

I Affirm Myself through the Dream

Surrealism championed the dream as 'the other half of life': a space of affirmation, not just of desire but of everything we cannot attain while we are 'awake'. A flowing 'arch': eros, light and knowledge.

The Vertigo of Eros

Eros: the life flow. Desire, love, projection beyond oneself, both forwards and backwards, up and down. Culmination or fall: vertigo due to not knowing the final outcome with any certainty.

I is Another

Woman, the active subject. The mirror of language turns towards the words of the poet Arthur Rimbaud: 'Je est un autre', 'I is another'. One more step is taken in these women's universe: 'I is another man/woman'. Dynamic gender identity: androgyny, which thus brings to a close the spiral that opens in the first section.



Dorothea Tanning (1910–2012)

Reclining Nude [Nue couchée], 1969–70

Cotton textile, cardboard, 7 table tennis balls, wool and thread, 38.5 x 108.9 x 53.5 cm
Tate. Purchased 2003

OPENING HOURS

November–February: open daily 10 am to 6 pm

March–June: open daily 10 am to 7 pm

July–August: open daily 10 am to 8 pm

September–October: open daily 10 am to 7 pm

Easter: open daily 10 am to 8 pm

Christmas: 24th and 31st December, 5th January: 10 am to 3 pm

From 26th to 30th December and from 2nd to 4th January: 10 am to 7 pm. The Museum will be closed on 1st and 6th January and 25th December

Visitors will be asked to begin leaving the galleries 10 minutes before closing time. Tickets are on sale up to 30 minutes before

ADVANCED TICKET SALES

Access through control without waiting in the queue by showing your printed tickets upon your arrival at the Museum

Guided visits in Spanish to the exhibition *We Are Completely Free. Women Artists and Surrealism*. Every Saturday at 12 pm. For other guided visits: reservas@mpicassom.org

Audio guides available in Spanish and English

Text: José Jiménez, curator

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© Leonora Carrington, Maruja Mallo, Marie Toyen, VEGAP, Málaga, 2017

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Cover (detail):

Toyen (1902–1980)

Rest [Relâche], 1943

Oil on canvas, 109 x 52.5 cm

South Bohemian Gallery, Czech Republic

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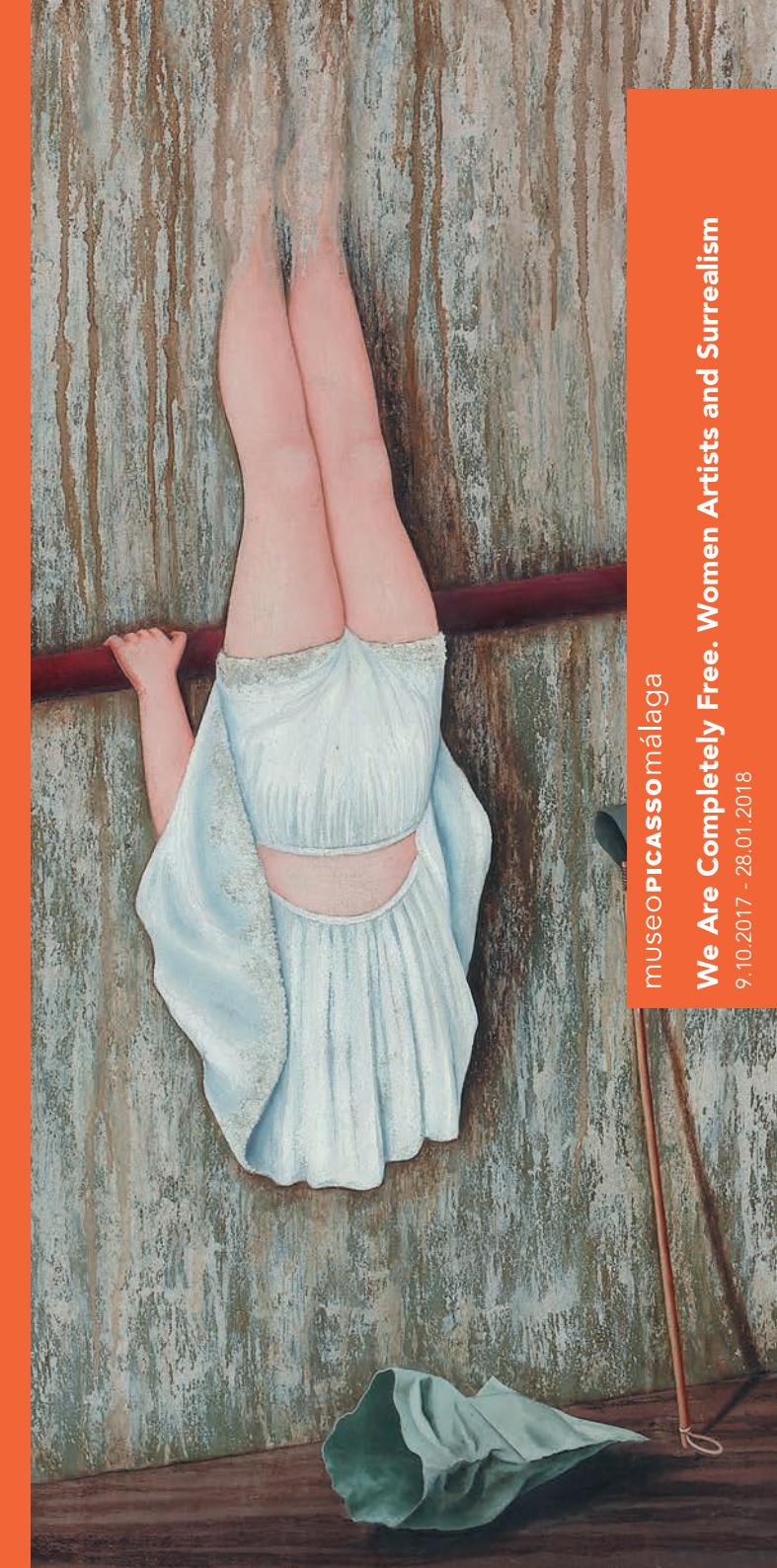
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We Are Completely Free. Women Artists and Surrealism

9.10.2017 - 28.01.2018



Claude Cahun (1894–1954)
Self-Portrait (Sitting Cross-Legged like Buddha)
[*Autoportrait (assise, avec les jambes croisées comme Bouddha)*], 1927
Oil on canvas, 12 x 9 cm
Gelatin silver print (vintage), 12 x 9 cm
Jersey Heritage Collections



Maruja Mallo (1902–1995)
The Fair [La verbena], 1927
Oil on canvas, 119 x 165 cm
Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid

While certain barriers still need to be overcome, the central role that women play in the Arts today is much more significant than it was in the past. This greater representation has certainly not been easy to achieve. The aim of this exhibition is to illustrate one of the key moments within this ongoing process of equality that took place within the context of Surrealism, when the work of a sizeable group of women artists attained an outstanding degree of consistency and international recognition.

This was neither simple nor easy, given that at the outset Surrealism was essentially a male movement of writers that increasingly opened up to visual artists. Both conceived of women on an 'idealised' plane as the 'eternal woman-child', the 'muse' or other similar variants, all of which suggested the passive, object-like status assigned to the female sex.

Gradually, however, certain women writers and artists began to secure spaces of freedom, alongside those of their male colleagues, and to develop creative proposals as protagonists rather than as mere secondary figures. In a 1993 interview, Leonora Carrington, one of the most important of these women artists then aged seventy-five, looked back and stated: 'I thought I had a lot in common with those people. It was a group essentially made up of men who treated women as muses. That was pretty humiliating. That's why I don't want anyone to call me the muse of anything. I never considered myself a *femme-enfant*

(woman-child), as André Breton wanted to see women. Nor did I want them to interpret me in that way, nor did I try to change the others. I just fell into Surrealism. I never stopped to ask whether I had the right to enter or not.'

We Are Completely Free offers a fresh look of the new creative horizons opened up by women artists in the artistic and conceptual framework of Surrealism through a selection of works that show the emergence of a new sensitivity that stood in contrast to patriarchal society. From a conceptual viewpoint the guiding thread of the exhibition, as its title indicates, is the idea and exercise of freedom in both its human and artistic sense.

The exhibition only features women artists. This is not, however, a 'separatist' option: artistic creation involves human beings on the whole or, more precisely, it is a synthesis of the masculine/feminine duality. In this case the presence of an exclusively feminine cast is in keeping with the show's intention to undertake a 'historical reparation': the aim is not to present these women on a 'stage' or in a life space or artistic career different to that of men, but rather to draw attention to the lack of knowledge or scant importance conceded to them and their work due to the exclusion generated during decades by a patriarchal, not to say male chauvinist ideology or mentality. While this has diminished in the present day, it still regrettably exists and retains its influence in the contemporary world. The key issue here is that with their



Leonora Carrington (1917–2011)
And Then We Saw the Daughter of the Minotaur, 1953
Oil on canvas, 60 x 70 cm
Private collection

works and through their creative processes, these women offer us the music—the song—of freedom, which is what essentially shapes all human beings, both men and women.

The eighteen artists selected for the show—Eileen Agar, Claude Cahun, Leonora Carrington, Germaine Dulac, Leonor Fini, Valentine Hugo, Frida Kahlo, Dora Maar, Maruja Mallo, Lee Miller, Nadja, Meret Oppenheim, Kay Sage, Ángeles Santos, Dorothea Tanning, Toyen, Remedios Varo and Unica Zürn—have been chosen on the basis of the importance and quality of their proposals in the context of historical Surrealism. It should be noted, however, that they do not form a closed list but rather one open to new considerations and annexations. They are presented in an unbarred, spiral-shaped itinerary articulated through the following sections:

The Mirror and the Mask

The central idea of this section is to reveal the use of a dynamic, changing concept of identity. Through their art these women show us that human beings can be many different things.

Other Worlds in This World

In this case and in an implicit allusion to the poet Paul Eluard's concept that the 'other' world or worlds are here in the world in which we live, this section directs our gaze towards what we habitually fail to see although it is right before our eyes.