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# Surrealist painter Leonora Carrington dies aged 94

Thu, May 26 2011

By [Mica Rosenberg](#)

MEXICO CITY (Reuters) - British painter Leonora Carrington, one of the last surviving artists from the golden age of Surrealism, has died aged 94 in her adopted home of Mexico City, where she had lived quietly for decades.

Mexico's national arts council said Carrington died on Wednesday night in the Mexican capital. Local media reported she died of pneumonia.

An arresting beauty in her youth who became famous for her paintings of women and mythical beasts, Carrington was embraced by the Surrealists in the late 1930s, when she had a passionate affair with German artist Max Ernst.

A rebellious aristocrat, she went on to win international recognition as a sculptor, painter and writer.

She fled to Mexico City in 1942 and lived in her later years in a rambling town house in the Roma neighborhood. While her work sold for hundreds of thousands of dollars across the world, she rarely left Mexico due to a fear of flying.

Born in Lancashire in northern England to a textile magnate, Carrington spent her childhood in a gothic-style Victorian mansion, but she soon rejected the strictures of a wealthy life governed by tutors and nannies.

She met Ernst in London at 19 and was dazzled by the famous painter, who was 26 years her senior. The couple then eloped to France against the wishes of her authoritarian father.

With Ernst, Carrington met other Surrealists like Salvador Dali, Luis Bunuel and Andre Breton, while studying figurative painting and gaining a reputation as a wild child.

"I suppose what I believe in is peaceful anarchy," the lifelong smoker told Reuters in a 2007 interview.

Her affair fell apart during World War Two when the Nazis imprisoned Ernst for creating subversive art. Carrington, devastated, fled to Spain where she had a mental breakdown and was placed in a brutal asylum.

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Thwarting her family's attempts to bring her home, she married a Mexican diplomat to get papers, boarded a boat to New York, then traveled to Mexico where she befriended artists Frida Kahlo and Remedios Varo and began painting in earnest.

She later married Hungarian photographer Chiqui Weisz and had two sons, Pablo and Gabriel.

One of Latin America's best known artists, Carrington's work was among the best selling for living surrealists.

Christie's auction house sold one of her tempera on wood panel paintings for \$1.48 million in 2009.

"The Giantess," also known as "The Guardian of the Egg," shows a mountainous woman in a white cape surrounded by a flock of birds. A tiny cast of characters runs through trees at her feet while a panoply of creatures frolic in a sea behind her.

Viewed as a national treasure in Mexico, her eccentric bronze sculptures dot the capital's main avenue Reforma. One piece was ripped from its bolted base and stolen from a public exhibition in 2000, though the thieves later abandoned it.

"She created mythical worlds where magical figures and animals predominate. Cobras become goats, crows transform into blind spirits and inhabit trees and houses," Conaculta said in a statement. "They are images that emerged from a mind obsessed with representing the transcendent reality we live in."

(Additional reporting by [Walker Simon](#) in New York; Editing by [Kieran Murray](#))



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