



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 work. She populated it with creatures representing Sidhe, a magical race from whom her grandmother claimed to be descended. The nonsensical text is primarily mirror writing referencing Gaelic history.

Something to talk about

Akin to the work of like-minded Surrealists, *Samhain Skin* invites and eludes interpretation. What is recognizable in this piece? What confuses you? Try crafting a story that 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 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, 47¼ x 32¾ 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

