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| Michaux, Henri (1899-1984) |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| Henri Michaux was a Belgian artist and writer who can be situated — however roughly — at the borders of Surrealism and Art Informel. At the age of twenty he dropped out of medical school in order to sail the world, setting in motion a restless series of voyages of expatriation that took him not only to South America, Asia, and finally to Paris, but also through several artistic mediums: poetry, fantastical stories, drawings, paintings, and one film. Stylistically, Michaux drew inspiration from the works of Comte de Lautréamont and Paul Klee. In the late 1950s, he frequently experimented with various drugs (mescaline, in particular) not in a hedonistic pursuit of pleasure, but instead in search of a kind of poetico-scientific knowledge of the inner movements of the mind, which he referred to as the *marvellous normal* (contrary to Andre Breton’s absolute marvellous). Although Michaux is perhaps most well known for his stories about a pseudo-autobiographical anti-hero named Plume, the entire trajectory of his visual work — first in his invented hieroglyphic *Alphabets*, then in his tachist paintings and mescaline drawings — can be seen as a series of failed attempts to create a means of expression adequate to the marvellous normal. |
| Henri Michaux was a Belgian artist and writer who can be situated — however roughly — at the borders of Surrealism and Art Informel. At the age of twenty he dropped out of medical school in order to sail the world, setting in motion a restless series of voyages of expatriation that took him not only to South America, Asia, and finally to Paris, but also through several artistic mediums: poetry, fantastical stories, drawings, paintings, and one film. Stylistically, Michaux drew inspiration from the works of Comte de Lautréamont and Paul Klee. In the late 1950s, he frequently experimented with various drugs (mescaline, in particular) not in a hedonistic pursuit of pleasure, but instead in search of a kind of poetico-scientific knowledge of the inner movements of the mind, which he referred to as the *marvellous normal* (contrary to Andre Breton’s absolute marvellous). Although Michaux is perhaps most well known for his stories about a pseudo-autobiographical anti-hero named Plume, the entire trajectory of his visual work — first in his invented hieroglyphic *Alphabets*, then in his tachist paintings and mescaline drawings — can be seen as a series of failed attempts to create a means of expression adequate to the marvellous normal.  Image: michaux.jpg  Figure 1 *Mescaline Drawing*, 1959, india ink, 32 x 24 cm  Musée national d’art modern, Paris (Fonds D.B.C. AM 1976 – 1169 D)  [http://www.francetvinfo.fr/image/74vna6j3x-8148/578/769/1218549.jpg] |
| Further reading:  (Bowie)  (Blanchot)  (Hetrick)  (Michaux)  (Michaux, Untitled Passages) |