

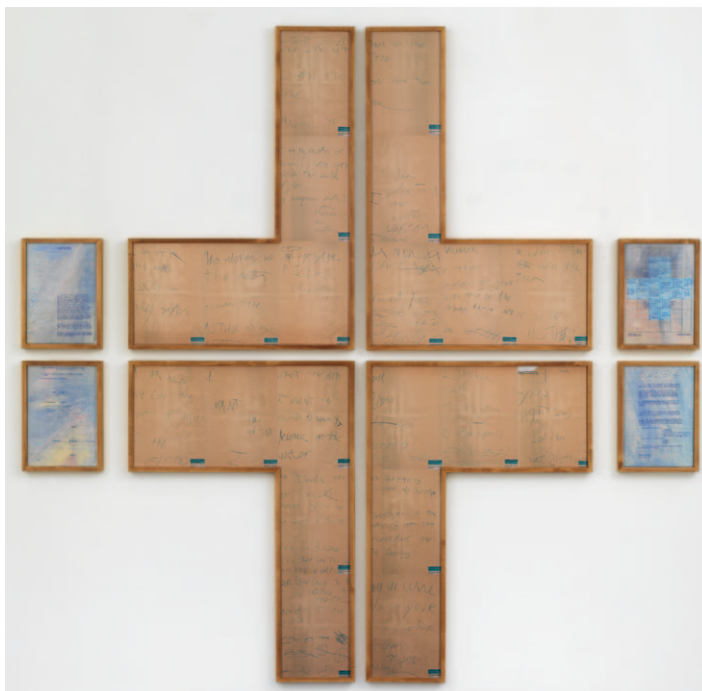
Photographic automatism: surrealism and feminist (post?)modernism in Susan Hiller's *Sisters of Menon*

Katharine Conley

Susan Hiller stated in a 2005 interview that what drew her 'to look again at surrealism' and 'the repressed history of automatism within modernism' was the experience she had drawing *Sisters of Menon* (1972) as part of a group project she initiated involving automatic practice.¹ One reason for this reconsideration must surely have been the surrealists' engagement in the counter-cultural ideals of her own generation as evidenced by their commitment to the May 1968 student protests in Paris.²

Born and raised in the United States, Hiller moved to London in the 1960s when she was in her 20s, after choosing art over an academic career in anthropology because art could better 'show what we don't know that we know'.³ Roughly fifteen years later, in a 1982 talk playfully entitled 'Post?modern?ism?', she commented that her 'work has been going on through several isms', situating herself within the continuum of modernism and postmodernism that defined the work of the first-generation surrealists, whose collective ethic and political self-consciousness she shares, with a decidedly feminist slant.⁴ In *Sisters of Menon* Hiller weaves together the legacies of modernism and surrealism with spiritualism and consolidates her position as an artist in the women's movement, politically aware and fully engaged with material culture. *Sisters of Menon* also illustrates André Breton's metaphoric statement from 1922 that automatic writing constitutes a 'veritable photograph of thought'.⁵ *Sisters of Menon* is a work simultaneously physically connected to a specific moment in time and, in the act of its creation, frozen and taken out of the flow of chronological time, like a photograph.

Produced automatically in the south of France in 1972, *Sisters of Menon* exists simultaneously as a framed work of art, first displayed in 1979, and as a book published with notes in 1983. It was part of *Draw Together*, one of several group investigations Hiller conducted in the 1970s.⁶ Like *Dream Mapping*, another group investigation launched by Hiller, it reflected her commitment to the kind of collective effort that launched the surrealist movement in the 1920s because it involved automatism practised together in a group. *Draw Together* and *Dream Mapping* also reflected her commitment to the



2.1 Susan Hiller, *Sisters of Menon*, 1972–79. © Susan Hiller/Timothy Taylor Gallery, London.

collaborative work that became a hallmark of 1970s feminism. As Hiller was drawing randomly in blue pencil at the outset of *Draw Together*, words came to her in the collective voice of the ‘Sisters’ and flowed from her hand in unfamiliar handwriting that, as an artist, she initially appreciated visually. Somehow, she mislaid the pages of scripts for seven years. When she found them, she framed and displayed them with typed notes in a cruciform shape (Figure 2.1). The negative cross that is created by the four L-shaped frames accommodating the sheets of $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ in paper – displayed side by side and up and down – visualise the work’s crossover quality as both a drawing and a writing. This quality reflects the overlapping coexistence of consciousness and unconsciousness, of the manifest and the latent content, of words remembered and forgotten, lost and found, and then cast and recast as images. The installation requires the viewer to crouch in order to see it all, thus characteristically demanding ‘the physical collaboration of the audience,’ as Alexandra Kokoli observes.⁷ The work relies on a geometric modernist grid, which, as Hiller explains, she favours as a non-hierarchical way of ‘arranging things.’⁸

Coincidentally, in the same year that Hiller completed *Sisters of Menon* as a work of wall art, Rosalind Krauss published her essay on ‘Grids.’⁹ For Krauss,

the modernist grid, with its perpendicular, crossing straight lines, has a cross-over quality, which may be found in Hiller's *Sisters* through the way it resists categorisation by allowing the modern artist to opt for pure decidedly non-sacred form while at the same time mobilising 'a secular form of belief'. This simultaneity inherent to the grid for Krauss sustains the tension 'between the values of science and those of spiritualism... within the consciousness of modernism, or rather its unconscious, as something repressed'.¹⁰ In this way, Krauss echoes Breton's insistence in 'Surrealism and Painting' that rather than looking outwards for inspiration in art, as though through a window, the surrealist artist must look inwards, and follow what Breton identifies as an '*internal model*'.¹¹ In Hiller's work, the contradiction to which Krauss refers appears more as a coexistence in which the 'unconscious' of the grid is featured prominently through the negative cross-structure according to which the cross itself is empty space. As a result, this repressed quality is trumpeted rather than muted. The tension between the cross as a known and visible symbol and the cross as an unconscious, negative structure thus parallels the surrealists' celebration of the coexistence of conscious and unconscious life in the definition of *surreality* as the future convergence of the two states of being.¹²

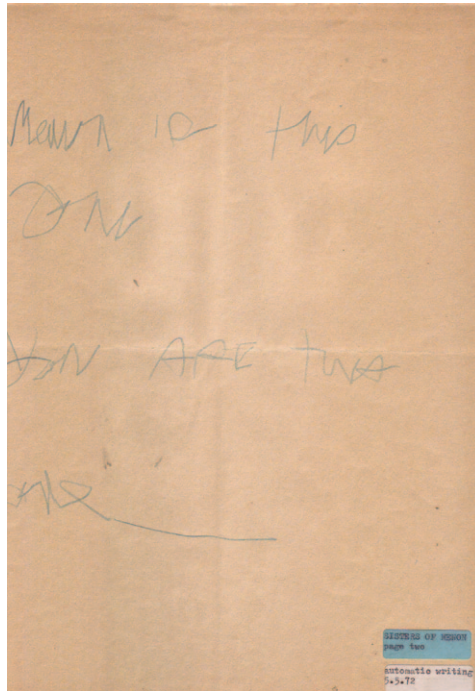
In *Sisters of Menon* the negative cross shape's reference to faith is explicitly linked to the place where she made the scripts, namely the village of Louprien in southern France, famous for having been a medieval stronghold for the Cathars, who also used an unusual cross as a symbol of their dissidence from mainstream Christianity.¹³ Hiller has had a long-standing fascination with the languages of dissident spirituality, 'secret languages, ritual languages, coded languages, artistic languages,' which for her eventually translate into art, as she explained in an interview with Stuart Morgan.¹⁴ She also has a long-standing interest in the prominent role of women in occult spiritualist practice, which Barbara Einzig links explicitly to the genesis of *Sisters of Menon*, to Hiller's investigation of 'how automatism has been interpreted according to gender; with women who see things portrayed as "spooked", disturbed, while men were regarded as visionaries, whether of the artistic or scientific variety'; as Einzig further explains, in *Sisters of Menon*, the 'writing that emerged spoke in a number of voices'.¹⁵ Hiller describes how her hand began to move while she 'was just observing', feeling dissociated from the experience.¹⁶

Whether in her native United States, the United Kingdom where she has lived since the 1970s, or France where she composed *Sisters of Menon*, the occult lies at the root of the gothic imagination born in the eighteenth century that spawned nineteenth- and twentieth-century spiritualism and later surrealism in a Freudian version.¹⁷ But while Breton denied any connection between surrealist and spiritualist automatism through the denial of the possibility of supernatural intervention, other surrealists like Robert Desnos and Leonora Carrington were willing to entertain the possibility of occult

phenomena such as ghostly visitation or magic.¹⁸ Hiller's experiment with automatism in 1972 shows her sustained investment in thinking about spiritualism and surrealism and about the role of women in those movements. Spiritualism began its international prominence in 1850 when two American women, the Fox sisters of Hydesville, New York, reported their ability to communicate with the dead through knocking sounds in their house.¹⁹ Women's work as mediums in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries allowed them to acquire social status and legitimacy, which made them into role models of independent creativity for certain twentieth-century feminists like Carrington, who was involved with the surrealist movement.²⁰

Carrington embraced surrealist automatism's origins in spiritualism, which was repressed by the original group of male surrealists so that they might establish their own intellectual and Freudian version of the practice. Those origins mattered to Carrington because they tied surrealism to a tradition that prominently featured women.²¹ Einzig reports that Hiller was impressed by a talk she heard Carrington give in New York in 1976 and that Hiller, more generally, has been sensitive to women whose artistic careers suffered in the male-dominated art world because, like Carrington, they were 'committed to the exploration of the irrational'.²² Hiller's link to this lineage of women, however, has little to do with 'conjuring' powers and more to do with language and artistic expression, bringing her close to the male surrealists, as well, whose practice of automatism was linked to poetry and art. Her commitment to collective work, shared with the original surrealist group, shows in her participation in two major group shows of women artists organised by women in the last twenty years – Whack! Art and the Feminist Revolution (2007), which included *Sisters of Menon*, and Inside the Visible: An Elliptical Traverse of 20th-Century Art, in, of, and from the Feminine (1995). Jean Fisher, who contributed to the catalogue for Inside the Visible, confirms that Hiller's investigation of automatism has to do with a desire to reclaim the artistic potential inherent to 'this earlier writing' (with an emphasis on writing).²³

Sisters of Menon explicitly crosses spiritualist automatic practice with surrealist questions about identity. The first two pages begin with questions: 'who is the one / I am this one / Menon will // Menon is this one / you are this one' (Figure 2.2). The voices belong to the 'Sisters', to Menon, and also to 'you', that is, to Hiller. They constitute an unknown plural identity and also a version of herself. This opening questioning echoes the opening challenge in Breton's most famous work, *Nadja*, 'Who am I?'²⁴ referring at once to Nadja and to himself. In so far as these voices flowing from Hiller's blue pencil also announce that they *are* her, they similarly echo the way Desnos describes imagining his body while in an automatic trance as 'the night bottle of the poet', which he experienced from within, as his own body, and also from without, because of the sensation he had of being able to detach a part of his



Susan Hiller, *Sisters of Menon* (detail; enhanced scan), 1972–79. © Susan Hiller/Timothy Taylor Gallery, London.

2.2

consciousness and see *into* his body from the outside and observe the ‘constellations bursting’ inside the glass of his body-bottle according to a vivid image of the sensations of automatism.²⁵

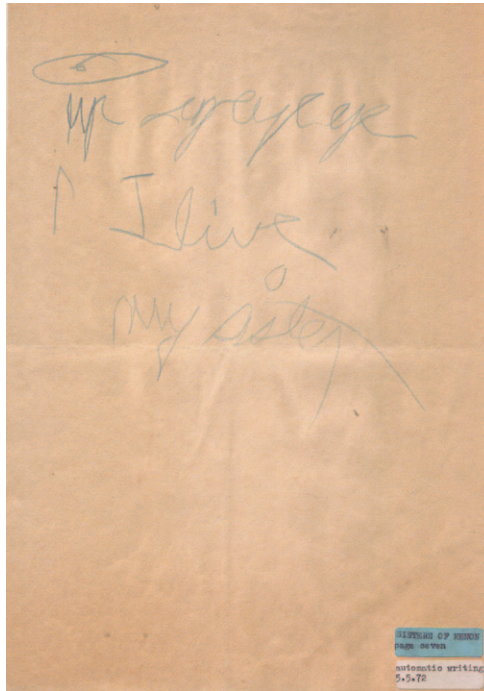
Indeed, while the decision to display the pages of the *Sisters of Menon* was intentionally feminist, Hiller’s *Sisters* follows in the tradition of the earliest collective experiments with surrealist automatism conducted by the predominantly male group in Breton’s Paris apartment in the fall of 1922. Desnos was the most adept at self-induced trance and produced one-line punning poems in these sessions following the style of those recently published by Marcel Duchamp under the punning pseudonym Rose Sélavy. Desnos borrowed the pseudonym as a tribute to Duchamp – with whom he claimed to be communicating telepathically from Paris to New York, in an instance of surrealistic possession. He also adopted it as a way of insisting that poetry spoke through him without his bidding and thus not necessarily in his own voice, in a demonstration of the way automatism reveals the mutability of identity. Poems, like ‘Les lois de nos désirs sont des dés sans loisir’ (The laws of our desires are restless dice), rely on sounds and visual resemblances as much as meaning

and create visual as well as verbal puns that also make comic sense (desire is restless and, like dice, governed by chance).²⁶ Like Desnos, Hiller has expressed belief in identity as mutable, as ‘a collaboration’, particularly in collective practice such as automatism.²⁷

The process of fixing the text to paper in *Sisters of Menon* can also be understood to have a metaphorical relation to the photographic process. The work shows the passage of time on its yellowed pages the way light on photosensitive paper activates a photographic image that comes into visibility by passage through a liquid medium. The colour of the pen she used recalls the blue graphic marks that artists and printers made when preparing documents for the graphic camera because non-photo blue vanishes during the black-and-white photographic process. Her blue pencil endures nonetheless because she recorded and printed her scripts in colour, thus materialising the double nature of automatic work. Whether visible or audible, automatic words and images flash into consciousness like memories surging back into awareness out of forgetfulness, as though resurfacing suddenly out of the developing fluid of time. Once found, Hiller made sure her scripts would remain visible by publishing them, effectively rescuing them from the suspended non-chronological time of the automatic trance and fixing them *in* chronological time.

Hiller’s automatic writing, like a photograph taken by her body functioning like an instrument, captured the words from her automatic experience then in a ‘pure state’, in accordance with Breton’s definition of surrealism from the first ‘Manifesto’ (1924) as ‘Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express [...] the actual functioning of thought.’²⁸ She automatically transferred the physical traces of that experience onto paper and preserved it. ‘Simultaneously participant & spectator, author & reader, singular & plural’, Hiller writes in her notes, “‘I” feel more like a series of activities than an impermeable corporeal unit.’²⁹ Breton wrote his definition of surrealism as automatism in its ‘pure state’ two years after stating (as noted earlier) that automatic writing was like a ‘veritable photograph of thought’. In both cases he may have been thinking about Man Ray’s photograms, his ‘rayographs’, which cut out the medium of the camera altogether and involved the photographer’s hand placing objects directly onto sensitised paper. A body, a flash of light or words surging into the mind, prepared paper at hand, and the result: captured moments from an automatic flow frozen as image-words on a page.

In *Sisters of Menon*, the first person pronoun ‘I’ develops into a Desnosian pun, roughly a third of the way through the text: ‘the woman is the sister/a (wo?)man is the mother of the sister // eye eye eye eye I live my sister’ (Figure 2.3). Hiller’s conflation of the pronoun ‘I’ and the body part ‘eye’ links vision to identity and gender while nonetheless eluding specificity because these sisters have no name. Menon, the collective name of the voices, is a partial

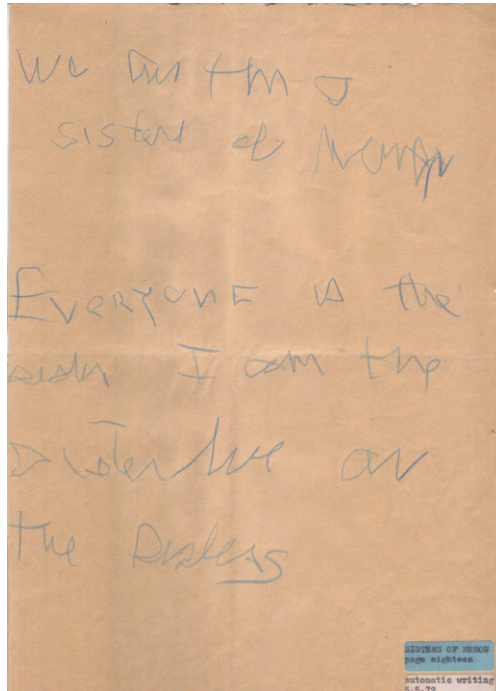


Susan Hiller, *Sisters of Menon* (detail; enhanced scan), 1972–79. © Susan Hiller/Timothy Taylor Gallery, London.

2.3

anagram of nemo, or no one. They are the sisters who are ‘not me’, particularly in a conflation of the English ‘me’ and the French ‘non’, and they are ‘not men’, as well; their name is possibly eponymous since Menon is also an anagram of *nomen*, or name, and partially of ‘omen’, sign or portent.³⁰ The pun between ‘I’ and ‘eye’ pits a singular identity against an unconscious plural identity with multiple eyes, disembodied and embodied at the same time. The unconscious plural identity resolves into ‘three sisters’ on page 9 who invite the ‘you’ transcribing the scripts to join them: ‘will you become my sister’. They continue in their invocation of Hiller herself: ‘I am the sister of everyone / I am your sister / we 3 sisters are // I sister / you are the sister / last night we // were 3 sisters now we are 4 sisters // you are the sister of Menon / we are 3 sisters’.

The voices that speak through Hiller *include her* in their incantation – ‘we were 3 sisters now we are 4 sisters’ – and thus command her to feel as though they are speaking and writing *together*, as though they were in the room with her in Loupien on a particular day in 1972. Towards the end they state, ‘We are the sisters of Menon / Everyone is the sister / I am the sister / love oh the sisters’ (Figure 2.4). This effect is reminiscent of the way Desnos’s utterances



2.4 Susan Hiller, *Sisters of Menon* (detail; enhanced scan), 1972–79. © Susan Hiller/Timothy Taylor Gallery, London.

made his audience feel during the ‘period of sleeps’ in 1922. Louis Aragon reports that the people in the room felt linked to Desnos and each other through the vehicle of the automatic trance as though it were ‘the foaming wide interior sea that flows beneath Paris as it flowed beneath Delphi’; Aragon and the others assembled in Breton’s apartment felt like ‘surprised utensils’, instruments of a larger force, while simultaneously sensing ‘the ebb and flow of hidden waters, where everything merges’, the present with the past.³¹

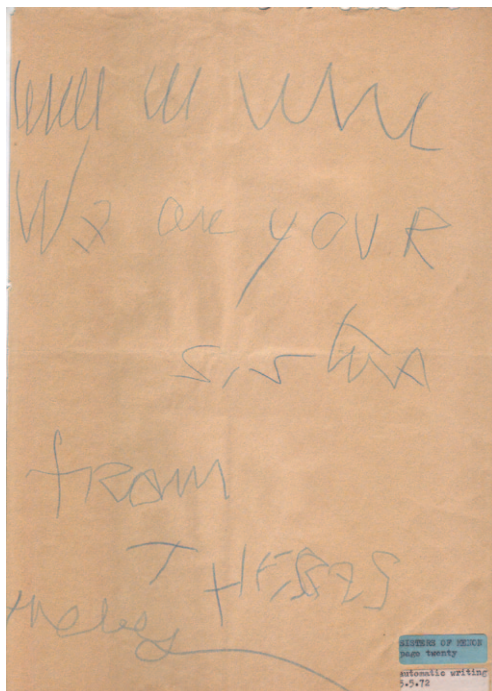
In effect, Hiller’s *Sisters* and her notes show automatism working in two ways. First, it is mechanical: automatism transforms the body into a passive instrument or receptacle like Desnos’ ‘night bottle of the poet’ or Aragon’s ‘surprised utensil’ and especially Breton’s ‘modest recording instrument’ from the first ‘Manifesto’, to which he compared the true surrealist.³² Second, it is subjective, with its emphasis on automatic experience as experiential, linked to touch. Her work is an example of the way women linked to surrealism have consistently added corporeal experience to the original abstract ideas put forward in the first ‘Manifesto’ based on the male surrealists’ view of automatism as ‘pure’ and the women’s view of automatism as embodied.³³ Her scripts

and notes add textures of feeling and body-based experience to the Bretonian 'recording instrument' of the camera.

Automatism has a rhythm of suspension and flow, intentional receptivity, on the one hand, and rushing words, sounds, and images on the other, that invade the mind and the senses and invite recording.³⁴ Once it is initiated, automatism is an experience that floods the mind, blurring the unconscious with the conscious mind in a way that makes the person experiencing it feel porous, like a vehicle for the sensation of everything merging, as Aragon commented 50 years earlier. Specific words and images, however, stand out within the consciousness of the person in an automatic trance the way light indexically captures an object's trace on sensitised paper in the instant the camera's shutter opens. This fixed aspect of automatism fits more broadly with Hiller's body of work, which is often tactile and 'built upon the basis of cultural artefacts', or discards, as she explained in another interview.³⁵ Hiller is a collector of stray materials connected to the environment where she found them that reflect the cultural unconscious of her time. Her work is quintessentially *in* time, linked to specific moments in cultural history in the way that a photograph is indexical, physically capturing and fixing the trace of a thing, vehicled by light at a specific moment and recording it.

Just as photography reminds the viewer repeatedly and iteratively in the present of moments of a past that continuously recedes, reminding human viewers of their own mortality, so do the yellowing scripts in all their fragility remind the viewer of the moment they were made while simultaneously relaying a sense of timelessness because of the uncanny way in which they came into being.³⁶ Hiller's *Sisters* as a work exists in time yet retains an ageless quality. Like Aragon's evocation of the surrealists' feeling of connection to the oracles of Delphi, Hiller's words evoke ancient oracles, too, through the reference in *Sisters of Menon* to ancient Greece and another, older place. The text ends with a repeated reference to Thebes: 'we are your sisters from Thebes/Thebes' (Figure 2.5). Her double Thebes is at once the location in Greece where Oedipus met the Sphinx and an even more ancient and specific location in Egypt, which includes a precinct dedicated to Memnon, a god of the dawn, or the coming of light.³⁷ This reference to light reinforces the connection of the sudden emergence of the words and voices in Hiller's automatic experience to flashes of light of the sort that capture traces of things and preserve them as photograms or photographs.

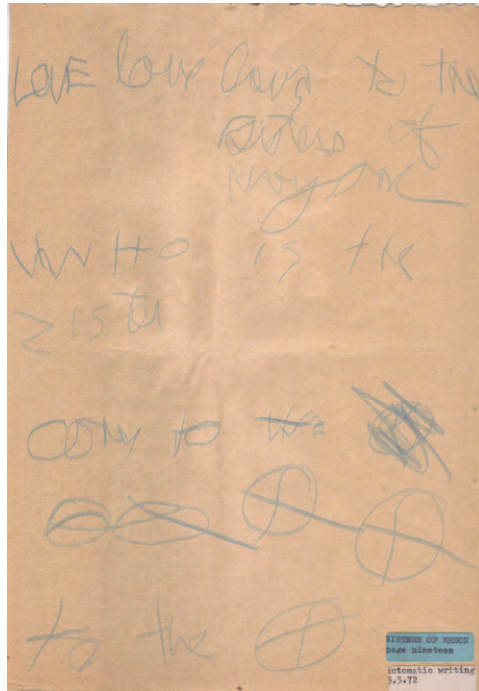
This reference to Thebes inevitably harks back to the question of human identity. The answer to the Sphinx's riddle, as we know, was *man*.³⁸ In Hiller's feminist version *man* has been replaced by multiple women who are explicitly not men, 'no-men'. She closes her notes with the simple word 'signs'. Menon as *nomen* is just another sign, a name that cannot capture the complexity of human experience; it echoes the punning performed by Duchamp and Desnos



2.5 Susan Hillier, *Sisters of Menon* (detail; enhanced scan), 1972–79. © Susan Hillier/Timothy Taylor Gallery, London.

with their adoption of a multivalent and shared pseudonym: Rose Sélavy (*éros, c'est a vie*, eros is life). Like Aragon, who wrote about the powerful emotional and intellectual feelings evoked by automatism, the sisters, in Hillier's penultimate line, also express powerful feeling. They repeat the word 'love' four times, followed by four 'O's with Xs crossed through them and a final crossed O (Figure 2.6). The crossed Os start as doubles of the word-sign 'love' in the sense that they duplicate the symbol often used in letters to represent 'hugs and kisses' from a sender to a recipient as symbolic of fully embodied gestures of affection, typically used between family members in Hillier's native United States.

These first two crossed Os also double the word for 'eye', as they resemble one visual shorthand symbol for the eye in a cartoon. Thus they hark back to the linguistic symbol for an individual that exists in time, an 'I', that sounds like the word 'eye', which designates vision – I am because I see. This individuality based on vision is something Breton idealised in 'Surrealism and Painting' as inner vision, namely the ability to look inwards as readily as outwards and to see both realities as coexisting on an equal footing, 'those things that



Susan Hiller, *Sisters of Menon* (detail; enhanced scan), 1972–79. © Susan Hiller/Timothy Taylor Gallery, London.

2.6

are and those that are not.³⁹ The third crossed O, however, moving to the fourth and fifth, rotates so that the X rhymes with the cruciform grid shape Hiller chose for the visual display of the entire work.

Hiller's rotation of the Xs in these eyes, these hugs, these signs for human affection, encapsulates how she manages the modernist grid through her use of a *negative* cruciform shape and the emotions that automatism generates that set that grid in motion in such a way that it rotates away from the abstract form the grid tends to represent in modern art towards the materialism that Krauss linked to surrealist photography.⁴⁰ The rotating Xs in Hiller's scripts and their symbolic connection to cartoonish eyes underscore the degree to which her automatism has a materialist bent. While her automatic scripts may capture traces of what rushed through her mind while in a trance experienced as suspended time, this work also clearly shows the imprint of her hand as it recorded words within time. In her notes she writes, "My" hands made the marks that form the inscriptions, but not in my characteristic handwriting.' The uncanny effect comes from her recognition of her own identity in the recollection of her recording of the words and her lack of recognition of the

way those words were formed. She concludes her introductory notes with a simultaneous avowal and disavowal of authorship: 'THE TEXT MUST BE READ, LIKE THE WORLD, AS A SERIES OF MARKS TO BE DECIPHERED.' This statement anticipates by almost a decade Krauss's poetic description of the surrealist's camera as framing the world's 'ceaseless automatism'.⁴¹ Hiller's body like a camera captured glimpses of the world within, the world Breton claimed exists inside a receptive surrealist mind. The outside world is captured automatically by a camera in Krauss's formulation, whereas in Breton's metaphoric comparison, nuggets from the inside world are captured.

Life teems in the outside world observed by consciousness and within human bodies, as well as in the form of the restless and boundless unconscious mind. Photography as a process, like the human body poised to record automatic experience, stands in the middle. The body, like the camera, constitutes the threshold, that in-between place between non-chronological unconscious flow and specific words and images imprinted onto memory. The mind in a body frames a thought the way a camera snaps a shot. Just as surrealism consists in the coexistence of realities and in the effort to mark that coexistence in every manner possible with the human mind, Hiller, through her automatic scripts, acknowledges the emergence of words from a mysterious and ancient source that would otherwise have remained lost and forgotten.

Hiller's *Sisters of Menon* shows how dreams and drives haunt everyday life in ways that go beyond realism, at once suspended outside of time, and capable of emerging into chronological reality so that they may be recorded. This work reflects Hiller's questions about the nature of female identity and consciousness over time, about the powers attributed to women since ancient times, about how those powers have been used against them, and how in the future they might be marshalled in their favour. Through her feminist cross-stitching of rational and irrational, verbal and visual, modernist and postmodernist methods, as well as spiritualist and surrealist approaches, she sets a rotating grid structure in motion in a manner that brings the passion inherent to the historical cruciform shape to bear upon its geometric form so that it simultaneously captures the timelessness of automatic experience and Hiller's own specificity in time. As a surrealist automatist and feminist committed to collective experience, Hiller relinquishes ownership of the voices that passed through her in a way that generously allows her readers and viewers to interact with *her* automatic experience of spiritualist-surrealist possession as though it were happening to them.

Notes

I thank Katherine Hart for her reading of this essay and I dedicate it to her in friendship.

- 1 Two versions exist in print of the interview Hiller gave at the West Dean conference on surrealism in 2005. The first has been edited; the second is complete. Roger Malbert, 'Susan Hiller in conversation with Roger Malbert', *Papers of Surrealism*, 5 (Spring 2007), 4; and Susan Hiller, 'On surrealism', in Hiller and Alexandra Kokoli (eds), *The Provisional Texture of Reality: Selected Talks and Texts 1977–2007* (Dijon: JRP & Les presses du reel, 2008), 215.
- 2 See Alyce Mahon, *Surrealism and the Politics of Eros 1938–1968* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 206–14.
- 3 In Sarah Kent and Jacqueline Morreau, 'Anthropology into art: Susan Hiller interviewed by Sarah Kent and Jacqueline Morreau', in Kent and Morreau (eds), *Women's Images of Men* (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative Society, 1985), 149.
- 4 Susan Hiller, 'Post?modern?ism?' in Barbara Einzig (ed.), *Thinking About Art: Conversations with Susan Hiller* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 141. Hiller's *Sisters* conforms to one of François Lyotard's definitions of postmodernism as 'that which, in the modern, puts forward the unrepresentable in presentation itself; that which denies itself the solace of good forms... that which searches for new presentations not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unrepresentable' (81).
- 5 André Breton, *The Lost Steps*, trans. M. Polizzotti (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 60.
- 6 For *Draw Together*, a postal art project, Hiller chose a random image and stared at it intensely and then drew. She chose certain times and dates so that artists around the world could do the same thing at the same time and send her the drawings they produced (see *The Provisional Texture*, 215).
- 7 Alexandra M. Kokoli, 'Susan Hiller's paraconceptualism', in Jennifer Fisher (ed.), *Technologies of Intuition* (Toronto: YYZBooks, 2006), 124.
- 8 Einzig, *Thinking About Art*, 58.
- 9 Hiller was unaware of Krauss's work at the time (email correspondence with the author, 14 March 2014).
- 10 Rosalind Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 12–13.
- 11 André Breton, *Surrealism and Painting*, trans. S. W. Taylor (Boston: MFA Publications, 2002), 4.
- 12 André Breton, 'Manifesto of surrealism' (1924), in *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. R. Seaver and H. R. Lane (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1972), 14.
- 13 Kokoli, 'Susan Hiller's paraconceptualism', 125.
- 14 Susan Hiller cited in Stuart Morgan, 'Beyond control: An interview with Susan Hiller', in Fiona Bradley (ed.), *Susan Hiller* (Liverpool: Tate Gallery, 1996), 42.
- 15 Einzig, 'Editor's introduction', *Thinking About Art*, 41.
- 16 Hiller, *The Provisional Texture*, 215.
- 17 See Katharine Conley, *Surrealist Ghostliness* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 2–5.
- 18 See Robert Desnos' 'Journal of an apparition', in Mary Ann Caws (ed. and trans.), *Essential Poems & Writings of Robert Desnos* (Boston: Black Widow

- Press, 2007), 130–43. See also Susan Aberth's *Leonora Carrington, Surrealism, Alchemy, and Art* (Aldershot and Burlington: Lund Humphries and Ashgate, 2004). Breton denies the possibility of any connection with spiritualism or the supernatural in 1922 in 'The mediums enter', *The Lost Steps*, 90. He does so again in 1933, see Breton, 'The automatic message', *Break of Day*, trans. M. Polizzotti and M. A. Caws (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 138.
- 19 See Clément Chéroux and Andreas Fischer, *The Perfect Medium: Photography and Occult* (New York: Yale University Press, 2005).
 - 20 See Nicole Edelman, *Voyantes, guérisseuses et visionnaires, 1785–1914* (Paris: Albin-Michel, 1995).
 - 21 Carrington painted an emanation resembling a spiritualistic ectoplasm swirling in the room with her in the self-portrait she made in 1938 entitled *The Inn at the Dawn Horse*. See Nadia Choucha, *Surrealism and the Occult* (Rochester, VT: Destiny Books 1992), 117. She also painted cooking and the creation of potions and spells on a regular basis. See Katharine Conley, 'Carrington's kitchen', *Papers of Surrealism*, 10 (2013), 1–18.
 - 22 Einzig, *Thinking About Art*, 40.
 - 23 Jean Fisher, 'Susan Hiller: *Elan* and other evocations', in Catherine de Zegher (ed.), *Inside the Visible: an elliptical traverse of 20th century art, in, of, and from the feminine* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 259.
 - 24 André Breton, *Nadja*, trans. R. Howard (New York: Grove Press, 1960), 11.
 - 25 Translation modified. Robert Desnos, 'If you knew', trans. M. A. Caws, in *Essential*, 157.
 - 26 Robert Desnos, 'Les lois de nos désirs sont des dés sans loisir', in Marie-Claire Dumas (ed.), *Robert Desnos – Œuvres* (Paris: Gallimard-Quarto, 1999), 509, my translation. This complete poem is part of a collection of 150 one-line poems assembled under the title 'Rose Sélavy (1922–1923)', borrowed from Marcel Duchamp's adopted pseudonym from 1920, and published in the *Œuvres*, 502–12.
 - 27 Esther Adler quoting Rozsika Parker in her essay on Hiller in the WACK! catalogue: 'Susan Hiller', in Cornelia Butler (ed.), *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (Los Angeles, Cambridge, London: The Museum of Contemporary Art and MIT Press, 2007), 246–7. See Rozsika Parker, 'Looking at new work, an interview with Rozsika Parker' (1983), in Barbara Einzig (ed.), *Thinking About Art: Conversations with Susan Hiller* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 51.
 - 28 Breton, 'Manifesto of surrealism', 26.
 - 29 Susan Hiller, *Sisters of Menon* (London: Coracle Press, 1983), n.p. All future references to Hiller's published notes in *Sisters of Menon* are to this edition.
 - 30 Rosemary Betterton, 'Susan Hiller's painted works', in James Lingwood (ed.), *Susan Hiller: Recall* (Gateshead: Baltic, 2004).
 - 31 Louis Aragon, *Treatise of Style*, trans. A. Waters (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 104.
 - 32 Breton, 'Manifesto of surrealism', *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. R. Seaver and Helen R. Lane (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1972), 27–8.

- 33 See Katharine Conley, *Automatic Woman: The Representation of Woman in Surrealism* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 9 and Katharine Conley (ed.), *The Journal of Surrealism and the Americas* special issue on 'Women in the surrealist conversation', 5:1–2 (December 2011), ii.
- 34 See Conley, *Surrealist Ghostliness*.
- 35 Lisa Tuttle, *Heroines: Women Inspired by Women* (London: Harrap, 1988), 126.
- 36 In communication with the author in email, 27 January 2014, Hiller explained that the 'wall installation of original pages of scripts is now too fragile to exhibit'.
- 37 Morgan, 'Beyond control', 42.
- 38 What goes on four legs in the morning, on two legs at noon, and on three legs in the evening?
- 39 Breton, *Surrealism and Painting*, 7.
- 40 Rosalind Krauss, 'Corpus delicti', in Krauss and Jane Livingston (eds), *L'Amour fou: Photography and Surrealism* (New York and Washington DC: Abbeville Press-The Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1985), 57–114.
- 41 Rosalind Krauss, 'The photographic conditions of surrealism', originally published in *October*, 19 (Winter 1981), 3–34 and later included in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, 115. Krauss rephrased this concept four years later as surrealist photography capturing the 'automatic writing of the world', in 'Photography in the service of surrealism', in Krauss and Livingston (eds), *L'Amour fou*, 35.

