



Unica Zürn: Art, Writing and Post-War Surrealism (International Library of Modern and Contemporary Art)

By Esra Plumer

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Diagnosed with schizophrenia in the 1950s, German writer and artist Unica Zürn produced a wealth of remarkable textual and visual material within psychiatric institutions across Germany and France. While Zürn is often discussed in relation to her partner, the controversial artist Hans Bellmer, this innovative book moves beyond the familiar model of the overlooked 'significant other' and re-introduces her as a member of the French Surrealist group. This is the first monograph on the life and work of the Unica Zürn in English. Esra Plumer presents Zürn's life and work in light of the artist's individual experiences with WWII, Post-war Surrealism and mental illness, at the same time revealing wider aspects of her artistic practice in relation to her contemporaries. She also reveals how the techniques of anagrams and automatism (writing and drawing methods designed to unlock the subconscious mind) form the pillars of Zürn's artistic creative output, which carry her work into the wider theoretical circles of psychoanalytic theory and post-structuralist thought.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Esra Plumer completed her PhD at the University of Nottingham, on the work of Unica Zürn and her development of the technique of automatism as an artistic strategy. She is the leading expert on the artistic work of Zürn with an extensive background in the history of psychoanalysis and psychiatric treatment methods. She has taught at the University of Nottingham, the European University of Lefke and The Courtauld Institute of Art.

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