

Leonora Carrington

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The life and work of Leonora Carrington (1917 - 2011) were marked by her inner and outer journeys, which took her far from her native Lancashire and her Celtic ancestors to Florence, Paris, the South of France, Spain, New York and Mexico, her final home, where she has long been considered one of the most important female artists, alongside Frida Kahlo and Remedios Varo.

This exhibition, bringing together 126 works, is the first major exhibition in France devoted exclusively to Carrington's work and aims to present her as a total artist and to highlight her artistic and intellectual universe through a unique presentation of her diverse visionary creations.

A cult figure in Mexico since the 1960s, Leonora Carrington has been the subject of renewed interest in Europe and the United States in recent years. Following the retrospective co-organised in 2018 by Tere Arcq on the occasion of her centenary, 'Leonora Carrington. Cuentos Mágicos', Carrington's work has been featured in exhibitions offering new interpretations of surrealism. Carrington's work has thus been highlighted in group exhibitions, but in very few monographic exhibitions, and never in a major solo exhibition in France.

The curatorial approach of the exhibition consists of presenting it as a 'Vitruvian Woman', an artist who represents a model of innovation and harmony, in response to Leonardo da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man*, a symbol of perfection and of Man as the centre of the universe during the Renaissance – a work that may have inspired Carrington's *Map of the Human Animal*. In this extraordinary cartography, brimming with metamorphoses and esoteric and mythological references, the artist, who described herself as a 'female human animal,' shows us a harmony based on the alchemical fusion of human and animal, masculine and feminine.

The exhibition takes this initial perspective to explore the artist's lifelong relationship with Italy and France, which serves as a starting point that illuminates her entire career: from her discovery of classical Italian art in Florence during her adolescence to her fascination with the Renaissance, her Celtic and post-Victorian origins, and her involvement in Surrealism during her stay in France.

Alongside these essential aspects of her life, the project is structured around themes that recount Carrington's journey as an artist and perpetual traveller who spent her life immersed in other dimensions, in search of self-knowledge. A feminist and avant-garde environmentalist, woman, mother, migrant, sufferer of mental illness, victim of 20th-century psychiatry and constantly evolving spiritual seeker, Leonora Carrington leaves behind a legacy as extraordinary as it is radical.

This project aims to present Carrington's main themes and interests by combining chronological and thematic approaches. It is based on current research conducted by curators on her work and biography.