



MARCH 2019

A MULTITUDE OF MINOTAURS

Minotaure, No. 1, 1933 | Pablo Picasso

Minotaure No. 10, 1937 | René Magritte

Minotaure, No. 11, 1938 | Max Ernst

Minotaure, Nos. 12–13, 1939 | André Masson



Pablo Picasso (Spanish, 1881–1973). *Minotaure*, No. 1, 1933. The Baltimore Museum of Art: E. Kirkbride Miller Art Research Library

Four issues of *Minotaure*, the Surrealist magazine published from 1933 to 1939, reflect four distinct interpretations of the mythical Minotaur by four different artists. Pablo Picasso (although not technically a Surrealist, he was closely associated with the movement in the 1930s) designed the cover of the inaugural issue and the muscular, confident Minotaur he depicts holding a dagger evokes an uninhibited, raw power. Max Ernst creates an eerie green Minotaur with only the whites of its eyes visible, attached to mysterious organic forms above its head that mimic another face when turned upside down. René Magritte's Minotaur is a menacing figure with the skeletal head of a bull, cloaked in black fabric in the foreground of a disorienting landscape that features subjects from other Magritte works such as a burning French horn and the nestled female figure. André Masson creates what appears to be the head of the Minotaur, embedded in which is a labyrinth, the home of the mythical beast.

Surrealism, a literary and artistic movement launched by André Breton, was focused on the expression of the subconscious and dream states and the rejection of all reason. This was largely in response to the devastation of World War I and the unease and violence in the years leading up to World War II, including the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. Surrealists resisted authority and the prevailing societal mores that they felt were responsible for the disarray and misery in Europe during this time.

The Minotaur was a creature of Greek myth—the offspring of a Minoan queen and a bull—who was condemned to live in an underground labyrinth and feed on human sacrifice. The Minotaur was ultimately killed by Theseus, who was celebrated for ending the human slaughter. The Surrealists adopted the Minotaur as their symbol but interpreted the creature differently than the bloodthirsty monster of Greek myth. For the Surrealists, the Minotaur was a disruptive, powerful, and necessary force—much as they hoped to be in the arena of political change.

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Minotaure, No. 1, 1933

Pablo Picasso (Spanish, 1881–1973). The Baltimore Museum of Art: E. Kirkbride Miller Art Research Library © 2019 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

MINOTAURE



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Minotaure, No. 10, 1937

René Magritte (Belgian, 1898 1967). The Baltimore Museum of Art: E. Kirkbride Miller Art Research Library © C. Herscovici / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



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Minotaure, No. 11, 1938

Max Ernst (French, born Germany, 1891-1976). The Baltimore Museum of Art: E. Kirkbride Miller Art Research Library © 2019 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris



Minotaure, Nos. 12–13, 1939

André Masson (French, 1896–1987). The Baltimore Museum of Art: E. Kirkbride Miller Art Research Library © 2019 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris