

# **New painting acquired by the National Galleries of Scotland**

**The National Galleries of Scotland (NGS) has acquired a painting by Spanish artist and poet, Remedios Varo, for the very first time.**

The painting is Encounter created in 1959 at the height of her career by the world renowned Surrealist artist.

The Surrealist movement was launched by the publication of André Breton's Manifesto of Surrealism in 1924, and this work is on display just in time to mark the centenary. Varo only completed around 100 paintings during her lifetime and most are now in public collections in Mexico where the artist settled after fleeing Nazi-occupied France.

The concept of the encounter – especially the chance encounter – was a subject favoured by the Surrealists for its mysterious potential. In this striking composition, a seated figure carefully lifts the lid on a tiny casket to find her own eyes staring back at her. Several similar boxes sit on the shelves in the background, suggesting that there are more “selves” to be discovered. Many of the figures that Varo painted resemble the artist herself, and this work is believed to be a self-portrait.

Varo said of the work: “This poor woman, full of curiosity and expectation as she opened the little coffer, encounters her own self; in the background, on the shelves, there are more little coffers, and who knows whether on opening them she will

find something new.”

Simon Groom, Director of Modern and Contemporary Art at the National Galleries of Scotland, said: “We’re thrilled to have acquired this incredibly rare and important painting by Remedios Varo. Her career as a full-time artist lasted little more than a decade. She worked slowly and meticulously, completing only about a hundred paintings, many of which are now in museum collections in Mexico and the USA. They are breathtaking gems which one seldom sees outside books. There’s not a single painting by her in a public collection outside the Americas. Or rather that was the case until now. Moreover, Encounter is a key work in her oeuvre, a self-portrait which deals with self-discovery and identity. It cements the National Galleries of Scotland’s collection of Surrealist art as one of the very finest in the world.”

Jenny Waldman, Director, Art Fund, said: “Artist Remedios Varo’s haunting painting, ‘Encounter’ into the Scottish National Galleries’ collection will captivate visitors from Scotland and across the UK. This painting is a key addition to Scottish National Galleries’ growing collection of major works by women artists. I’m delighted that Art Fund has been able to support this important Surrealist work to enter the permanent collection, thanks to our generous donors and National Art Pass members.”

The acquisition was made possible thanks to the Walton Fund, along with support from Art Fund and the Wendi Norris Gallery, San Francisco.

Encounter is free to view at Modern One from today.



PHOTO Nick Mailer



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