



8 Female Surrealists Who Are Not Frida Kahlo—from Meret Oppenheim to Dorothea Tanning

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BY ALEXIS CORRAL
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Mexican artist and cultural icon Frida Kahlo is arguably the world's most famous female Surrealist, but women across the globe have long employed art to plumb the depths of dreams and the unconscious. As art historian Whitney Chadwick notes in LACMA's catalogue *In Wonderland: The Surrealist Adventures of Women Artists in Mexico and the United States*, the companion to the museum's 2012 exhibition, "Surrealism's legacy included a model for creative practices that encouraged many women to adapt its principles in their search to link artistic self-identity to the realities of gender and female sexuality."

Despite the Surrealist movement that took place in 20th-century Europe being male-dominated, women have contributed to this genre throughout that century—and all the way up to the contemporary period, as seen in the work of Nicole Eisenman and Inka Essenhigh today. So, Kahlo is sitting this one out as we highlight eight historical female Surrealists whose careers spanned everything from painting to poetry.

Helen Lundeberg



Left: Helen Lundeberg, *Portrait of Inez*, 1933. © The Feitelson / Lundeberg Art Foundation, courtesy of Louis Stern Fine Arts; Right: Helen Lundeberg, *Biological Fantasy*, 1946. © The Feitelson / Lundeberg Art Foundation, courtesy of Louis Stern Fine Arts.

In 1934, one of California’s most significant female Surrealists, Helen Lundeberg, and her husband, Lorser Feitelson, created what became known as Post-Surrealism, penning the only U.S. manifesto to challenge André Breton’s European Surrealism—which advocated for the expression of “pure, psychic automatism.” Unlike her European counterparts, Lundeberg believed in employing a more rational form of creativity to depict the unconscious mind. Like a lucid dream, her paintings carefully reflect on the mysteries of biology, astronomy, and physics.