SURREALIST Women: AN INTERNATIONAL ANTHOLOGY
Edited with introductions by Penelope Rosemont
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Surrealism is a unique, exciting and important influence. Its long legacy like it anywhere a landmark in the study of 20th century literature, art and ideas, it is also full of imaginative writing at its best, and fun to read.

The first anthology in any language of writings by women artists in the surrealist movement, SURREALIST Women traces how women surrealists did much to shape surrealist ideas and activity from the very beginning. Packed with information unavailabe elsewhere, Penelope Rosemont provides introductions to each of the book's six sections (and her headnotes to the individual selections) tell the hidden story of surrealist women's impact on surrealism, on the broader culture, on contemporary thought and behavior.

Arranged chronologically, the book's almost 300 selections start with an ecstatic dream-lette by Renee Gauthier, from the first issue of the surrealist journal, La Revolution surrealiste. In 1934, just after the publication of the first Surrealist Manifesto, this is followed by fourteen other selections by seven other women who took part in the formation of surrealism in the 1920s. Later sections focus on the 1930s, the Second World War (1940-1949), the worldwide surrealist explosion during the Sixties, and a survey of surrealism around the world today.

Surrealism is an art that is "all-make" event. Surrealists Women is one of the rare books that was "mostly French." The anthology features writings by 97 women from nearly 30 countries. Most of the foreign-language texts appear here in English translation for the first time—from the Spanish, Czech, German, Portuguese, Swedish, Dutch and Arabic as well as French. Also included are texts written in English by some 20 women surrealists from Britain, Australia and the U.S.

From the early 1930s on, many major figures of international surrealism have come from the Third World countries, including Suzanne Cezanne from Martinique, and Egyptian poet-Joyce Mansour, but they are rarely mentioned in U.S. studies of the movement. From Africa, the Spanish Maghreb, the Middle East, and South America are represented in SURREALIST Women, most of them for the first time in English.

SURREALIST Women is, in fact, the single largest anthology of surrealism ever to appear in English. It includes 15 short stories, 145 short articles, and 49 essays, articles and interviews—on art, politics, social and cultural criticism, ethnography, mental illness, sexuality, nature, and surrealism itself. Of particular interest are surrealist women's critiques of sexism, out-of-control technology, and white supremacy. In some texts, surrealist poets, dancers, photographers, painters, composers, scholars and film-makers discuss their own and other's work. Also included are several examples of surrealist games, from "Exquisite Corpse" to "Time-Travelers' Polyhabit.

SURREALIST Women includes substantial selections by such well-known figures as Leonora Carrington, Claude Cahun, Nancy Cunard, Nelly Kaplan, Joyce Mansour, Meret Oppenheimer, Valentine Pernice, Galatea Principe and Kay Sage. The great majority of women in the anthology are of course artists, but all of them—without exception—have been important in surrealism. Readers will doubtless be captivated by some of surrealism's "shooting stars"—such as the English writer and photographer, the Surrealist photographer, the mysterious Czech poet Drahomira Vandas, and others who, as Rosemont remarks, "made contributions to the movement out of proportion to the brevity of their participation in it." Despite the fact that more than half the women in this book have been almost completely ignored by U.S. critics and historians, this is no reason to call the book "minor authors."

Correcting many errors made by earlier researchers, highlighting surrealism's basic open-endedness and relating the movement's cultural contents—including feminism, Marxism, anarchism, Pan-Africanism, radical ecology and ecology—this book is a bright challenge to conventional wisdom, inviting readers to regard surrealism in new ways.

As Penelope Rosemont points out on the opening page, to ignore the work of surrealist women is "to ignore some of the best of surrealism."

To order SURREALIST Women: An International Anthology, click here.