



Under My Skin

English-born Leonora Carrington absorbed Irish legends and stories she heard as a child. This work's title references the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain (pronounced SAH-win), celebrating summer's end.



Samhain Skin, 1975

Take a closer look

Leonora Carrington (1917–2011) never revealed the meaning of this piece, which she populated with creatures representing Sidhe, a magical race from whom her grandmother claimed to be descended. The seemingly nonsensical text is primarily mirror writing that references Gaelic history.

Something to talk about

Akin to the work of like-minded Surrealists, Carrington's piece invites and eludes interpretation. What is recognizable in this piece? What confuses you? Try crafting a story this work might illustrate.

In her own words

"The stories my grandmother told me were fixed in my mind and they gave me mental pictures that I would later sketch on paper."

Who knew?

Carrington befriended Remedios Varo (1908–1963), also represented in the museum's collection. They originally met in Paris in the 1930s, but did not become close until both moved to Mexico during World War II.

Leonora Carrington, *Samhain Skin*, 1975; Gouache on vellum; 47³/₄ x 32³/₈ inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; © 2015 Estate of Leonora Carrington / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

