the conventions of gothic novel they embody lesbianism in ghostly apparitions.iv

Some think that their love can anyway be deduced from their respective poetry collectionsv. By juxtaposing their lyrical poetry, published by each other right after their 1936 journey together, the intertextual evidence of their lived romance becomes evident.

Valentine: Taking breasts hands and horses (*À Une Femme À Une Route* vi)

As your breasts are suns see on your body (*Poèmes* vii)

Alice: Breasts delivered that fly and sing (*Muttra* viii)

In spite of its apparitional aesthetics (visible yet concealed), *Dons des Féminines* proposes a radical representation of the female couple in art. The cruising ladies dress for gender balance: they travel wearing feminine Victorian dresses, mixed with male accessories; other time dressing fully in men's clothes. They embrace one another and look into each other's eyes. This staging of female intimacy in the exotic garden was a veiled coming out of Valentine Penrose in the surrealist context of her male peers that failed to ever recognize the revolutionary impact of the female couple in art and in life. The free association of images and words practiced by Valentine in *Dons des Féminines* was a political strategy to overcome surrealist censorship of the female couple. "For surrealists, whilst the erotic image of the woman was the key to revolutionary transformation of consciousness, they always stood away from female homosexuality as if it was not revolutionary or as if the unconscious was heterosexual." ix

In that context, Paul Eluard's preface to the book was an exception and can now be read as a precursor to contemporary queer and feminist criticism for the value he attributes to the girlfriends (*les amies*, in French): "The tale the girlfriend tells her lover has more serious charms than men's stories. Women's knowledge belongs to the woman. I lived in this impossible world. I suffered from this singular life, but I fought to live and lived to fight. My honesty was the clearest of my arms."x

The process of dismemberment of the female body put forward by cubist and surrealist modernity was essentially a men's work. For women, on the contrary, the integrity of their bodies represented that of their artistic identities. Valentine's collages had yet another role, as they were also a direct visual answer, to *Une Semaine de Bonté* by Max Ernst. Valentine's work suggests a corrective gesture in relation to Max's bound and beaten women,^{xi} and ultimately a critique to the way surrealism represented the female form, in a conscious break with patriarchal hegemony. Both works share similar characteristics, as they juxtapose dated and obsolete images, producing a disruption to the usual codes of cultural representation of their times. In the space of the book, the artists experiment with gender roles and power relationships, through a process of selection and rearrangement of old fashioned images that if in the case of Max, revolved around "phallic dominance, the incarceration of the female, and the active passive binary of the male/female configuration;" in Valentine's work, on the contrary, the collage process enables "an egalitarian female economy of exchange." xii

The mise-en-scène of the unconscious (A Week of Goodness)

The Second volume is Monday. The element is the mise-en-scène of the unconscious, and the example is *A Week of Goodness*, the collage novel by Max Ernst.

In 1933, Max left Paris, and with a heavy suitcase in his hand, he took the train and traveled to Vigoleno. *A week of Goodness* resulted from his three week stay at the Palazzo of the countess of Vigoleno in Italy. Ernst brought with him a suitcase filled with nineteenth century pulp fiction, *Le Petit Journal*, old sales catalogues and encyclopedias, all gathered in used book stores and magazine stalls along the Seine, the literary equivalent to the flea market. From these old fashioned sources, Max cut out its beautiful engravings of outdated Victorian domestic interiors, filled with carpets and drapes, statues and ornaments, all dressed up in historical styles and natural motifs, distanced in time. With these, he built an imaginary world of torture, murder and catastrophe, in suggestive traumatic tableaux. As a visual archaeology of the unconscious, his collages concerned and represented the traumatic process of constitution of subjectivity and formation of sexuality, through the representation of primal scenes and castration fantasies. ^{xiii} Max's collages evoked as well the interior iconography of the historical period that corresponded to the invention of psychoanalysis by Freud.

One could say that the Victorian interior, that had been so carefully built as a space of protection from a galloping industrial outside world, was literally convulsed through Max's scissors. The psychic unrest that was happening at a particular important moment (the pre years of second world war) disrupted Walter Benjamin's idea of the domestic sphere being a "refuge", a protective shell from the reality principle of the work place.^{xiv} On the other hand, the collages exposed the domestic interior as an image of bourgeois subjectivity, opened to the outside world and to the sexual and racial identities that threatened this ideal of Victorian domesticity.

A strong influence in *A Week of Goodness* was the gothic novel, a literary genre that emerged in the eighteenth century and combined romanticism and horror, through plots occurring in the interior of haunted households. Some of Max's sources were cut outs from Jules Marin's pulp fiction novels, and the illustrations of *Le Petit Journal*, a populist weekly illustrated newspaper. Both sources relied on spicy tales of torrid love, torture, crimes and punishments, hatreds and jealousy that were heavily inspired by the gothic genre. These gave their popular readers what the elites got from the gothic genre: an aesthetic of pleasurable fears.^{xv}

Both Max and Valentine were influenced by the gothic, as it created a space for sexual exploration, happening in an imaginary sphere. Whilst in *Dons des Féminines*, Valentine drew on Gothic conventions - such as concealment and revelation- to go into the queer relationship of her heroines, in *A Week of Goodness*, Max explored the darker side of the Gothic. Imagery coming from the penny-dreadful was rearranged into even more horrific new scenes in which women were "mauled, ravaged, and possessed by various winged and monstrous hybrids"^{xvi} happening in the midst of Victorian drawing rooms and other uncanny domestic spaces. The monstrous androgynous figures that tormented the inhabitants in Max's homes reinforced the surrealist project of showing how the familiar domestic bourgeois world was one of violence and threat.

Max, who studied Psychology and was aware of Freud's theories, was most possibly familiar with the psychoanalyst's 1919 essay about the uncanny, that feeling of unease and strangeness, being aroused in a familiar place such as our home: Throughout the history of the "Uncanny", the house has remained embedded within the source of the explanation of what "commonly merges with what arouses fear in general".^{xvii} The uncanny, just like the gothic, was intimately linked to the experience of writing a horrible tale that was strangely familiar and reading the same tale over and over again. As if the familiarity manifested in Ernst's choice of old fashioned interiors pointed to a representation of his own tormented childhood, read, interpreted and visualised through the technologies of subjectivity invented by Freud.

Max was born in a bourgeois German family, in the city of Brühl. His father, Philip Ernst had been a teacher of the deaf and an amateur painter with an extremely authoritarian personality. Assuming that *A Week of Goodness* represents Max (as it can be induced by the overwhelming presence of his alter ego, loplol, the bird man, in the collage-roman), then his uncanny book both evokes his traumatic past, filled with domestic violence, and hints at a chaotic future. Moreover, Max relates the historically obsolete to the psychically repressed at the very level of representation, making us wonder how did those representations, linger in the childhood of the surrealist members: What kind of childhood did the surrealists experience? Why did they produce so many monsters that were creepy meaning-making machines? And why was the gender and species of those disturbing monstrous figures so difficult to identify?

Max and Valentine's childhoods coincided with the beginning of psychoanalysis, photography and cinema, processes that had enabled the formation of the optical unconscious,^{xviii} that cautiously experimented with ways to represent our dreams, minds, desires and other unspeakable forces. The illustrations that both used to produce their collages, had as their own source many of those first photographs, that could be seen as even more marvelously uncanny in those early days. They were both the mirror of someone being represented and what Roland Barthes identified as being there in every photograph: the return of the dead.^{xix}

It would be that wealthy bourgeois sector of society that would travel to Vienna to meet the famous young doctor living on Bergstrasse 19, that later on influenced tremendously Max and Valentine's readings of the world: Sigmund Freud. In the early days of his career, Freud had traveled to Paris and had worked with the French physician Jean Martin Charcot, to study his research on hysteria. Charcot who was also trained in art and an art collector deployed extensive artistic methodologies to deal with the clinical symptoms. He collaborated with photographers and illustrators to document the hysterical changes brought upon the female body, and staged the hysterical condition in theatrical lectures where the diagnosed women performed for the audience.^{xx} These resulted in a series of publications where photography, drawing and text gave rise to the hysterical body manufactured by the medical doctors for an audience that consumed the spectacle of hysteria both through live demonstrations and published evidence.^{xxi} In the last volume of *A Week of Goodness*, Max has indeed used images of the hysterics derived from Charcot's documentation,^{xxii} clearly revealing through this act, the way his book mirrors and reveals the becoming-hysterical of the interiors, and the way the photocollage techniques mediate the female body.

The photoalbum in the drawing room (cardomania), the album of Madame B.

The third volume is Tuesday and the element is the photoalbum in the drawing room, or cardomania. The example is the album of Madame B., aka Marie-Blanche-Hennelle Fournier, one of the several Victorian women behind the creation of the new medium of the photocollage album in the 1860s.

It all began with the invention of the carte-de-visite – a pocket size photographic portrait – that in the 1850s started a new craze for card exchanging and collecting. This inexpensive, easily reproducible and portable photographic portrait made it possible for people with means to carry their own photographic carte-de-visites and exchange them with family, friends and social acquaintances, like today one exchanges business cards. This frenzy in card exchanging and collecting became known as cardomania and the next step in this art form was the creation of elaborated and colourful painted backgrounds where the photographic portraits became part of witty painted fictions, organized in photoalbums.

Amongst the most prominent photocollage artists of their time were Lady Filmer (aka Mary Georgiana Caroline), Georgina Berkeley, Elizabeth Pleydell-Bouverie and Jane Pleydell-Bouverie, Eva Macdonald, Maria Harriet Elizabeth Cator, and Constance Sackville-West. These women living in England in the 1850s and 1870s, embarked in what can today be best described as a self-publishing adventure that challenged the rules of sociality and photo representation in Victorian England. xxiii

The photocollage albums were radically different from the middle class albums. By cutting out cartes-de-visite, pasting them into painted backgrounds and adding additional decorative and narrative elements, the producers of photocollage transformed a reproducible medium into something wholly unique. Browsing through the pages of some of the photocollage albums, one can see in Madame B's album, for example, a playful engagement with the conventions of portraiture. In a page from the album there is a collage of men's heads cut out from studio photo portraits and inserted into a gigantic watercolor of butterfly wings. xxiv

Another photocollage artist of the same period, Kate Edith Gough, in a page from the Gough Album, glues women's heads cut out from their studio photographic portraits onto the painted bodies of swimming ducks gliding on a pond. In other albums, heads and other body parts are cut out from photo portraits and collaged into realistically painted drawing rooms filled with plinths, fantastical landscapes and everyday objects. In other pages, one can find watercolours of lakes, spider nets, playing cards, teacups and fans, where through the playful hands of the collagists, the photographic faces of members of society are rearranged into humorous combinations of hybrids half-human, half-animal and half-things.

One generation out from the invention of photography, the creators of the collaged photoalbum, that were mainly aristocratic women, explored photography's capacity to invent the realm of fiction. In their hands the photographic portrait became a tool for the emancipation of photography from the burden of realistic photographic representation.^{xxv} The photoalbum production anticipates the modernist (dadaist and surrealist) play with the unconscious through methods of photographic cut-up and collage. By playing with the fantastic and the hybrid, Victorian women were thus pioneering a long process about to begin: the one of representing the oneiric and the unconscious, that would be later on further explored by their grandchildren: the surrealists.

The photocollage albums were usually on display at the homes of their authors, usually in the drawing rooms. The drawing rooms were domestic spaces of socialization, used by wealthy circles of society such as the ones of Max and Valentine parents and grandparents. Regularly, friends used to gather in each other's drawing rooms, and browse the freshly printed illustrated newspapers and fashion magazines as well as the photocollage albums. These were filled with not only collages, but also poetic verses, and souvenirs of daily life. Those albums, neither private nor public, were socially shared and the theme of conversations.

Curiously, it would be precisely the spaces of the drawing rooms and their bourgeois social environment that decades later, would be savagely represented by Max Ernst in his collage novel *A Week of Goodness*. If Victorian photocollage artists had played with the depiction of their own social environments in a tender and humoristic way, Max's hysterical drawing rooms consciously evoked perverse desires such as sodomy and sadomasochism happening mainly over the defenseless bodies of women. In these, hybrid figures assault one other, and the monstrous other (such as the

oriental and the androgynous other) appear ghostly in the spaces of representation such as in paintings or mirrors on the walls.

The paper mosaick (Female cruising in the garden)

The fourth volume is Wednesday and the element is the paper mosaick. The example is *Flora Delanica*, the flower mosaics' masterpiece by Mary Delany that inscribes the invention of collage at the core of female landscape arts in the eighteenth century England.

We take up again the theme of the female couple in art, looking into earlier female artists who expressed queer love through garden projects and botanical imagery. With Mary Delany and Margaret Bentinck we cross into a different context. In the mid eighteenth century, British wealthy women met in their properties and drawing rooms to practice landscape arts, a genre that offered them an interdisciplinary language through which they could express their intimate wishes. They engaged with the direct manipulation of the lived environment as medium, for example in garden design, or used landscape imagery as a central motif or metaphor for same-sex desire, in collage, drawing and poetry. Their collaborations enabled unique garden spaces for female cruising and new representations of female queer sexuality.

Mary Granville Pendarves Delany, born in 1700 was an aristocratic artist that by the age of seventy decided to embark on an immense journey: over the course of a decade she produced nearly one thousand botanical illustrations in paper mosaick (her term for her collage work), a project entitled *Flora Delanica*. Exploring for the first time in the history of botanical illustration the use of paper collage, Mary illustrated many of the estimated seven thousand plants that arrived in Britain in the eighteenth century. These collages were a product of the British Imperial travels of discovery of an exotic colonial world.

Delany's flower mosaics contributed to a tradition, following Linnaeus, of seeing the heterogeneous and sometimes 'homosexual' life of plants as analogous to and expressive of human sexuality and sexual variation. *Flora Delanica* resulted as well from Mary's porous boundaries between platonic friendship and eroticism as it was produced and perfected while she spent six months of the year, for various decades, living with her best friend, Margaret Bentinck, also known as the Duchess of Portland, at the latter's Buckinghamshire property: the Bulstrode estate.

Mary was part of a self-conscious community of intimate women friends in the cosmopolitan cultures of eighteenth century London and Dublin that fell along a continuum from sexual intimacy to chaste mutual devotion. They experienced friendship associating it both with "wisdom" in the Ciceronian fashion, as well as with a more "delicious" experience linked to Epicureanism^{xxvi}. One of her best friends, with whom she developed an intimate relationship that would last forty years, was Margaret, a married woman of great wealth and a mother of five children that experienced throughout her life lived various intimate friendships with women. Mary became one of these, and perhaps the privileged one, and their partnership resulted in various creative projects. Mary, who had been married as well, used to live half a year at the Duchess property in Bulstrode. There, various intellectuals including botanists and landscape designers used to gather, and in that stimulating and creative environment, she would work as a collage artist and as a garden landscape designer.

Two garden landscape designs Mary is well known for are female grottos, unique garden spaces for female cruising and intimacy that exist now only in drawings that serve as the sole reminders of her extraordinary work. The first of them, *The Beggar's Hut* was created in Delville, Ireland, her family's estate, and shows an appropriation of the Ribald garden aesthetics. Whilst other eighteenth century male landscape designers used sexual symbolism in the garden, creating grottos featuring "venus temple" and "venus mound" to imitate a woman's belly and vagina with earth and stone, Mary goes a step further and decorates hers with glued shells, an innovation that she dedicates to Margaret, herself a shell collector. The second project later built at Bulstrode, Margaret's estate, also involves an extensive decorative use of shells and other artworks that they used to embellish the grotto, in a collaboration that took many years to complete.

From a contemporary queer perspective, Mary's garden projects can be seen as explorations of female intimacy. Her garden spaces enabled female cruising, as in her grottos; female

encounters could take place away from home and still safe, in the self-built space of the garden enclosure. xxvii Mary's landscape designs and her botanical collages of flowers coming from all over the British Empire could be seen as suggesting something else which is also present in the travel metaphors of Valentine's collage-poem: the exotic outdoors was a space of escapism, as it facilitated the fulfillment of transgressive desires. That space, in contrast to the closeted one of the bourgeois home, was inspired by a certain vision of the other, the one living in an out there, in the East, that was full of sensuous promises.

Valentine Penrose also worked with exotic landscape imagery in her collages. In these, pairs of women travelling together crossed varied outdoors environments. The domestic interiors, when present, were fragmented and dislocated towards the outside, and were mingled with images of galleries, museums, urban plazas, natural parks, and riverside spaces, populated with an iconography of travel and motion, such as boats, ships and balloons. Escaping from the hysteria of the interior into a landscape dream world, Valentine forged a space where there was no hegemonic order and the occasional benign hybrid creatures she had created in her collages were no authority figures but emblems of transcendence. xxviii The images were accompanied by her writing that with poetic fluidity also insinuated flights and passages. This created a sense of movement that placed emphasis upon the role of the subject as a process, rather than fixed by constricting structures.

In order to suggest the exotic landscape and the idea of travel, Valentine profusely used elements of flowers and fauna in her collages. These flowers evoked both the Victorian past time of floriography (also widely used by the Victorian photocollagists) and the French poetic floral symbolism. Her use of floriography, linked her to a long tradition that may have started when botanical taxonomies began to be used as metaphors for gender and sexuality. This emerged in the eighteenth century when Linnaeus's taxonomic system for the classification of plants, started to be explored by other women, the most notorious of which was Mary Delany, the inventor of the paper collage.

If Mary, an aristocratic lady of the eighteenth century had only been able to travel abroad indirectly through her work of delicate paper collages illustrating outlandish plants, two hundred years later Valentine would go to India various times, on exploratory and educational trips similar to the ones done by various male explorers from the eighteenth century onwards. One of these had been Captain Cook that in one of his trips had traveled in the company of the botanists that would later on work side by side with Mary.

The result of various travels that began in the eighteenth century was a certain fabricated vision of the East in the west, through the eyes of the dominant power. xxix Not only written texts, but also visual imagery, contributed to an Orientalist type of discourse that reified the narrative of the exotic East as being a dreamland inhabited by the primitive other to whom everything was permitted. This was quite evident in one of the most recurrent themes of the 'Orientalist painting' that were bathing scenes happening in the harem. These pictured various women, sometimes with occidental faces, bathing together in large bath-pools located in the palaces' patios, decorated with sculpted columns and sumptuous tapestry. Expressions of sensuous desire between women were openly evoked in Orientalist paintings, as love between women was an important parcel of the male sensuous imaginary. One could say that what was subtly suggested in Mary's botanical collages and Valentine's travelling female couples, present in *Dons des Féminines*, existed uncovered in these paintings, that even though obviously designed to provide visual pleasure to the male spectator, inspired a collective vision in the West of the queer type of pleasures that the East could offer xxx. That vision was the possibility of love happening between women.

Dons des Féminines, that in English is translated as "gifts of the feminine" could furthermore be interpreted as a metaphor for the materiality of the gift: the exchange of gifts between women proposes a feminine libidinal economy xxxi in which the gift circulates without debt. The literal offering of gifts is manifest in Valentine's collage-poem, for example through references to "nosegays" that are exchanged between the characters Maria Elona and Rubia. In such a sharing type of relationship neither participant is constituted as the giver or receiver, and the active/passive binary usually associated with heterosexual coupling is no longer appropriate. Likewise, Mary's bond with Margaret and her wider circle of female friends is itself based on a constant exchange of gifts, both art works they made, and objects they bought or collected. Both relationships, occurring within a gap of nearly two centuries, expressed a queer exchange of gifts and affects, happening in the context of the outlandish landscape.

If the good friends Mary and Margaret would remain together for various decades, from their meeting in 1736 until the Duchess died in Mary's arms in 1785, the surrealist couple Valentine and Alice Rahon would separate by the end of their trip. Unlike her fictional characters Maria Elona and Rubia, Valentine would return home, in a movement of enclosure that closeted again her hybrid sexuality, suggesting that in the gendered space of the bourgeois western home, sexual

transgression was just possible to express through the monstrous and mad. If queer desire was mostly placated, lyrical and unproblematic in *Dons des Féminines*, that was possible precisely because it was located in the East, and not at home, a home that would always remain in a certain way strange and uncanny to her. Likewise, just as Max Ernst had explored the darker and perverse side of sexuality happening in the space of the home, in 1962, Valentine would publish her gothic novel *Erzsébet Báthory la Comtesse Sanglante*,^{xxxii} where she narrates the story of a female lesbian monster, one type of character that captivated the surrealists and that was enclosed alive amongst four closed walls in her room, as punishment for her crimes.

Valentine died in the domesticity of Farley Farm House in 1978, the house of her former husband Roland Penrose and Lee Miller. From the fifties onwards, she would spend large parcels of her time there, shifting between her two extended families, her “irritating” originary one, in France, and the Penrose’s. Max, a few years after he published his collage-novel, financed by Roland Penrose, would see the prophecy of a chaotic world, that he so much anticipated in his collages, finally happen, with the onset of the world war two. During those convulsed times, he traveled to Lisbon in an adventurous trip that resembled the movie *Casablanca*.

The story we tried to trace here concerns collage books done over the course of travels and trips, as well as in response to the home and the drawing room. And all of these are intimately linked, it seems, even though happening at various times and in different places. The books we have been opening, made up with paper collages, cross three centuries and one after the other, they have been arriving to our studio that is located by a beautiful wildlife garden.^{xxxiii} We have transformed the studio into a drawing room and there, we have studied them, trying to figure out what they tell us now. We have dreamed with those images, and remade some of its collages, by selecting, reconfiguring and formatting various types of collage books. We traveled to Lisbon, not in a train but by flight, and we brought with us a suitcase filled with outdated images, scissors and glue. There, we stayed at an old-fashioned house, we visited the exotic Coimbra Botanical Garden designed by Vandelli, a close friend of Linnaeus, the inventor of the plants taxonomies, where we also explored the herbarium and its greenhouse, stuffed with exotic plants coming from the East.

What do we want from these books, now that we are about to close them, detach from them and delicately put them back in their shelves? Maybe a way to move outwards, from a dreamy inner world into the outside world of reality? A way to grasp time? A way to merge various worlds? Who knows? And as we embody the consciousness of other times into our own times and bodies we produce new readings and new collages. We have been travelling through wonderful queer paper gardens. And just as all the travelers see to and the ones who go to sleep do, we say farewell and invite you into deciphering our queer pages, as forests of symbols.

These look at you, with understanding eyes.

i Valentine Penrose (1951) *Dons des Féminines*, Paris: Les Pas Perdus.

The collages and poetry were published with a preface by Paul Eluard, in an edition of 400 numbered copies, numbers 1 to 5 with an etching by Picasso.

ii Max Ernst (1934) *Une Semaine de Bonté (A Week of Goodness)*. Paris: Editions Jeanne Bucher.

The collages were assembled into chapters that were published sequentially in a limited edition by the Galerie Jeanne Bucher. The first two, Sunday and Monday were dated April 15 and 16, respectively. The next two, Tuesday and Wednesday, appeared on July 2. The last three Thursday, Friday and Saturday, were published as a single volume, dated December 1.

iii M. E Warlick (1987) *Max Ernst's Alchemical Novel: "Une Semaine de bonté."* *Art Journal*, Vol. 46, No. 1, *Mysticism and Occultism in Modern Art*, pages 61-73.

iv Kimberley Marwood, (2009) *Shadows of Femininity: Women, Surrealism and the Gothic*. *Re.bus*, issue 4 autumn winter, University of Essex.

-
- v Georgiana M. M. Colvile (1996) Through an Hour-glass Lightly: Valentine Penrose and Alice Rahon Paalen, in King, Russell and McGuirk, Bernard, Eds. Reconceptions Reading Modern French Poetry, pages 81-112. University of Nottingham.
- vi Valentine Penrose (1937) 'À Une Femme, À Une Route', in Poèmes. Premier Cahier de Habitude de la Poésie, Paris, G.L.M.
- vii Valentine Penrose (1937) Poèmes. Premier Cahier de Habitude de la Poésie, Paris: G.L.M.
- viii Alice Rahon (1938) *Muttra. Sablier Couché* Paris: Editions Sagesse.
- ix Marie-Jo Bonnet (2000) *Les Deux Amies: Essai Sur le Couple de Femmes dans L'art*. Paris: Editions Blanche.
- x Paul Eluard (1951) Preface to Valentine Penrose. *Dons des Féminines*: Paris: Les Pas Perdus.
- xi Karen Humphreys (2006) *Collages Communicants: Visual Representation in the Collage-Albums of Max Ernst and Valentine Penrose*. *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies*, 10:4, 377-387.
- xii Kimberley Marwood (2009) *Shadows of Femininity: Women, Surrealism and the Gothic*. In: *re·bus Issue 4 Autumn/Winter*, p. 7.
- xiii Hall Foster (1993) *Compulsive Beauty*. Massachusetts: MIT Press.
- xiv Michael Jennings and Howard Eiland (2002) *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume III, Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century, Writings 1935-1938*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- xv Judith Halberstam (1995) *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, p.6
- xvi Marina Warner (1995) *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairytales and their tellers*. London: Vintage, p. 383.
- xvii Sigmund Freud,(1919 /2003) *The "Uncanny,"* In Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, David McLintock (trans.). New York: Penguin, pp. 123.
- xviii In 1931, in his article "A Small History of Photography", Walter Benjamin described the optical unconscious, connecting it to the possibilities of registering the unconscious, that the invention of photography had enabled: "For it is another nature that speaks to the camera than to the eye: other in the sense that a space informed by human consciousness gives way to a space informed by the unconscious. Whereas it is commonplace that, for example, we have some idea what is involved in the act of walking, if only in general terms, we have no idea at all what happens during the fraction of a second when a person steps out. Photography, with its devices of slow motion and enlargement, reveals the secret. It is through photography that we first discover the existence of this optical unconscious, just as we discover the instinctual unconscious through psychoanalysis."(p. 243)
- xix Nicholas Royle (2003) *The Uncanny*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, p.9
- xx Sigrid Schade (1995) *Charcot and the Spectacle of the Hysterical Body: The 'pathos formula' as an aesthetic staging of psychiatric discourse - a blind spot in the reception of Warburg*. *Art History* Vol. 18 No. 4, pages 499- 517

xxi Three volumes of *Iconographie Photographique de la Salpêtrière*, written by Bourneville et Régnard and illustrated with photographs by Régnard were published by Delahaye publishers between 1876 and 1879.

xxii Amongst other recognisable sources for the collages in the last volume of *A Week of Goodness* are sketches by Paul Richer of the hysterical attack catalogued as “phases of movements” and “contortions.” Richer (1881), *Études Cliniques Sur L'hystéro-Épilepsie ou Grande Hystérie*, Paris: Delahaye et Lecrosnier.

xxiii Elizabeth Siegel (Ed.) (2009) *Playing with Pictures: The Art of Victorian Photocollage*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

xxiv Elizabeth Siegel and Martha Packer (2012) *The Marvelous Album of Madame B: Being the Handiwork of a Victorian Lady of Considerable Talent*. London: Scala Publishers.

xxv Elisabeth Siegel, 2010, *Society Cut-Ups: Victorians and the Art of Photocollage*. Recorded: Saturday, June 5, 2010 at Marvin Gelber Prints and Drawings Centre, Art Gallery of Ontario.

xxvi Lisa L. Moore (2011) *Sister Arts: The Erotics of Lesbian Landscapes*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, page 23.

xxvii Lisa L. Moore (2005) *Queer Gardens: Mary Delany's Flowers and Friendships*. *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 1, pages 49-70.

xxviii Karen Humphreys (2006) *Collages Communicants: Visual Representation in the Collage-Albums of Max Ernst and Valentine Penrose*. In: *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies*, 10:4, pages 377-387.

xxix Said, Edward (1978) *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon.

xxx Reina Lewis (2004) *Rethinking Orientalism: Women, Travel and the Ottoman Harem*. London: I B Tauris.

xxxi In Kimberley Marwood text ‘*Shadows of Femininity: Women, Surrealism and the Gothic*,’ the scholar establishes connections between Valentine Penrose’s title *Dons des Féminines*, and the work of feminist writer Helene Cixous. The former, as Abigail Bray articulates, connects both terms to what Cixous understands as the ‘feminine libidinal economy,’ “An economy that is centered around liberating a repressed female desire - about circulating that desire within language - and about recognizing and encouraging an economy which moves beyond the strictures of phallogocentric law”. (see footnote 4: pg. 23)

xxxii Valentine Penrose (1964) *Erzsébet Báthory La Comtesse Sanglante*. Paris: Mercury de France.

xxxiii These works were developed in residency at Stockwell Studios (former Annie McCall’s hospital) and are a tribute to the artist’s community that built the studios’ wild life garden, as a constant source of inspiration.