

## Dorothea Tanning. *Behind the Door There Is Always Another Door*



DOROTHEA TANNING

*Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* [Un poco de música nocturna], 1943

Óleo sobre lienzo

Tate: Adquirida con la ayuda de Art Fund and the American Fund for the Tate Gallery 1997

<b>DATES:</b>	3 October 2018 – 7 January 2019
<b>PLACE:</b>	Sabatini building, Floor 3.
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía
<b>CURATOR:</b>	Alyce Mahon
<b>COORDINATION:</b>	Beatriz Jordana

Dorothea Tanning (1910–2012) is widely regarded as one of the twentieth century's most important and multifaceted women artists, an association, however, which she spurned: "Women artists. There is no such thing — or person. It's just as much a contradiction in terms as 'man artist' or 'elephant artist'. You may be a woman and you may be an artist; but the one is a given and the other is you". Tanning developed her extensive, exhaustive and expressive body of work between the USA and France, producing paintings, drawings, costume and set designs for ballets, "soft" sculptures, novels and poems. Her work tells stories which are etched into a personal universe she used to give meaning to modern life and, in a surreal setting — brimming with fantasy and phantoms — shaped in a space which is at once seductive and pernicious.

The exhibition revolves around themed rooms drifting through the periods which were integral to Tanning's career — spanning childhood and family scenes, girls dressed in Victorian clothing, baroque and bucolic nudes, red-rock deserts, and representations of flowers, highly pertinent in her mature work. Moreover, her installations include *Chambre 202*, *Hôtel du Pavot* [*Poppy Hotel, Room 202*] (1970–1973), with amorphous sculptures inviting visitors to see, feel and be part of the surreal world she inhabits.

Tanning breaks down the distance between artwork and spectator, seeking to make her work an invitation to transcend rather than reflect the world. A female-dominated world of open doors and revelations brings on chaos in a traditional domestic space that pulses and arouses a strange curiosity. Do we dare to enter her fairy tale, a house with open doors, a residence inhabited by odd creatures, to move into a sunburnt landscape? In the words of the artist: "I wanted to lead the eye towards spaces that hid, revealed, transformed all at once and where there would be some never-before-seen image, as if it had appeared with no help from me".

**For further information:**

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