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CURATING RENÉ MAGRITTE: THE SEMIOTICS OF PATTERN AND SCALE

This paper examines the map and territory relationships among various visual works by Belgian artist, René François Ghislain Magritte (1898-1967). From the presence of an object to its representation in painted and sculptural frames, this exploration engages major turns in the creation, exhibition, and reimagining of Magritte's works. The layers of the works are interrogated, elucidating increasingly complex and overlapping semiotic contexts. Building on Michel Foucault's model of analysis—involving layers within visual and symbolic language—the differentiations between text and image, plastic and linguistic, title and object, among others, can be unveiled. This reading also illuminates the relationships between visual communication, techné, ethics, and aesthetics. Moreover, this interdisciplinary perspective is extended vis-à-vis contemporary curatorial inquiry that continues to envision Magritte's work through patterns and scales of the architectural, biological, and institutional. The integration of meanings across semiotic sign, signifier, and signified informs ways in which art, science, and design, as well as metadesign, become interwoven in visual communication, and in turn, embodied experience.

The presentation format will compliment this analysis by featuring and comparing well-known and lesser-known works by Magritte. Each image will assist in exemplifying the artist as a consummate and multidimensional visual communicator.