



## UNICA ZÜRN

Musée d'Art et d'Histoire de l'Hôpital Sainte-Anne, Paris, France,  
January 31 – May 31, 2020

This exhibition of Unica Zürn's works at MAHSA in Paris features 70 works, as well as photographs, publications and letters to provide insight to her intense and complex inner world. Along with five pieces by Zürn that belong to the Museum, the exhibition has brought together works from other institutions and private loans.

During 18 months spent in Saint Anne Hospital (from 26 September, 1961 to 23 March, 1963), Zürn produced an abundant number of drawings and poems, made possible because of the help of her life partner, the German artist Hans Bellmer, and other friends, in particular the Belgian writer and painter, Henri Michaux, who brought her the material for her artistic creation.

Most of the works shown in the exhibition have been executed in ink and Chinese ink, but Zürn also worked in gouache, oils and collage. Often compared with Surrealist automatic drawings, her hybrid creatures are covered with fish scales, and have numerous eyes and spirals that create a vibrant, lace-like effect of chimeric shapes. The forms of her drawings are reminiscent of strange insects, or jellyfish that spread their tentacles in all directions. Some of her anagram poems displayed in the exhibition, such as *Oracles et spectacle*, are decorated with her engravings. While creating her anagrams, Zürn used to dismantle the existing phrases, and from their parts, would put them together to form her own expressions carrying new meanings, which were at times tragic, like the end of her life.

## ALLA CHERNETSKA