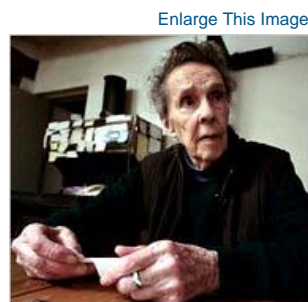


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Leonora Carrington Is Dead at 94; Artist and Author of Surrealist Work

By WILLIAM GRIMES Published: May 26, 2011

Leonora Carrington, a British-born Surrealist and onetime romantic partner of Max Ernst whose paintings depicted women and half-human beasts floating in a dreamscape of images drawn from myth, folklore, religious ritual and the occult, died on Wednesday in Mexico City, where she lived. She was 94.



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Henry Romero/Reuters

The artist Leonora Carrington in a 2007 photograph in Mexico City.

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"The Inn of the Dawn Horse (Self-Portrait)," oil on canvas, 1939, Ms.

The cause was pneumonia, Wendi Norris, the co-owner of Frey Norris Contemporary and Modern gallery in San Francisco, said.

Ms. Carrington, one of the last living links to the world of André Breton, Man Ray and Miró, was an art student when she encountered Ernst's work for the first time at the International Surrealism Exhibition in London in 1936. A year later she met him at a party.

The two fell in love and ran off to Paris, where Ernst, more than 25 years her senior, left his wife and introduced Ms. Carrington to the Surrealist circle. "From Max I had my education," she told The Guardian of London in 2007. "I learned about art and literature. He taught me everything."

She became acquainted with the likes of Picasso, Dalí and Tanguy. With her striking looks and adventurous spirit, she seemed like the ideal muse, but the role did not suit. Miró once handed her a few coins and told her to run out and buy him a pack of cigarettes. "I gave it back and said if he wanted cigarettes, he could bloody well get them himself," she told The Guardian. "I wasn't daunted by any of them."

Encouraged by Ernst, she painted and wrote. In 1939 she produced her first truly Surrealist work, "The Inn of the Dawn Horse (Self-Portrait)." Now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, it shows an androgynous-

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Carrington's first major Surrealist work. The painting is now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

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Omar Torres/Agence France-Presse -- Getty Images, Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris

A sculpture from a recent exhibition of Leonora Carrington's work at the Estación Indianilla Cultural Center in Mexico City.

looking woman seated in a room with a rocking horse on the wall, extending her hand to a hyena.

Her interest in animal imagery, myth and occult symbolism deepened after she moved to Mexico and entered into a creative partnership with the émigré Spanish artist Remedios Varo. Together the two studied alchemy, the kabbalah and the mytho-historical writings Popol Vuh from what is now Guatemala.

"She was a seeker and a searcher," said Whitney Chadwick, a professor of art at San Francisco State University and the author of "Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement" (1991). "In her work, she always sought to define moments when one plane of consciousness blends with another."

In the 1940s and '50s Ms. Carrington made a small number of carved wooden sculptures, and in her 80s and 90s she produced large-scale bronze sculptures of fantastical quasi-human forms, both comic and horrific, like "[How Doth the Little Crocodile.](#)" Located on one of Mexico City's most prominent avenues, that work depicts a lizardlike oarsman steering a crocodile vessel and its four lizards passengers on a voyage to places unknown.

Leonora Carrington was born on April 6, 1917, in Clayton Green, Lancashire. Her father was a wealthy textile manufacturer, and she grew up in a grand house, Crookhey Hall, where her Irish nanny entranced her with folk tales.

Her parents, both Roman Catholic, sent her to convent schools, from which she was expelled for eccentric behavior. At their wits' end, they sent her to study at Mrs. Penrose's Academy of Art in Florence. On returning to Britain, she enrolled in the art school recently established by the French modernist Amédée Ozenfant.

Her father was dead set against her becoming an artist and had insisted that she be presented as a debutante at the court of George V. Her mother was at least mildly encouraging, and, little suspecting the impact it might have, gave her a copy of Herbert Read's new book on Surrealism, published in 1936. It had a reproduction of a Max Ernst work on the cover.

After Ernst left his wife in 1938, he and Ms. Carrington left Paris and settled in Provence, near Avignon, but the outbreak of World War II put an end to their idyll. Ernst was imprisoned, first by the French and then by the Germans, and Ms. Carrington suffered a breakdown. She described the abusive treatment she received at a mental hospital in Spain in a memoir, "Down Below." She and Ernst never reunited.

After entering into a marriage of convenience with Renato Leduc, a Mexican writer and friend of Picasso's, Ms. Carrington made her way to New York, where she had solo shows at the Pierre Matisse Gallery and was included in group shows at Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century gallery and at the Museum of Modern Art.

After her marriage was dissolved, she moved to Mexico and lived in Mexico City for the rest of her life, with interruptions. There she married Emeric Weisz, a Hungarian photographer who had been Robert Capa's darkroom manager in Paris. It was Mr. Weisz who spirited three cardboard valises filled with negatives of Capa photographs of the Spanish Civil War from Paris to Marseilles, where he was arrested and sent to an

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internment camp in Algiers. The negatives, believed lost, resurfaced in Mexico City in 2008.

Ms. Carrington is survived by their two sons, Gabriel Weisz-Carrington of Mexico City and Pablo Weisz-Carrington of Midlothian, Va., and five grandchildren.

Ms. Carrington wrote short stories and novels in the same Surrealist vein as her artwork. In 1988, Dutton published "The House of Fear: Notes From Down Below," an anthology of her work, and "The Seventh Horse and Other Tales."

She was the subject of Susan Aberth's "Leonora Carrington: Surrealism, Alchemy, and Art," published in 2004 .

This article has been revised to reflect the following correction:

Correction: May 27, 2011

An earlier version misstated how many grandchildren survive Ms. Carrington. It is five, not four.

A version of this article appeared in print on May 27, 2011, on page A25 of the New York edition with the headline: Leonora Carrington Is Dead at 94; Artist and Author of Surrealist Work.

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