

Imaginarium

<https://youtu.be/2gebwYau6os>



Imaginarium is a practice-based choreographic research project exploring the work and life of the surrealist artist and writer, Leonora Carrington (1917 – 2011). It was co-created and performed by Edge Hill University lecturers James Hewison and Michelle Man. <http://www.michelle-man.com/imaginarium>

Leonora Carrington was born and raised in Lancashire, but lived her entire adult life in Europe and South America. Despite her relative obscurity in the UK, she is extremely well-known in parts of Europe and South America, particularly in her adopted country of Mexico, where she is a highly regarded and popular artist known for her prolific output which, beyond her painting and sculpture, includes literature (novels, poetry and plays), theatre design and film.

The *Imaginarium* project examines, through embodied dance practice, how Carrington's figurative and literary images can be transformed and translated into danced choreographic language. The work draws on the physicality and captured energies found in Carrington's

sketches and paintings, and to the artist's sense of mobilization, colour and imagery. Through these investigations a notion of emergence and transferability from the work of art to the danced form occurred.

Imaginarium was also developed through an artistic residency at Crookhey Hall, Carrington's childhood home near Lancaster. This was a unique opportunity allowing the creators to explore a place that without doubt left its mark on the artist's psyche, descriptions and representations of which appeared in several of her later literary works and paintings: <http://www.leocarrington.com/paintings-pinturas.html>



Imaginarium premiered 15.03.15 at Tate, Liverpool, as part of the EHU sponsored exhibition of Leonora Carrington's work, and was performed at the gallery on six occasions over a period of three months. The EHU and Tate Liverpool Report Interim Partnership Report on the *Leonora Carrington* exhibition, September 2015, estimated a total audience of 200 for the *Imaginarium* performances, and a total attendance for the exhibition of 15,600.

<http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-liverpool/performance-and-music/dance-performance-intervention-imaginarium>

Imaginarium was also performed as part of the Institute for Creative Enterprise (ICE) event at Edge Hill University on 29th April 2015: *Gallery: In conversation about Leonora Carrington*.

<http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/news/2015/05/gallery-in-conversation-about-leonora-carrington>. This 'in conversation' event saw the journalist, biographer and cousin of Leonora Carrington, Joanna Moorhead, join Francesco Manacorda, Tate Liverpool's Artistic Director, to discuss Carrington's intriguing personal history and artistic practice.

A subsequent UK performance of *Imaginarium* took place at The *Leonora Carrington Centenary Symposium* (LCCS), on 30th June 2017, at Edge Hill University. <https://youtu.be/ko8q80WsWQk>

The symposium attracted over one hundred national and international scholars, artists, writers, early career researchers, and students to celebrate and bring into discussion Carrington's work and legacy. This interdisciplinary event stemmed from the existing body of research and creative practice from across several disciplines at Edge Hill University, led by Prof Roger Shannon (Media), Prof Ailsa Cox (Creative Writing), James Hewison and Michelle Man (Performing Arts), all of whom co-convened the symposium.

The LCCS featured keynote speaker Dr Catriona McAra from Leeds College of Art, and co-editor of *Leonora Carrington and the International Avant Garde* (Manchester University Press; 2017). Guest speaker, Joanna Moorhead discussed her new book, *The Surreal Life of Leonora Carrington* (Little Brown, 2017), and the event also welcomed from Gabriel Weisz Carrington, Leonora's son, as Guest International Speaker.

The LCCS screened new films relating to Carrington, including the BBC documentary, *The Lost Surrealist* (directed by Teresa Griffiths), and Josh Appignanesi's feature, *Female Human Animal*, starring novelist/curator and friend of Carrington, Chloe Aridjis. <https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/ice/files/2017/03/LCCS-Programme-30June>

As a result of LCCS Hewison and Man have signed with Vernon Press, USA as contributing co-editors, alongside Cox and Shannon, for a new volume, *Leonora Carrington: Living Legacies*. Publication is expected in 2019.

Peer reviewed conference papers that have been delivered about *Imaginarium*

- Man, M (2016) *Arquitecturas Viscerales [Felt Architectures]*, (Man), at Arquitectura en Danza, Colegio de Arquitectos de Avila, Spain [17/09/2016]
- Hewison, J. and Man, M. (2017) *Of cabbages and Queens: dancing Carrington at Leonora Carrington Centenary Symposium*, Edge Hill University [30/06/2017] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ovnO39aL0b0&index=6&list=PLBrk-wPNLaVm7DoPeI8OIoWMLYaKtnCd4>

The soundscape created for *Imaginarium* was arranged by the Basque composer and academic, Alfonso García de la Torre Rey, Artistic Director of the Contemporary Music Ensemble, *Espacio Sinkro* and Head of Composition Studies in the Laboratory of Electro-Acoustic Music in Vitoria, Spain.

Further National dissemination of *Imaginarium*:

- 06.08.16 Two performances offered to the Greenslate Community Farm (Wigan) Summer Festival. The event received over 3,00 people in one day.
- 23.10.16 One performance at the Linlithgow Care Home, Scotland

International dissemination of *Imaginarium*, alongside the artists of *Espacio Sinkro*, has taken place at:

- XII Festival Carmelo Bernaola, Artium Basque Museum-Center of Contemporary Art, Vitoria, Spain. 31st October 2015
- NAK , Festival de Música Contemporánea de Navarra 2016. Sala de la Muralla de Baluarte, Pamplona. 15th September 2016 <https://vimeo.com/211364580>
- Concert organised by Scherzi Musicali. La Fabrica de Tornillos, Miranda de Ebro. 16th September 2016 <https://vimeo.com/203740911>
- Colegio de Arquitectos de Avila as part of Arquitectura en Danza. 17th September 2016

Further International dissemination of *Imaginarium* includes the screening of a video recording from Tate, Liverpool, at the Biblioteca Nacional, Mexico City, as part of an *International Panel* to celebrate Carrington's birth centenary in her adoptive home city on 6th April 2017. <https://youtu.be/xcRQuOnua40?t=13m18s>

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