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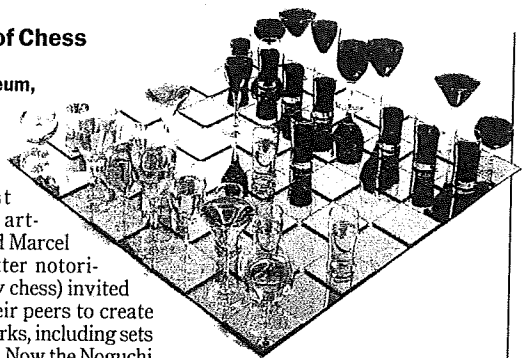
### "The Imagery of Chess Revisited"

The Noguchi Museum, through Mar 5 (see Museums).

In 1944, New York gallerist Julien Levy and artists Max Ernst and Marcel Duchamp (the latter notoriously fascinated by chess) invited a who's who of their peers to create chess-related artworks, including sets of their own design. Now the Noguchi Museum reprises the resulting show (with Noguchi himself on the roster).

Josef Hartwig's Bauhaus-era pieces reduce forms to their chessboard function; knights are L-shaped, while bishop are X-shaped—a reference to their ability to move diagonally in two directions. Other artists speculate on the intrigues and hierarchies of court, implied by the cast of kings, queens, knights and castles. The drawings in Alexander Calder's "Knightmare's Portfolio," for example, depict the chessboard as a battlefield of sexual conquest; in one, a lascivious bishop gropes a neighboring knight—anthropomorphized as a naked woman with a mare's head.

With a typically Surrealist flair for the transgressive, André Breton (with Nicolas Calas) presents a large



**André Breton and Nicolas Calas, Wine Glass Chess Set and Board**

mirrored board with drinking glasses in lieu of chessmen: One opponent plays red wine, the other white. Here, a lofty game of strategy is debased to a lowly drinking game, as players are required to swig after every move and drain their glass upon loss of a piece. As Breton wrote in a sly critique of the exhibition's premise, "What must be changed is the game itself, not the pieces."

The exhibition's motif is as rich today as it was 60 years ago. Chess offers an elegant, rule-bound terrain of battle—an allegorical alternative to the horrors of the real thing, be it World War II in 1944 or the current war in Iraq.—*Eva Diaz*