

PRESS RELEASE

Magic, Witchcraft and Surrealism – Leonora Carrington at ARKEN

Leonora Carrington was one of Surrealism's key figures. She rebelled against power hierarchies and conventions with a magical universe filled with humour, witchcraft and spirit, yet she remained an overlooked figure in art history. Today, interest in Carrington is immense and this September ARKEN Museum of Modern Art, located just south of Copenhagen in Denmark, opens the first major Leonora Carrington exhibition in Scandinavia. The exhibition is organized in collaboration with Fundación MAPFRE, Madrid.

Exhibition curator Sarah Fredholm who is in charge of the Leonora Carrington exhibition at ARKEN explains why the surreal artist resonates so much today:

"Leonora Carrington's artistic vision of freedom and equality is more relevant than ever in times of global warming, natural disasters, and war. In response to the crises of our time, spirituality, the occult and the forces of nature are being increasingly cultivated, for instance through astrology, tarot cards and witchcraft. Carrington was also taken with witchcraft and spirituality, which is why she is relevant to audiences today," says Fredholm.

British-Mexican artist Leonora Carrington (1917-2011) grew up in a wealthy family near Lancaster in England as the daughter of an Irish mother and a father who was a textile factory owner. However, Carrington rebelled against her strict upper-class childhood and was repeatedly expelled from Catholic boarding schools.

At 20, Carrington moved to Paris to pursue a life as an artist. Here she became part of the inner circle of Surrealism and started an intense love affair with surrealist artist Max Ernst. When World War II broke out, Carrington first fled to New York, then to Mexico, where she settled. Together with Mexican artist colleagues, Carrington cultivated a shared vision of witchcraft, drive, community and freedom.

"Carrington possessed incredible power and mystery. She remained unique, created her own version of Surrealism and did not allow herself to be restricted by either men or the surreal movement. This is really relevant today, when a lot of people feel under pressure on many fronts. As an artist, she challenges our way of seeing the world," says Sarah Fredholm.

Marvelous stories of transformation

Carrington's art takes you into enchanted worlds of magical creatures undergoing transformations – powerful female figures turning into horses, and witches and old women as expressions of zest for life and resistance. Alchemy and astrology captured Carrington's heart and she even created her own tarot cards. For seven decades, she expressed herself in a range of media – painting, sculpture, drawing and tapestries, and as an author.

First major Carrington exhibition in Scandinavia

With the exhibition at ARKEN, this is the first time a Scandinavian audience will be able to experience a large retrospective exhibition that unfolds Carrington's life's work. Here, you will see key works from England, the US and Mexico, important works from private collections that have never been exhibited before, as well as photographs and letters.

The *Leonora Carrington* exhibition will be on view at ARKEN from 17 September 2022 until 15 January 2023. The exhibition will subsequently be shown at Fundación MAPFRE in Madrid.

The exhibition is organized in collaboration with Fundación MAPFRE.



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