

<p>René Magritte n°1</p>	<p>First publication: 7 March 2014</p>	<p>Last update : 21 March 2014</p>	<p>Translator: Ostyn Sofie</p>
<p>Title : L'Idole / The Idol</p> <p>1965 Oil on canvas, 54 x 65 cm</p>  <p>Description : from a rocky shore we see a vast maritime space and a clear sky. In front of that shore, in the centre of the canvas, we see a bird hanging above the sea. Its figure and shapes are clearly those of a bird, but its texture looks like stone, the same rock as on the shore.</p> <p>"I'm very pleased with the title you have thought of: nothing could be better than <i>The Idol</i>." Magritte to Bosmans</p> <p><u>Catalogue raisonné</u> : <i>Volume III, cot.1015, p.411.</i></p>	<p>The problem here is the fact the bird is made of stone. The feathering looks the same as the coastal rocks and therefore, the bird shouldn't be able to fly but should fall down like a stone... So, the bird has got another meaning...</p> <p>The solution is given by the title "The Idol".</p> <p>One should remember what an idol is: something that we consider absolute while it's relative. We believe something is pure, which actually isn't. That is the underlying concept. According to Greek etymology, the word idol means image... An idol is the image, the representation of a divinity or of a being which is worshipped or part of a cult. But this idol is in the best case merely an intermediary to the higher world. The bird here, belongs to both the higher and the lower world. In Christian symbolism, it represents the breath of the Holy Spirit.</p> <p>In ancient times and in primitive societies, animals were often deified. The big monotheistic religions, Judaism and Islam in particular, transformed those deified animals into idols. Let's just recall the story of the Golden Calf in the Old Testament: the Jews who had fled Egypt – where they were slaves – heard from Moses that they had been saved by a God. They asked to see that God, but Moses couldn't provide an image quickly enough. So the Jews made a Golden Calf themselves, forged with their melted jewels. Like this, it's easier to understand why in our western traditions, we often experience our idols as a drawdown of a spiritual impetus of a material element.</p> <p>On this canvas, the bird evokes lightness through its form and action, as well as the capacity to disconnect from and to defy the laws of gravity. But the texture makes the bird a pure deception because it is made of stone. It is heavier than a living bird and shouldn't be in the sky, but should fall down instead.</p> <p>To sum up, with this work, Magritte shows us the abstract concept of an idol. He makes an image – or an idol – out of it in the etymological sense : this bird has the looks of the ideal but is purely materialistic. Magritte, who denounces <i>The treachery of images</i>, makes an image of the Image :</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>The idol is in essence a treachery (of the Ideal)</u></p> <p>For more information: Spee B. (2008) <i>L'Idole de Georges Rodenbach ou L'anorexie comme trouble de l'idéal ? Une application du « Comment lire ? »</i> by T.Todorov (25 pages) . The article is free to read on the website www.onehope.be</p>		
<p><u>On the internet:</u> http://www.bonhams.com/auctions/14799/lot/124/</p>	<p><u>References to other works:</u> <i>La trahison des images</i> n° 155</p> <p><u>Books with reproductions of the work :</u> <i>Magritte Les essentiels de l'art</i> , Ludion Flammarion, 2001, Gand , p.403. Torczyner H., <i>Magritte Signes et Images</i>, Editions Draeger Vilo, 1982, p.242-243 .</p> <p><u>Articles, sources:</u> <i>Magritte Lettres à André Bosmans 1958-1967</i>, Editions Seghers Isy Brachot, 1990, 518 pages.</p>		

Small studies of Magritte's work