

museum van boijmans beuningen

MUSEO BOIJMANS VAN BEUNINGEN - MÉXICO

3 de junio al 2 de octubre

🕒 9 June 2022, 08:00 (CEST)

Boijmans collection on show in Mexico City

Surrealism has a strong tradition in Mexico and female artists have played a crucial role in it. The travelling Boijmans surrealists can now be seen in Mexico City, in an exhibition which is further enriched with 40 works from the local collection.

In dialogue with Mexican surrealism

All the works that were previously exhibited in Wellington and Seoul are now on show in Palacio del Museo de Bellas Artes, including Dalí's 'Mae West lip sofa', 'Le Tabernacle' by Yves Tanguy and 'The Living and the Dead' by Phillip West. Leonora Carrington's 'Again the Gemini Are in the Orchard' has also temporarily returned to the country where the painting originated. In the exhibition, the Boijmans collection enters into a dialogue with Mexican surrealists. A remarkable number of female artists have played a crucial role in finding new ways of illustrating their vision on the world. In addition to Carrington, these included Remedios Varo, Alice Rahon, Kati Horna, Lola Alvarez- Bravo, Maria Izquierdo and Bridget Tichenor. 'Only the Marvelous is Beautiful' can be seen in Mexico City until 2 October 2022.

Surrealism firmly rooted in Mexico

In 1938, the leader of the French surrealists André Breton visited Mexico together with his wife, the artist Jacqueline Lamba. They were received by the artist couple Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, and travelled around for several months. During this stay, they met numerous Mexican artists and intellectuals. Breton, Rivera and the dissident communist Leon Trotsky collaborated on a Manifest for Independent Revolutionary Art, in which they challenged the emerging fascism. It quickly transpired that fascism was more than a threat. War broke out in Europe and Mexico became the new home for many surrealist artists, including Leonora Carrington, Wolfgang Paalen, Alice Rahon and Remedios Varo.

Circle of female surrealists in Mexico

In Mexico, the female artists were given the opportunity of freeing themselves from their role as muse and to develop their own voice. The new homeland nourished their interest in archaeology, anthropology, mythology and various forms of occultism. Their work shows a world view in which feminism, ecology and magic fuse together and add a new dimension to the surrealist universe. They also testify to the crucial role played by Mexico during the second period of surrealism.

Surrealist world view

Surrealism was not a style or a movement with a prescribed visual language, but rather a new way of looking at the world. The surrealist world view arose in the twenties of the previous century as a reaction to the western norms and values which had emerged from the enlightenment. Surrealists questioned the idea of eternal progress, rational thinking, scientific empiricism and individualism. They emphasised instead the value of the sub-conscious, the dream, eroticism and imagination. In their search for alternative ways of understanding reality, they delved into the beliefs, rituals and knowledge of old civilisations. For these artists, Europe was far from the centre of the world. The Pacific Ocean, the north-west coast of America and Mexico embodied the surrealist spirit.