



Surreal Friends

Leonora Carrington, Remedios Varo and Kati Horna
Stefan van Raay, Joanna Moorhead and Teresa Arcq With
contributions by Sharon-Michi Kusunoki and Antonio
Rodriguez Rivera



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Surreal Friends brings together for the first time the work of three women Surrealist artists, friends in exile in Mexico in the 1940s: British painter Leonora Carrington, Spanish painter Remedios Varo and Hungarian photographer Kati Horna.

Leonora Carrington came to Mexico in the 1940s when her love affair with Max Ernst was interrupted by the outbreak of the Second World War. In Mexico City she found herself liberated from her English upper-middle-class background and from the expectations of the older male Surrealists of whose circle she had been a part in Paris and New York. She made new friendships - with Varo and Horna especially, but also with other refugees from war-torn Europe and with Mexican artists and writers including Frida Kahlo and Octavio Paz.

Remedios Varo arrived in Mexico City in 1941, having fled Nazi-occupied France with her lover, the French Surrealist poet Benjamin Péret. Until her early death in 1963 she produced a wealth of paintings inspired by the spirit and freedom of Mexico, in which magic, humour and illusion feature strongly.

Kati Horna was born in Hungary and moved to Paris to pursue a career as a photographer. With her partner José Horna she documented the Spanish Civil War, before moving with him to Mexico City in 1939. In Mexico she became a photojournalist for various newspapers and also took on more personal photography projects, much of this work suffused with a Surrealist thread.

For all three women, Mexico offered freedom to explore their art. Surreal Friends tells the fascinating story of their artistic friendship.

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About the Author

Stefan van Raay is Director of Pallant House Gallery and was previously Senior Curator of Art at Glasgow Museums and Head of Exhibitions at the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam. His previous publications include *Imitation & Inspiration - Japanese Influence on Dutch Art* (1989), *Gallery of Modern Art Glasgow - The First Years* (1996) and *Modern British Art: The First 100 Years* (2004). Joanna Moorhead is an award-winning journalist and author who writes for UK newspapers including the *Guardian*, the *Times*, the *Independent on Sunday* and the *Mail on Sunday*. She has written widely on galleries, museums and exhibitions, and has spent a lot of time in Mexico over the last three years, much of it with Leonora Carrington. Teresa Arcq is an art historian based in Mexico City, who most recently curated the Remedios Varo Retrospective (2008) and the Alice Rahon Retrospective (2009) at the Museo de Arte Moderno in Mexico City. She is a guest curator of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's Northern and Southern American Survey exhibition of Surrealist women artists (2011).

Sharon-Michi Kusunoki is an art historian and Curator and Archivist of the Edward James Foundation at West Dean near Chichester. She curated the Edward James Retrospective at Brighton Museum and Art Gallery and is currently preparing the publication of Edward James' correspondence with his artist friends.

Antonio Rodriguez Rivera is a Mexican anthropologist, who has researched the Mayan and Zapotec cultures. He is also an artist, who in 2007-2008 was the first Xilitla scholar at the Edward James Foundation/West Dean College. He is currently preparing a publication on the Union Movement in Mexico in the early 1960s.

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