

HYPERALLERGIC

Sensitive to Art & its Discontents

LACMA Lets You Play Exquisite Corpse on Your iPhone

by [An Xiao](#) on February 15, 2012



LOS ANGELES — Just a day after I [reviewed](#) LACMA's *In Wonderland* exhibition of surrealist female artists, I came across their new app. Designed by media artist [Jody Zellen](#), [Art Swipe](#) starts you off with 16 images from the show. The images are cut in three and arranged with others on the screen, allowing you simply to slide the images until you find a mash-up you like.



One of Jody Zellen's creations, using some of her iPhone sketches with Alice Rahon's "Orion ballet: Juglar (Orion Ballet: Juggler)".

It would be nice to be able to shake the app to create random juxtapositions, and in the spirit of the social nature of the original game, it would have been fun to create something more interactive, perhaps by allowing multiple people with iPhones to contribute a sketch or image via wifi. But the interface is quite clean and intuitive. You can also add more images, with a diverse array available from LACMA's larger collection or even your own camera roll.

Zellen [tells LACMA](#) she draws inspiration from the [exquisite corpse](#) surrealist parlor game, which asked multiple artists contribute to a single image while unaware of each other's contributions until the very end. It's the right inspiration for the show, as the mash-ups are frequently unsettling and oddly beautiful.

I'm not sure exactly what the app is *for*, but I think that's the point. It's a purely artistic app, an update on an old game for the iPhone generation. But there's more: It's a unique way to bring the museum experience to life, especially for those not able to attend the show in person. This is particularly effective on the iPad version, which allows you to see hi-res images of the works along with basic artist information.

According to the app designer: "The way it functions mirrors the approach of the artists in the show, in many ways ... It's about play and fun and making uncanny juxtapositions out of things that already exist — taking something that is a given and reading it in a new way, putting a new twist on it."