

LACMA FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

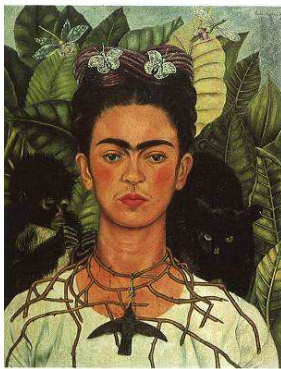
EXHIBITION: IN WONDERLAND: THE SURREALIST ADVENTURES OF WOMEN ARTISTS IN MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES

ON VIEW: JANUARY 29–MAY 6, 2012

LOCATION: RESNICK PAVILION

LACMA PRESENTS FIRST INTERNATIONAL SURVEY OF WOMEN SURREALIST ARTISTS IN NORTH AMERICA

TRAVELING EXHIBITION REPRESENTS NEARLY 50 ARTISTS FROM U.S. AND MEXICO INCLUDING FRIDA KAHLO, LEE MILLER, LEONORA CARRINGTON, AND MORE



(IMAGE CAPTIONS ON PAGE 4)

(Los Angeles, November 22, 2011)—The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) presents *In Wonderland: The Surrealist Adventures of Women Artists in Mexico and the United States*. Co-organized by LACMA and the Museo de Arte Moderno (MAM) in Mexico City, *In Wonderland* is the first large-scale international survey of women surrealist artists in North America. Past surveys of surrealism have either largely excluded female artists or minimized their contributions. This landmark exhibition highlights the significant role of women surrealists who were active in these two countries, and the effects of geography and gender on the movement. Spanning more than four decades, *In Wonderland* features approximately 175 works by forty-seven extraordinary artists, including Frida Kahlo, Lee Miller, Leonora Carrington, Remedios Varo, Dorothea Tanning, Louise Bourgeois, and more.

"In many respects these surrealists were similar to Lewis Carroll's central character—Alice—in his famous nonsensical novels. Their creativity was often stifled or marginalized by what seemed to be a somewhat arbitrary and bizarre world where logic did not always reign," notes Ilene Fort, exhibition curator and LACMA curator of American art. "This expansive survey illustrates that North America offered these women a degree of independence they could not experience in Europe. Hence it became for them a land of reinvention, their wonderland."

The exhibition is co-curated by Dr. Ilene Susan Fort, LACMA's Gail and John Liebes Curator of American Art, and Tere Arcq, MAM's Adjunct Curator. After premiering at LACMA, *In Wonderland* travels to the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (MNBAQ) (June 7–September 3, 2012), and the Museo de Arte Moderno in Mexico City (September 27, 2012–January 13, 2013).

Exhibition Overview

Surrealism called for the destruction of bourgeois culture and traditional standards and advocated intellectual and political liberty. When promoted in North America, these ideals flourished especially among the supposedly "second sex." In standard studies on surrealism, female artists have been cast primarily as mistresses, wives, or muses—the inspiration for the male fetishized subject matter. This exhibition however explores the legacy of the movement in the United States and Mexico through its influence on several generations of women artists. Unlike their male counterparts, these artists delved into the unconscious as a means of self-exploration that enhanced an often haunting self-knowledge in their quest to exorcise personal demons. For women surrealists—whether natives by birth, émigrés, or temporary visitors—North America offered the opportunity for reinvention and individual expression, a place where they could attain their full potential and independence.

In Wonderland illuminates the work of a diverse group of artists—both well-recognized and lesser known—who were active during a period that witnessed both the internationalizing of surrealism and the professionalizing of women in the visual arts in urban centers such as Mexico City, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco.

The survey presents an extensive range of work, including paintings, works on paper, sculpture, photographs, and film. The works date primarily from about 1930 (the period when Lee Miller and Rosa Rolanda first experimented with surrealist photograph techniques) to 1968 (the year that Yayoi Kusama, working in New York City, presented one of her landmark happenings, "Alice in Wonderland," in Central Park). A selection of later works is also included to illustrate surrealism's historical overlap and influence on the feminist movement.

Exhibition Organization

In Wonderland is organized according to nine major themes that demonstrate recurrent issues in the women's lives and art: Identity; The Body and Fetishes; The Creative Woman; Romance and Domesticity; Games and Technical Innovations; North America: The Land, Native People, and Myths; Politics, Depression and the War; Abstraction; and Feminism.

Most prominent in the show are portraits and self-referential images, ranging from bluntly honest to disturbing, that reveal unresolved issues haunting the artists. Equally telling are the many double, couple, and group portraits, and narrative fables that exemplify the women's friendships, loves, and families, and convey the difficulties and dramas often involved in such relationships. For instance, the portrayal of love and marriage ranges from storybook romances by Sylvia Fein and Remedios Varo; cynical, somewhat eerie courtship scenes by Leonora Carrington and Gertrude Abercrombie; and an obsessive fascination for a lover (i.e., Diego Rivera) by Frida Kahlo. The struggle of motherhood and domesticity versus an artistic career is often cast in terms of houses, dolls or other toys in the works of Carrington, Ruth Bernhard, Louise Bourgeois, Gerri Gutmann, and Kati Horna.

Exhibition Publication

The exhibition's accompanying book includes more than 250 color illustrations, along with several essays exploring the major themes of *In Wonderland*. The book is edited by co-curators Ilene Susan Fort and Tere Arcq, with Terri Geis, and features contributions from Dawn Ades, Maria Buszek, Whitney Chadwick, Rita Eder, Salomon Grimberg, and Gloria Orenstein.

Ticketing

Adults \$20; children (under 18) free. Beginning January 18, 2012, timed tickets will be available to purchase online at lacma.org, by phone (323 857-6010), or on-site at LACMA's ticket offices during regular museum hours (service and convenience fees apply to tickets purchased online and by phone only). LACMA's permanent collection and non-ticketed special exhibitions are included in the *In Wonderland* ticket price.

Credit

This exhibition was organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico. It was made possible through a generous grant from the Terra Foundation for American Art.

TERRA

FOUNDATION FOR AMERICAN ART

The organizers are grateful for the special collaboration of the National Council for Culture and the Arts (Conaculta), Mexico, and National Institute of Fine Arts (INBA), Mexico.



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About LACMA

Since its inception in 1965, LACMA has been devoted to collecting works of art that span both history and geography and represent Los Angeles's uniquely diverse population. Today, the museum features particularly strong collections of Asian, Latin American, European, and American art, as well as a contemporary museum on its campus. With this expanded space for contemporary art, innovative collaborations with artists, and an ongoing *Transformation* project, LACMA is creating a truly modern lens through which to view its rich encyclopedic collection.

Location and Contact: 5905 Wilshire Boulevard (at Fairfax Avenue), Los Angeles, CA, 90036 | 323 857-6000 | lacma.org

Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: noon-8 pm; Friday: noon-9 pm; Saturday, Sunday: 11 am-8 pm; closed Wednesday

General Admission: Adults: \$15; students 18+ with ID and senior citizens 62+: \$10

Free General Admission: Members; children 17 and under; after 5 pm weekdays for L.A. County residents; second Tuesday of every month; Target Free Holiday Mondays

Images (page 1)

(Left) Frida Kahlo, *Autorretrato con collar de espinas y colibrí* (Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird), 1940, © 2011 Banco de México Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico, D.F. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, photo courtesy Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin

(Center) Kaye Sage, *Danger, Construction Ahead*, 1940, © Estate of Kay Sage Tanguy, photo © Yale University Art Gallery

(Right) Rosa Rolanda, *Autorretrato* (Self Portrait), c. 1945, © Estate of Rosa Rolanda Covarrubias, photo courtesy of Andrés Blaisten, by Francisco Kochen

Press Contact: For additional information, contact LACMA Communications at press@lacma.org or 323 857-6522.

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